

Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council



Animal Welfare Guidelines for Managing Acutely Injured Livestock on Farm



Department of
**Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food**

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta,
Iascaigh agus Bia**

Animal Welfare Guidelines For

Veterinary Practitioners and Farmers on Managing Acutely Injured Livestock on Farm

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AN INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR PATRICK FOTTRELL

Chairperson of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

The Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council was set up to allow representative groups with a variety of perspectives on animal welfare, meet and exchange views, seek consensus on various issues and developments relevant to the care of farm animals. These guidelines are the product of this consensus and have been adopted unanimously by the Council.

In 2008, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food introduced the European Communities (*Welfare of Farmed Animals*) Regulations, which came into operation on 31st January 2008. The Regulations give effect to a series of European Directives concerning the protection of animals and animals being slaughtered, including emergency and humane killing and slaughter of animals.

Emergency slaughter, for the purpose of this document means – “*the slaughter of an otherwise healthy animal which has suffered an injury that prevented its transport to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons*”.

The “Guidelines for Veterinary Practitioners and Farmers on managing acutely injured livestock on Farm” is aimed at assisting veterinary practitioners and farmers in arriving at an informed decision on the method of dealing with animals covered by the above definition, having regard to (a) Animal Welfare and (b) Public Health.

These are the only considerations, which should influence the decision on how an animal should be disposed.

The Council has adopted the best farm animal husbandry practices and welfare standards, which take account of the five basic needs of an animal:

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
4. Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and distress

In maintaining these guidelines veterinary practitioners, farmers, animal handlers and others can demonstrate Ireland’s prominence in the practice of farm animal welfare standards.

Professor Patrick Fottrell
Chairperson
July 2009

MANAGING AN ACUTELY INJURED ANIMAL ON FARM

Where treatment is not an option, there are three possible ways of managing an acutely injured animal on farm as follows:

- 1 Transport of the live animal to a slaughterhouse.
- 2 Transport of the emergency slaughter animal to a slaughterhouse following emergency slaughter on site.
- 3 Slaughter and disposal of the emergency slaughter animal as fallen stock.

Having inspected the animal, evaluated the degree of injury and pain which the animal is suffering and, having considered the available options regarding transport and slaughter in the context of proximity of the slaughter outlet, availability of suitable transport vehicle and timelines involved, the veterinary practitioner must decide on the most appropriate action.

- Should options 1 or 2 above be considered, it is the responsibility of the owner or keeper to arrange a slaughterhouse to accept the animal. There is however **no obligation** on any slaughter premises to accept animals for emergency slaughter or for dressing following slaughter.
- Should it not be possible to find a slaughterhouse prepared to accept the animal or emergency slaughter animal without undue delay and, taking fully into account the welfare of the animal, then option 3 above must be taken.

The veterinary practitioner involved must communicate with the official veterinarian at the designated slaughterhouse. Such communication does not, of course, obviate the necessity for the required written certification.

The final decision on the suitability of an animal for slaughter, or an emergency slaughter animal for dressing, rests with the official veterinarian. However, even where an animal or emergency slaughter animal is accepted, it will be subject to the intake checks at the slaughterhouse (ante-mortem if appropriate, post-mortem inspection and documentary checks), as well as any additional examinations deemed necessary by the official veterinarian.

The method employed for disposal of an emergency slaughter animal should be decided by reference to the following Decision Tree, which is followed by notes elaborating on each step.

Note 1

Is there any reason why the animal should not be fit for human consumption?

The veterinary practitioner, having examined the animal, decides whether emergency slaughter is advisable. Having decided that it is, he or she must determine whether there is any reason why the animal should not be fit for slaughter for human consumption. There are three considerations involved here - Health, Cleanliness and Medication.

Health

The veterinary practitioner must be satisfied that the animal can pass a routine *ante-mortem* inspection in accordance with the criteria laid down in Annex I of Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council. If the decision is that it would pass, the *ante-mortem* is carried out and certification to that effect is completed and signed.

Cleanliness

The veterinary practitioner must be satisfied that the animal meets the requirements of the clean livestock policy.

Medication

The veterinary practitioner must be satisfied that, as far as he or she is aware, the animal has not been in receipt of any medication, the withdrawal period of which has not expired and he or she must be prepared to certify to this. A signed declaration from the owner or keeper of the animal to this effect is also required.

Note 2

Would transport of the animal to a slaughterhouse be likely to subject it to further injury or unnecessary suffering?

This is a matter for the professional judgment of the veterinary practitioner. However, he or she must observe some basic principles. The animal must be able to walk unaided on to the transport vehicle no matter how short the journey.

Detailed guidance on a determination of whether to allow transport or to slaughter on farm is available on the Department's Website (www.agriculture.gov.ie) as per European Communities (Animal Transport and Control Post) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 675 of 2006).

Note 3

Transport of live animal to the slaughterhouse

If the animal fulfils the requirements of Appendices I and II, it may be transported live to the slaughterhouse, subject to:

- The slaughterhouse being prepared to accept and slaughter it
- The slaughterhouse must be within a reasonable distance (100Km) of the injured animal and

- The animal being transported without undue delay in an appropriate vehicle, which is not likely to add to the injury or suffering being endured by the animal

The conditions of transport must meet the requirements of the European Communities (Animal Transport and Control Post) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 675 of 2006).

The animal must be accompanied by the required certification and declarations. (See Appendix I)

Note 4

Slaughter on site prior to transport to slaughterhouse

If the animal fulfils the requirements outlined in Note 1 but not those in Note 2, the option of slaughter on site and transport of the emergency slaughter animal to the slaughterhouse may be considered. As outlined previously, this is subject to the availability of a slaughterhouse, within a reasonable distance, prepared to accept the emergency slaughter animal.

Slaughter must be carried out humanely in accordance with the European Communities (Welfare of Farmed Animals) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 14 of 2008) either by a Registered Veterinary Practitioner or by a slaughterman licensed by the Local Authority under the Slaughter of Animals Act 1935.

Following stunning, the major vessels must be severed immediately to prevent recurrence of consciousness. The easiest way to bleed an animal is to cut the throat from ear to ear, exposing the spine and ensuring all major blood vessels are cut. The emergency slaughter animal must be fully bled and the blood collected. The emergency slaughter animal, accompanied by the blood, must be transported to the slaughterhouse in a vehicle which does not pose a risk of contamination of the emergency slaughter animal. The vehicle must be refrigerated if the time interval from slaughter to dressing is likely to exceed two hours.

The necessary certification and declarations must accompany the animal to the slaughterhouse.

Note 5

Arrival of injured animal/emergency slaughter animal at the slaughterhouse

Both injured and emergency slaughter animals should be accompanied to the designated slaughterhouse by their passports.

1. Injured Animal

(i) Euthanasia

On occasions, it may be necessary in the best interests of an animal, which has been declared unfit for slaughter, that it be euthanised. The consent of the owner should be sought before this step is taken. If the owner refuses to allow euthanasia, contact the plant Veterinary Inspector.

Under the provisions of the legislation of the Protection of Animals Act 1911 and (amendment Act) 1965, a Garda, if advised by an authorised veterinary practitioner that it is necessary, can insist that an injured or diseased animal be slaughtered.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. when an Garda Síochána have been notified and are unable to attend within the required timeframe) the Official Veterinarian (OV) in charge can euthanase the animal under the powers invested in him/her by the Veterinary Practice Act 2005.

(ii) Slaughter

The OV at the designated slaughterhouse must be advised in advance of the arrival at the plant of an injured animal. On arrival, the following information must be submitted to the OV or a Temporary Veterinary Inspector (TVI) nominated by the OV: -

- The certificate of the veterinary practitioner testifying to the fitness of the animal for slaughter for human consumption and
- The owners declaration relating to the animal

The OV/TVI should examine the injured animal upon arrival at the plant.

The OV/TVI should use the information provided in the veterinary certificate and their own professional judgement to assess the animal's fitness for slaughter and human consumption. They may contact the Veterinary Practitioner and herd owner to glean further information to assist him/her in their decision.

If the decision is to permit slaughter for human consumption at the plant then this should be done within two hours of the arrival of the animal at the plant.

Article 3 (h) of Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, defines a TSE suspect as:

“ Live, slaughtered or dead animals, which show or have shown neurological or behavioural disorders or a progressive deterioration of the general condition linked to the impairment of the central nervous system and for which the information gathered on the basis of a clinical examination, response to treatment, a post-mortem examination or an ante or post-mortem laboratory analysis do not allow an alternative diagnosis to be established”

2. Emergency Slaughter Animal

The OV at the designated slaughterhouse must be advised in advance of the arrival at the plant of the emergency slaughtered animal.

All paperwork must be completed fully to assist the OV in making a determination on the emergency slaughter animal to assess suitability for further dressing procedures.

Failure to supply the documentation to the OV will result in grounds for disposal of the emergency slaughter animal as a Category 1 animal by-product.

There are procedures for dealing with emergency slaughtered animals in slaughterhouses. These are set out in the protocols of the DAFF Veterinary Public Health Inspection Service and the Local Authority Veterinary Service.

N.B. A Veterinary Practitioner who provides certification of an animal for Emergency Slaughter must, on no account, act as *ante-* or *post-mortem* inspector of that animal at the slaughterhouse.

Appendix I **Certification and Declarations Required for Managing an Injured Animal on Farm (see page 3).**

1. In the case of Options 1 and 2 the **Veterinary Practitioner** must certify the following:

- That he or she carried out an *ante-mortem* examination in accordance with Annex I of Regulation (EC) No 854/2004, and found the animal to be fit for slaughter for human consumption and
- That he or she was not aware of any substance having been administered to the animal, the withdrawal period of which had not expired.

In the case of options 1 and 2 the **owner** must make the following declaration:

- The owner or keeper must sign a declaration that, as far as he or she is aware, a substance, the withdrawal period of which had not expired, had been administered to the animal.

2. In the case of Option 1 only, the **Veterinary Practitioner** must also certify:

- That in his or her opinion the transport of the animal to the slaughterhouse is not likely to cause them further injury or unnecessary suffering.

3. In the case of Option 2 only, the **Veterinary Practitioner** must also certify:

- That the animal was humanely slaughtered by a registered Veterinary Practitioner in accordance with the European Communities (Welfare of Farmed Animals) Regulations 2008 or by a licensed slaughterman in accordance with the requirements of the Slaughter of Animals Act, 1935, and was fully bled.

Sample Certificates and declaration are in the appendices

Appendix II **Relevant Legislation**

The Protection of Animals Act 1911 and The Protection of Animals (Amendment) Act 1965

The Slaughter of Animals Act 1935

European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 910 of 2005) (As Amended)

European Communities (Animal Transport and Control Post) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 675 of 2006)

European Communities (Welfare of Farmed Animals) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No 14 of 2008)

Abattoirs Act 1988 (Veterinary Examination and Health Mark) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 154 of 2009)

Appendix III

Sample Certificate

SERIAL NUMBER

SAMPLE VETERINARY CERTIFICATE FOR A HEALTHY ANIMAL THAT HAS SUFFERED AN ACCIDENT THAT PREVENTED ITS TRANSPORT TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE FOR WELFARE REASONS.

Owner's Name.....
Address.....
Herd Number.....
Animal's Description..... **Breed**..... **Colour**..... **Sex**.....
Tag Number.....
Clinical Examination **Date**..... **Time**.....

Clinical findings and disability

I wish to state, having carried out a clinical examination of the above described animal, that in my opinion it is not showing signs or symptoms of any disease or condition as per Annex 1 of Regulation 854/2004 which is likely to render its meat unfit for human consumption or to infect other animals in the slaughterhouse or to cause danger to health by contaminating the premises or meat therein.

I have not administered or authorised, nor am I aware of the authorisation and the administration of any medicament, antibiotic, chemotherapeutic or other substance whose withdrawal period has not been completed. I have explained the term "withdrawal period" to the owner or person in charge of the animal.

Transport

I hereby certify that

- this animal is an otherwise healthy animal that has suffered an acute accident that prevents its transport to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons.
- this animal has been examined by me and is in my opinion **unfit for transport alive** to a slaughterhouse and that such transport is likely to cause further injury or unnecessary suffering to the animal.
- this animal has been humanely slaughtered by a licensed slaughterman or veterinary practitioner in accordance with The Slaughter of Animals Act 1935 and the European Communities (Welfare of Farmed Animals) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 14 of 2008).

Signature of Veterinary Practitioner: _____

Practice Stamp.....

Name (Block Letters).....

Address :

Date :

Slaughter of the Animal

<u>Name of PVP/slaughterman</u> _____
<u>Address</u> _____
<u>Time of Slaughter</u> _____
<u>Destination of emergency slaughter animal</u> <u>(slaughterhouse)</u> _____
<u>Signature of slaughterman/PVP:</u> _____

Guidelines for the Ante-Mortem Examination

Under the European Communities Regulations 854/2004, Annex 1, an animal may be considered to be unfit for slaughter for human consumption if it shows signs or symptoms of a disease, disorder, condition or injury which is *likely* to render its meat unfit for human consumption and in particular if it shows signs or symptoms of any of the following diseases or conditions:

- Anthrax;
- Acute or chronic septic conditions with systemic disturbance or to an extent sufficient to render meat or offals unfit for food;
- Advanced pregnancy;
- Blackquarter or Blackleg;
- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy;
- Imminent death;
- Digestive disorders with systemic disturbance;
- Diseases specified in the First Schedule to the Diseases of Animals Act 1966;
- Extensive injuries which render meat and offals unfit for food;
- Extensive skin affectations, which may render the meat or offals unsightly, unwholesome or unfit for food;
- Emaciation;
- Exhaustion, excitement or fatigue;
- Fever;
- Gangrenous conditions unless confined in extent and effect to a small area;
- Glanders;
- Hide condition;
- Immaturity;
- Joint ill or navel infections;
- Listeriosis;
- Metritis, whether acute or septic;
- Mastitis or Mammitis whether acute, septic or gangrenous;
- Milk fever;
- Oedema, general and dropsical;
- Pneumonia and pleurisy;
- Piroplasmosis (Redwater);
- Rabies;
- Respiratory distress with systemic disturbance;
- Salmonellosis;
- Swine fever and swine erysipelas;
- Tetanus.

Please ensure that any neurological symptoms manifested by the animal are differentiated from the symptoms of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. Please note that it is a legal requirement to report any *suspected* case of a Scheduled and Notifiable Disease to an Garda Síochána or the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's District Veterinary Office.

Appendix IV

Sample Certificate

SERIAL NUMBER

SAMPLE VETERINARY CERTIFICATE TO ACCOMPANY AN INJURED ANIMAL INTENDED FOR SLAUGHTER

Owner's Name.....
Address.....
Herd Number

Animal's Description.....BreedColourSex
Tag Number.....

Clinical Examination Date..... Time.....

Clinical Findings and Disability.....

I wish to state, having carried out a clinical examination of the above described animal, that in my opinion it is not showing signs or symptoms of any disease or condition as per Annex 1 of Regulation 854/2004 which is likely to render its meat unfit for human consumption or to infect other animals in the slaughterhouse or to cause danger to health by contaminating the premises or meat therein.

I have not administered or authorised, nor am I aware of the authorisation and the administration of any medicament, antibiotic, chemotherapeutic or other substance whose withdrawal period has not been completed. I have explained the term "withdrawal period" to the owner or person in charge of the animal.

Transport Authorisation

I hereby authorise the transport of this animal to (state name of slaughterhouse)..... as it is my opinion that such transport is not likely to cause further injury or unnecessary suffering for the animal.

Signature of Veterinary Practitioner.....

Practice Stamp

Name (Block Letters).....

Address.....

Date..... **Time**

Declaration by the Owner or Person in Charge of the Animal

I wish to state, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that the above described animal has not been treated with any medicine whose withdrawal period has not been completed. The term "withdrawal period" has been adequately explained to me.

Signature.....

Name (Block Letters).....

Guidelines for Assessing Fitness for Transportation*

In general if the transportation of an animal is LIKELY to cause further injury or unnecessary suffering, the animal must **NOT** be transported. In particular do not transport any animal, which cannot be loaded or unloaded without using force (e.g. unable to walk unassisted), or any animal with severe wounds or protruding viscera.

Where transport is authorised, animals should in all cases be transported to the nearest available slaughterhouse (and not more than a distance of 100km). Please note that the above are guidelines only and are not intended to be exhaustive or to be a legal interpretation of the relevant legislation.

The relevant legislation in this area is SI No 675 of 2006 European Communities (Animal Transport and Control Post) Regulations 2006 which give effect to the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the welfare of animals during transport in Ireland and SI No 14 of 2008 European Communities (Welfare of Farmed Animals) Regulations 2008.

** See also 2.14 of the FAWAC booklet " Best Practice for the Welfare of Animals during Transport"*

Appendix V

Sample Owner Declaration

SAMPLE OWNER DECLARATION TO ACCOMPANY THE EMERGENCY SLAUGHTER ANIMAL TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

Failure by the Owner/Keeper to complete the documentation in full for arrival at the slaughterhouse will result in disposal of the emergency slaughter animal as a Category 1 animal by-product. **Regulation 853/2004 Annex III, Section I, Chapter VI, paragraph 5 & 6**

All Boxes must be completed in full

Owner's name, address	
Herd number / Holding number	
Production site address (if different)	
Contact name, telephone number and email address of owner/owner's agent	
Identity of Animal (tag no.)	
breed	
age	
sex	
Nature of the accident (describe)	

A. Owner/Agent's Declaration

Record all veterinary medicinal products or other treatments administered to the animal, within the last 6 months, dates of administration and withdrawal periods		
	Yes	No
Tuberculosis Is the animal a reactor or inconclusive reactor to the TB test? Is the holding under a TB restriction order?		
Brucellosis Is the animal a Brucellosis reactor? Is the holding under a Brucellosis restriction order? Is the holding/area under restrictions for other animal health or other reasons?		
Have any analyses shown that the animal may have been exposed to food-borne zoonoses or substances likely to result in residues in meat? If yes, attach a copy. Is the animal clean		
Status (e.g. owner, manager, stockman)		

I _____ being the Owner/Keeper of the animal described above hereby declare that the animal has not, to my knowledge, been in receipt of any substance, the withdrawal period of which has not expired. The term 'withdrawal period' has been explained to me.

Signature of Owner / Keeper

Name in Block Capitals

Date _____

Time of signing _____

Notes

Notes

For further information please contact:
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