

Animal welfare standards and compliance for SMEs

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No matter the size of the business, red meat processing companies are required to comply with legislation, standards and regulations imposed by Government. This SnapShot is designed to assist small to medium sized businesses meet the animal welfare requirements set out in the AS4696:2007 *Australian Standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption*.

There are three critical aspects of animal welfare that need to be maintained to ensure the commercial success and regulatory compliance for a SME. The main elements for each of these critical aspects are summarised below.

Unloading livestock

- Ensure that your premise is in good working order to minimise risk of injury, pain and suffering. This includes non-slip flooring, no broken gates, and no protrusions.
- Observe livestock as they are unloaded to identify any sick or injured animals, and ensure animals are correctly identified (e.g. NLIS eartag).
- Receive the signed movement documentation e.g. NVD.
- Always move livestock calmly and quietly.
- Check that clean drinking water is available for all livestock and that they can easily access it.
- Animals identified as sick or injured must be segregated from any others.
- If the sick or injured animal requires treatment, the relevant treatment must be given as soon as possible by a qualified person with regard to veterinary advice, withholding periods, and/or the provision of feed and water.

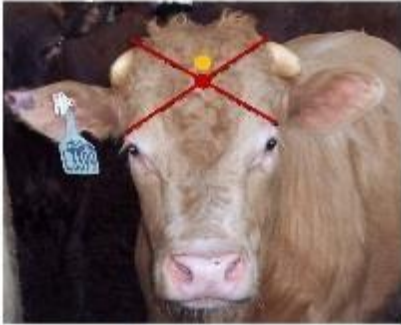
Stunning

- Always move livestock calmly and quietly into the restrainer.
- Electric goads should be used as little as possible – never use sticks, metal pipes, clubs or pointed objects.
- Animals that are unable to walk must be humanely destroyed – never force lame animals up into the restraint.
- Animals must be effectively restrained, without slipping, falling or losing balance.
- Ensure you apply the stunning equipment in the correct position.



For captive bolt

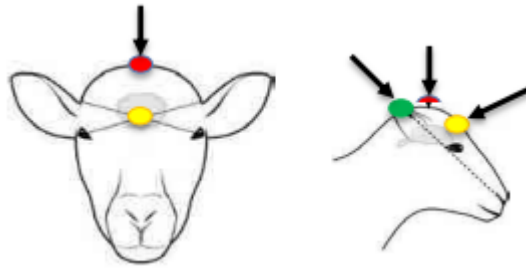
Cattle



© L. Hewitt

Position for a penetrating captive bolt (red dot) and non-penetrating captive bolt (yellow dot)

Small stock including sheep, lambs, goats, calves



Courtesy of AusMeat 2014

Polled sheep position for a penetrating captive bolt (red dot) and non-penetrating captive bolt (yellow dot)

Horned sheep position the stunner should be aimed at the angle of the lower jaw (green dot)

- Ensure an effective stun has been achieved for every animal. This can be achieved by checking for a 'corneal reflex', ensuring there is no signs of rhythmic breathing and/or head righting. Any sign of a blink, rhythmic breathing or head righting the animal must be immediately re- stunned.
- Ensure that stunning equipment and backup stunning equipment is maintained in good working order.

Sticking

- Before any cut is made, you must check for an effective stun.
- Ensure that your knives are clean and sharp before starting work.
- Ensure that the animal is 'stuck' immediately after stunning to ensure the animal doesn't regain consciousness. For non-penetrating (mushroom) the maximum delay to commence bleeding the animal is 30 seconds for all species.
- You must completely sever the blood vessels so that there is no chance of the animal regaining consciousness prior to brain death.
- If there is any sign of the animal regaining consciousness it must be restunned immediately. Insert links to relevant online materials.



Employee/trainee sign off

Trainees and existing employees that read and follow the information outlined in this SnapShot are adhering to the requirements of the Australian Standard.

I have read and understand the information contained in this document. I am committed to ensuring that I meet the requirements for my company

..... to achieve regulatory compliance with the Australian Standards.

Signed,

Employee/trainee

Employer

Further information

Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand, AS 4696:2007

Australian Standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption, CSIRO publishing, Collingwood, Vic.

Industry Animal Welfare Standards for Livestock Processing Establishments Preparing Meat for

Human Consumption (2009) – Australian Meat Industry Council. This can be downloaded free from www.amic.org.au

MINTRAC training and assessment materials for unloading, stunning and sticking. Contact

MINTRAC for more information mintrac@mintrac.com.au or 02 9819 6699.

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