



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Elliptical Road, Diliman
Quezon City 1100, Philippines

Department of Agriculture
DA-Administrative Order No. 18\
Series of 2008

**SUBJECT: RULES AND REGULATIONS ON HUMANE HANDLING IN THE
 SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS FOR FOOD**

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 8485, otherwise known as “The Animal Welfare Act of 1998” particularly section 6 (7) paragraph 2 and 3, provides that any mentioned cases, the killing of animals shall be done through humane procedures at all times, which shall mean the use of the most scientific methods available as may be determined and approved by the DA-committee on Animal Welfare;

WHEREAS, the DA AO No. 21B series of 1999 entitled Code of Conduct in the Slaughter of Animals for Food provides the basic guidelines in the humane handling and slaughter of food animals;

WHEREAS, the DA Committee on Animal Welfare created under RA 8485, is vested with powers to review and recommend the adoption of new procedures and technology pertaining to the humane handling and slaughter of food animals, and other procedures related to animal welfare concerns;

WHEREAS, the DA AO No. 6 series of 1975 provides the regulations in the proper handling of animals prior to slaughter recognizing that improper handling has adverse effect on the quality of meat;

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture, thru its attached agencies and pursuant to RA 9296 or the Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines and its IRR, DA AO No. 28 series of 2005 particularly Section 8, 1(a) and (b) thereof, wholesome, is vested with powers to formulate and issue, and implement jointly with appropriate local government units national policies, guidelines, rules and regulations and programs.

WHEREAS, the adoption of measures to ensure pure, wholesome, and safe supply of meat and meat products but not limited to the establishment of safety and quality standards of meat and meat products in consultation with the product standards setting agencies;

NOW THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR C. YAP, Secretary of Agriculture, considering the above cited premises, do hereby Issue this order prescribing the rule and regulations on humane handling and slaughter of animals for food, amending DA AO 21b. series of 1999 entitled Code of Conduct in the : A) Euthanasia for Pets/Companion Animals and Slaughter of Animal for Food.

Section 1. **SCOPE**

This order shall apply to all animal establishments such as slaughterhouses, poultry dressing plants, stockyards and holding areas which regularly handle animals for slaughter. It shall also apply

to all persons, companies or entities engaged in the handling and slaughter of animals for food and regulatory officers involved in the supervision and regulation of these activities.

Section 2. **DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS**

2.1 DEFINITIONS

As used in this Order, the following words, terms and phrases shall be construed to mean:

- 2.1.1 Animal Welfare Officer- a technical officer duly authorized or deputized by the Bureau of Animal industry to conduct activities related to animal welfare concerns in general.
- 2.1.2 Captive bolt stunner- a type of stunner that uses the principle of kinetic energy to render food animals unconscious prior to slaughter.
- 2.1.3 Emergency slaughter- the immediate slaughter due to injury such as but not limited to bone fracture, heat stroke, danger of suffocation, etc. to eliminate continue suffering of animal.
- 2.1.4 Food Animal Welfare Officer (FAWO)- a duly designated or appointed officer by the National Meat Inspection Service or the local government units tasked to perform functions in the implementation of the guidelines, rules and regulations related to welfare of food animals.
- 2.1.5 Free bullet- a projectile fired from any firearm; rifle or handgun
- 2.1.6 Holding pen- a required feature of a slaughter house to rest animals awaiting slaughter and were ante-mortem is conducted.
- 2.1.7 Humane slaughter- the slaughter of food animals that shall be done rapidly and away from public view and must occur with the least fear, anxiety, pain, and distress to the animal
- 2.1.8 Livestock- any domestic farm animal intended for food such as but not limited to horses, cattle, carabaos, sheep, goat and swine
- 2.1.9 Poultry – any domestic bird intended for food such as but not limited to chicken, turkey, geese, duck, pigeon, and quail including ostrich.
- 2.1.10 Religious slaughter – slaughter in accordance with the ritual requirement of a religious faith that prescribes a method of slaughter examples of which are halal, schechitah and kosher.
- 2.1.11 Restrainers – slaughter equipment used to secure and restrict the body movements of the animal prior to stunning.
- 2.1.12 Stunning – the act of putting an animal or group of animals insensible to pain before sticking and bleeding.

- a. Reversible – a type of stunning method were stunned animal may recover if not bleed
- b. Immediately, e.g. electrical, stunning, captive bolt non penetrative

2.1.13 Sticking/Bleeding – the severing of all major blood vessels leading to the brain to cause death.

2.1.14 Suspect – any animal presented for slaughter showing physical or physiological abnormalities that may lead the authority to pass or condemn until final judgment can be ascertain and therefore requiring further inspection and/or examination.

2.2 Acronyms

As used in this Order, the following acronyms shall mean:

2.2.1	BAI	-	Bureau of Animal Industry
2.2.2	DA-CAW	-	DA-Committee on Animal Welfare
2.2.3	DA	-	Department of Agriculture
2.2.4	LGU	-	Local Government Unit
2.2.5	NGO	-	Non Government Organization
2.2.6	NMIS	-	National Meat Inspection Service
2.2.7	PCMVLP	-	Provincial City and Municipal Veterinarians League the Philippines
2.2.8	PCSP	-	Philippine College of Swine Practitioners
2.2.9	PVO	-	Provincial Veterinary Office
2.2.10	PCPP	-	Philippine College of Poultry Practitioners
2.2.11	PCVPH	-	Philippine College of Veterinary Public Health

Section 3. **SLAUGHTERHOUSE FACILITIES FOR THE HUMANE HANDLING OF FOOD ANIMALS**

All meat establishments handling food animals for slaughter shall have the required facilities for humane handling.

- 3.1 Holding pens are necessary facilities in the establishment of slaughterhouses. The animal pens shall be near the slaughter hall but should not be located within.
- 3.2 The required space for holding large animal is 2.23m²/head and for small animal like hogs, it is 0.6 m²/head. However, for culled sows and boars, the space requirement is 1.0m²/head.
- 3.3 Holding pens should be roofed, properly drained and with non-slip floors.
- 3.4 Separation of different classes and types of slaughter animals as appropriate is required to

avoid injury to one another. Range animals, especially if horned, may require further segregation.

- 3.5 Provision for adequate ventilation is necessary. In case of limited space where free flow of air is not possible, industrial fans and blowers shall utilized.
- 3.6 Clean and adequate drinking water must be provided freely to slaughter animals during the holding period.
- 3.7 To ensure smooth traffic flow and to lessen stress and excitement during the moving of animals, a one-way system is followed where animals enter at one end and leave at the opposite end.
- 3.8 Other facilities such as ramps, artificial light, weighing scales and showers must be so installed so that animals do not get excited with their use.
- 3.9 Feeding troughs or boxes must be available and feeds must also be provided to animals which are not slaughtered within 12 hours after arrival in the slaughterhouse.
- 3.10 Adequate water for cleaning must also be provided to ensure that cleanliness of pens are maintained.
- 3.11 Lighting should be strategically located as to encourage animals to move forward.
- 3.12 The chutes and other animal passageways shall be of a single file chute shall be solid to avoid visual distraction from the outside.
- 3.13 All slaughterhouses shall be equipped with hog restrainers and large animal knocking box for appropriate restraint of animals during stunning.

Section 4. **GENERAL PROVISIONS IN THE HANDLING OF SLAUGHTER ANIMALS**

The meat establishment operator is responsible in ensuring the proper handling of slaughter animals and the reporting of such, within the premises of the establishment.

- 4.1 Slaughter animals must be loaded, unloaded and moved easily with minimal risk of injury to both animals and handler. The moving of animals must be under the supervision of a competent animal handler.

- 4.2 Meat establishment personnel handling livestock shall be regularly monitored by a Food Animal Welfare Officer to ensure that the handling of livestock is done humanely.
- 4.3 Animals of different species as well as animals of same species likely to cause injury to one another shall be physically separated.
- 4.4 The unloading and moving of slaughter animals shall be achieved with minimum stress or excitement to the animals
- 4.5 The natural following behavior of animals shall be utilized to advantage as much as possible.
- 4.6 The instruments allowed for moving animals are as follows:
 - 4.6.1 canvass, soft plastic or leather flappers
 - 4.6.2 soft polythene pipes or rattles
 - 4.6.3 plastic brush
 - 4.6.4 pig boards which shall be used for blocking only
- 4.7 The instruments that are prohibited for moving animals shall include:
 - 4.7.1 bamboo clubs, sticks-canes or wood
 - 4.7.2 electric pod
 - 4.7.3 hard plastic hose
 - 4.7.4 steel brush
 - 4.7.5 ropes and whips
 - 4.7.6 metal pipes
 - 4.7.7 any sharp or pointed object
- 4.8 Slaughter animals within the meat establishment premises shall not be subjected to the following inhumane acts:
 - 4.8.1 unnecessary, irritating noises
 - 4.8.2 kioking
 - 4.8.3 Ear and tail twisting
 - 4.8.4 Ear, genital and anal poking
 - 4.8.5 hot water splashing
 - 4.8.6 knife, razor or blade incision to mark skin; lifting
 - 4.8.7 drenching or forced oral administration of water
- 4.9 Gates shall not be used as an implement for forcing the animal along the chutes or into the knocking box.
- 4.10 Animals with extremely wide horns or those that cannot move freely shall not be introduced into the chute.

Section 5. **HANDLING OF INJURED, DISABLED OR SUSPECT ANIMALS**

When a slaughter animal is injured, disabled or is a suspect and is unable to walk from a transport vehicle, it shall be handled as follows:

- 5.1 The animal shall be removed from the transport vehicle as humanely as possible under the supervision of a competent handler.
- 5.2 An authorized officer of the competent meat inspection authority shall inspect and declare judgment on the animal's eligibility for emergency slaughter. If eligible and the injury or disability causes severe suffering to the animal, slaughter shall be done without available delay.
- 5.3 Humane means of conveyance shall be made available to transport of conveyance shall be made available to transport the animal to the sticking area. However, upon the directive of the inspector, sticking and bleeding of the animal may be done immediately in the conveyance prior to unloading if the animal is unable to walk and in severe pain and proper transport to sticking area is not immediately available.

Section 6. **HANDLING OF ESCAPED ANIMALS**

The establishments operator shall ensure that animals that escape during the unloading or from holding pens shall be handled humanely.

- 6.1 Escaped animals shall be retrieved by the use of humane handling methods.
- 6.2 Escaped animals shall be treated as emergency slaughter case if retrieval may post gender to human beings. In such cases, free bullet or firearm may be used to restrain animal.
- 6.3 The escaped animal, if injured during the retrieval, shall be slaughtered humanely. The use of a mechanical stunner such as captive bolt is recommended to render it insensible to further pain brought about by the injury as well as prior to the sticking and bleeding.
- 6.4 Escaped animals that are retrieved without being injured shall be turned to the holding pen and shall be slaughtered by with the rest.

Section 7. **STUNNING**

All slaughter animals that are to be slaughtered shall be stunned effectively prior to sticking and bleeding.

- 7.1 Restraint of animals to be stunned
 - 7.1.1 Slaughtered animals shall be properly restrained at the time of stunning.
 - 7.1.2 Restrainers shall not hold animals during breaks in slaughter operation.
 - 7.1.3 Restrainers shall be designed to effectively restrain the intended animal type.

7.1.4 Group stunning is allowed when the stunning to sticking interval (SSI) is always achieved. The pen shall be of appropriate size that provides adequate restraint of animal so as to ensure an effective stunning operation.

7.1.5 No additional step in the restraining, stunning, sticking and bleeding procedure which may prolong the suffering of the animal shall be performed.

7.2 Stunning equipment

7.2.1 Stunning shall be performed with the use of a device which effectively renders the animal insensible to pain.

7.2.2 Recommended devices are electric, mechanical or controlled atmosphere stunners.

7.2.3 The design and operational features of the device shall be suitable to the size, weight range and physical features of the animal being stunned.

7.2.4 Controls for devices needing adjustments corresponding to the requirements of the animal being stunned must be conveniently located for easy access of the operator.

7.2.5 The national and local licensing requirements for the operation of the devices, if any, must be complied with by the establishment operator.

7.2.6 For establishments handling large livestock, a suitable firearm shall be made available and accessible to authorized personnel for emergency stunning of livestock outside working hours.

7.2.7 Stunning equipment shall be cleaned daily and maintained regularly to ensure effective functionality during slaughter operation.

7.3 Animals to be stunned

7.3.1 All animals presented for slaughter shall be effectively stunned prior to sticking and bleeding.

7.3.2 The NMIS as the sole national controlling authority shall approve slaughter without prior stunning subject to conditions or restrictions. Any organization who wishes to be exempted from this regulation shall formally apply for the exemption and the NMIS shall issue the necessary authorization to provide guidance to the establishment operator and personnel as well as to the meat control officers and meat Inspectors and animal welfare officer tasked to supervise the establishment.

7.3.3 Where irreversible stunning is used, as large animals may be shackled and hoisted prior to sticking.

7.3.4 Where irreversible stunning used as in small livestock, shackling and hoisting is permitted only when the SSI is always achieved.

7.4 Stunning to Sticking Interval (SSI)

Stunning to sticking Interval is the time from when the animal was stunned up to when it is stuck or bled.

7.4.1 The maximum SSI shall appropriate to the method of stunning, and the species of animal.

7.4.2 The following SSI are

7.4.3 Recommended to be the maximum acceptable time for reversibility stunned animals,

Species	SSI (max.)
Pigs, sheep, goats, lambs	15 seconds
Calves	10 seconds
Cattle, Carabao	
a. non-penetrative mushroom head which does not penetrate the cranial cavity	30 seconds
b. electrical	10 seconds
Poultry (electrical stunning)	10 seconds
Ostrich	60 seconds
Rabbit	15 seconds
Turkey	15 seconds

7.5 Recommended electric Currents for stunning food animals

In order to stun animal with electricity, it is necessary to pass sufficient current through the brain or through the brain and heart respectively.

The recommended current level for head-only stunning and head-to-body stunning is as follows;

Species	Head-only	Head-to-body
(1) cattle	1.2 amperes	1.51 Amps
(2) calves	1.0A	1.0A
(3) sheep/goat	1.0A	1.0A
(4) lambs/kids	0.6A	0.6 A
(5) pigs	1.3A	1.3A

7.6 Stunning Procedures

7.6.1 Stunning and sticking shall proceed in a manner that ensures that the animal does not regain consciousness.

7.6.2 Where reversible stunning is used the rate of stunning shall be commensurate with the rate of which animals are bled.

7.6.3 A re-stunning procedure shall be done immediately after an ineffective application. When an animal recovers from a stun, the reason shall be identified and steps taken to prevent recurrence.

7.6.4 When an animal escapes at that time of or after stunning the animal shall be retrieved immediately and then stunned and slaughter.

- 7.6.5 Electrically live electrodes of electric equipment shall not be used for driving, catching or immobilization of an animal prior to stunning.
- 7.6.6 Sticking and bleeding must be performed as soon as possible after stunning and be carried out in such a way as to bring out rapid, profuse and complete bleeding. In any event the bleeding must be carried out before the animal regains consciousness. For irreversibly stunned large animals, shackling shall be carried out prior to sticking and bleeding.
- 7.6.7 All animals which have been stunned must be bled by incising at least one of the carotid arteries or the vessels from which they arise.
- 7.6.8 After incision of the blood vessels, no further dressing procedures nor any electrical stimulation may be performed on the animals before the bleeding has ended.
- 7.6.9 Where one person is responsible for the stunning, shackling hoisting and bleeding of animals that person must carry out those operations consecutively on one animal before carrying them out on another animal.
- 7.6.10 In the case of poultry, manual back-up for slitting must be available where poultry are bled by means of automatic neck cutters so as to ensure humane procedures in cases of breakdown.

7.7 Stunning Personnel

- 7.7.1 The establishment shall assign a personnel specifically tasked to operate the stunning device.
- 7.7.2 The stunning device operator shall have the expertise and necessary training to ensure effective stunning with minimum excitement or stress and prevent stunning of the animal. He must also be informed on the effect of improper stunning on meat quality.
- 7.7.3 The operator must be familiar with the equipment to avoid injury to himself and other slaughter personnel.
- 7.7.4 The operator shall use the device in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications for effective stunning.

Section 8. **PROHIBITED ACTS**

No person, firm or corporation either by himself or during the process of handling or conduct of food animals shall:

- 8.1 Use sharp or pointed instruments such as but not limited to blade or knife, to mark livestock for the purpose of identification
- 8.2 Forcibly administer or introduce water and/or fluids orally to food animals as provided DA no. 15 series of 2006, Prohibiting the "Flooding" of food Animals in Animal Facilities an Abattoir.

8.3 Perform or proceed with sticking and bleeding without prior stunning in the process of slaughter.

Section 9. **PENAL PROVISIONS**

Any person, corporation or entity who violates any of the provisions of this Order shall, upon conviction by final judgment, be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) months no more than two (2) years or a fine of not less than One Thousand Pesos (P 1,000.00) no more than Five Thousand Pesos (P 5,000.00), or both at the discretion of the Court. This is in addition to administrative sanctions such as delisting, cancellation of license of operator and the revocation of accreditation of the establishment.

If the violation is committed by an alien, he or she shall be immediately deported after service of sentence without any further proceedings.

Section 10. **NON-EXCLUSIVITY**

All existing rules and regulations, policies, procedures and standards not inconsistent with this Oder shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 11. **CLAUSE**

All existing administrative orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Order are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 12. **SEPARABILITY CLAUSE**

If any portion of this Oder is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other portions thereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 13. **EFFECTIVITY**

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation, whichever comes first.


ARTHUR C. YAP
Secretary