



Environment and Rural Affairs Department  
Agriculture Group

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To: Slaughterhouse & Abattoir Operators, Processing Plants, Transporters, Producers, Welfare Organisations, Religious Organisations, Racial & Equality Groups, Auctioneers & Markets, Local Authorities, Chief Constables, Animal Health Offices, Veterinary & Scientific Interests Groups, Consumer Groups

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Your ref:  
Our ref:

8 April 2004

Dear Sir/Madam

**THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL (FAWC) REPORT ON THE WELFARE OF FARMED ANIMALS AT SLAUGHTER (RED – MEAT ANIMALS) – DRAFT SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE RESPONSE**

I am writing to invite your comments on the enclosed consultation document “Draft Response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) Report on the Welfare of Animals at Slaughter (Red – Meat Animals)”.

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (the UK and devolved Government’s independent advisory body on animal welfare matters) published a report on the welfare of red meat animals at slaughter and killing on 10 June 2003. The Scottish Executive has now completed the process of reviewing and considering the report and a copy of our draft response is enclosed with this letter. We would be grateful to receive your comments.

The FAWC have produced a well researched evidence based report which details 94 recommendations aimed at improving the welfare of farmed animals at the time of slaughter. While the majority of the recommendations may only be of interest to the industry, focussing mainly on the design and operation of slaughterhouses, some of the recommendations in the FAWC report relate to the issue of slaughter without pre-stunning of animals (religious slaughter) which is permitted under EU and domestic legislation. It is expected that the consultation will therefore be of particular interest to religious, welfare, veterinary and consumer groups.

Our proposals in response to the report, represent a real improvement in the welfare of animals at slaughter. However, slaughter without pre-stunning is permitted for religious reasons by domestic and importantly, EU legislation. This is because of the deeply held beliefs of Moslem and Jewish communities in Scotland, the UK and throughout Europe. For this reason we do not seek to ban the production of halal or kosher meat, as that is a matter for agreement within the European Union.

*However, your thoughts on our response to recommendation 62 on post-cut stunning are particularly welcome. How could any action on this be taken forward and, if relevant, what the maximum interval should be between cut and stun.*

## Responding to this consultation paper

We are inviting written responses to this consultation paper by **Friday 2 July 2004**. Please send your response to:

Ann Sunderland  
SEERAD: Animal Health & Welfare Division  
Scottish Executive  
Room 350  
Pentland House  
47 Robb's Loan  
Edinburgh  
EH14 1TY

If you have any queries contact Patsy Gray on 0131 244 6611.

We would be grateful if you could clearly indicate in your response which questions or parts of the consultation paper you are responding to (using the consultation questionnaire if appropriate) as this will aid our analysis of the responses received.

This consultation, and all other SE consultation exercises, can be viewed online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations>. You can telephone Freephone 0800 77 1234 to find out where your nearest public internet access point is.

The Scottish Executive now has an email alert system for [SE consultations \(SEconsult\)](#). This system allows stakeholder individuals and organisations to register and receive a weekly email containing details of all new [SE consultations](#) (including web links). [SEconsult](#) complements, but in no way replaces SE distribution lists, and is designed to allow stakeholders to keep up to date with all [SE consultations](#) activity, and therefore be alerted at the earliest opportunity to those of most interest. We would encourage you to register.

### Access to consultation responses

We will make all responses available to the public in the Scottish Executive Library by 2 August, unless confidentiality is requested. All responses not marked confidential will be checked for any potentially defamatory material before being logged in the library or placed on the website.

### Other information

If you are aware of any organisations or individuals who might be interested in seeing and commenting on the draft response document but who have not received it, please contact Patsy Gray on 0131 244 6611, who will arrange for a copy to be sent to them. If you have any questions relating to this consultation exercise, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

**Ann Sunderland**  
Animal Health & Welfare Division



## B. RESPONDEE INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the details below and attach it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately:

Name:

Postal Address:

Consultation title:

1. Are you responding as: (please tick one box)

- (a) an individual  (go to 2a/b)  
(b) **on behalf of** a group or organisation  (go to 2c)

### 2a. INDIVIDUALS:

Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in SE library and/or on SE website)?

- Yes (go to 2b below)   
No, not at all

2b. Where **confidentiality is not requested**, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes)

- Yes, make my response, name and address all available   
Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address   
Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

### 2c ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

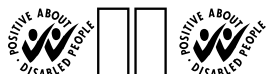
Your name and address as respondents **will be** made available to the public (in the SE library and/or on SE website). Are you content for your response to be made available also?

- Yes   
No

## SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

3. We will share your response internally with other SE policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

- Yes   
No



## The Scottish Executive Consultation Process

Consultation is an essential and important aspect of Scottish Executive working methods. Given the wide-ranging areas of work of the Scottish Executive, there are many varied types of consultation. However, in general Scottish Executive consultation exercises aim to provide opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on a proposed area of work to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body. Consultation exercises may involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as public meetings, focus groups or questionnaire exercises.

Typically, Scottish Executive Consultations involve a written paper inviting answers to specific questions or more general views about the material presented. Written papers are distributed to organisations and individuals with an interest in the area of consultation, and they are also placed on the Scottish Executive web site enabling a wider audience to access the paper and submit their responses<sup>1</sup>. Copies of all the responses received to consultation exercises (except those where the individual or organisation requested confidentiality) are placed in the Scottish Executive library at Saughton House, Edinburgh (K Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD, telephone 0131 244 4552).

The views and suggestions detailed in consultation responses are analysed and used as part of the decision making process. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

If you have any comment about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to: Ann Sunderland at the address above or by email to: [ann.sunderland@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:ann.sunderland@scotland.gov.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations>

# **SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL (FAWC) REPORT ON THE WELFARE OF FARMED ANIMALS AT SLAUGHTER OR KILLING - PART 1: RED MEAT ANIMALS**

## **DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE**

### **Recommendation 1 (Para 25):**

**Efficient scheduling procedures should be implemented by slaughterhouse operators so that animals do not have to wait to be unloaded.**

Response: Accept. Efficient scheduling procedures provided benefits for producers, transporters and processors. In addition there are obvious animal welfare benefits. There is the added advantage that they reduce the number of vehicles waiting to use the cleaning and disinfection facilities. However, it is the responsibility of the producer, the transport operator and the plant operator to organise these scheduling procedures. Guidance on scheduling will be provided in the Scottish Executive code of practice. It has to be recognised that on occasion factors outside the control of the transport or plant operator (traffic accident delaying arrival, major breakdown of equipment, etc) result in a backlog of vehicles waiting to enter the plant. In this situation it is the responsibility of the transport operators to ensure that they comply with all the requirements of the relevant legislation.

### **Recommendation 2 (Para 26):**

**If animals' waiting time on lorries regularly exceeds 30 minutes, it is incumbent on the OVS to take enforcement action.**

Response: Do not accept. The OVS does not supervise all unloading and the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) is concerned that this proposed change could lead to 'hasty' unloading that would compromise animal welfare. However, when OVSs are alerted to problems over waiting times, they will be able to give advice on scheduling (see above).

The MHS take enforcement action to protect animal welfare within the requirements of the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995' (WASK) and notify the Local Authorities in cases of non-compliance with the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997 (WATO). Additional legislation would be required to enforce the proposed new time limit. Action is already taken where animals are exposed to avoidable excitement, pain or suffering, or where they need protection from adverse weather, etc.

### **Recommendation 3 (Para 31):**

**Government should make it a legal requirement that slaughterhouses provide facilities to enable animals to exit lorries on the level, in all but low throughput slaughterhouses.**

Response: Accept. Many slaughterhouses already have unloading bays with level surfaces. Those that do not will be required to take steps to provide level unloading bays. This recommendation will require changes to legislation and need to be phased in to allow operators time to make the necessary structural alterations.

**Recommendation 4 (Para 32):**

**Detailed guidance should be produced by Government relating to design of unloading bays, as well as unloading points for farm trailers. This information should be widely distributed to all slaughter premises.**

Response: Do not accept. Such information is already available from the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC) who have standard drawings and construction details. The Code of Practice for red meat slaughterhouses will direct operators to relevant sources of information.

**Recommendation 5 (Para 36):**

**A designated and competent member of staff who has been trained in animal welfare, must be required by law to be present throughout unloading and their duties should be outlined in a code of practice.**

Response: Partially accept. The Scottish Executive will consider this recommendation further. The training should be by a designated training provider or provided in-house. The requirement that a member of staff trained in animal welfare should be present every time animals are unloaded may not be practicable. Lorries sometimes arrive out of hours as a result of delays during the journey where a trained member of staff is not available. EU proposals for a new Council Regulation on the protection of animals during transport include the provision for trained, competent operators to be present throughout the journey, including at unloading.

**Recommendation 6 (Para 37):**

**The MHS must ensure that its staff receives training and regular updating on legislation relating to welfare during transport, and there should be greater co-operation with Local Authorities on transport issues.**

Response: Accept. The MHS will approach LACORS to discuss improving co-operation with Local Authorities and agreeing a standardised approach throughout GB. Regional Veterinary Advisors (RVAs) and Principal OVSs (POVSs) regularly attend regional animal welfare meetings with Local Authorities to discuss these issues.

The OVS designation course provides an understanding of WATO and OVSs are updated through the Operations Manual. In addition, OVS contracts require the contractor to develop a training plan according to the individual needs of each OVS.

**Recommendation 7 (Para 38):**

**Local Authority enforcement officers should undertake regular checks on livestock transporters at slaughterhouses.**

Response: Partially accept. There will be a need to ensure that there is no duplication of effort between the Local Authority enforcement officers and the plant OVS.

Transport checks at slaughterhouses are currently carried out by some Local Authorities. A pilot Framework Agreement on delivery of services is being developed in England & Wales to improve consistency of service delivery and standards. This will be reviewed and considered for use in Scotland.

**Recommendation 8 (Para 42):**

**The slaughterhouse operator must ensure that isolation pens are kept ready for their intended use.**

Response: Accept. It is a requirement of WASK that sick or disabled animals are kept apart from healthy animals. It will be re-emphasised in the MHS manual that the OVS checks that the operator has an isolation pen ready for use.

**Recommendation 9 (Para 43):**

**The slaughterhouse operator must ensure that procedures for emergency slaughter, and the telephone number of an out of hours duty slaughterman and other emergency contacts, are clearly displayed at the unloading point so that any animal in obvious pain or distress on arrival at the slaughterhouse can be slaughtered or killed immediately.**

Response: Accept. Plant operators will be asked to ensure that this information and all necessary equipment are available at the unloading point. However, when there is the need to recall the slaughterman to the slaughterhouse this will inevitably mean that the animal cannot be slaughtered or killed immediately.

**Recommendation 10 (Para 47):**

**Lairage times optimal for animal welfare, along with needs for water feed and space over time, for each species should be included in Government's code of practice.**

Response: Accept. The Scottish Executive will investigate the availability of such information with a view to including it in the Code of Practice. If this information is not available, the UK Government will consider the possibility of commissioning the necessary research. However, it is not entirely clear what is intended by 'lairage times optimal for animal welfare'. This may depend on a number of factors, e.g. journey time to abattoir, type of transport, weather conditions, etc, and may vary for animals within a particular species as well as between species, but in practice the shortest time possible would, in most cases, be the optimal time. Operators will need to take this into account when scheduling deliveries.

**Recommendation 11 (Para 51):**

**The Food Standards Agency should ensure that the approval process for new premises, currently undertaken as a means of ensuring compliance with meat hygiene requirements, should include animal welfare objectives.**

Response: Accept. The licensing process for slaughterhouses carried out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) already takes account of animal welfare objectives. Regulation 4(2)(a)(i) of the Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 as amended, provides that the requirements of Parts I and II of Schedule 2 to WASK must be complied with before a licence is granted.

**Recommendation 12 (Para 52):**

**The Food Standards Agency should ensure that all slaughterhouses undergo a formal review of their structural approval every five years to ensure animal welfare requirements are met.**

Response: Do not accept. The FSA considers that the full time presence of MHS officials at licensed slaughterhouses already provides a more frequent opportunity than is being recommended to review the structural approval and ensure that animal welfare assessments are met. The obligations on MHS staff to monitor welfare standards are clearly set out in their Operations Manual. Where requirements under Parts I and II of Schedule 2 of WASK are not being met, the FSA has powers to revoke the premises' licence. Audit visits by the Veterinary Meat Hygiene Advisers (VMHA) also take structural issues into account.

**Recommendation 13 (Para 55):**

**When designing new slaughterhouses or re-designing existing ones, operators must ensure compliance with the legal requirement that the place of slaughter or killing should be sited so as to minimise the handling of the animal.**

Response: Accept. It is to the advantage of the slaughterhouse operator to minimise handling and reduce stress on the animal as this not only ensures the slaughter operation runs smoothly, but also has meat quality advantages. The Scottish Executive will remind operators in the code of practice of the legal requirement to minimise the handling of animals in slaughterhouses.

**Recommendation 14 (Para 59):**

**Government should issue guidance to slaughterhouses on suitable species-specific solutions for non-slip flooring. More evaluation is needed of new materials which might provide a non-slip but hygienic, easy clean surface.**

Response: Partially accept. While the use of non-slip floors is to be welcomed, many common areas within a slaughterhouse will be used by more than one species. In this situation the issue of guidance on species-specific non-slip flooring may not be the best solution. What may be required is the best compromise material for a variety of species. It is true that some materials sold as providing a non-slip surface have proved to be not very hard wearing, and a damaged surface can prove to be no better, and possibly even worse, than a concrete floor. The recommendation that we should evaluate new materials for their non-slip and hygienic, easy to clean characteristics will be considered in the context of existing research results before being considered for inclusion in Defra's research programme. Any research work undertaken should be linked with investigations into suitable non-slip floors for use on-farm and in markets.

**Recommendation 15 (Para 60):**

**Slaughterhouse operators and the MHS should implement a scoring system of animals' slips and falls as a means of regularly assessing floor conditions, design problems and standards of handling in their slaughterhouse.**

Response: Partially accept. In the experience of the MHS, scoring systems are subjective, controversial and difficult to apply. It is difficult to assess whether the condition of the floor, the design of the slaughterhouse or the handling of the animal made the major contribution to the slip or fall. Action should be taken based on objective evidence without the need to apply a score. However, an assessment by MHS and competent slaughterhouse staff of where/when animals slip and fall should be made so that action can be taken to remedy the problem.

**Recommendation 16 (Para 67):**

**The slaughterhouse operator should monitor levels of vocalisation within the handling system and, where they are beyond acceptable limits, should identify the cause of the problem and rectify it (see Appendix D).**

Response: Accept. It is accepted that the level of vocalisation is an indicator of possible problems with the handling systems in slaughterhouses. However, vocalisation levels are particular to each slaughterhouse and species. Therefore, it is incumbent on the operator to identify areas in the handling system with higher than expected levels of vocalisation for the species being processed. It will then be the responsibility of operators to take action to rectify any problem.

**Recommendation 17 (Para 68):**

**Government should fund research on noise in slaughterhouses and its effects on the welfare of livestock. This should lead to maximum noise levels and exposure limits being set for animals. This should be supported by guidance from Government for slaughterhouse operators on practical steps to baffle or reduce noise.**

Response: Do not accept. We would encourage operators to take steps to reduce noise levels within the lairage and handling systems. The Scottish Executive will issue guidance on steps to baffle or reduce noise levels in its code of practice.

**Recommendation 18 (Para 71):**

**Government should provide specialist advice on lairage ventilation. In addition, there should be clear guidance on limits for temperature, ammonia, concentration and humidity for slaughterhouse lairages.**

Response: Partially accept. The Scottish Executive will investigate the availability of data on lairage ventilation with a view to providing advice in the code of practice. Further research into limits for temperature, humidity and ammonia levels may be required but this would be contained within Defra's R&D programme. A decision on whether further research is required will take into account the current availability of data. Lairage times will also need to be taken into account when assessing the adequacy of ventilation systems. Ammonia levels that are acceptable in health and safety terms for lairage workers should not be so high as to cause problems for animals that are in the lairage for relatively short periods.

**Recommendation 19 (Para 76):**

**Government should provide advice on optimum schedules for feeding and watering prior to slaughter, taking into account the travelling and marketing time animals may have undergone.**

Response: Partially accept. The Scottish Executive will consider the issue of optimum feeding and watering schedules. However, as WASK requires that drinking water should be available from appropriate facilities to all animals kept in the lairage at all times it is not clear that scheduling is the problem. It would appear from the report that it may be the number of drinking points available in each pen that is at issue. If the stocking rate in an individual pen is such that not all animals have access to water this is an enforcement matter for the OVS (see below). The provision of advice on feeding schedules is far more complex as it will depend upon information being available on when and where the animal was last fed, journey times, length of stay in market (if relevant), etc.

**Recommendation 20 (Para 77):**

**The MHS should remind slaughterhouse operators of the legal requirement to make water available to all animals at all times in the lairage and ensure that this is enforced.**

Response: Accept. The MHS actively enforce this provision in licensed slaughterhouses, but believes it would be helpful to have a legal notice restricting the use of individual pens without suitable water provision for the type of stock being held. The Scottish Executive in tandem with Defra will investigate the possibility of introducing such legal notices.

**Recommendation 21 (Para 79):**

**Government should issue guidance on minimum space allowances based on existing knowledge. These should be published as a matter of urgency. Research should be conducted to establish optimum stocking densities for all species applied across a range of circumstances.**

Response: Do not accept. We will investigate the availability of data on minimum space allowances. Once the availability of such data has been established, we will consider whether further research is required.

**Recommendation 22 (Para 82):**

**Government should issue guidance to operators on the effects of mixing of livestock in slaughterhouses.**

**And**

**Recommendation 23 (Para 83):**

**Slaughterhouse operators should ensure that their lairage design reflects the need to avoid mixing unfamiliar groups of either cattle or pigs.**

Response: Accept. The Scottish Executive will issue guidance in the code of practice on the effects of mixing unfamiliar groups of cattle or pigs in the lairage. Operators will be advised when constructing new slaughterhouses, or modifying existing lairages and that the mixing of unfamiliar groups of animals should be avoided. However, it must be recognised that there may be occasions when, for example, a small number of animals are delivered to the slaughterhouse, there may be no alternative to lairaging them in a pen with another group of animals.

**Recommendation 24 (Para 85):**

**Government should issue guidance on showering regimes for pigs in slaughterhouse lairages in its code of practice.**

Response: Accept. Guidance will be included in the code of practice.

**Recommendation 25 (Para 89):**

**Government must ensure that field lairages contiguous to slaughterhouses are defined as being within the curtilage of the premises.**

Response: Do not accept. All animals intended for human consumption must undergo ante-mortem inspection within 24 hours of arrival at slaughterhouse premises, including welfare checks. If the welfare of any animal causes concern, including those coming from fields owned/ leased by the slaughterhouse operator, the MHS takes appropriate action.

The Food Standards Agency is responsible for the licensing of slaughterhouse premises under the Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995. In appropriate circumstances, a field contiguous to a slaughterhouse and used for lairaging may be included within the boundary of the licensed premises. However the FSA does not wish to encourage the use of field lairages, for a number of reasons:

- The frequent movement of stock from several sources in and out of field lairages can lead to a build-up of food-borne pathogens in an environment that cannot be cleansed and disinfected. Field lairages can lead to higher animal density. It is also more likely that the hides of animals can more easily become dirty. Both aspects increase the risk of contamination of meat during subsequent slaughter. More generally, lairage of animals in fields is not compatible with the Clean Livestock Policy that sets clearly defined standards for cleanliness of sheep and cattle presented for slaughter for human consumption.
- It could present problems for slaughterhouse operators since, under animal health rules, animals must be slaughtered within 48 hours of arriving in the lairage. Where operators use fields to hold animals awaiting slaughter, this is usually to provide longer holding periods than allowed under the Meat Hygiene Regulations.
- It would present practical enforcement problems for the Meat Hygiene Service, as any animals intended for human consumption must undergo ante-mortem inspection within 24 hours after arrival at the premises and not more than 24 hours before slaughter. This could mean inspections have to be carried out after dark or in inclement conditions and may have to be repeated before slaughter.

However, while field lairages continue to be used we will discuss with the MHS how field lairages contiguous to the slaughterhouse could be monitored to ensure that animal welfare is maintained without contravention of the law.

**Recommendation 26 (Para 90):**

**Government should issue guidance on the proper management of field lairages to prevent the risk of disease build up, preserve good conditions underfoot and maintain adequate pasture.**

Response: Accept. We will, in consultation with interested parties, prepare guidance for the proper management of field lairages where these exist contiguous to the slaughterhouse.

## **HANDLING OF ANIMALS PRIOR TO STUNNING**

**Recommendation 27 (Para 95):**

**Government and the industry should establish a design resource, based on the best available data from research and practice, for animal handling systems from unloading up to the point of slaughter.**

Response: Do not accept. We cannot commit to funding the establishment and maintenance of a design resource facility. We will, however, investigate with industry the availability of data and inform operators on where such design data may be obtained.

**Recommendation 28 (Para 97):**

**Government should ensure that any future introduction to Great Britain of methods of animal identification take account of the welfare implications of animal handling in slaughterhouses.**

Response: Partially accept. The requirements for animal identification in slaughterhouses will be one of the requirements taken into account when any new methods of animal identification are introduced. It is anticipated that new methods of electronic identification will be more animal welfare friendly when used in conjunction with electronic readers in slaughterhouses. However, animal identification rules are now a matter of EU competence and the type of identification, equipment for recording identification, etc., will need to meet the varied needs of farmers, markets, transporters and processors.

**Recommendation 29 (Para 102):**

**Slaughterhouse operators should actively discourage presentation of dirty livestock for slaughter and should not see the provision of a routine cleaning service as a routine part of their operation. If a producer persistently presents dirty animals for slaughter the OVS should instigate an investigation through the SVS.**

Response: Partially accept. The MHS already encourage operators to accept only clean animals through their clean livestock policy. However, it is for the slaughterhouse operator to decide whether to accept a dirty animal and provide a cleaning service.

**Recommendation 30 (Para 103):**

**Government should issue guidance to slaughterhouse operators and enforcement officers with regard to acceptable equipment and procedures for cleaning of animals.**

And

**Recommendation 31 (Para 104):**

**Where clipping and shearing has to be carried out at the slaughterhouse, facilities should be suitable for the purpose and the procedure carried out by trained, competent operators.**

And

**Recommendation 32 (Para 105):**

**Where washing has to be undertaken at the slaughterhouse we recommend that water pressure and temperature limits are set and if any animal shows obvious signs of distress or requires unreasonable levels of restraint, pressure washing should be ceased immediately.**

Response: Accept. The Scottish Executive will seek advice on acceptable equipment and procedures for cleaning animals with a view to publishing guidance in the code of practice.

Guidance will be issued to OVSs in red meat slaughterhouses on clipping and shearing procedure. The need to establish specific training courses will be investigated. Where washing is undertaken the MHS are already required to act if any animal is subject to avoidable excitement, pain or suffering. The recommendation requires the water pressure and temperature limits to be set so guidance will be required for best practice. We will seek advice on appropriate pressure and temperature limits by species and issue guidance in the code of practice.

**Recommendation 33 (Para 108):**

**Electric goads should only be used in exceptional circumstances.**

Response: Accept. Guidance on the use of electric goads will be included in the code of practice provided their use in slaughterhouses is not banned, as currently proposed in the new draft EU Council Regulation on the protection of animals during transport. The OVS already takes action if there is inappropriate use of electric goads.

**Recommendation 34 (Para 109):**

**The slaughterhouse operator should monitor levels of goading within the handling system and, where they are beyond acceptable limits, should identify the cause of the problem and rectify it (see Appendix D).**

Response: Accept. We will recommend that slaughterhouse operators adopt this recommendation provided the use of electric goads is not banned.

**Recommendation 35 (Para 113):**

**FAWC believes that horned cattle, or recently de-horned cattle with unhealed wounds, should not be presented for slaughter, with the exception of defined specialised breeds of cattle for which specific arrangements should be made.**

Response: Accept in principle. We will consult with the farming industry, transport operators, slaughterhouse operators and other interested parties on this proposal before issuing guidance.

**Recommendation 36 (Para 118):**

**Slaughterhouse operators must ensure that cattle are not allowed to enter the handling system unless staff are ready to stun and slaughter immediately.**

Response: Accept: It is the responsibility of the management of the slaughterhouse, and in particular of the lairage, to ensure that the animals are not held in the handling system if staff are not ready to stun and slaughter. Good design of the lairage will help to reduce problems. Instructions will be issued to OVSs to remind operators that animals should not be placed in the handling system until the slaughter team is ready to stun and slaughter.

**Recommendation 37 (Para 119):**

**Guidance should be given in the design resource to be established by Government and the industry on the design of stunning boxes.**

Response: Partially accept. We cannot commit to funding the establishment and maintenance of a design resource facility. However, we will investigate the availability of data on the design of stunning boxes and provide information to operators on best practice.

**Recommendation 38 (Para 120):**

**All stunning boxes should have a level floor; all new installations with immediate effect and all boxes by 2008.**

Response: Do not accept. There is disagreement over the benefits of stun boxes with level floors. Although some animals may be reluctant to enter a stun box with stepped or angled floor, other problems arise with stun boxes with level floors. If the animal drops without rolling its removal from the box may result in the stun to stick time being extended, with the danger that the animal may begin recovering consciousness before dying from exsanguination. There are also health and safety issues for the slaughterman who may be placed in danger if rhythmic kicking commences before the animal is removed from the box.

**Recommendation 39 (Para 121):**

**Legislation that requires stunning boxes to be fitted with some device that restricts the movement of the animal's head must be enforced by the MHS.**

Response: Partially accept. Legislation requires a head restraint to be fitted to the stunning box and in most instances the head restraint should be used. However, the MHS are aware that some methods of head restraint result in stress to the animal. Where the use of the head restraint is likely to cause more distress to the animal than not using it, it should be left to the discretion of the OVS and the slaughtermen. Further research work on providing a system that can be used without causing undue stress is required. Immediate rigid enforcement may cause closure of some small slaughterhouses.

**Recommendation 40 (Para 126):**

**Government should include criteria for the design and operation of group stunning pens for pigs in its code of practice.**

Response: Accept. We will investigate the availability of data on the design and operation of group stunning pens and make recommendations in a code of practice.

**Recommendation 41 (Para 127):**

**Government should fund research to evaluate optimum criteria for design of group stunning pens for sheep, calves and goats.**

Response: Accept. Any research would be accommodated within Defra's research programme and available budget.

**Recommendation 42 (Para 133):**

**The use of goads should not be considered a routine requirement of any pre-slaughter handling system.**

Response: Accept.

**Recommendation 43 (Para 134):**

**Animals must never be left waiting in restrainers. In the event of a breakdown they should be able to be evacuated or killed in situ.**

Response: Partially accept. Animals should not be left for extended times in restrainers and it should be possible to evacuate animals or kill them in situ. However, it is not always possible to determine at the time of the initial breakdown how long the animals will have to remain in the restrainer before the system is again operational. For relatively short breakdowns it may be less stressful for the animal to be left in the restrainer than removed if this involves considerable handling. OVSs will be instructed to monitor animals in the case of a breakdown and instruct the operator to either remove or kill the animals in situ if they are showing signs of stress.

**Recommendation 44 (Para 138):**

**The design resource to be established by Government and the industry should include handling systems that allow groups of pigs to calmly enter gas killing systems.**

Response: Do not accept. We cannot commit to funding the establishment and maintenance of a design resource facility. However, we will investigate available data on existing systems both in the UK and overseas with a view to identifying most appropriate handling systems and will issue guidance in a code of practice.

**Recommendation 45 (Para 139):**

**Electric goads should not be used in any gas stunning/killing handling system.**

Response: Partially accept. See response to recommendation 33 above. Quiet handling and well constructed and designed handling systems are essential and should obviate the need to use electric goads.

## **STUNNING AND KILLING**

**Recommendation 46 (Para 143):**

**Government should establish a mandatory system of approval for stunning/killing equipment to ensure suitability for the purpose intended.**

Response: Do not accept. We will consult with industry on the feasibility of establishing a voluntary system of approval for stunning/killing equipment, along the lines of a quality 'kite-mark'. Any mandatory system would require EU approval as manufacturers in other EU member states could not be required to submit their equipment for mandatory testing without a EU wide requirement. Any attempt to impose unilateral requirements would almost certainly be challenged in the courts. Of equal importance is the necessity that equipment is correctly set up and operated, and tested for efficacy according to the manufacturers instructions.

**Recommendation 47 (Para 146):**

**The OVS should monitor the keeping of records of slaughter equipment maintenance.**

Response: Accept. Instructions will be issued to OVSs.

**Recommendation 48 (Para 149):**

**Monitoring by slaughterhouse operators of the stunning/killing procedure should be audited by the OVS.**

Response: Accept. Instructions will be issued to OVSs.

**Recommendation 49 (Para 150):**

**The use and continued development of devices to monitor stunning equipment should be pursued by Government and industry organisations.**

Response: Accept. There is already a considerable range of monitoring equipment available on the market, although their uptake has not been as great as expected, or desired. We will discuss with industry and other interested parties where gaps in the market still exist with a view to commissioning further work on new equipment. However, it might be more profitable to devote the limited resources to encouraging the greater use of existing monitoring equipment.

**Recommendation 50 (Para 152):**

**Whenever the slaughterhouse is operating, the OVS should rigorously enforce the requirement that back-up stunning or killing equipment must be ready for use at the point of stunning or killing.**

Response: Accept. The MHS enforce this provision and will remind staff of their duties in this respect. Guidance will be issued on how frequently such checks should be made.

**Recommendation 51 (Para 153):**

**In larger premises, where the lairage is separated from the slaughter line, slaughterhouse operators should ensure that back-up killing equipment is kept in the lairage area to deal quickly with animals in pain or suffering.**

Response: Accept. It is the operator's responsibility to ensure that there is equipment available in the lairage to deal with animals experiencing avoidable pain and suffering as a result of, for example, injury sustained during transport or in the lairage. If processing the animal through the normal stun/kill system would result in unnecessary pain for the animal it should be killed in the lairage. The OVS will be reminded to check on a regular basis that the necessary equipment is available and in good working order. Operators will also be reminded to provide lairage staff with the necessary training in handling injured animals to ensure their safety.

**Recommendation 52 (Para 160):**

**Government and the industry should fund research and development into the use of non-aversive gas mixtures. The use of aversive gas mixtures should be phased out within five years.**

Response: Partially accept. Research work has already been carried out in the investigation of non-aversive gas mixtures and further work is about to be commissioned. In particular the use of argon has been studied. However, there are issues related to the length of

time it takes for the animal to lose consciousness and die from anoxia when argon is used compared to the use of CO<sub>2</sub>. There is also the issue of the increased cost of using argon. Work is underway to assess the use of nitrogen and nitrogen/argon or nitrogen/carbon dioxide mixtures. However, there are questions of containment with nitrogen mixtures, and existing equipment will probably require modifications before such mixtures can be used commercially. We cannot make any commitment to phase out the use of CO<sub>2</sub> within five years when there is no certainty that an effective alternative system will be available within that time frame.

**Recommendation 53 (Para 167):**

**Tong positioning and effectiveness of stun should be monitored by the OVS and slaughterhouse managers with action being taken if performance falls below acceptable levels.**

Response: Accept. However, the OVS carries out this work as part of routine daily duties as required by the MHS Operations Manual.

**Recommendation 54 (Para 170):**

**Government should produce clear species-specific guidance on currents and application times for electrical stunning.**

Response: Accept. We will investigate the availability of data on currents and application times for all species stunned electrically. Where there is robust data it will be included in the code of practice.

**Recommendation 55 (Para 177):**

**Electrical stunning/killing systems for cattle must be closely monitored and maintained by the slaughterhouse operator to ensure effective stunning/killing.**

Response: Accept. The OVS will be reminded of the need to ensure that the operator closely monitors the system and that a regular maintenance programme is followed and recorded. This is understood already to be carried out to some extent by those operating electrical stun/kill systems for cattle, in order to ensure efficient usage. We are not aware of any animal welfare problems associated with the use of this equipment, but the OVS will be asked to check a sample of cattle to establish whether any exhibit a regular heartbeat after being removed from the box.

**Recommendation 56 (Para 178):**

**Government should produce guidance for slaughterhouse operators on recognising an effective stun/kill when using electrical equipment on cattle.**

Response: Accept. We will investigate with the equipment manufacturers, other experts in the field and operators ways of recognising an effective stun and publish guidance for slaughterhouse employees.

## **SLAUGHTER**

### **Recommendation 57 (Para 189):**

**Government should arrange re-evaluation of all restraining pens currently in use, particularly in terms of the efficiency of restraint of animals of various sizes.**

Response: Accept. We will consider contracting an independent expert to re-evaluate the restraining pens used for slaughter without prior stunning. This may be carried out at the same time as assessing what, if any, modifications need to be made to the existing pens to enable the slaughterman to carry out an immediate post-cut stun (see recommendation 62 below).

### **Recommendation 58 (Para 192):**

**The legislation prohibiting the lifting of sheep by the fleece should be enforced by the OVS.**

Response: Accept. However, we are not aware that currently this is a major problem in slaughterhouses where sheep are slaughtered without prior stunning. The OVS is not present all the time in the lairage and can only enforce in a fair and proportionate manner when contraventions are observed. The Operator should be able to demonstrate that all staff are trained in the correct handling of animals in the lairage.

### **Recommendation 59 (Para 193):**

**Alternatives to manual restraint methods for sheep should be explored by the industry for use at slaughter without pre-stunning.**

Response: Accept. A single sheep restrainer that rotated to enable the cut to be made was built and used by one operator but was not generally taken up by the industry. We are also aware of a system of delivering the sheep to the slaughter point by a v-shaped restrainer. The animals are then moved mechanically along a conveyor belt to the shackling point. We will explore with the industry other possible alternatives to manual restraint.

### **Recommendation 60 (Para 197):**

**Where an animal has not been stunned, the OVS must ensure that nothing is inserted into the neck wound post-cut.**

Response: Accept. Legislation will be introduced to prevent this happening. While the OVS does not observe each animal being slaughtered, the MHS accepts the proposal in principle.

### **Recommendation 61 (Para 201):**

**Council considers that slaughter without pre-stunning is unacceptable and that the Government should repeal the current exemption.**

Response: Do not accept. We accept the report's conclusion that, on balance, animals (especially cattle) slaughtered without pre-stunning are likely to experience very significant pain and distress. We also recognise that certain religious groups in Scotland, and elsewhere in the UK are constrained from eating meat from animals that are stunned at the time of slaughter. If we were to ban the slaughter of animals without prior stunning, it would require these groups to import meat from other countries. There would therefore be no improvement in total animal welfare.

Within European directive 93/119/EC, an exemption currently applies for slaughter without pre-stunning which is permitted for religious reasons. This is because of the deeply held beliefs of Moslem and Jewish communities in Scotland, the UK and throughout Europe. For this reason we do not seek to ban the production of halal or kosher meat, as that is a matter for agreement within the European Union. Furthermore, the Scottish Executive believes that a ban on religious slaughter would not be consistent with the provision of the Human Rights Act 1998 which implements the European Convention on Human Rights.

However, it is clear from the public reaction following the publication of the FAWC report that there are strong feelings against slaughter without prior stunning, on the part of consumer and animal welfare groups. We are therefore concerned that meat from animals which have not been stunned before slaughter, and which is unsuitable for the halal and kosher markets, can find its way onto the ordinary meat market, and that consumers are not able to identify it at the point of sale. We would wish consumer and industry groups to consider whether this problem could be successfully addressed through a voluntary system of labelling, bearing in mind that an early EU agreement on meat labelling according to slaughter method is unlikely.

**Recommendation 62 (Para 203):**

**Until the current exemption which permits slaughter without pre-stunning is repealed, Council recommends that any animal not stunned before slaughter should receive an immediate post-cut stun.**

Response: Partially accept. We see merit in this recommendation for cattle but not for sheep, as we would expect all sheep to have lost consciousness within 5 to 10 seconds. However, we are mindful of likely opposition to this from some religious groups and would intend to seek progress on a voluntary basis.

**Recommendation 63 (Para 210):**

**The law should be changed to permit the bleeding of pigs and sheep within sight of their con-specifics in England and Wales, provided that a maximum stun to bleed time of 15 seconds is set down in legislation.**

Response: Partially accept. In Scotland, bleeding within sight of con-specifics is already permitted. However, we will not make a requirement that the maximum stun to bleed time to be 15 seconds. Current legislation (The Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995) already states that an animal may not be stunned unless it can be bled without delay, and horned sheep and goats which are shot in the back of the head must be bled within 15 seconds. It is already a requirement of WASK that the stunning process must produce an immediate loss of consciousness, which lasts until death. However, guidance will be provided in the code of practice on recommended stun to stick times.

**Recommendation 64 (Para 211):**

**Government's code of practice should set out targets for stun to bleed times for all species and for the range of stunning and killing methods currently in use.**

Responses: Accept. We will investigate the availability of data on optimum stun to stick times and publish targets in a code of practice.

**Recommendation 65 (Para 213):**

**The law should require that bleeding should be carried out by severing both carotid arteries.**

Response: A decision on this recommendation will be delayed until the evaluation of the effect of the new EU Meat Hygiene regulations that include a requirement for red meat species that the oesophagus must not be cut during sticking.

**Recommendation 66 (Para 214):**

**The Government code of practice should recommend that thoracic bleeding methods should be used wherever practicable.**

Response: Accept. The Code of Practice will recommend the thoracic cut where practicable.

**Recommendation 67 (Para 217):**

**Practical information on recognising the signs of unconsciousness in animals needs to be included in the code of practice and as a separate short checklist for slaughter staff.**

Response: Accept. Information on recognising an effective stun will be included in the Code of Practice.

**Recommendation 68 (Para 220):**

**Government should revisit FAWC's report "Foot and Mouth Disease 2001: Lessons for the Future" and address our outstanding recommendations, particularly with reference to killing techniques and equipment, and the licensing of field killing teams.**

Response: Accept. (See Annex 1)

**Recommendation 69 (Para 239):**

**Government should provide guidance on the killing of deer in the field.**

Response: Accept. We will consult with the relevant bodies on the killing of deer in the field and provide guidance to those keeping farm or park deer.

**Recommendation 70 (Para 240):**

**Facilities used for lairaging and restraining deer, wherever they are killed, should be specifically designed for the purpose.**

Response: Partially accept. In a purpose built deer slaughterhouse we would expect the facilities used for lairaging and restraining deer to be specifically designed. However, given the limited availability of purpose built facilities, there will continue to be a need for some deer to be slaughtered in conventional slaughterhouses. We would expect those slaughterhouses dealing with significant numbers of deer to install specifically designed lairaging and restraining facilities. However, for those slaughterhouses which deal with relatively small numbers of animals, any requirement for them to install purpose built facilities may not be financially viable, resulting in them ceasing to slaughter deer. This could adversely affect the welfare of the deer if, as a result, they undergo lengthy transport to slaughter.

**Recommendation 71 (Para 241):**

**Deer should be stunned within a drop-floor crate to enable them to be firmly but calmly restrained.**

Response: Partially accept. When deer are slaughtered in a purpose built deer slaughterhouse a drop-floor crate should be used. However, given the constraints on access to purpose built facilities it will not always be possible for deer to be stunned in a drop-floor crate.

**Recommendation 72 (Para 242):**

**The welfare legislation should, where necessary, protect deer by referring to their specific needs.**

Response: Accept. Consideration will be given to defining the specific needs of farmed deer and amending the legislation if necessary.

**Recommendation 73 (Para 249):**

**Welfare at slaughter legislation must be changed to ensure ratites are treated as red meat animals and, if necessary, as a distinct category of animal.**

Response: We will seek further advice on this recommendation. Ratites should clearly not be considered as poultry under WASK, and it is very unlikely that anyone farming/slaughtering ratites would in fact attempt to handle them in the same way as poultry. The solution may be to treat ratites as a distinct category under WASK with specific requirements for lairaging, handling, restraining and slaughtering them.

**Recommendation 74 (Para 250):**

**Ratites must be individually restrained for slaughter in a system designed to minimise stress.**

Response: Accept. We will investigate designs for restrainers used in the UK and overseas. The Government will recommend designs that minimise stress for the animal.

**Recommendation 75 (Para 251):**

**Government should identify best practice for the slaughter and emergency killing of ratites in a code of practice.**

Response: Accept. We will investigate the most appropriate method for killing ratites in an emergency, to prevent the animal experiencing avoidable pain and suffering.

**Recommendation 76 (Para 258):**

**Unloading and lairage facilities must be such as to ensure that wild boar cannot escape from the abattoir.**

Response: Accept. We will seek advice on appropriate unloading and lairage facilities for wild boar and other difficult to handle species. Recommendations on the design of such facilities will be included in a Code of Practice. (see below).

**Recommendation 77 (Para 259):**

**Government should produce a Code of Practice for the slaughter of wild boar and other exotic species.**

Response: Accept. We will produce a Code of Practice for the slaughter of exotic species raised in the UK.

**Recommendation 78 (Para 267):**

**Government should fund research into the welfare implications of difficult-to-handle horses being accompanied by another, calmer horse during slaughter.**

Response: Do not accept. There is already sufficient evidence that hard to handle horses react better when accompanied into the slaughterhouse by another calmer horse. However, Defra will be commissioning research into the slaughtering of horses within sight of others. If this does not cause the animal unnecessary stress, WASK will be amended to allow the slaughter of horses within sight others, as is currently allowed for other species.

**Recommendation 79 (Para 268):**

**If a stunning method were to be used during the slaughter of horses then Government should provide guidance on maximum stun to stick time.**

Response: Accept. Should slaughterhouses currently dealing with horses choose to use captive bolt stunning rather than killing with the use of a free bullet, we would investigate appropriate stun to stick times and provide guidance.

## **LICENSING, TRAINING AND STAFFING**

**Recommendation 80 (Para 274):**

**A licence to slaughter should be granted by the MHS only to those who achieve an independently assessed and verified level of competence.**

Response: Do not accept. A licence is granted only when an Official Veterinary Surgeon is satisfied that the slaughterman has suitable experience and has achieved the required level of competence and knowledge required by the regulations. Provision of detailed guidance for theoretical and practical training, including a range of questions to be answered at testing and

assessment, would improve the consistency of approach by OVSs. We will be investigating how best to provide the necessary guidance. The SVS and authorised veterinary surgeons assess and provide certificates of competence to slaughter operators outside licensed premises although the licence is issued by the MHS.

**Recommendation 81 (Para 275):**

**The competence of those holding licences to slaughter should be re-assessed by the MHS every three years. If a licence is not renewed then there should be an automatic downgrading to provisional status.**

Response: Do not accept. The MHS has more than 7,300 slaughter men on its database. There is continuous assessment by the OVS of the competence of licence holders working in licensed slaughterhouses. Any licence holder not complying with the requirements of his licence would be recommended for licence revocation and/or prosecution.

**Recommendation 82 (Para 278):**

**Government should review the current slaughter licensing system and appropriate qualification and assessment systems should be developed for farmers, stockmen, slaughterhouse workers and field professionals.**

Response: Do not accept. We will consider the training requirements of those engaged in handling animals outside of slaughterhouses in the context of the possible training requirements for animal keepers, as outlined in the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy.

**Recommendation 83 (Para 282):**

**All slaughterhouses should have an appropriate training regime for all staff to ensure adequate levels of competence. Individual training records should be kept.**

Response: Accept. Slaughterhouse operators are encouraged either to establish internal training programmes for staff on animal welfare responsibilities, or to send staff on external training courses. It would be expected that operators would keep individual training records as a matter of course, but they will be reminded that best practice requires the maintenance of up-to-date training records.

**Recommendation 84 (Para 283):**

**Animal welfare at slaughter must form an integral part of the training of any individual working with live animals in the slaughterhouse**

Response: Accept. It is the responsibility of operators to ensure that all staff involved in the handling of live animals are aware of their responsibility to ensure that animal welfare standards are maintained at every stage of the slaughter process.

**Recommendation 85 (Para 285):**

**The OVS must ensure that the welfare of the animals being slaughtered is not compromised by operator fatigue.**

Response: Partially accept. Operators should ensure that all employees have sufficient breaks to prevent fatigue. The OVS will take action when the welfare of the animal is compromised by any failure on the part of the slaughterman.

**Recommendation 86 (Para 286):**

**Rotation of staff in large throughput operations should be a standard operating procedure. However, slaughterhouse operators must ensure that rotation of staff is practised only if the personnel involved are competent in all of the relevant tasks.**

Response: Accept. Most large throughput slaughterhouses already rotate their staff as a matter of course. Those operators who do not, will be advised to consider introducing such a system. WASK requires that all persons engaged in the restraint, stunning, slaughter, killing, pithing, shackling or hoisting and bleeding of any animal have the appropriate licence attesting to their competence.

**Recommendation 87 (Para 289):**

**The role of the AWO should be formalised in legislation and guidance as to their responsibilities should be outlined in the relevant Government code of practice.**

Response: Do not accept. We welcome the role played by the Animal Welfare Officer in slaughterhouses and can see merit in including guidance in a future code of practice, but FAWC does not make a strong case for the AWO role to be formalised in legislation.

**Recommendation 88 (Para 290):**

**The AWO course operators should consider developing a system for formal assessment.**

Response: Accept. This is a decision for the course operators but we believe it would be valuable. However, the varying educational backgrounds of the course participants will need to be taken into account in developing any possible system for formal assessment. The lack of a formal assessment system should not be taken to imply that course participants have not gained very valuable training and knowledge from attending the course.

**Recommendation 89 (Para 291):**

**Assistance should be given by Government to ensure that small to medium sized enterprises have access to AWO training.**

Response: Do not accept. We encourage all operators to ensure that their staff undergo appropriate training, either in house or by attending an appropriate external training course. It is the operators responsibility to ensure that all staff involved in the handling of live animals are aware of their responsibility to ensure that animal welfare standards are maintained at every stage of the slaughter process. Operators are encouraged to develop a company welfare policy to make employees aware of animal welfare issues. We do not at present intend to make funds available for the training of animal welfare officers in medium and small slaughterhouses.

**LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

**Recommendation 90 (Para 294):**

**Where legislation is being introduced affecting farm animals at slaughter but which is not directly related to animal welfare, e.g. for food hygiene, disease control or traceability purposes, the Government Department involved should carry out an animal welfare impact assessment as part of the consultation process.**

Response: Accept. We currently ensure that animal welfare is taken into account when legislation that might impact upon it is being considered. However, we do not propose to introduce a formal animal welfare impact assessment as part of the consultation process.

**Recommendation 91 (Para 297):**

**Government should introduce a system of formal improvement notices for structures, equipment or practices that do not comply with the law and have the potential to cause animal welfare problems.**

Response: Accept. We will investigate the practicality of introducing such a system in slaughterhouses.

**Recommendation 92 (Para 301):**

**Attendance on animal welfare modules should be a required element of Continuing Professional Development for MHS staff.**

Response: Do not accept. OVS contractors are required to identify and maintain a training plan for their OVSs according to their knowledge, experience and needs. In addition to the basic animal welfare training that MHI's receive prior to qualification the MHS CPD module is available to all MHI's. Regular attendance at training could create significant operational difficulties and have major financial implications.

**Recommendation 93 (Para 303):**

**Government and the MHS should consider the use of auxiliaries, specifically trained and under veterinary supervision, to undertake some of the welfare monitoring currently carried out by the OVS.**

Response: Accept in principle. The MHS supports the recommendation to have trained auxiliaries working under veterinary supervision to assist the OVS with welfare monitoring. Funding for training and development would have to be agreed.

## **RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**

**Recommendation 94 (Para 308):**

**The results of research into welfare at slaughter must be disseminated as quickly and as widely as possible, with the mechanism for technology transfer being clearly set out when the contract is awarded.**

Response: Accept. All new contracts for R&D commissioned by Defra require that the contractors specify in their research proposals how the results will be disseminated. Assessment of proposals will take into account whether the technology transfer proposed is likely to be effective and adequate.

**FAWC REPORT 'FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE 2001: LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE'**

**Recommendation 10: Detailed strategies for killing in the field of all species and ages should be available as part of contingency plans. These strategies should be based on sound scientific research.**

Response: The recently produced training package "Getting it right ...first time, every time" (video, interactive CD ROM, and booklet) deals with the issues relating to the large-scale killing of animals of various species and ages in the field. The Scottish Executive will evaluate the training package to assess its suitability for use in Scotland.

**Recommendation 11: Field slaughtermen should be issued with an Army style "green card" setting out the minimum standards required of them.**

Response: Chapter 3 of the SVS manual provides specific guidance for slaughter teams and animal handling teams in the case of a major animal disease outbreak. One of the responsibilities of the supervising vet/Case Officer is to ensure that all members of the Field Operations Team are provided with copies of this guidance. We believe that this will provide more comprehensive guidance than a "green card" system and can be easily amended to reflect changes in best practice.

**Recommendation 12: Research is needed to assess the effectiveness of captive bolt stunners as killing method for sheep.**

Response: Negotiations are currently under way on a research contract to assess the effectiveness of captive bolt stunners as a killing method for sheep.

**Recommendation 13: Government should consider the establishment of a scheme of recognised standards for slaughter/killing equipment.**

Response: See the response to Recommendation 46

**Recommendation 14: Government should consider the establishment of a trained reserve of field slaughtermen for rapid deployment in disease emergencies.**

**and:**

**Recommendation 15: There should be a specific licence for field killing and incentives for slaughtermen to be trained and take up this option. Slaughter teams should not be paid piece rates.**

Response: We have placed contracts with a number of licensed slaughtermen to provide slaughter services at 24 hours notice in the case of an animal disease emergency. Most of these slaughtermen have been sourced through the Animal Health Divisional and Area Offices and are known to the SVS staff. Before signing a contract they are required to provide a copy of their slaughter licence, a copy of their firearms certificate permitting them to kill

animals (if they have one) and their insurance details. They will also be required to complete a field check before they can start slaughtering. In the event of their services being called upon slaughtermen will be paid a combination of a flat hourly rate and a headage payment. This is considered to be the most effective way of ensuring the welfare of the animal is protected while maintaining a satisfactory kill rate.

**Recommendation 16: The organisational principles of large scale killing under field conditions need defining and setting out clearly to provide operational guidelines for those having to set up and implement procedures on farms having widely different facilities.**

Response: The recently produced training package “Getting it right ...first time, every time” has been widely distributed in this country and abroad. Organisational principles for emergency large-scale killing on farm are also dealt with extensively in the SVS manual, Chapter 3. However, as all premises will differ it is not possible to provide exhaustive procedures for each holding. General principles are laid down and then it is the responsibility of the supervising Veterinary Officer/Case Officer to implement the procedures, taking into account the specific conditions on a particular holding and by seeking advice from others, e.g. owner of stock, slaughtermen etc.