

# New RSPCA welfare standards requiring the installation of CCTV in abattoirs processing mammals

**These standards and information boxes apply to all abattoirs on the Freedom Food scheme processing mammals. They must be read in conjunction with the RSPCA welfare standards for:**

**Dairy cattle (dated January 2008)**  
**Beef cattle (dated March 2010)**  
**Sheep (dated April 2010)**  
**Pigs (dated January 2010)**

\* Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

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\*  **The use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in areas where live animals are present can assist those responsible for monitoring and enforcing animal welfare within the abattoir in ensuring that standards are maintained. It is strongly recommended that CCTV footage is also used for in-house training programmes and to provide an additional level of security at the abattoir.**

S(TV) 1.1\* By 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011, a functional CCTV system must be installed and operational to monitor animals undergoing the following processes at the abattoir (as applicable):

- a) unloading from vehicles into the lairage
- b) lairaging, including the movement of animals out of the lairage towards the stun point
- c) stunning, including animals approaching the stun area
- d) shackling, including the shackling of animals following gas killing
- e) sticking
- f) entering a Controlled Atmosphere System (CAS).

S(TV) 1.2\* CCTV cameras must be positioned to ensure a clear view of the processes being monitored is achieved at all times.

S(TV) 1.3\* It must be possible to observe clearly the view from each camera at all times via one or more monitors.

S(TV) 1.4\* CCTV footage must be recorded at all times where animals are undergoing any of the processes listed under standard S(TV) 1.1.

S(TV) 1.5\* The recorded CCTV footage must be:

- a) retained by the abattoir for a period of at least three months, and
- b) available for viewing on site by Freedom Food field staff and RSPCA Farm Animals Department staff on request.

 **Where possible it may be useful for managers to retain CCTV footage for longer than the three months specified in standard S(TV) 1.5, for their own monitoring and security purposes.**



**RSPCA welfare  
standards for**

# sheep

**April 2010**



Certification Mark

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# Introduction

The '*RSPCA welfare standards for sheep*' are used to provide the only RSPCA-approved scheme for the rearing, handling, transport and slaughter of sheep. They take account of legislation, government welfare codes, scientific research, veterinary advice, recommendations of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) and the practical experience of the farming industry.

The standards are based upon the 'Five Freedoms' as defined by FAWC (hence the name 'Freedom Food' - see page iv). Although these 'freedoms' define ideal states, they provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of animal welfare on farm, in transit and at the place of slaughter, as well as representing an important element of farm assurance requirements.

- Freedom from hunger and thirst  
by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- Freedom from discomfort  
by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease  
by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- Freedom to express normal behaviour  
by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from fear and distress  
by ensuring conditions and care which avoid mental suffering.

These freedoms will be better provided for if those who have care of livestock practise:

- caring and responsible planning and management
- skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious stockmanship
- appropriate environmental design
- considerate handling and transport
- humane slaughter.

## Guide to the use of the RSPCA welfare standards

- (i) At the head of each section the broad objectives of the welfare standards are described.
- (ii) The numbered requirements are the standards, all of which must be complied with.
- (iii) Boxed sections (indicated by ⓘ) give additional advice or may highlight areas where the standards will be reviewed in the future.
- (iv) It is assumed that all relevant legislation regarding farm animal husbandry and welfare on-farm, during transport, and at the abattoir, will be fully implemented in addition to the RSPCA welfare standards.
- (v) **Farmers are required by law to have a thorough knowledge of the '*Defra Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Sheep*'.**

## Freedom Food Ltd

Freedom Food is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RSPCA, formed to implement these standards. Upon satisfactory inspection farmers, hauliers, slaughterers, processors and retailers may subscribe to the scheme and use the Freedom Food trademark. All participants are regularly assessed by Freedom Food Ltd. A charge is levied to cover inspection, administration and marketing costs. Participants are also randomly monitored by members of the RSPCA Farm Animals Department, free of charge.

It is the intention of Freedom Food Ltd to establish sister, franchise organisations in other countries working to the RSPCA welfare standards and therefore, in time, establish a common and consistent message for consumers around the world.

Freedom Food Ltd is non-profit making. Any surplus income will be used to fund research into farm animal welfare.

# Food and water

Livestock must have freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and promote a positive state of well-being. Feed and water must be distributed in such a way that livestock can eat and drink without undue competition.

## Food

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- FW 1.1 Sheep must be fed a wholesome diet that is:
- appropriate to their species
  - is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health
  - satisfies their nutritional needs.
- FW 1.2 Sheep must have access to food each day, except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon.
- FW 1.3 Producers must have a written record of the constituents of compound feeds and feed supplements.
- FW 1.4 No feedstuffs containing mammalian derived protein are permitted, with the exception of milk and milk products.
- FW 1.5 Sheep must be fed so that their body condition is likely to sustain full health and normal reproductive capacity over their maximum foreseeable life span.
- FW 1.6 Body condition change in sheep must be carefully planned and maintained according to the stage of production cycle.
-  **As a general rule, no animal should, at any time, have a body condition score less than 2.**
- FW 1.7 Efforts must be made to avoid sudden changes in the type and quantity of food.
- FW 1.8 For store lambs and mature sheep, systems involving the use of high intakes of cereal-based diets must have an appropriate introductory feeding period, during which sufficient roughage or a suitable high fibre concentrate must also be fed. In the case of mature sheep, high levels of concentrates must be split into more than one meal per day.
- FW 1.9 In systems described in FW 1.8, mineral mixtures must be specifically designed, and appropriate to the animal to avoid causing problems (e.g. urinary problems in male animals).
- FW 1.10 Sheep must be provided with adequate suitable fibre to allow them to ruminate.
- FW 1.11 During the grass growing season, climatic conditions allowing, all sheep must derive the bulk of their nutrient requirements from grazing at pasture, except in the case of dairy ewes which, in addition to grazing, must be provided with supplementary concentrates as appropriate (also see information box above FW(D) 1.1 in *supplementary standards for dairy sheep*).
- FW 1.12 When being fed at troughs:
- all sheep must be able to eat supplementary concentrates at the same time
  - there must be sufficient trough space for forages to ensure that, within 24 hours, all sheep have sufficient access to meet their requirements.

FW 1.13 When calculating required trough space:

- a) account must be taken of the size and number of animals and presence or absence of horns
- b) there must be sufficient trough space or feeding points to minimise aggression due to competition.

**i** For concentrate feeding, approximately 45cm trough space should be provided. For hay and silage feeding *ad libitum*, approximately 12 to 15cm trough space per ewe should be provided, depending on access and other relevant factors, e.g. whether ewes are horned.

**i** Floor feeding is permitted, providing bedding is kept clean and dry.

FW 1.14 Sheep must not be kept for longer than 24 hours in an environment which is known to offer nutrient deficiency on a long term basis, e.g. holding pens, stubble or exhausted root crops.

FW 1.15 Sheep which have difficulty in eating due to having damaged, missing or loose teeth must be supplied with food which they are able to eat, e.g. sufficiently long grass or concentrates.

FW 1.16 Troughs must be kept clean and any stale food removed.

FW 1.16.1 Automatic feeding equipment must be cleaned at least once a week.

FW 1.17 Equipment and utensils used for liquid feeding must be thoroughly cleansed daily and must be effectively sterilised.

FW 1.18 Stored foods, such as hay and silage, must:

- a) be protected from cats, rodents and other pests
- b) be of good quality and in a palatable condition.

FW 1.19 To prevent the introduction and potential spread of disease, procedures must be in place to prevent the contamination of all stored animal feeds.

\* **i** Procedures to satisfy FW 1.19 may include the use of lids on feed storage bins and food hoppers.

FW 1.20 Control practices must be in place to minimise access to poisonous plants and unsuitable feedstuffs.

FW 1.21 Sheep fed on root crops must be given particular care and attention with regard to dentition (also see E 3.5 and E 4.3).

FW 1.22 Lambs must not be weaned before 5 weeks of age, with the exception of lambs from dairy sheep flocks (see standard FW(D) 1.1 in *supplementary standards for dairy sheep*).

## Water

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- FW 2.1 Sheep must be provided with continuous access to an adequate supply of clean, fresh drinking water each day.
- FW 2.2 For sheep fed on a high dry matter diet (e.g. concentrates, hay), at least one drinking space per 20 animals must be provided.
- FW 2.3 For all sheep on other diets, constant and unlimited access to drinking water must be provided so as to ensure that animals can fully satisfy their requirements at all times.



**A drinking space is defined as space required by a single sheep whilst drinking, or as an individual bowl.**

**Sheep will require different volumes of water, depending on diet, age and stage of production, and it is important to provide for these needs. For example, a ewe in early lactation may drink 10 litres a day.**

- FW 2.4 Water troughs must be provided unless natural water sources are sufficient to ensure adequate daily access.
- FW 2.5 Provision must be made to ensure an emergency supply of suitable drinking water in case normal supplies fail, for instance due to freezing, drought, etc.
- FW 2.6 Water bowls and troughs must be kept thoroughly clean and managed in a way which ensures that they are capable of dispensing sufficient clean water at all times.
- FW 2.7 Bowls/troughs must be sited to avoid lambs drowning.



# Environment

The environment in which livestock are kept must take into account their welfare needs and be designed to protect them from physical and thermal discomfort, fear and distress, and allow them to perform their natural behaviour.

- E 1.1 Where novel management systems, designs or layout of facilities not covered in the RSPCA welfare standards are being employed or considered, these must be referred to, and discussed with, the RSPCA Farm Animals Department before they can be considered for certification.

## Buildings

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- E 2.1 For all accommodation the key points relating to welfare must:
- be recorded on the farm site plan
  - if practical, be displayed at or near to the entrance to each building
  - be kept up to date.
- E 2.2 \* Records relating to E 2.1 must include:
- total floor area
  - number of sheep in relation to age, weight, feeding and drinking, and bedding space.
- E 2.3 Adequate and safe holding and handling facilities must be provided, whether indoors or outdoors (also see M 3.1 to M 3.9.)
- E 2.4 \* There must be nothing in the sheep's environment that is likely to cause injury or distress to the animals that can be avoided.

**i** Injury is defined as damage severe enough for the formation of granular scar tissue and to an extent significantly greater than would be caused by accidental bumps and scratches.

- E 2.5 Except when preservatives with an insecticidal role are used, sheep must not come into contact with toxic fumes or surfaces, for example from paints, wood preservatives or disinfectants.
- E 2.6 All electrical installations at mains voltage must be:
- inaccessible to sheep
  - well insulated
  - safeguarded from rodents
  - properly earthed
  - \* e) tested at least once a year or each time the building is subjected to pressure washing, by a qualified or competent person.

\* **i** Electrical installations have to be tested every 3 years as part of the Periodic Inspection Report, in order to meet legal requirements relating to electrical safety. However, at least once a year, the 'trip switch' should be tested to ensure it is in correct working order.

## Environment

- E 2.7 Internal surfaces of housing and pens must be made of materials which can be readily cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaced when necessary.

### Thermal environment, ventilation and shelter

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- E 3.1 \* Efforts must be made to ensure that the thermal environment is not so hot or so cold as to significantly affect production or cause distress.
- E 3.2 Buildings must be effectively ventilated so as to avoid high humidity, condensation and draughts.

**i** Good ventilation is essential as sheep are particularly susceptible to respiratory diseases. Properly designed ventilation will permit the free circulation of air above sheep height and avoid draughts at sheep level.

- E 3.3 \* Provision must be made to ensure that, when sheep are housed, aerial contaminants do not reach a level at which they are noticeably unpleasant to a human observer.

\* **i** Inhalable dust should not exceed 10mg/m<sup>3</sup> and ammonia levels should not exceed 25ppm.

- E 3.4 When it can be foreseen that the temperature will fall below the lower critical temperature, supplementary heating must be made available immediately for very young animals.

- E 3.5 \* All sheep must have access to effective shade and shelter, in particular:
- where lambs are being reared at pasture (either with the ewe or artificially)
  - for winter conditions, when additional shelter must be provided for stock that are not considered able to cope comfortably.

\* **i** Shelter can be natural or artificial, as long as it is available at all times and provides effective protection against prevailing conditions.

- E 3.6 Provisions must be made to protect sheep from heat stress.

### Lying area/floors

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- E 4.1 Sheep and lambs kept indoors must be kept on, or at all times have access to, a lying area that is:
- bedded to a sufficient extent to avoid discomfort
  - either sloped or otherwise constructed to provide drainage, or bedded to a sufficient extent to provide a dry lying area.
- E 4.2 The lying area must be of sufficient size to accommodate all sheep together lying in normal resting posture (see E 5.3).

- E 4.3 \* When sheep are kept outdoors there must be an area to which they have ready access that is:
- a) grassed or straw covered
  - b) well drained and dry
  - c) of sufficient size for all sheep to lie down there
- so as to limit the build-up of mud or dung on the fleece.

\*  **Particular care and attention needs to be given to E 4.3 in the case of sheep fed on fields of root crops.**

## Space allowances

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- E 5.1 Pen shape, space allowance and group size must:
- a) be such that there is sufficient freedom of movement to permit exercise
  - b) take into account the age, size and class of stock.
- E 5.2 Sheep must always be provided with a total floor area at least 1.5 times the bedded lying area (see E 5.3).
- E 5.3 The minimum straw bedded lying areas are:

Type and weight (kg)	Straw bedded lying area (m <sup>2</sup> per animal)	Total floor area (m <sup>2</sup> per animal) (See E 5.2)
Ewes		
45 to 60	1.1 to 1.2	1.65 to 1.8
60 to 90	1.2 to 1.4	1.8 to 2.1
Lambing pens	1.5	2.25
Ewes with lambs up to 2 weeks		
45 to 60	1.3 to 1.7	1.95 to 2.55
60 to 90	1.4 to 1.8	2.1 to 2.7
Ewes with lambs up to 6 weeks		
45 to 60	1.8 to 2.0	2.7 to 3.0
60 to 90	2.0 to 2.2	3.0 to 3.3
Creep area		
2 weeks	0.15	0.15
4 weeks	0.4	0.4
Hoggets		
20 to 30	0.7	1.05
30 to 40	0.8	1.2
40 to 50	1.0	1.5
Rams	1.5 to 2.0	2.25 to 3.0

 **In the case of dairy ewes, these space allowances may need to be increased – see space allowance section in *supplementary standards for dairy sheep*.**

## Environment

- E 5.4 Sheep must not be closely confined except in the following circumstances, and even then only for the shortest period of time necessary:
- a) for the duration of any examination, routine test, blood sampling or treatment/operation carried out for veterinary purposes
  - b) while they are being fed on any particular occasion
  - c) for the purpose of marking, washing or weighing, vaccination or dipping
  - d) while accommodation is being cleaned
  - e) while they are awaiting loading for transportation.
- E 5.4.1 \* From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010, close restraint of ewes (involving 'yoking') for the purpose of lamb fostering is prohibited (also see H 2.13 to H 2.16).
- E 5.5 When rams are newly introduced to each other, they must be put in an area small enough to prevent head-to-head combat, but only for a period of time necessary to allow familiarisation and reduction of aggression to occur.

## Lighting

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- E 6.1 In all sheep housing, adequate lighting, whether fixed or portable, must be available to enable them to be thoroughly inspected at any time.
- E 6.2 Housed sheep must have access for the normal period of daylight hours to an area designed to be lit to a level of 100 lux at sheep eye level.



**50 lux is bright enough to allow a person of normal eyesight to read standard newsprint without difficulty.**

## Environmental hazards

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- E 7.1 Young lambs must be protected as far as possible from hazards, in particular from open drains and from predators, using humane methods only.
- E 7.2 When siting shelters, shelter belts and fences, efforts must be made to minimise the risk of sheep being trapped in snow or being unable to access to shelter.
- E 7.3 As far as is practicable, sheep must be:
- a) prevented from gathering in places where they may be buried by snow
  - b) shepherded into safer areas whenever heavy snowfalls are forecast.
- E 7.4 Sheep must be removed from areas liable to flooding.

## Fencing

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- E 8.1 All fencing must be adequately inspected and maintained (also see M 6.4.1).
- E 8.2 Electric fences must be designed, installed, used and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the sheep.
- E 8.3 Electric mesh fencing must not be used for horned sheep.

## Climate change and animal welfare

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**The issues relating to climate change have the potential to significantly affect the welfare of farm animals. The RSPCA believes that it is now appropriate to react to, think ahead, and consider what can reasonably be done to mitigate, any negative effects that adverse weather conditions may have/be having on the welfare of farm animals now, and in the future.**

**Examples of important considerations include:**

- Prolonged dry periods may mean that there is less grass for grazing and conservation.
- Animals kept outside may be seeking shelter for longer periods of time, which may mean that they do not consume enough, potentially affecting health and welfare.
- Feeding at either end of the day may help to offset the problems associated with feeding during the hottest parts of the day.
- There may be reduced water availability for drinking, so ensuring drinking water systems are working efficiently will be even more important.
- There may be a threat from more insect borne diseases as a result of a warmer climate.
- The need to ensure that the farm buildings can withstand more severe weather conditions will become more necessary.



# Management

A high degree of caring and responsible management and stockmanship is vital to ensure good animal welfare. Managers and stock-keepers must be thoroughly trained, skilled and competent in animal husbandry and welfare, and have a good working knowledge of their system and the livestock under their care.

- M 1.0 \* All records and other documentation that the '*RSPCA welfare standards for sheep*' require the producer to keep and maintain, must be made available to the Freedom Food Assessor and RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer.

## Managers

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- M 1.1 Personnel with responsibility for the management of approved establishments must be named and recorded.
- M 1.2 Managers must ensure that all stock-keepers:
- \* a) have access to a copy of the current version of the '*RSPCA welfare standards for sheep*'
  - b) are familiar with its content
  - \* c) understand and apply its content in their specific areas of responsibility.
- M 1.3 Managers must:
- a) develop and implement a suitable training programme for stock-keepers with regular updates and opportunities for continuing professional development and keep records of such training
  - b) ensure that the Veterinary Health Plan (see H 1.1) is implemented and regularly updated, and that the required data (including records of dipping) is recorded appropriately
  - c) maintain records of production data and use of medication – these records must include documentation on all incoming and outgoing stock on the farm as well as types and quantities of medicines used
  - d) develop and implement a transport plan to Freedom Food-approved abattoirs which includes a method of identification of animals (see M 4.1) and minimises waiting time for the sheep.



**Producers using extensive management systems should make best use of local knowledge, traditions and practices to help achieve the highest possible welfare standards.**

- M 1.4 Managers must develop and implement plans and precautions to cope with emergencies such as fire, flood or interruption of supplies, and provide an emergency action board sited in a prominent position, which must include:
- a) the procedures to be followed by those discovering such an emergency
  - b) the location of water sources for use by the fire brigade
  - c) a map grid reference and post code for the location of the unit.
- M 1.5 \* Should circumstances result in the removal of livestock to unregistered premises, Freedom Food Ltd and the RSPCA Farm Animals Department must be informed immediately.

## Stock-keepers

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- M 2.1 Stock-keepers must:
- a) understand the times and circumstances in which sheep are prone to welfare problems on their own unit
  - b) be able to demonstrate their competence in recognising and dealing with these problems.
- M 2.2 Stock-keepers caring for breeding flocks must be aware of the welfare implications during lambing, injection, oral dosing, tail docking and castration.
- M 2.3 Stock-keepers with responsibility for care of lambs must know when to give colostrum and how to avoid the problems of mismothering.
- M 2.4 Prior to being given responsibility for the welfare of livestock, stock-keepers must:
- a) be properly trained
  - b) be able to recognise signs of normal behaviour, abnormal behaviour and fear
  - c) be able to recognise signs of common diseases and understand their prevention and control, and know when to seek veterinary help
  - d) have a knowledge of body condition scoring
  - e) understand the functional anatomy of the normal foot, its care and treatment
  - f) when necessary, have a knowledge of lambing and the care of the newborn lamb.
- M 2.5 Stock-keepers must be able to demonstrate:
- a) competence in handling animals in a positive and compassionate manner
  - b) their proficiency in any procedures they might carry out which have the potential to cause suffering, e.g. injections, castration.

## Breeding procedures

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- M 2.6 Intravaginal insemination must only be performed by a veterinary surgeon, or a skilled and trained person under the direction of a veterinary surgeon.
- M 2.7 Transcervical and/or intrauterine (laparoscopic) artificial insemination must not be carried out.
- M 2.8 \* The use of electroejaculation in rams is not permitted.

## Handling

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- M 3.1 All producers must have suitable facilities for routine handling and management of the flock.
- M 3.2 Handling systems must be designed, constructed and maintained so as to minimise stress and the likelihood of injury to the sheep during handling.
- M 3.3 Handling systems must be appropriate for the number of sheep kept, and the nature of the procedures carried out.

## Management

- M 3.4 \* Sheep must be handled:
- quietly and calmly at all times
  - only as firmly as is necessary to keep the animal safe and under control
  - with care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress.
- M 3.5 Sheep must not be caught by the fleece alone, nor lifted or dragged by the fleece, limbs, ears or tail, nor roughly handled by the horns.

**i** **Horns, particularly of young sheep, can be damaged or broken if sheep are roughly handled by them.**

- M 3.5.1 Sheep must be handled or restrained by means of a hand or an arm under the neck (holding, but not pulling, the neck wool if necessary) with the other arm placed on or around the rear.
- M 3.6 Electric goads must not be used.
- M 3.7 Sticks must not be used for hitting sheep.

**i** **Sticks or other benign handling aids may be used as extensions of the arms.**

- M 3.8 Heavily pregnant ewes must only be handled when absolutely necessary.
- M 3.9 Heavily pregnant ewes must be handled with care to avoid distress and injury which may result in premature lambing.

## Shearing

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- M 3.10 Every adult sheep of a wool breed must have its fleece removed at least once every year.
- M 3.11 When shearing, care must be taken not to nick or cut the skin; particular care must be taken not to cut the teats of young female sheep and not to injure the penis/sheath and/or scrotum of ram lambs.
- M 3.12 If, when shearing, a wound occurs, effective treatment must be given immediately by a veterinary surgeon when necessary.
- M 3.13 Shearers must disinfect their shearing equipment between flocks to minimise the risk of spreading diseases such as caseous lymphadenitis and sheep scab.
- M 3.14 Sheep must not be shorn during winter unless they are housed and measures taken to ensure that they are protected from extremes of temperature (see E 3.1 to E 3.6).
- M 3.15 In winter, the ewes must not be turned out within 2 months of shearing, and even after this time, if necessary, the ewes must be kept indoors until the climatic conditions are suitable.

**i** **Even when housed, environment is particularly important after shearing to ensure that draughts and cold stress are avoided.**

## Identification

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- M 4.1 Sheep must be marked for identification purposes in accordance with current legislation.
- M 4.1.1 If electronic boluses are used for identification purposes:
- a) a written procedure must be in place on the farm outlining the precise protocol followed, and the measures taken to minimise the risk to welfare
  - b) insertion of boluses must only be carried out by those who have received specific training, and are competent, in the procedure
  - c) an inspection protocol must be in place, and implemented, to ensure that all sheep receiving boluses are more closely monitored for a period of at least 2 weeks following insertion.



**Those involved in piloting various initiatives that include the need to use electronic identification (EID) boluses (e.g. the National Scrapie Plan) have developed protocols for administering the boluses to sheep, aimed at ensuring 'best practice'. An example of this is the written procedure developed by ADAS for administering an EID bolus during a pilot study in sheep. Further information can be obtained by contacting ADAS Redesdale.**

- M 4.2 All identification procedures must only be undertaken:
- a) by trained, competent personnel
  - b) using appropriate, well-maintained equipment
  - c) in a way that minimises the risk to welfare both during and after the procedure.

## Equipment

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- M 5.1 When equipment is installed which affects animal welfare, stock-keepers must be able to:
- a) demonstrate an ability to operate equipment
  - b) demonstrate the ability to carry out routine maintenance
  - c) recognise common signs of malfunction
  - d) demonstrate knowledge of action to be carried out in event of a failure.
- M 5.2 All automatic equipment must be thoroughly inspected by a stock-keeper or other competent person, at least twice daily to check that there is no defect in it.
- M 5.3 Where a defect is found in the automatic equipment:
- a) the defect must be rectified immediately, or
  - b) if this is impracticable, such measures must immediately be taken (and must be maintained until the defect is rectified) as are required to safeguard the sheep from suffering unnecessary pain or distress as a result of the defect.
- M 5.4 Where the automatic equipment includes a ventilation system, the system must contain:
- a) an alarm which will give adequate warning of the failure of that system to function properly (and will operate even if the principal electricity supply to it has failed)
  - b) additional equipment or means of ventilation (whether automatic or not) which, in the event of such a failure of the ventilation system, will provide adequate ventilation so as to prevent the livestock from suffering unnecessary distress as a result of the failure.

- M 5.5 Devices such as harnesses must be:
- a) made of suitable material
  - b) properly fitted and adjusted to avoid causing injury or discomfort
  - c) closely checked at least once a day.

## Inspection

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- M 6.1 When sheep are housed, stock-keepers must inspect their livestock and the equipment upon which such stock depend at least twice daily.
- M 6.2 Following inspections, stock-keepers must:
- a) record observations
  - b) record actions taken.
- M 6.3 \* Shepherds must inspect the flock as frequently as is necessary to avoid welfare problems, particularly:
- a) at times of fly strike danger
  - b) under adverse weather conditions
  - c) when sheep have access to a potentially hazardous environment, e.g. where they may become trapped, entangled, etc.
  - d) pre- and post- lambing when sheep are at greater risk of becoming stuck on their backs.

- \* **i** **Stock-keepers should be aware of factors that may increase the risk of sheep becoming stuck, trapped or entangled:**
- **Horned sheep are at greater risk of becoming trapped in mesh wire fencing.**
  - **Double fencing may increase the risk of sheep becoming trapped when they try to reach grass between the fences.**
  - **Sheep can easily become entangled in brambles - consideration should be given to shearing ewe-lambs to reduce the risk.**

- M 6.4 Any welfare problems seen during an inspection by the shepherd/producer must be dealt with appropriately and without delay.

- \* **i** **Welfare problems of sufficient severity, that they should have been noticed on previous inspections and dealt with, shall be taken by the Freedom Food Assessor or RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer as evidence of negligence of duties by the stock-keeper.**
- Stock-keepers should be aware of environmental factors that might cause sheep to be missed out during inspections (e.g. lambs hidden inside hollow trees).**

- M 6.4.1 \* Where any type of mesh fencing is used it must be inspected at least:
- a) once a day
  - b) twice a day if used around lambing fields.

## Waste management

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- M 7.1 Animal waste and effluents must be stored and disposed of in such a way as to minimise the risk of spread of disease to other animals or humans and in a manner that avoids polluting the environment.
- M 7.2 Muckheaps in fields must be fenced off to prevent direct access by grazing livestock.

## Sheep dogs

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- M 8.1 Sheep dogs must be properly trained.
- M 8.2 All dogs must be under control at all times.
- M 8.3 Farmers/shepherds must ensure that the dogs are:
- a) well cared for
  - b) suitably housed and fed
  - c) given proper attention to their health and welfare needs.
- M 8.4 All dogs must be treated regularly to eliminate endoparasites.

## Sourcing of livestock

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- M 9.1 All sheep presented for slaughter must have spent their entire lives on Freedom Food farms, except in the circumstances set out in M 9.2
- M 9.2 In the case of new members of the Freedom Food scheme only:
- a) All stock on the farm at the time of approval must subsequently have a dwell period of at least 90 days on Freedom Food farms from the date of approval before qualifying as Freedom Food animals for the purposes of labelling after slaughter.
  - b) If the animals are moved prior to the 90 days, they can still retain their Freedom Food status if they are moved to other Freedom Food approved farms using Freedom Food approved transport (including the producer's own transport), and the total dwell time on approved farms totals 90 days before slaughter.
  - c) From the approval date onwards, any store animals brought onto the farm and intended for the food chain under the Freedom Food label must be sourced from a Freedom Food approved farm.
  - d) Animals that have not completed the 90 day dwell time on Freedom Food farms may be registered on the store stock register as 'Freedom Food' provided that:
    - it is stated that they still have dwell days to serve on Freedom Food farms prior to slaughter, and
    - the number of dwell days remaining is stated.



**Animals can still be transferred between farms, as long as all premises are Freedom Food approved. If finishers have problems in sourcing Freedom Food stock, please contact the Freedom Food office where information on Freedom Food approved sheep breeders is held.**

## Pests and predators

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M 10.1 \* A written pest control policy must be in place (see Appendix 3).

\*  **The RSPCA is opposed to the use of poisons that cause animal suffering.**

**The RSPCA is concerned about the welfare of all animals that have the capacity to suffer, and therefore consideration and use of alternatives to baiting as a method of pest control is strongly encouraged.**

M 10.2 When developing and implementing farm pest and predator control plans, physical exclusion methods, and the removal of elements in the vicinity of livestock that might encourage the presence of pests and predators (see information box below), must be included.

 **Methods of physical exclusion and discouragement of pests and predators include:**

- **Construction/maintenance of fencing appropriate for excluding the pests/predators in question**
- **Removal of shelter/cover (e.g. weeds) in the area surrounding livestock buildings**
- **Removal/protection of obvious food sources**
- **Maintenance/proofing of buildings against pests and predators**



# Health

Livestock must be protected from pain, injury and disease. The environment in which livestock are housed must be conducive to good health. All producers must develop a health plan in consultation with their veterinary surgeon.

- H 1.1 All sheep units must have a written Veterinary Health Plan (VHP) drawn up and regularly updated by the producer in conjunction with the attending veterinary surgeon.
- H 1.2 Sheep producers must arrange for at least:
- a) one veterinary visit per year for finishing units
  - b) two veterinary visits per year for breeding units.
- H 1.3 Records must be kept in association with the VHP (see H 1.1)



**The Veterinary Health Plan (VHP) forms a vitally important part of the RSPCA welfare standards with regard to maintaining health and welfare of livestock on farm.**

**In liaison with the Sheep Veterinary Society, the RSPCA has developed guidance notes for producers and veterinary surgeons as to how the VHP should be formulated to ensure high standards of health are maintained. These guidance notes are available to Freedom Food producers and their veterinary surgeons from the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.**

**Should you or your veterinary surgeon require assistance with the formulation of your VHP, please refer to these guidance notes or talk to an RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer.**

- H 1.4 All sudden deaths, disease outbreaks and sheep humanely killed as unfit, must:
- a) be recorded
  - b) be reported to the veterinary surgeon
  - c) be investigated appropriately
  - d) have the outcome and action recorded.
- H 1.5 Flock performance data must be continuously monitored for signs of disease or production disorders.
- H 1.6 If any flock performance parameters fall below the tolerance limits identified in the VHP (e.g. parasite infestations):
- a) the veterinary surgeon must be informed
  - b) the VHP must be revised to try to remedy the problem.

\* **i** In addition to reviewing the environment, management and veterinary care of sheep when health and welfare problems arise, consideration should be given to whether genetics may be a contributory factor, and hence whether changes in the farm's policy on genetics in the flock would be beneficial.

**For example, there is evidence that some breeds/strains of sheep are more resistant to some parasites and other conditions such as foot rot. Similarly, lambing ease varies between breeds/strains, as does suitability to different environments. There are also concerns about the potential welfare problems resulting from double muscling in some sheep.**

**Producers are encouraged to provide feedback on these issues to sheep breeders.**

H 1.7 Any injured, ailing or distressed sheep must:

- a) be segregated
- b) be treated without delay
- c) If necessary, be humanely killed (see H 4.1)

H 1.7.1 In relation to H 1.7, veterinary advice must be sought when needed.

H 1.8 Hospital pens must be constructed to facilitate:

- a) effective cleaning of surfaces
- b) the possible removal of a carcass from the pen.

H 1.9 Hospital pens must be emptied between occupancies, cleaned according to the cleaning plan, and waste disposed of separately without risk of infection to other stock.

H 1.10 Replacement animals brought in from other sources must be quarantined and/or appropriately treated, e.g. for ecto/endoparasite control, in accordance with the VHP, before integration.

H 1.11 All practical measures must be taken to prevent or control external and internal parasitic infestations.

H 1.12 Where infestations such as fly strike or sheep scab mite are likely to occur, sheep must be given routine treatment such as regular dipping or other effective methods.

H 1.13 When dipping is carried out, operators must know how to:

- a) minimise stress to the sheep
- b) safeguard human health and safety.

H 1.14 Measures for prevention and treatment of parasitic infestations must be detailed in the farm's VHP (see H 1.1).

**i** For more guidance on best practice in dipping and other parasite controls, refer to the relevant information booklets produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and ATB Landbase.

H 1.15 Close attention must be given to the condition of the feet, which must be regularly inspected for signs of abnormal wear, excessive growth or infection.

## Health

H 1.16 Measures to prevent lameness must include:

- a) careful foot paring when necessary
- b) the regular use of a footbath, which must be a non-irritant solution.

H 1.16.1 \* The VHP (see H 1.1) must include:

- a) a detailed lameness prevention and control plan
- b) details on use of footbaths to ensure effectiveness, appropriate concentrations of solutions used etc.

H 1.17 Stock-keepers must:

- a) have access to a copy of the Defra booklet, '*Lameness in Sheep*' (PB1149, 2003)
- b) be familiar with its content
- c) implement its recommendations.



**It is recommended that producers obtain, watch and where appropriate, apply the advice contained within the RSPCA-commissioned information video: '*Stamping out lameness – a practical guide for sheep owners*', which contains information and advice on identifying, controlling and treating all the common causes of lameness in sheep. Copies can be obtained from the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.**

H 1.18 Prior to housing, sheep must:

- a) be in a dry condition
- b) be foot bathed (preferably in zinc sulphate solution)
- c) be checked for lameness.

H 1.19 Any lame animals detected must be:

- a) immediately inspected
- b) appropriately treated without delay
- c) isolated where infectious causes are suspected.

H 1.20 When conventional methods prove ineffective in control of foot rot, consideration must be given to immunisation of the flock against the infection.



**Freedom Food Assessors and RSPCA Farm Livestock Officers will consider the existence within the flock of unrecognised, untreated chronic foot lameness as an indicator of poor welfare standards within that flock.**

H 1.21 All personnel involved in the administration of animal medicines must be competent to do so.

H 1.22 Written procedures must be in place, and must be followed at all times, for the safe disposal of pharmaceutical waste, needles and other sharps.

H 1.23 Procedures relating to H 1.22 must be in strict accordance with the relevant waste disposal regulations.



**For example, sharps may be disposed of in a separate 'sharps' disposal box, which may then be taken to a local veterinary surgery for disposal.**

## Health

- H 1.24 Medicines must be clearly labelled and stored in accordance with the label instructions.
- H 1.25 Medicines must be kept in a secure, lockable store which is safe from animals, children and birds.
- H 1.26 The medicine store must be separate from food producing areas.
- H 1.27 A nominated person must:
- be responsible for the management of the medicine store
  - keep appropriate records for stock control purposes.
- H 1.28 Any medicines used must be authorised for use in the UK, and applied in accordance with UK and EU legislation.



**It is recommended that producers obtain, read and where appropriate, apply the advice contained within the latest version of the 'Guidelines on Responsible Use of Antimicrobials in Sheep Production', issued by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) alliance (RUMA, Acorn House, 25 Mardley Hill, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 0TT; [www.ruma.org.uk](http://www.ruma.org.uk)).**

## Pregnancy/lambs

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- H 2.1 \* Stock-keepers must:
- have access to a copy of the Defra booklet, '*Improving Lamb Survival*' (PB 2072, 2004)
  - be familiar with its content
  - implement its recommendations.
- H 2.2 During pregnancy, the use of scanning techniques to determine foetal numbers must be considered.
- H 2.3 Body condition must be monitored throughout pregnancy and diet adjusted accordingly.
- H 2.4 When a stock-keeper experiences difficulty in delivering a live lamb, skilled assistance must be sought immediately.
- H 2.5 Embryotomy must be carried out:
- on dead lambs only
  - only by a veterinary surgeon.
- H 2.6 Stock-keepers must:
- be trained in the use of stomach tubes for feeding lambs
  - have knowledge of all other recovery techniques in the event of lamb hypothermia.

H 2.7 All lambs must receive a sufficient amount of colostrum in the first 24 hours after birth.

**i** **Lambs should receive colostrum as soon after birth as possible, ideally within 2 to 3 hours. The antibodies in colostrum can only be absorbed from the gut into the bloodstream of the lamb for 12 to 15 hours after birth, so it is vital they receive sufficient quantities by this time.**

**As a guide, lambs should receive around 150 to 250mls of colostrum per feed, in proportion to size/weight, and 4 to 5 feeds in the first 24 hours. This should be increased by 20 to 30% if outdoors, particularly in cold, wet, windy conditions. If the lamb's mother has inadequate colostrum, alternatives can be used such as colostrum from another ewe or cow's colostrum. Refer to the Defra booklet '*Improving Lamb Survival*' for details (See H 2.1).**

H 2.8 Orphan lambs must be fed a suitable milk substitute at least four times daily in the first week, and at least three times daily in weeks 2 to 4, so ensuring that they remain in good condition without dehydration.

H 2.9 Where automatic feeding equipment is provided, lambs must be trained in its use to ensure an adequate intake of food.

H 2.10 From the end of the second week of life, lambs must also have access to:

- a) palatable and nutritious solid food (which may be grass)
- b) fresh clean water.

H 2.11 Close attention to detail and high standards of supervision and stockmanship must be applied when artificial rearing is practised.

H 2.12 For at least the first 3 weeks of life, housed lambs must be kept in groups small enough to facilitate inspection and limit the spread of disease.

**i** **H 2.12 is particularly important for twin and triplet lambs.**

H 2.13 \* From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010, close restraint of ewes (involving 'yoking') for the purpose of lamb fostering is prohibited.

H 2.14 \* Practices and procedures for fostering lambs must be planned prior to the start of lambing, and details, including success rates of different methods, must be:

- a) outlined in the Veterinary Health Plan (see H 1.1)
- b) reviewed annually

\* **i** **Further information on fostering methods and artificial rearing can be found in The Moredun Foundation News Sheet: '*Effective Fostering and Artificial Rearing of Lambs*' (Feb 2004) (News Sheet Vol 4, No.2), Moredun Research Institute, Pentlands Science Park, Penicuik, Midlothian. EH26 0PZ.**

H 2.15 \* If lambs are fostered onto ewes, frequent checks (several times in any 24 hour period) of the ewes and lambs must be made.

H 2.16 Regardless of the practice/procedure used, if fostering has not been successfully achieved within 48 hours of applying the method, alternatives, such as well managed artificial rearing (see H 2.9 to H 2.11), must be applied.

## Potentially injurious husbandry procedures

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- H 3.1 \* There must be no surgery carried out on sheep for cosmetic purposes.
- H 3.2 \* Potentially injurious husbandry procedures must not be carried out, with the exception of:
- a) those done for therapeutic reasons by a veterinary surgeon
  - b) those outlined in H 3.4 to H 3.7.
- H 3.3 \* Any potentially injurious husbandry procedures that are carried, including castration and tail docking (see H 3.4 to H 3.7), must be detailed in the VHP (see H 1.1), including:
- a) information on the methods used and steps taken to minimise suffering
  - b) an annual review of:
    - i) whether the procedures remain necessary
    - ii) the pain management and relief protocols used.
- H 3.4 \* Castration is not permitted without farm-specific permission from the RSPCA. Requests for permission to castrate lambs, together with information about the welfare-related reasons for the request (see information box below) must be submitted in writing to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department, who will consider the information provided, and may need to visit the farm before making a decision.

\* **i** **Circumstances in which permission to castrate lambs will not be granted include:**

- if the predicted slaughter age of ram lambs is below that of their sexual maturity
- if management practices allow flock segregation
- if castration is only being undertaken to satisfy meat buyers' (e.g. retailers'/processors') specifications.

**A pro-forma including advice on the information that needs to be sent to the RSPCA is available from the RSPCA Farm Animals Department or RSPCA Farm Livestock Officers/Freedom Food Assessors.**

- H 3.5 \* If castration is permitted (see H 3.4):
- a) it must only be performed by a trained, competent person
  - b) all possible measures must be taken to minimise suffering (see information box below)
  - c) it must only be carried out using the following methods:
    - i) application of a rubber ring between 24 hours and 7 days of age only
    - ii) in the event of the failure or unintentional omission of the rubber ring technique, by the use of an approved bloodless castrator, between 24 hours to 8 weeks of age only
    - iii) surgically by a veterinary surgeon using effective pre- or post- operative pain relief.

\* **i** **The impact of castration on lamb welfare is reduced by the use of pain relief, which should be applied whenever possible. Producers should discuss pain management and relief at castration with a veterinary surgeon and review the options regularly (see H 3.3).**

**The RSPCA is continuing to review the available information and research on this issue and intends to reflect any new developments in the RSPCA welfare standards. As soon as practical, viable methods of pain relief at castration become available their application will become a requirement under the standards.**

H 3.6 \* Tail docking is not permitted without farm-specific permission from the RSPCA. Requests for permission to tail dock lambs, together with information about the welfare-related reasons for the request (see information box below) must be submitted in writing to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department, who will consider the information provided, and may need to visit the farm before making a decision.

\* **i** A pro-forma including advice on the information that needs to be sent to the RSPCA is available from the RSPCA Farm Animals Department or RSPCA Farm Livestock Officers/Freedom Food Assessors.

\* **i** The risk of flystrike can often be reduced through various means other than tail docking, including:

- carefully timed application of appropriate fly deterrent chemicals
- crutching
- avoiding soiling of the rear end, e.g. through reducing worm burdens, considering diet etc.
- genetic selection of breeds/strains of sheep with lower risk of flystrike.

H 3.7 \* If tail docking is permitted (see H 3.6):

- a) it must only be performed by a trained, competent person
- b) all possible measures must be taken to minimise suffering (see information box below)
- c) it must be ensured that sufficient tail is retained to cover the vulva in the female and the anus in the male sheep
- d) it must only be carried out using the following methods:
  - i) application of a rubber ring between 24 hours and 7 days of age only
  - ii) thermocautery, which must only be used under veterinary advice, from 24 hours to 8 weeks of age only

\* **i** The impact of tail docking on lamb welfare is reduced by the use of pain relief, which should be applied whenever possible. Producers should discuss pain management and relief during tail docking with a veterinary surgeon and review the options regularly (see H 3.3).

The RSPCA is continuing to review the available information and research on this issue and intends to reflect any new developments in the RSPCA welfare standards. As soon as practical, viable methods of pain relief during tail docking become available their application will become a requirement under the standards.

## Casualty animals

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- H 4.1 Each farm must have provisions for humane killing/slaughter, without delay, of casualty sheep.
- H 4.2 Casualty killing/slaughter must be carried out by either:
- a) a named, trained, competent member of staff
  - b) a licensed slaughterman
  - c) a veterinary surgeon.
- H 4.3 If there is any doubt as to how to proceed in relation to H 4.2, the veterinary surgeon must be called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane killing/slaughter is required to prevent suffering.
- H 4.4 If an animal is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, then the animal must be promptly and humanely killed/slaughtered.

**i** It is not illegal to slaughter an animal to prevent further severe suffering if a method of humane slaughter is available on the premises and there is somebody competent to undertake the procedure. However, for non-emergency casualty slaughter, a slaughterman's licence is required if a captive bolt pistol is used.

- H 4.5 Managers and stock-keepers must:
- a) have access to a copy of the Sheep Veterinary Society booklet '*The Casualty Sheep*'
  - b) be familiar with its contents.
- H 4.6 All carcasses must be disposed of according to current legislation.
- H 4.7 A record must be kept of how and where all carcasses are disposed of.
- H 4.8 On-farm disposal must be in line with the relevant Defra code of good agricultural practice (air, water, soil).
- H 4.9 Carcass disposal in muckheaps is not permitted.

# Transport

Animal transport systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort. The transport and handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in transport must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

## Livestock markets

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T 1.1 Sheep must not be presented for sale at livestock markets.

**i** **Sheep that are presented for sale at livestock markets will automatically lose their Freedom Food status.**

## Casualty animals

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T 2.1 A sick or injured animal may only be transported if it is being taken for veterinary treatment or it is being taken to the nearest available place for humane slaughter, and then only if the said animal is suitable for loading, travelling and unloading.

T 2.2 \* Hauliers must:

- a) have access to a copy of the Defra booklet, '*Welfare of Animals During Transport - Guidance Notes: Part 2a, Fitness to Transport*'
- b) be familiar with its content
- c) implement its recommendations.

## Training

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T 3.1 Personnel in charge of sheep transporters must:

- a) have completed an approved training course, preferably validated
- b) be able to demonstrate competence in handling sheep when loading, unloading and whilst in transit.

**i** **Drivers need to be aware of the effect of their driving style on the welfare of livestock on-board vehicles. In particular, they should make every effort to corner smoothly and pull away/stop as gently as possible.**

T 3.1.1 Managers of livestock hauliers must use the Humane Slaughter Association's training video '*The Road Ahead – livestock welfare in transit*' as part of their staff training programme.

T 3.2 Animal handlers must be trained to:

- a) understand the likely stress factors sheep may be subject to
- b) appreciate how sheep react towards other sheep
- c) appreciate how sheep react towards humans
- d) appreciate how sheep react towards strange noises, sights, sounds and smells.

- T 3.3 Sheep have the following behaviour characteristics which must be taken into account when being moved:
- they have a wide field of vision and can see moving objects even at a long distance, so wherever possible their far vision should be restricted
  - they have acute hearing so must not be subjected to loud noise
  - they are gregarious animals and must not be left in isolation while in transit.

## Handling/loading/unloading

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**Sticks and flags may be used as benign handling aids, i.e. as extensions of the arms. Well trained dogs may also be used.**

- T 4.1 Sticks must not be used for hitting sheep.
- T 4.2 Electric goads must not be used.
- T 4.3 All handling systems must be designed and operated so as not to:
- impede movement of the sheep
  - to reduce the incidence of noise.
- T 4.4 Sheep must not be driven unless the exit or the way forward is clear.
- T 4.5 Loading facilities must provide a ramp of no more than a 20% incline.
- T 4.6 Both loading ramps and tail boards must be fitted with a means of preventing animals from falling off or slipping.
- T 4.7 All tailboards must be fitted with appropriately designed and spaced foot battens.
- T 4.8 If a loading ramp is to be modified or newly installed, a reverse ramp must be provided.



**When a 'reverse ramp' is installed, it is the vehicle that negotiates the incline until the tailgate is level with the ground and animals walk straight into or out of the vehicle on the level. Purpose built loading bays should be designed such that the vehicle is level during loading.**

- T 4.9 Races and gates must be designed and operated so as not to impede the movement of sheep.
- T 4.10 Gates and catches must be baffled to reduce the noise when they shut.

## Transport

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- T 5.1 The timing of transport for any purpose must be planned between haulier and producer, and slaughterhouse if applicable, to minimise travelling and waiting time for the sheep.
- T 5.2 All hauliers must have a written *Standard Operating and Emergency Procedure* to implement during transportation (see Appendix 2).
- T 5.3 Sheep must be unloaded immediately at the slaughterhouse.

## Transport

- T 5.4 Sheep must:
- be transported in their on-farm social groups (established at least 1 week prior to transport)
  - not be mixed at the abattoir.
- T 5.5 Sheep must not be transported for more than 8 hours from the first sheep loaded to the last sheep unloaded.
- T 5.6 Sheep must have access to:
- water up to the point of transport
  - food up to 4 hours before loading onto the lorry.
- T 5.7 The floors of all vehicles must be covered with sufficient bedding in order to provide comfort and reduce the likelihood of injury.
- T 5.8 All deaths and serious or widespread injuries must be recorded and reported to:
- the driver
  - the haulier
  - the slaughterhouse manager
  - the farm manager
- before the next consignment from the same source is collected.
- T 5.9 An on-farm record must be maintained of all deaths and serious or widespread injuries during transit.
- T 5.10 All deaths and serious or widespread injuries must be investigated and the results of the investigation recorded.
- T 5.11 Where causes relating to T 5.10 have been identified, prompt action must be taken to prevent further deaths and suffering occurring.
- T 5.12 Any transit mortality must be:
- the subject of a veterinary investigation
  - reported to the Freedom Food Assessor and RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer.
- T 5.13 All transporters must have a 'livestock capacity document' on board at all times.
-  **This will give data on the size of the transporter and the calculated carrying capacity for different livestock species under different climatic conditions.**
- T 5.14 Sheep must be penned within the lorry in groups of similar age and size.
- T 5.15 The following groups must not be mixed:
- unfamiliar rams over 6 months of age
  - unfamiliar weaned lambs under 3 months of age
  - polled and horned sheep.
- T 5.16 Sheep must be slaughtered as close as possible to their place of production.

## Transport space allowances

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T 6.1 On journeys longer than 3 hours, sheep must have enough space in which to lie down.

**i** Research suggests that sheep weighing 30 to 40kg require a space allowance of at least 0.27 to 0.3m<sup>2</sup> per sheep in order to lie down in transit. Correspondingly, greater space will be required by heavier sheep.

T 6.2 The following minimum space allowances must always be provided during transport:

	<b>Weight (kg)</b>	<b>Area (m<sup>2</sup> per animal)</b>
Shorn	< 55	0.2 to 0.3
	> 55	> 0.3
Unshorn	< 55	0.3 to 0.4
	> 55	> 0.4
Pregnant ewes	< 55	0.4 to 0.5
	> 55	> 0.5

# Slaughter

All slaughter/killing systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort. The pre-slaughter handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in the slaughter must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

## Management and training

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- S 1.1 Managers must develop and implement an animal welfare policy, which must include written procedures with regard to maintaining animal welfare in the abattoir, including the responsibilities and duties of staff and emergency procedures.
- S 1.2 The animal welfare policy (see S 1.1) must be regularly reviewed and updated.
- S 1.3 Managers must appoint at least one trained Animal Welfare Officer (AWO), who is responsible for the implementation of the animal welfare policy (see S 1.1).
- S 1.3.1 \* All AWOs must have attended the Bristol University Animal Welfare Officer training programme, or other recognised, named, validated course on animal welfare at abattoirs.
- S 1.4 Managers, in conjunction with the AWO (see S 1.3), must:
- develop and implement a training programme for all staff handling and slaughtering animals
  - ensure that staff are properly trained to carry out their duties and are competent to perform them.
-  **Where possible this training should be validated.**
- S 1.5 Managers must:
- have access to copies of The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) training programme '*Humane Slaughter – Taking Responsibility*', and '*Best practice guidelines for the welfare of sheep and goats in abattoirs*' (HSA 2004)
  - use them as part of the staff training programme.
- S 1.6 An AWO (see S 1.3) must:
- be present on the site at all times whilst slaughter is being carried out
  - make frequent and thorough checks throughout the day to ensure that animals are being effectively stunned and are insensible throughout the slaughter operation.
- S 1.7 Where it is found that animals are not being effectively stunned, the slaughter line must be stopped and immediate remedial action taken.
- S 1.8 The managers, AWOs (see S 1.3) and all slaughter staff must:
- have access to a copy of the current Defra codes of practice relating to slaughter
  - be familiar with their content.
- S 1.9 The AWO (see S 1.3) must ensure that animal welfare during the slaughter process is not compromised by operator fatigue.
- S 1.10 In order to reduce the likelihood of operator fatigue, managers must ensure that rotation of staff is practised as necessary, and recorded, as a Standard Operating Procedure.

## Casualty animals

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- S 2.1 Sheep who are not able to walk must be killed without delay, except in exceptional circumstances where a delay can be justified (see information box below), to ensure avoidance of suffering, and without moving them i.e. the animals must be killed on the lorry, in the lairage pen, or wherever they are situated, using emergency slaughter equipment and procedures.



**Delay in killing a sheep unable to walk can only be justified in exceptional circumstances i.e. when the welfare of other sheep would otherwise be adversely affected.**

- S 2.1.1 In order to reduce delay in killing a sheep that is unable to walk, appropriate, well-maintained slaughter/killing equipment must be easily accessible for use in such emergencies.
- S 2.2 Killing methods for disease control must be in accordance with S 6.1 or, alternatively, an injection of an overdose of a drug with anaesthetic properties which causes immediate loss of consciousness and then death, may be administered by a veterinary surgeon.
- S 2.3 \* All staff responsible for checking animals on arrival must:
- a) have access to a copy of the Defra booklet, 'Welfare of Animals During Transport - Guidance Notes: Part 2a, Fitness to Transport'
  - b) be familiar with its content
  - c) implement its recommendations.

## Lairage

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- S 3.1 Sheep must be provided with an adequate quantity of appropriate food on arrival at the lairage, and twice daily thereafter, unless they are to be slaughtered within 12 hours.
- S 3.2 Slaughterhouse managers must ensure that the premises are constructed and maintained so as to prevent any injury being caused to animals confined there.
- S 3.3 The slaughterhouse must provide a lairage facility which:
- a) is constructed so as to provide shelter from direct sunlight and adverse weather conditions
  - b) provides animals with a dry lying area (see S 3.4)
  - c) is of adequate size and construction for the number of animals confined there (see S 3.4)
  - d) provides adequate and draught-free ventilation
  - e) is thermally comfortable for the sheep (i.e. the sheep are neither overheated nor chilled)
  - f) is properly lit to permit animals to be inspected
  - g) has drainage facilities for faeces and urine
  - h) is able to be thoroughly cleaned between batches of animals
  - i) has isolation pens in which sick or injured animals can be isolated and, if necessary, humanely slaughtered, these pens being located close to the unloading area and within easy access of the stunning area
  - j) provides easy access to adequate water, which must be available at all times, and to food, if necessary (see S 3.1).

## Slaughter

- S 3.4 Staff in charge of the lairage must ensure that animals confined overnight have at least the following space allowances:

Type and weight (kg)	Straw bedded area (m <sup>2</sup> per animal)
Ewes	
45 to 60	1.1 to 1.2
60 to 90	1.2 to 1.4
Hoggets	
20 to 30	0.7
30 to 40	0.8
40 to 50	1.0
Rams	1.5 to 2.0

- S 3.4.1 When animals are confined in lairage for shorter periods, at least two thirds of the space requirements stated in S 3.4 must be provided.
- S 3.5 Sheep which, because of their sex, age or origin are likely to be aggressive, must be separated from each other at lairage.
- S 3.6 Sheep in lairage pens must not be exposed to bright artificial light or direct sunlight except during antemortem inspection, which must be carried out in a minimum of 220 lux illumination.



**A number of abattoirs have installed Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) monitors within the pre-slaughter handling and slaughter areas. This can be a very effective way of enabling those responsible for animal welfare within the abattoir to monitor whether welfare standards are being maintained at each stage – pre-slaughter, and during both stunning and sticking. The installation of CCTV systems is, therefore, very strongly recommended by the RSPCA.**

- S 3.7 Milk lambs must be slaughtered within 2 hours of arrival at the abattoir.

## Pre-slaughter handling

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- S 4.1 Sheep must be handled calmly and quietly, with care to avoid unnecessary excitement or distress.
- S 4.2 \* Races and passageways must:
- be designed, constructed and operated so as to encourage unimpeded forward movement of the sheep
  - not contain any projections or unnecessary obstructions
  - be lit appropriately.
  - by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 not contain any right-angled bends.
- S 4.3 Races must have an exit gate immediately prior to the stunning area which allows sheep to be taken back to the lairage.
- S 4.4 \* The presence and use of electric goads in any abattoir is prohibited.
- S 4.5 Flooring must be non-slip in races and passageways.
- S 4.6 Sheep must not be driven unless the way forward is clear, and there is adequate space available for them to move into.

## Slaughter

- S 4.7 Work routines for stunning and slaughter must be arranged to ensure that all sheep are slaughtered within 18 hours of their last feed.

### Slaughter equipment

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- S 5.1 The equipment used for the stunning and killing of animals, including the stunning pen and/or restraint devices, must be designed, manufactured and maintained to ensure rapid and effective stunning or killing.
- S 5.2 All slaughter equipment must be thoroughly and appropriately cleaned after use.
- S 5.3 Slaughter equipment must be checked at least once daily by an AWO to ensure it is in working order and in a good state of repair.
- S 5.4 A record of the check on slaughter equipment must be made.
- S 5.5 Reserve equipment for the stunning and killing of animals must be kept at the place of slaughter for use in an emergency.
- S 5.6 Reserve equipment must be checked at least once weekly by an AWO to ensure it is in working order and a good state of repair.
- S 5.7 A record must be made of the check on reserve equipment.

### Slaughter/killing methods

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- S 6.1 Sheep must only be slaughtered/killed using one of the following methods:

- head-to-back electrical stun/kill
- free bullet,

or

- captive bolt stunning
- head only electrical stunning

which renders sheep instantaneously insensible and insensitive to pain, followed by bleeding.



**Signs of an effective stun/kill:**

**a) head-to-back electrical stun/kill**

- animal becomes rigid with slight tremors
- body gradually relaxes

**b) free bullet**

- animal collapses immediately
- no rhythmic breathing
- no corneal reflex
- twitching and convulsions may start shortly afterwards

**For signs of an effective stun using captive bolt or head only electrical stunning, see information box below S 7.1.**

## Slaughter

- S 6.1.1 Deviation from the signs outlined in a) or b) in the information box above may be an indication that the killing procedure has been ineffective, and immediate action must be taken to ensure the animals are swiftly killed.
- S 6.2 In the case of electrical stun/kill:
- a) it must be ensured that electrical stunning equipment is delivering the appropriate current
  - b) the current must be checked at the start of the killing process for each batch of animals using a tester which can simulate the resistance offered by the sheep and can check the current and amperage output at the tongs
  - c) the outcome of each check referred to in b) must be recorded.
- S 6.3 When using a 50 Hertz a.c. supply:
- a) the current level must not be less than 1.0 amps, or 0.6 amps in the case of lambs
  - b) an output voltage of at least 200V must be delivered for at least 3 seconds.

## Stunning

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- S 7.1 Sheep must be stunned prior to slaughter by means of a stunning system which renders them instantaneously unconscious and insensitive to pain and maintains that state until the point of death.

**i** a) **Signs of effective captive bolt stunning (one phase):**

- animal collapses
- no rhythmic breathing
- fixed, fully dilated pupils
- no corneal reflex (i.e. no blink reaction when the surface of the eyeball is lightly touched)
- relaxed jaw
- tongue hanging out

b) **Signs of effective head-only electrical stunning:**

- i) **Tonic phase**
  - animal collapses and becomes rigid
  - no rhythmic breathing
  - head is raised
  - forelegs extended and hind legs flexed into the body
- ii) **Clonic phase**
  - gradual relaxation of muscles
  - paddling or involuntary kicking (can be severe)
  - downward movement of eyeballs
  - urination and/or defecation

**Deviation from the signs outlined in a) or b) above may be an indication that the stun has been ineffective or that animals are beginning to recover from the stun.**

- S 7.1.1 If there is any indication that a stun has not been completely effective, or that animals are displaying signs of recovery from a stun, re-stunning must take place immediately.
- S 7.2 To ensure that electrical stunning equipment is delivering the appropriate current it must be checked using a tester which can simulate the resistance offered by the sheep and can check the current and amperage output at the tongs.

## Slaughter

- S 7.3 When using a 50 Hertz a.c. supply:
- the current level must not be less than 1.0 amps, or 0.6 amps in the case of lambs
  - an output voltage of at least 200V must be delivered for at least 3 seconds.

**i** Current legislation requires that any electrical equipment used for stunning an animal in the slaughterhouse is fitted with a failsafe device that will prevent it from delivering current below that which it has been set to deliver, in order to ensure an effective stun. However, to date, it has not proved possible to develop an effective device of this kind. At present, therefore, the difficulty of achieving full compliance with this legislative requirement is appreciated.

- S 7.4 Sheep must only be stunned when they can be stuck immediately afterwards with a stun-to-stick interval of no more than 15 seconds.

- S 7.5 Techniques which lower the resistance of the sheep to electrical current must be used.

**i** Resistance to current flow may vary, depending on the condition of the electrodes, the site of contact with the sheep's head, and how tightly the electrodes are pressed onto the head. The efficiency of current flow can be improved by regular decarbonising and cleaning of electrodes (when dry) with a wire brush.

- S 7.6 The effectiveness of stunning, in terms of ensuring immediate unconsciousness in all animals which remains until death, must be monitored at the start of slaughter and at least every 2 hours after that, and the outcome recorded.

- S 7.6.1 When assessing the effectiveness of stunning (S 7.6) at least 10 animals must be checked on each occasion.

- S 7.6.2 The records of checks on the effectiveness of stunning must include:

- the name of the person undertaking the checks
- the number of sheep checked each time
- the date and time of the checks
- the number of non-compliant sheep
- the action taken to correct ineffective stunning.

## Sticking

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- S 8.1 After incision of the blood vessels, there must be no further dressing procedure on the animal for at least 20 seconds and, in any case, until all brain-stem reflexes have ceased.

- S 8.2 Sheep must be stuck using a sharp knife which is a minimum of 5 inches (12cm) long.

- S 8.3 Blood loss from the sheep must be rapid, profuse and sufficient to ensure that the animal is dead.

**i** Two methods can ensure achievement of S 8.3 – a chest stick (i.e. thoracic bleeding method) which is the best method, or a throat cut.

## Slaughter

- S 8.3.1 Both carotid arteries and jugular veins (in the case of a throat cut), or the major blood vessels near the heart from which they arise (in the case of a chest stick), must always be completely severed during sticking.
- S 8.4 Where one person is responsible for the stunning, shackling, hoisting and bleeding of sheep, they must complete all these operations on each individual sheep in turn.
- S 8.5 No dressing procedures must be undertaken until at least 20 seconds after bleeding has commenced.



# SUPPLEMENTARY STANDARDS FOR DAIRY SHEEP

The following standards for the care of dairy sheep are additional requirements to the '*RSPCA welfare standards for sheep*', which must be read in conjunction with this document.

## Food and water (dairy sheep)

### Food

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**i** It is recognised that dairy sheep during lactation will not be able to attain sufficient nutrients and energy from grazing at pasture alone, and will require supplementary concentrates as well.

- FW(D) 1.1 Dairy lambs must not be weaned before they are capable of consuming sufficient quantities of solid feed to fulfil their nutritional requirements.

**i** As a guide, dairy lambs should not be less than 3 to 4 weeks of age at weaning, unless in individual cases, health and welfare considerations dictate otherwise.

### Water

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- FW(D) 2.1 Drinking facilities must be sufficient, and appropriately positioned (e.g. away from the entrance/exit to the dairy), to ensure that all sheep waiting in the collecting yards, both prior to and following milking, have ready access to sufficient quantities of clean, fresh water.

**i** It is particularly important that lactating dairy ewes are provided with sufficient quantities of water. It is recognised that there will be variation in the numbers of animals waiting at any one time and in the waiting period on different farms. It is necessary, therefore, to take account of these criteria when calculating the provision of water facilities needed to satisfy the standard. (See also the Water section in the '*RSPCA welfare standards for sheep*').



## Environment (dairy sheep)

### Milking parlour

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- E(D) 1.1 The highest standards of hygiene must be practised in the parlour to reduce the risk of infection.
- E(D) 1.2 Udder, teats and flanks must be clean, dry and free from sores on entry to the parlour.
- E(D) 1.3 Udders must be appropriately cleansed prior to milking.
- E(D) 1.4 \* Parlour staff must have clean hands when handling teats in order to reduce the risk of disease transmission.

 **Consideration should be given to the use of rubber gloves.**

- E(D) 1.5 Statutory requirements (e.g. relating to examination of milk) under current Dairy Products (Hygiene) Regulations must be adhered to.
- E(D) 1.6 All cases of mastitis must be treated promptly, and underlying predisposing factors corrected.
- E(D) 1.7 Any sheep with mastitis or other udder diseases must be marked and milked last, and the milk discarded. Alternatively, they must be milked with a separate cluster and bucket.
- E(D) 1.8 Sheep with chronic mastitis must be identified and humanely slaughtered.
- E(D) 1.9 Clinical cases of mastitis and mastitis tube usage must be monitored and recorded.
- E(D) 1.10 Milking machinery must be properly maintained.
- E(D) 1.11\* All teats must be dipped in or sprayed with an approved teat disinfectant after milking in order to reduce the risk of disease transmission.
- E(D) 1.12\* If teats are dry, chapped or cracked, appropriate action must be taken to investigate the cause of the problem and solve it.

 **Consideration should be given to the use of an emollient.**

- E(D) 1.13 Measures must be in place to minimize the risk/incidence of mastitis in dry sheep.
- E(D) 1.14 Milking machine testing must be carried out and recorded at least once every 6 months.

- E(D) 1.15 Proper application, function and maintenance of the milking machinery must be ensured, by practising the following:
- a) avoid under and over milking
  - b) select appropriate teat cup liners
  - c) check teat cup liners daily and replace damaged/rough teat liners
  - d) exchange liners according to manufacturer's recommendations
  - e) ensure correct pulsation rate and a correct release/squeeze ratio
  - f) the vacuum regulation must be functioning correctly and preventing vacuum fluctuation.
- E(D) 1.16 The waiting/standing time for sheep prior to and after milking must be minimised.

**i** As a guide, waiting should be limited to around 2 hours.

## Dairy

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- E(D) 2.1 The highest standards of hygiene must be practised in the dairy, and producers must adhere to the appropriate Food Hygiene Regulation(s).

## Thermal environment and ventilation

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- E(D) 3.1 Dairy sheep at pasture must have access to shade and shelter, either natural or artificial at all times, in order to protect them from adverse weather conditions.

## Space allowances

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**i** When housed, additional space may be required by dairy ewes when lactating, particularly in the case of higher yielding breeds with larger udders. As a guide, for such animals, the space allowances in E 5.3 of the '*RSPCA welfare standards for sheep*' should be increased by around 20%.

## Health (dairy sheep)

**i** There are indications that some breeds of dairy sheep may be particularly susceptible to lameness problems such as foot rot. It is, therefore, most important that effective methods of lameness prevention/control are in place, and form part of the veterinary health plan, and that levels of lameness are regularly monitored and reviewed.

### Surplus lambs

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- H(D) 1.1 When it is intended to euthanase lambs that are not required for rearing, and for which no suitable alternative market is available, producers must:
- a) contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department in order to discuss and agree on an acceptable method to be used for the purposes of euthanasia, which will then be confirmed in writing by the RSPCA
  - b) ensure that the agreed procedure is only undertaken by a veterinary surgeon or other trained, named, competent personnel using appropriate, well-maintained equipment.

## Flock biosecurity

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All approved units must have a written plan describing precautions to limit the introduction of and/or spread of disease onto and within the unit. (This could be considered as part of the health plan). A Flock health plan is important from financial, welfare and food safety perspectives.

The written policy must include procedures for cleaning and disinfection of buildings and equipment, specifying the approved dilutions at which chemicals are to be used.

All such chemicals must be on the approved Defra list for the Purposes of the Diseases of Animals (Approved Disinfectants) Order 1978. Exceptions are acceptable only under veterinary direction.

The written policy must include procedures for pest control.

Units must have written waste management procedures (manure, slurry, all farm waste and general rubbish). Waste materials of any nature must not be a risk to animal health or compromise the control of pests.

Domestic animals must not have access to the unit, other than farm dogs and cats, which must be in a clean, healthy condition and regularly wormed (recorded in medicine book).

Domestic pets, birds, and pests must not have access to carcasses.

Feed stores, offices, toilets, etc., must be maintained in a clean, hygienic condition.

### Transport – standard operating and emergency procedure

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Items to be included

1. RSPCA welfare standards relating to transport of sheep.
2. Procedure for loading/unloading of sheep delivery vehicles.
3. Procedure for delivery of sheep to customer sites.
4. Daily journey sheet.
5. Sheep delivery report.
6. List of good hygiene measures, including procedure for cleaning of lorries prior to collection of sheep.
7. Total quality management leaflet – if appropriate.
8. Operating procedures for roadside checks.
9. Accident procedure.
10. Out of hours telephone numbers and 'emergency procedure'.
11. Mobile phones or other communication equipment (and procedures for use).
12. Fire extinguishers.
13. Tyres – punctures – codes of practice.
- \* 14. FTA – the current version of the '*The driver's handbook*' including tachograph regulations.
15. Certificate of motor insurance.
16. Guidelines on correct environmental conditions during the journey, depending on length of journey and ambient temperature.
- \* 17. The current version of the Defra guidance booklet on rules for identifying sheep and goats.

## Pest control policy

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Levels of potentially harmful pests (e.g. rodents and birds) must be humanely managed to avoid the risk of disease spread to humans and animals, damage to buildings and services, contamination and spoilage of feed.

Methods of physical exclusion must be included whenever possible. If these are inadequate or unsuccessful, other approaches must be enacted.

Approved production units must be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to minimise risk of pests.

Domestic animals must not have access to the unit, other than farm dogs and cats, which must be in a healthy condition and regularly wormed (record to be kept in medicine record book).

Domestic pets, pests or birds must not have access to carcasses.

Feed stores, offices, toilets etc, must be maintained in a clean, hygienic, tidy condition.

Pesticides must be covered by the farm COSHH assessment, if required to be in place.

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