



HSA Centenary International Symposium (June 30- July 1, 2011, Portsmouth UK)

Recent Advances in the Welfare of Livestock at Slaughter

Conference tidbits

- Over 200 attendees.
- Representation from: research/academic, animal welfare, government, farming and business communities, charitable and veterinary communities.
- Symposium proceedings will be published in the UFAW's journal, *Animal Welfare* in early 2012.
- Abstracts of presentations and posters available at: www.hsa.org.uk/symposium%202011.html
- Canadians in attendance: Jackie Wepruk (NFACC), Bruno Letendre (Dairy Farmers of Canada), Ian Duncan (Global Animal Partnership, University of Guelph – professor emeritus), Jennifer Woods (J Livestock Services Ltd), Penny Lawlis (OMAFRA).

This is a summary of key messages from speakers that I found to be of interest or where I was asked to bring back information from specific speakers. **Please feel free to follow up.** I may have more information (e.g., abstracts, more detailed notes, photos of some posters).

Day One – June 30, 2011

A Gavinelli and D Simonin (European Commission, Belgium) **Future challenges of the new European regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing and its relevance to international trade**

- New EU slaughter regulations will include requirements around:
 - staff competency – for staff at slaughterhouses and fur farmers
 - responsibilities for operators – must take ownership of the issue through SOPs, monitoring/oversight, having an “Animal Welfare Officer” on staff
 - technical provisions – approved methods, technical definitions and updates that allow quick adoption of new techniques
 - stronger enforcement tools – ensure a sound scientific basis to support enforcement
- Regulations will require equivalent standards for importing countries.
- A certificate attesting to the equivalency will be necessary.

V Sandilands, N Sparks, L Baker, ABM Raj and T Pennycott (Scottish Agricultural College and University of Bristol, UK) **Methods for whole house gassing of poultry**

- Tested 3 methods for whole house gassing using liquid CO₂ – all were effective in reaching lethal gas levels quickly and uniformly. (*Note: if interested I can provide the abstract and additional notes*).
- Conclusion: liquid CO₂ is viable and humane under real conditions.

GJ Coleman and PH Hemsforth (Monash University and The University of Melbourne, Australia),

The attitudes and behaviour of stock people at Australian sheep and cattle abattoirs

- Significant correlations exist between stockperson attitudes and behaviour.
- The pressures imposed by perceptions around lack of control over their actions, time constraints, effect of poor facilities were all associated with frequent use of forceful handling.
- There is an opportunity to improve stockperson behaviour at abattoirs by targeting attitudes with educational and training materials, similar to training used in other livestock species.

T Grandin (Colorado State University, USA), **Auditing animal welfare and making practical improvements**

- Reviewed her numerical scoring system.
- 2 causes of issues: people training and/or equipment.
- Temple has videos on You Tube describing humane slaughter methods.

M Cullinane, E O'Sullivan, G Collins, DM Collins and SJ More (Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, The Veterinary Department of Cork County Council and Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis, Ireland) **Veterinary certificates for emergency or casualty slaughter bovines in Ireland: are the welfare needs of certified bovine animals adequately protected?**

- Ireland currently allows the transport of unfit animals if accompanied by a veterinary certificate.
- A review of bovine cases where veterinary certificates were issued uncovered problems with:
 - Veterinarians allowing inappropriate transport
 - Farmers ignoring veterinary certificate directions
- On-farm emergency slaughter is now a viable option in Ireland, so it should be encouraged. If veterinary certificates are allowed to continue, they require stricter stipulations.
- Veterinarians are responsible under EU legislation if an unfit animal is transported under a veterinary certificate he/she signed.

JA Lines, P Berry and P Cook (Silsoe Livestock Systems, PB Technical and Food Animal Initiative, UK)

Improving the poultry shackle line

(Note: I have a copy of the text of Jeff's presentation; the Power Point is available at:

<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/3876000/Improvements%20to%20the%20shackle%20line.ppt>

- Options evaluated: compliant shackles, breast support conveyor, and head only water bath stunning.
- Compliant shackles: shackles were too small, compressing bird legs. Redesigned to fit bird legs and system operated well.
- Breast support conveyor: avoids the inverting and suspending of birds. Tested on a small broiler processing plant and now used on two commercial turkey processing lines. Results: better water bath entry, reduced red wing tips and joint injuries.
- Head only water bath stunning: immersion of a bird's head in the water bath stunner while simultaneously passing a 2000Hz, 25 - 30 mA current through the body of the bird from the shackle to the waterbath controls wing flapping.

Day Two – July 1, 2011

Jia Zili and Sun JJ (Beijing Chaoyang Anhua Animal Product Safety Research Institute, China and World Society for the Protection of Animals), **WSPA and APSRI humane slaughter programme in China – STEPS®**

- There are **20,000** pig slaughter plants in China, with 1.5 million workers (10% are involved in pre-slaughter).
- Legislation and Codes are being developed around humane slaughter, along with training programs.
- Poker is a popular pastime, so the training program utilizes playing cards as an extension technique.
- Computer generated graphics are used to illustrate processes/procedures (*note: they were of excellent quality*)
- The main supplier of McDonald's China is at the forefront of the humane slaughter program.
- Humane Slaughter Code for pigs launched in 2009. Other Codes being developed.
- A new program for general standards of animal welfare assessment has been approved by the Chinese central government.

K van Driel, M Farish, H van de Weerd, J Talling, M Mitchell and P Kettlewell (Food and Environment Research Agency, Scottish Agricultural College, and ADAS, UK), **Journey duration and welfare of pigs transported to slaughter in the UK**

- Many factors along with the interaction between factors (e.g., temperature, waiting times) affect the welfare of pigs in transport, and may be more important than transport time alone.
- The data collected indicates that travel durations of up to 18.5 hours have no obviously negative effect on pig welfare.

P Llonch, P Rodríguez, A Velarde, V Abreu de Lima and A Dalmau (IRTA, Spain and UNESP Jaboticabal, Brasil) **Aversion to the inhalation of nitrogen and carbon dioxide mixtures compared to high concentrations of carbon dioxide for stunning rabbits**

- 300 million+ rabbits are slaughtered in Europe each year. Rabbits are the 2nd only to poultry for numbers of animals slaughtered.

C Berg, L Nordensten, J Hultgren and B Algiers (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden and Swedish National Board of Agriculture, Sweden), **Stun and meat quality of sheep under commercial conditions**

- There was no significant association between current level in head-only electrical stunning of sheep and blood splash.

FG Roberts, AJ Lucas and S Johnson (Kingston Maurward College, Integra Food Secure Ltd and Tesco Stores Ltd, UK), **The use of a single empirical outcome measure to assess welfare in slaughter plants: between and within sector comparisons of the supply base for a major retail multiple**

- Tesco Stores utilizes Integra Food Secure Ltd as an independent, UKAS accredited body whose inspectors are deployed globally throughout the Tesco supply base for the UK market. Inspections have been ongoing for twelve years.
- A critical control point based approach has been used as a model to develop a new cross-sector scoring system that identifies issues based on welfare importance (upper/lower) and occurrence (isolated/numerous/systematic).
- Outcome status is recorded as “green,” “amber,” “red” (as per traffic light system) or “blue” (indicating best possible practice) – called the BRAG status.
- 300 inspections carried out over a two year period in red meat and poultry abattoirs (in UK, EU and non-EU countries) indicate that the approach has led to a general sustained improvement of welfare standards. Inspected parties are striving to reach “green” or “blue” status (as opposed to previous pass/fail approach).

Jennifer Woods (J Livestock Services Ltd & Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada, Canada), **The welfare of horses at slaughter: the development of recommended handling guidelines and animal welfare assessment tool for horses**

- Guidelines and assessment tool developed in consultation with animal welfare scientists, equine behaviourists and industry representatives from across North America
- Standards use objective numerical scoring for the percentage of horses stunned correctly and the percentage of horses falling during handling
- This tool for assessing the welfare of horses destined for slaughter was released November 2010
- More information is at www.horsewelfare.ca

T Cassidy and A Wilson (Food and Veterinary Office, Ireland) **Equivalency between EU and third country standards for animal welfare at slaughter (findings from inspections of the Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission)**

- In 2011 the Food and Veterinary Office, of the European Commission’s DG Health and Consumers, will conduct inspections in nine non-EU countries which have significant meat exports to the EU.
- The goal is to determine how well these countries’ EU-approved slaughter plants comply with the new EU slaughter requirements taking effect from January 2013.