

Poultry welfare at slaughter: hazards identified, measures proposed



EFSA has proposed measures to address the animal welfare hazards most commonly observed during the slaughter of poultry for food production and disease control.

A comprehensive overview published today covers the entire slaughter process from arrival and unloading of birds through stunning to bleeding and killing. It identifies a number of hazards that give rise to welfare issues – such as pain, thirst, hunger or restricted movement – and proposes preventive and corrective measures where possible.

Most of the hazards are the result of staff failings e.g. lack of training and skilled personnel. EFSA's advice highlights the importance of staff being adequately trained in the different phases of slaughter and for clear identification of roles and responsibilities.

The new scientific opinions are the first in a series of updates on welfare of animals at slaughter requested by the European Commission. EFSA will publish further opinions in 2020 on pigs (March), cattle (June), and other species (December).

They are all based on the latest available scientific knowledge and are being developed in consultation with animal welfare experts from EU Member States.

The findings will be used by the European Commission in discussions with the World Organisation on Animal Health (OIE) aimed at aligning approaches to animal welfare at slaughter.