To those on the attached circulation list

26 January 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

CALL FOR INFORMATION ON THE WELFARE OF GOATS AT THE TIME OF KILLING

The Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) has begun a review of the welfare of goats at the time of killing. The review will be carried out by FAWC’s Welfare at Killing Standing Committee and the aim is for FAWC to produce a Report early in 2019.

Recent rapid expansion in the dairy goat industry and limited evidence about the goat meat industry brings into question how and where goats are killed at the end of their useful life. Defra has requested this review to inform policy.

The aim is to provide a detailed review of the animal welfare implications of the various circumstances in which goats might be killed and the methods used. Objectives of this review include:

a. To investigate the landscape of the goat industry and how this affects the choices and practices regarding when, where and how goats are killed;
b. Reviewing slaughterhouse processes and practices and the main methods used for stunning and killing goats of different age groups at the slaughterhouse and on-farm;
c. Assessing the animal welfare issues relating to the killing of goats; and
d. Making recommendations to improve the welfare of goats at the time of killing.

The scope of the review will include the meat and dairy goat industry, smallholders as well as goats kept for their hair (i.e. stunned and religious slaughter, male kids, cull nannies, breeding animals, end of life choices), fitness to travel, killing on-farm, unloading, lairaging and handling at the slaughterhouse, methods of stunning and killing, volumes of production and destination of production to cover all UK regions.
On-farm killing methods for goats, particularly neonates, were covered in a recent FAWC study on the welfare of animals killed on-farm to be published shortly, but more information may emerge from a detailed review of the goat sector.

You are invited to provide views on some or all of these areas of interest to FAWC.

1. What is the landscape of the goat industry as a whole: i.e. size of commercial dairy, meat and hair sectors; goat breeds kept in the UK; extent of smallholder and pet ownership, and how does this affect the choices and practices regarding when, where and how goats are killed?

2. Numbers of goats going to commercial slaughterhouses and those killed elsewhere. Extent of non-stun and different stun methods at the time of slaughter. FAWC has recently completed a study on on-farm killing methods, including goats, but it would be useful to have an idea of the relative scale of on-farm killing and commercial slaughter, which the previous study did not focus on.

3. Are male kids from the dairy goat sector killed at an early age or reared for meat? Is there sufficient demand for goat meat to sustain rearing males from the dairy sector for meat? Is there a market for kid meat, and if yes are meat goats also killed as kids?

4. How and where are cull dairy goats killed and for what purpose?

5. Fitness to travel to slaughter and welfare during transport issues for goats.

6. Slaughterhouse lairage welfare issues, e.g. separation of horned and non-horned individuals.

7. Are restraint and handling systems currently used in slaughterhouses appropriate for goat welfare, e.g. are lamb handling systems in slaughterhouses used for goats and are they a suitable fit for goat anatomy and behaviour?

8. What are the main methods of stunning and killing different ages and breeds in the slaughterhouse and the welfare implications?

9. Is there farm assurance applied to the goat sectors and to goat slaughter and killing?

10. How do smallholders and pet keepers access services to despatch goats at end of life?

How to respond

Please email your responses to fawcsecretariat@defra.gsi.gov.uk by Friday, 9 March 2018.

Or post to: FAWC Secretariat, Defra, Area 5B, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR

Chairman: Peter Jinman, OBE, BVet Med, Dip Arb, FCIArb, MRCVS
FAWC website: https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/farm-animal-welfare-committee-fawc
In addition to this call for information, as the work progresses, we may write to some organisations with specific questions. Some organisations may be invited to discussions with the Group.

FAWC may wish to visit slaughterhouses that illustrate some of the approaches to goat slaughter. If you are aware of any likely candidates or can offer assistance in this please let the Secretariat know when you respond.

It is usual to include in FAWC Reports the names of those organisations who have contributed evidence. If you would prefer that your name is excluded, please let us know when you reply.

If you are aware of any relevant organisations who we may have omitted please let us have contact details.

Further information about FAWC can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/farm-animal-welfare-committee-fawc.

Yours faithfully

Peter Jinman
Chairman, Farm Animal Welfare Committee
Circulation

ADAS
Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
Angora goat society
Animal Health and Welfare Board for England
Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group, Wales
Association of British Abattoir Operators
Association of Government Vets
Association of Independent Meat Suppliers
Association of Meat Inspectors
Assured Food Standards
British Boer Goat Society
British Meat Processors Association (BMPA)
British Retail Consortium
British Goat Society
British Goat Veterinary Society
British Veterinary Association (BVA)
Compassion in World Farming
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
DAERA NI
Defra
Farm Animal Initiative
Farm Assured Welsh Livestock
FDQ
Farmers' Union of Wales
Food Standards Agency Operations
Goat Veterinary Society
HCC Meat Promotion Wales
Humane Slaughter Association (HSA)
LANTRA
Licensed Animal Slaughterers & Salvage Association (LASSA)
Livestockwise
Local Government Association
Meat Training Council
Milking Goat Association
National Farmers Union
National Farmers' Union of Scotland
National Farmers' Union (Wales)
National Federation of Meat and Food Traders
Practical Sheep, Goats and Alpacas
Quality Meat Scotland
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
Royal Veterinary College
RSPCA Assured
Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers
Scottish Government
Scotland's Rural College
Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Ulster Farmers Union
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare
University of Bristol
Veterinary Public Health Association
Welsh Government
Welsh Local Government Association
World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)