

Policy position: non-stun slaughter

Our view is that all animals should be stunned before slaughter. If slaughter without stunning is still to be permitted, then any meat or fish from this source must be clearly labelled. This will enable consumers to fully understand the choice they are making when purchasing such products.

Our concern is for the welfare of those animals that are not stunned. Our concerns have nothing to do with the expression of religious beliefs but with the practice of killing by throat-cutting without pre-stunning.

BVA is calling for one clear mandatory EU-wide method of production food labelling system, which should include requirements relating to animal welfare outcome safeguards. We believe that the current voluntary labelling system is confusing for consumers.

Statement on post-cut stunning

Our position on welfare at slaughter is clear but as a result of the current absence of a legal requirement for all animals to be stunned prior to slaughter, a separate stand-alone position statement has been developed on the option of post-cut stunning.

We recognise that while pre-stunning is superior from a welfare point of view, should non-stun slaughter continue to be permitted, post-cut stunning offers a valid means of reducing the suffering of animals at slaughter. Therefore, the option of post-cut stunning is not equivalent to pre-cut stunning but presents a highly desirable refinement if government policy does not change.

Where an immediate post-cut stun is applied, we believe that the requirement for sheep/goats to remain stationary for a minimum period of 20 seconds is unnecessary as stunning renders the animal immediately unconscious and insensible to pain.

For additional information on this issue, please contact policy@bva.co.uk