

NPA BRIEFING



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NPA briefing note on mandatory use of CCTV in abattoirs

Issue:

While an increasing number of Food Business Operatives (FBOs) have CCTV in place to record slaughter operations, the issue of CCTV in slaughterhouses has been brought to both public and political attention as a result of pressure from animal welfare organisations and media reports of covert filming in slaughterhouses.

Background:

- The legislation covering the welfare of all farmed animals within the UK during the handling and slaughter process is EC1099/2009 ^[1].
- All abattoirs processing more than 1000 pigs per year are required under this regulation to appoint a trained Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) to assist them in ensuring compliance with the legislation.
- Once the domestic legislation The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) 2013 comes into force, all staff involved in the handling and care of animals before slaughter will be legally required to obtain a Certificate of Competence ^[2].
- Data from the Food Standards Agency indicates that 92% of pigs in the UK are processed at premises operating CCTV ^[3]. This is due to CCTV operation being a requirement of assurance schemes including Freedom Foods ^[4] and British Quality Assured Pork ^[5].
- Additionally, most major retailers (including Asda, the Co-operative, Iceland, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Lidl and Waitrose) now insist upon the use of CCTV in the abattoirs of their supply chain ^[3].
- Abattoirs not supplying to food chains under assurance schemes and abattoirs supplying to wholesale trade may not currently be required by their customers to install CCTV.
- While the benefits of CCTV use in abattoirs are wide-ranging, there are also some limitations. For example, old systems that rely on fixed camera positions in only a few areas may provide footage that is unrepresentative of the site as a whole. Image quality may also be an issue.
- The Farm Animal Welfare Committee recently published an Opinion on CCTV in slaughterhouses recommending that all approved slaughterhouse operators should install CCTV in all areas where live animals are kept, stunned and slaughtered ^[3]. A number of other recommendations are also made in the report.

NPA position:

- There are a number of existing legal requirements and industry-led initiatives to ensure the welfare of pigs during unloading, lairage, stunning and slaughter is protected.
- That said, NPA sees great value in the use of CCTV to record and audit slaughterhouse practices, provide footage for staff training and development and consequently increase consumer confidence. We therefore support the use of CCTV in abattoirs, mandatory or otherwise.
- To maximise the benefit of CCTV, consistent sampling and auditing protocols for systematic review of the footage should be developed and employed.
- NPA agrees with the opinion of the Farm Animal Welfare Committee that “CCTV should not be seen as a replacement for conventional monitoring, verification, auditing and inspection regimes... CCTV needs to work as an adjunct and accompaniment to physical observation and supervisory presences”^[3]. We also believe that certificated training and continual professional development form the basis of professional abattoir operations
- NPA believes that CCTV footage should primarily remain within the food industry and not be disseminated widely, to ensure the working environment for slaughterhouse operatives is secure and built on mutual trust. Protocols for data protection, use and disclosure should be generated as a priority when establishing CCTV systems.

References

^[1] http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/slaughter/regulation_1099_2009_en.pdf

^[2] <https://www.gov.uk/farm-animal-welfare-at-slaughter>

^[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/400796/Opinion_on_CC_TV_in_slaughterhouses.pdf

^[4] <http://www.freedomfood.co.uk/media/75824/RSPCA-Welfare-Standards-for-Pigs-2014-website-1-.pdf>

^[5] <http://www.bmpa.uk.com/Content/standards.aspx>

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