



EURCAW

**European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare
for Poultry and other small farmed animals**

Question to the Centre

Reference of the query: 001-2020

Query received: September 8, 2020

Date of admissibility: September 8, 2020

Reply sent: October 1, 2020

Answer sent: October 5, 2020

Complementary answer sent: October 26th, 2020

Information and background context provided by the solicitor

Level: Killing

Type of production: Poultry and Rabbit

Other attachments: best practices and fact sheets produced by the EU Commission

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ea4ef3e9-cda5-11e7-a5d5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/practice/slaughter/2018-factsheets_en

Question from the solicitor:

I would have some complementary information about on farm-killing for poultry and rabbits. How captive bolt is used in Europe for on-farm killing of small animals and how they addressed the issue of noise for other animals and security for the users.

Answer from the Centre

EURCAW-Poultry-SFA (later the "Centre") has complemented this reply after having received more information from the Member States.

Question 1: Are there many countries in the European Union that are using captive bolt stunning during on farm killing of poultry and rabbits?

During the meeting between the Centre and the Member State competent authorities on September 17&18th 2020, the question was raised:

Only two countries reported to use this method during the meeting. The other countries did not contest.

Question 2: What are the most used methods in the European Union in this type of productions?

To our knowledge, the main method used is cervical dislocation. Head only electrical stunning followed by a killing method is also used in poultry. An email has been send to the competent authorities contact points to ask for the most common tool used.

Question 3: Does the noise constitute a problem regarding the welfare of other animals?

To avoid the fear that might be induced by the noise produced during captive bolt stunning use, the gun should be applied to the animal to be killed in a place separated from the rearing room. That means that if the method is applied properly and not in the vicinity of the other animals, the noise should not constitute a welfare concern.

Question 4: What about the danger for the operator about the use of such a tools?

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Please first note that the safety of operators is not a welfare question and EURCAW-Poultry-SFA has no particular competence to reply to your question. However, EURCAW-Poultry-SFA is not aware of any accident related to the use of this device but a request has been sent to competent authorities contact points by the Centre. As indicated by EFSA, 2019 “All processes of the on-farm killing should be carried out by trained and skilled personnel and also involve proper maintenance and use of stunning/killing equipment”.

The competence of personnel killing animals is also a legal obligation (see Article 7 of Regulation No 1099/2009).

Complementary answer from the Centre

Answers from the Members States (MSs): EURCAW-Poultry-SFA got answers from 17 MSs out of 27.

1. Do you use captive bolt device during on farm killing of poultry and rabbits (to cull injured, sick or runt animals)? (n=17 MSs)

NO: 13 countries

YES: 4 countries (two countries yes and two countries rarely and for turkeys)

2. What are the most common used methods in your country for this purpose? (n=16 MSs)

Percussive blow to the head: 8 countries

Cervical dislocation: 15 countries (in association or not with percussive blow to the head)

CO2: 2 countries

Electrical (head only): 2 countries

3. Are you aware of any accident for the user related to the use of this device in your country? (n=7 MSs)

Yes: 0

No: 7