



## Meat notice

<b>Meat notice number:</b>	2016/07
<b>Meat notice title:</b>	Managing animal welfare concerns at export registered red meat and pork slaughtering establishments
<b>Category:</b>	Refining and reinforcement of existing requirements

NSFS reference	Issue date	Date of effect	Review date
14	29 Nov 2016	Immediate	1 Dec 2018

Contact officers	Distribution categories
Mac Tawadros A/g Director Food Safety, Animal Health and Welfare Unit 02 8334 7568 <a href="mailto:maged.tawadros@agriculture.gov.au">maged.tawadros@agriculture.gov.au</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Central and regional office <input type="checkbox"/> Departmental on-plant officer(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Managers, export meat establishments <input type="checkbox"/> State/Territory regulatory authorities

### Implementation schedule (to be completed by the departmental on-plant officer)

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date discussed with est. management: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial implementation date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Management representative initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. on-plant officer initials: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Purpose

This notice provides export registered establishments and department On-Plant staff with procedures to be followed when:

- animals unloaded at an export registered abattoir with unfit to load conditions.
- animals are improperly handled at export registered red meat and pork slaughtering establishments.

### 2. Scope

This notice applies to all export registered red meat and pork slaughtering establishments. This notice supersedes Meat Notice 2005/12.

### 3. Background

The welfare of animals sent for slaughter can be adversely affected at different points along the supply chain including the place of origin, in transit, saleyard and slaughtering abattoirs.

Under current constitutional arrangements each state and territory government is responsible for its own animal production and welfare legislation and enforces its own animal welfare laws. These laws cover all aspects of animal handling including during production, transportation and slaughter within Australia.

*The Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS 4696: 2007)* states that animals must be handled in a way that minimises their risk of injury, pain and suffering and causes them the least practicable disturbance. The standard also states that young, injured, sick or stress susceptible animals must be appropriately managed to reduce their stress and pain.

Under the Approved Arrangement Guideline the *Industry Animal Welfare Standards – Livestock processing establishments –preparing meat for human consumption-2nd edition* is also referenced as a guide for use at abattoirs.

The *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines - Land Transport Standard of Livestock 2012* - provides guidance and regulates the transport of livestock. It replaces a number of model codes of practices for the transportation of livestock. The standard consists of two Parts: Part A “general standards and guidelines that apply to all major livestock” and Part B “specific standards and guidelines for the transport of livestock”. Under this standard it is an offence to load and transport animals in a manner that causes or is likely to cause unnecessary harm and/or suffering.

Follow this link for updates on the implementation of the Land Transport Standard in your state/territory. <http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/land-transport/>

According to the National Land Transport Standard, an animal is not fit for the intended journey if it is:

- Unable to walk on its own by bearing weight on all legs or
- Severely emaciated or
- Visibly dehydrated or
- Blind in both eyes or
- Showing visible signs of severe injury or distress or
- Suffering from conditions that are likely to increase pain and suffering as a result of the transport process or
- Known to be or visually assessed to be near (within two weeks of parturition) as specified in the species requirements, unless time off water and journey is less than 4 hours duration to another property.

Any animal assessed to be not fit for the intended journey must only be transported under veterinary advice. The person in charge must not load, nor permit the loading of animals that are not fit for the intended journey except under veterinary advice.

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) developed a “*National guide to the selection of animals fit for transport – Is it fit to load?*” to help producers, agents and transporters meet their obligations when preparing/transporting animals for slaughter.

Link to fit to load guidelines:

<http://www.mla.com.au/CustomControls/PaymentGateway/ViewFile.aspx?8znoiE22IEXXkZNN6z/ht+RHdGsB+0+ryJnxjWa16FYe/D/C8aTPH5hN2i29hr4r3EYMKKAfsht7d1Tnt3BqiA==>

Australian Pork Limited (APL) are revising guidelines to help pig producers in selecting animals fit for transport to slaughter. Check the Australian Pork Limited website for update on its progress.

#### **4. Duty of Care**

The welfare of animals sent to slaughter is a shared responsibility with different stakeholders and individuals along the supply chain having a duty of care for the animals in their custody. The consignor/ farmer must only supply animals that are fit for the intended journey; equally, the transporter must not load animals that are not fit for the intended journey except under veterinary advice, such advice should travel with the consigned animals to the slaughter facility.

The occupier of an export registered abattoir is responsible for the welfare of animals from the point of unloading off the truck or rail to the completion of slaughter. The occupier is also responsible for assessing and reacting as appropriate to the condition of stock that have been delivered to the abattoir after unloading as soon as practicably possible. These obligations must be reflected in the establishment’s Approved Arrangement.

#### **5. Key points**

- Animal welfare at export-registered abattoirs is the responsibility of the establishment management. Occupiers must proactively manage animal welfare within their own facility.
- Livestock are assessed for their fitness to load or other transport related problems at the point of unloading or shortly thereafter as soon as practicably possible.
- Establishments may seek input from the OPV to include in incident reports raised by them.
- Animal welfare incidents relating to livestock that have been unloaded that were not detected and/or not acted upon by the establishment within a reasonable time will be managed in accordance with the department’s audit and verification system and reported to the relevant state authority.
- Improper handling of animals at export registered establishments are addressed immediately and managed in accordance with the department audit and verification system and may be reported to the relevant state authority.

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1 Establishment management must:

- a) Ensure that an animal welfare incident reporting system is documented in the establishment's Approved Arrangement (AA) consistent with the provisions of this meat notice.
- b) Assess the condition of animals arriving for slaughter at the point of unloading or shortly thereafter as soon as practicably possible (at first observation by establishment personnel) to identify animals arriving with any welfare concerns.
- c) Take timely corrective actions to reduce further pain and suffering of affected animal(s); this may include:
  - Humane euthanasia.
  - Emergency slaughter. AS4697 2007 sub-clause 7.8.  
Note: fitness for human consumption is a secondary and separate consideration (AS4696-2007 sub-clause 8.9).
  - Priority slaughter – rescheduling slaughter to allow affected animals to be slaughtered first with its mob.
  - Treatment (if warranted).
- d) As soon as is practicable notify the On-Plant Veterinarian (OPV) of the animal welfare concern(s).
- e) Take photos of the affected animal(s) and collect all relevant information/evidence as required in the animal welfare incident report form (attachment 1).
- f) Seek advice from the OPV if required
- g) Fill out an animal welfare incident report (attachment 1) together with supporting evidence and send to the OPV for submission to the relevant state authority.
- h) File a copy of the completed animal welfare incident report at the establishment.
- i) For improper handling of animals at the abattoir:
  - Take immediate corrective action to prevent any further pain and suffering by affected animal(s).
  - Take preventive action to address the underlying reason(s) for the problem
  - Record the actions taken
  - Report to the OPV through the weekly meeting

### 6.2 Department On-Plant Veterinary officers will:

- a) Provide establishment management with a copy of this meat notice (MN) as soon as possible.
- b) Verify that the establishment's responsibilities and actions required by this Meat Notice have been included in the establishment's approved arrangements (AA).
- c) Verify the establishment's ongoing compliance with the requirements of this meat notice.

- d) In accordance with the frequencies in the Meat Establishment Verification Schedule (MEVS), observe the unloading and management of animals at the establishment and verify compliance with the requirements of this meat notice.
- e) For animal welfare incidents which were not identified and/or acted upon within a reasonable time frame by the establishment
- Direct the establishment management to take immediate corrective action to stop further pain and suffering by the affected animal(s) where that course of action is required.
  - Report the incident to the relevant state authority through an animal welfare incident report (Attachment 1).
  - Discuss the welfare concern with management prior to issuing an NCI or CAR if the establishment has failed to detect the welfare concern and take timely corrective action.
  - Verify the effectiveness of any corrective actions and/or preventive measures taken.

### **6.3 Area Technical Managers will:**

- a) Review the occupier's arrangement and verify that the establishment has a functional animal welfare incident reporting system in its Approved Arrangements (AA) that reflects the requirements of this meat notice (MN).
- b) Approve the arrangement based on assessment of the establishment's compliance with the requirements of this meat notice.
- c) Verify through audits, the occupier's compliance with relevant export legislation, and Australian Animal welfare standards.
- d) Ensure establishment management and OPVs are managing animal welfare incidents appropriately and in accordance with the requirements of this meat notice.

Dr Samantha Allan  
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Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

## **Attachment 1: Animal Welfare Incident Report**

Refer to attached form "Animal Welfare Incident Report".

## **Attachment 2: State animal welfare contact details**

<b>QLD</b>	<b>Biosecurity Queensland – DAF</b> Phone : 13 25 23 Email: callweb@daff.qld.gov.au
<b>NSW</b>	<b>Animal Welfare Inspectoral office – NSW department of Primary Industries</b> Phone: 02 9872 0570 Email: animal.welfare@dpi.nsw.gov.au
<b>VIC</b>	<b>Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources</b> Phone: 136 186 Email: aw.complaint@ecodev.vic.gov.au
<b>TAS</b>	<b>RSPCA – Inspectorate</b> Phone: 1300 139 947 Email: inspector@rspcatas.org.au
<b>WA</b>	<b>Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA)</b> Livestock Compliance Unit Phone: 08 9366 2320 Email: livestock.compliance@agric.wa.gov.au
<b>SA</b>	<b>Biosecurity SA</b> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal_health/contact_us">http://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal_health/contact_us</a>
<b>NT</b>	<b>Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries</b> Animal Welfare Branch Phone: 1300 720 386 Email: animalwelfare@nt.gov.au

**Note:** To ensure that the incident report is sent to the right state contact, an updated contact list of state authority animal welfare contacts will be maintained on ELMER3. This list will be updated every 6 months.