



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture**  
**and Water Resources**

# Meat notice

<b>Meat notice number:</b>	2018/02		
<b>Meat notice title:</b>	Mandatory thoracic sticking of calves		
<b>Category:</b>	Reinforcement of existing requirement		
<b>NSFS reference</b>	<b>Issue date</b>	<b>Date of effect</b>	<b>Review date</b>
14	02 March 2018	Immediate	02 March 2020
<b>Contact officers</b>		<b>Distribution categories</b>	
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## 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 with clarification for mandatory thoracic sticking of calves.

### 2. Scope

This notice applies to all export registered establishments slaughtering calves.

This notice replaces and supersedes meat notice 2005/05.

### 3. Background

Calves may have a prolonged bleeding time due to the presence of the bilateral vertebral arteries and the potential for occlusion of the cut peripheral arteries (e.g. the carotids) by clotting and/or constriction of the cut end which can delay bleeding and the onset of death.

Calf slaughter using only a neck cut does not sever the bilateral vertebral arteries supplying the brain. Calves may recover from the stun before permanent insensibility caused by blood loss.

Interruption of the vertebral arteries may be achieved by severance of the brachiocephalic trunk by the use of a 'thoracic stick', an incision with a knife through the thoracic inlet.

To maintain desirable animal welfare outcomes when slaughtering calves, it is mandatory to perform a thoracic stick immediately after the initial neck cut.

Scientific research is inconclusive on the relative importance of the vertebral arteries with regards to the significance of their role in supply of blood to the brain as calves grow older.

## 4. Definitions

The following table defines terms used in this notice.

Description	Term	Definition
Calves	Veal	A young bovine or bubaline animal weighing between 70 kg to 150 kg hot standard carcass weight (HSCW).
	Light veal	A young bovine or bubaline animal weighing no more than 70 kg hot standard carcass weight (HSCW).
	Bobby calf	A young bovine or bubaline animal weighing no more than 40 kg hot standard carcass weight (HSCW).

## 5. Procedure

To maintain desirable animal welfare outcomes when slaughtering calves, it is mandatory to perform a thoracic stick immediately after the initial neck cut.

For bobby calves, the thoracic stick must be applied no more than 20 seconds after the stun.

For vealers and light vealers thoracic sticking is also required. It should be performed at a timeframe interval after the stun and initial neck cut that ensures the vealer and light vealers never regains consciousness as required by the Australian Standard (AS4696:2007 sub-clause 7.10).

The thoracic stick interval for vealers and light veal, must be established by the occupier to ensure ongoing compliance and must be included in the approved arrangement (AA).

## 6. Responsibilities

6.1 Establishment management must:

- a) Amend the approved arrangement (AA) to comply with the requirements of this meat notice.
- b) For bobby calf slaughter
  - Apply a thoracic stick **within 20 seconds** of stunning to hasten the onset of bleeding and avoid any welfare concerns associated with bobby calves regaining consciousness on the bleed rail.

- c) For vealer and light vealer slaughter
  - Establish a thoracic stick interval after the initial neck cut to ensure that the animals cannot regain consciousness or sensibility before dying.
- d) Monitor the insensibility of bobby calves, light vealers and vealers to ensure that animals do not regain sensibility on the bleed rail.

6.2 Departmental on-plant veterinarian (OPV) will:

- a) Provide establishment management with a copy of this meat notice as soon as possible.
- b) Verify the establishment responsibilities and the actions of this meat notice have been included in the occupier's approved arrangement (AA).
- c) As per the frequencies in the MEVS verification schedule for slaughter floor process monitoring, observe bobby calf, vealer and light vealer slaughtering operations to verify compliance with the requirements of this meat notice.

6.3 Area Technical Managers (ATM) will:

- a) Review and when satisfied approve the establishment's amendment to the approved arrangement (AA).
- b) Verify through audits the occupier's compliance with the requirements of this notice.

Angela Davies

Director

Export Meat Program

02 March 2018