

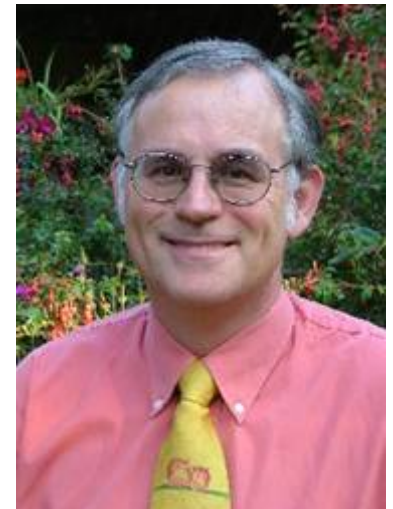
**Practical experience
Killing animals for disease control
in UK: Europe**

Debby Reynolds

David Pritchard, Gordon Hickman

**2nd OIE Conference on Animal Welfare
Implementing OIE Standards**

Acknowledgements



Overview

- Principles and challenges of animal welfare and killing
- The practical response - preparation
 - contingency planning, operations, training, people
- Case study - avian influenza
 - methods and systems to kill poultry
- Conclusions

- the OIE
- the Veterinary Services
- press releases/Editorials
- international meetings
- world animal health situation
- official animal health status
- animal diseases data
- OIE Expertise
- certification of diagnostic assays
- health standards
- OIE Publications
- jobs/Internships/Services
- links

Terrestrial Animal Health Code

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PDF

CHAPTER 7.6.

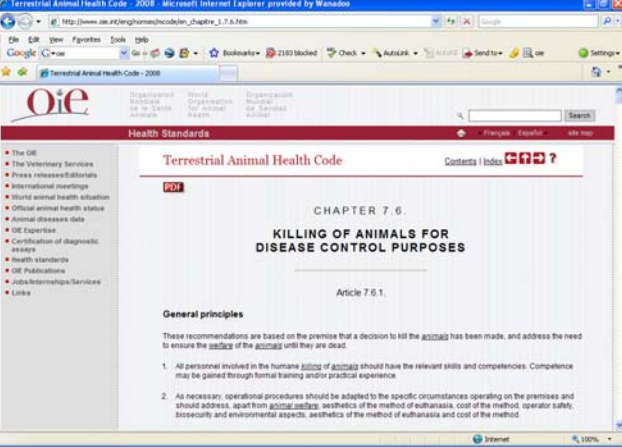
KILLING OF ANIMALS FOR DISEASE CONTROL PURPOSES

Article 7.6.1.

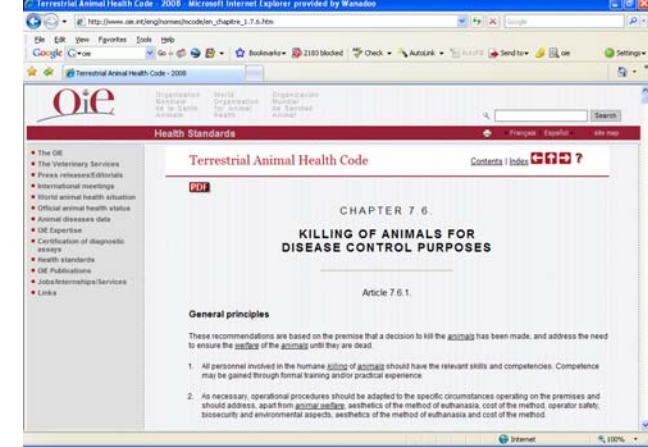
General principles

These recommendations are based on the premise that a decision to kill the animals has been made, and address the need to ensure the welfare of the animals until they are dead.

1. All personnel involved in the humane killing of animals should have the relevant skills and competencies. Competence may be gained through formal training and/or practical experience.
2. As necessary, operational procedures should be adapted to the specific circumstances operating on the premises and should address, apart from animal welfare, aesthetics of the method of euthanasia, cost of the method, operator safety, biosecurity and environmental aspects, aesthetics of the method of euthanasia and cost of the method.



Principles

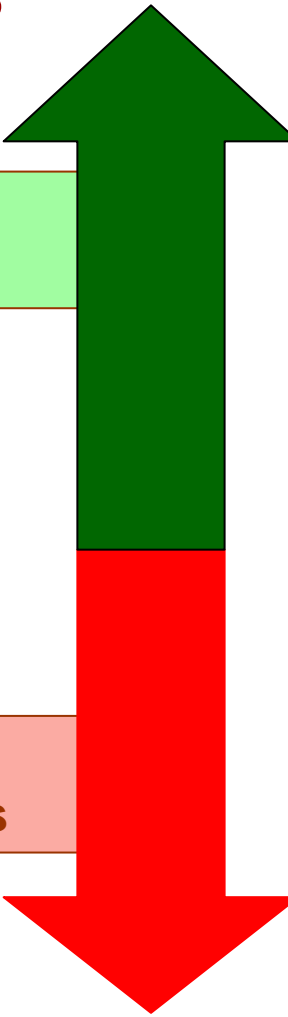


Challenge 1 - Policy

- Why and when to kill for disease control?
- Does the control of an infectious disease justify killing (large) numbers of wild or domestic animals?

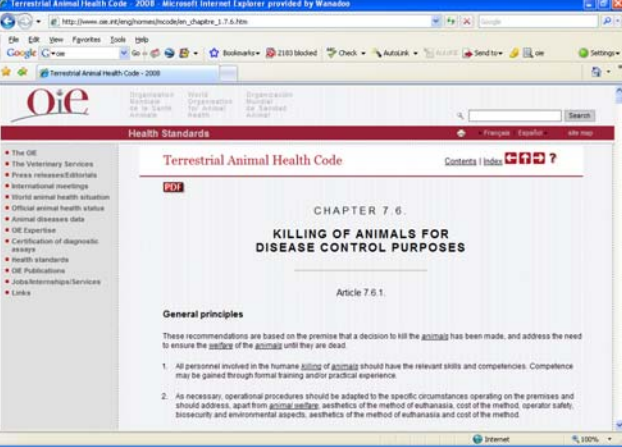
Control by killing - duty of care to balance risk, costs & benefits

- Cases
 - infected premises
- Suspect cases
 - risk / consequence basis
- Dangerous contacts
- Contiguous culls
- Firebreak cull
- Vaccinate to kill
- Vaccinate to live

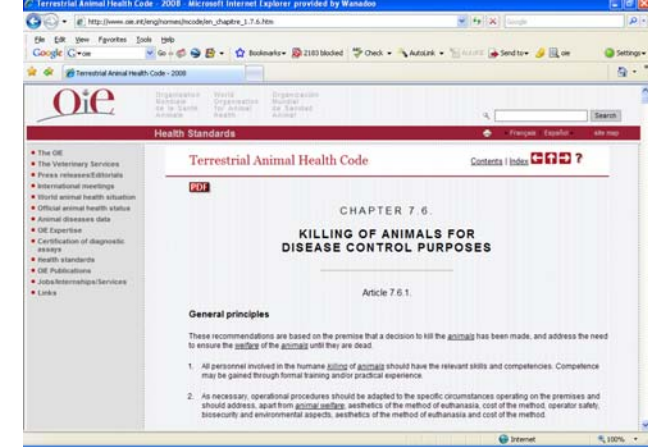


**Certainty benefit
greater than cost**

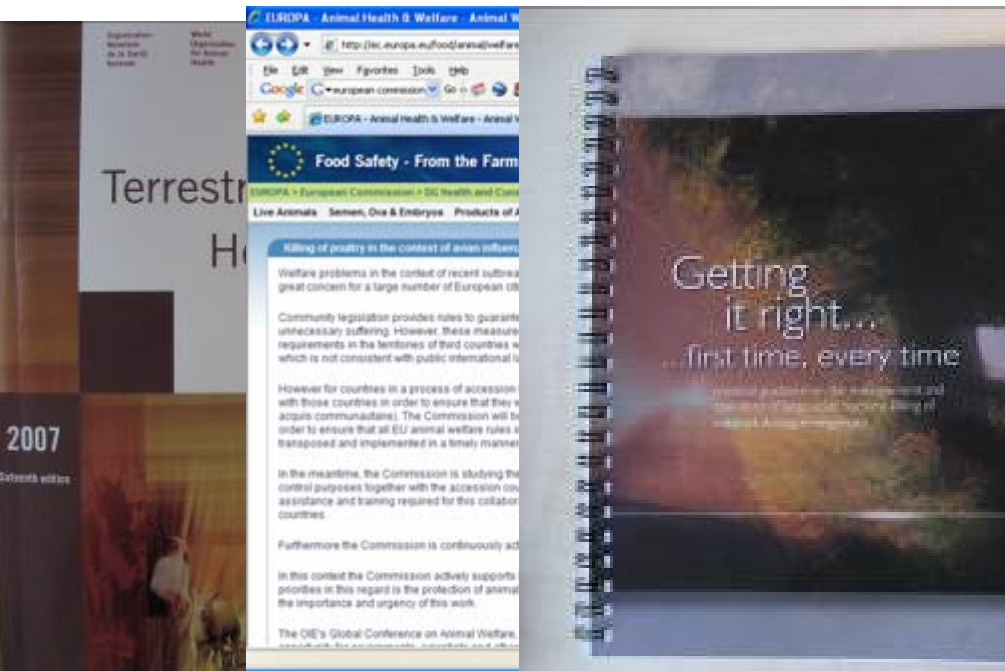
**Risk of costs
exceeding benefits**



Principles



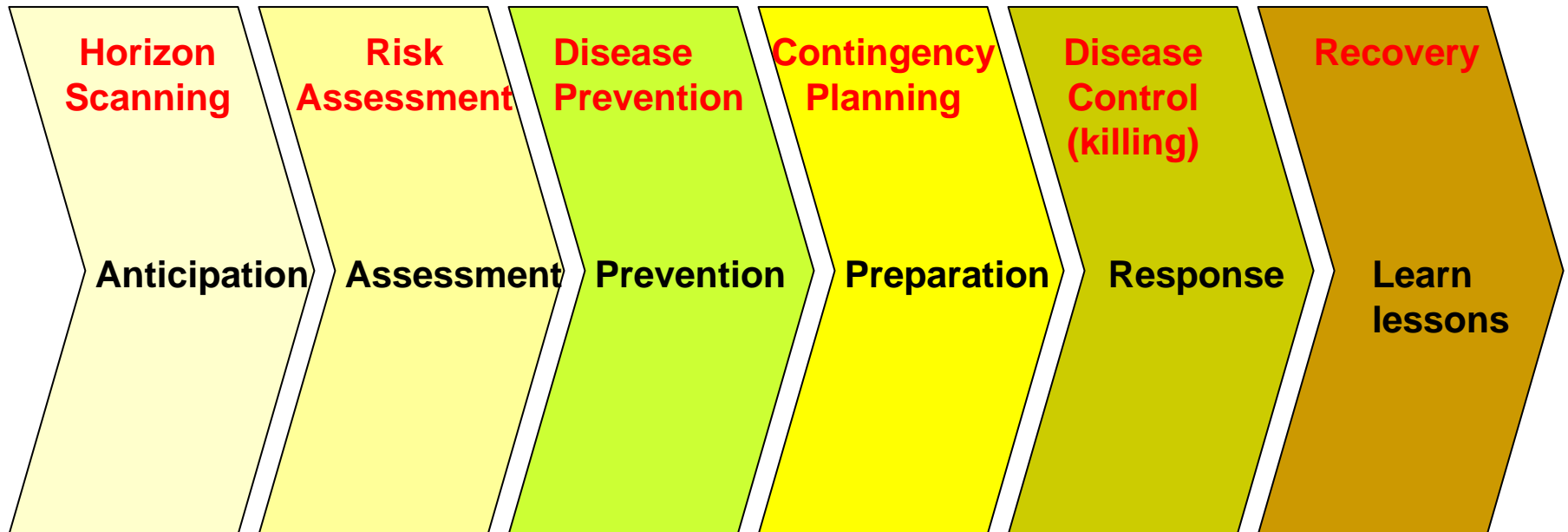
Challenge 2 - Practical



Effective preparations

- Preparation to kill animals for disease control
 - Contingency planning includes welfare
 - Engagement with stakeholders in advance
 - Training in advance
 - Decide on skills, knowledge, competences required
- Key people

Contingency Planning, Emergency Response



Strategic

- **Civil Contingencies Committee**
- (Prime) Minister leadership
- Chief Veterinary Officer
- Other Government depts.
- Expert Science Advice



Tactical

- **National Disease Control Centre**
- Operational and Policy
- Operational partners
- Stakeholders



Operational

- **Local Disease Control Centre**
- Based in outbreak area
- Deliver the response
- Strong local networks



Engagement with stakeholders

- In advance on
 - methods of killing
 - logistics of operations
 - humaneness of killing
- Public documents: available on web
- Training issues
- Communication

Getting it Right, First Time, Every Time

- A resource for training and updating vets, slaughtermen, support staff etc.
 - Team leader
 - Risk assessment
 - Communication
 - Farmer's knowledge
 - Good handling systems
 - Health & safety
 - Biosecurity



Key people

- Leadership roles
- Senior experienced
- Trained, confident
- Have practical exposure to methods and situations
- Flexible

Need strong support

What do they need to understand?

- Animal behaviour
- Handling livestock
- Weapons



Communication to deal effectively with media coverage



Communication about killing on infected premises

- Media handling is key – proactive briefing, factual information and rebuttals
 - *The methods of killing you have described in your letter such as birds being drowned, buried or burnt alive or stuffed live into polythene bags or wheelie bins would not be permitted in this country*
- Evidence on humaneness and systems

World wide TV images

- FMD 2001
- Negative reaction



Bird flu battle
A chicken on fire tries to escape a fire as villagers of Balaogan village burn hundreds of chickens infected by bird flu in a bid to stop the spread of the disease in East Indonesia's Sulawesi province said that about 1.6 million chickens in the country would have to be culled to stem the outbreak of the bird flu virus.

Briefings for media

- Set out what the industry does
 - how it works
- explain key terms
 - stunning, death, a humane kill, stress



UK experience and recent developments

- On farm killing – practical methods
- Research on
 - Whole House Gassing (WHG)
 - Foam Delivery of gas
- Containerised Gassing Units (CGUs)

Lethal injection

- **Strengths**

- minimal equipment, already held
- humane

- **Weakness**

- requires vet to administer
- can only deal with small numbers
- individual animals need to be handled

- **Uses**

- immediate killing for disease/welfare
- young animals, hobby and backyard flocks



Neck dislocation

- **Strengths**

- no equipment
- field expertise
- humane at up to 3kg

- **Weakness**

- small numbers
- repetitive strain
- individual birds need to be handled

- **Uses**

- immediate killing for disease/welfare



Gassing bags

Strengths

- Modest cost
- Proven technique

Weakness

- Individual birds need to be handled
- H&S associated with use of gas
- Some welfare issues
- Low throughput

Uses

- Small units



Whole house gassing

Features

- no handling live birds
- quick humane kill large numbers

Weakness

- need gas engineers
- health and safety : use of gas
- cost and quantity of gas required
- limited range of houses suitable ?

Uses

- large broiler units
- deep pit caged units
- large layer barns



Foam delivery of gas

Features

- Development stage
- foam surfactant used to hold gas
- pumped in to fill building
- bird movement breaks bubble and releases inert gas
- death by exposure to anoxic gas mixture, not by physical obstruction of trachea/lungs
- acceptance by birds



Containerised gassing units CGU

- **Strengths**

- modest cost
- proven technique
- humane
- Argon/CO₂ gas mix (80/20)
- flexible

- **Weakness**

- need to handle birds
- H&S associated with use of gas
- moderate throughput

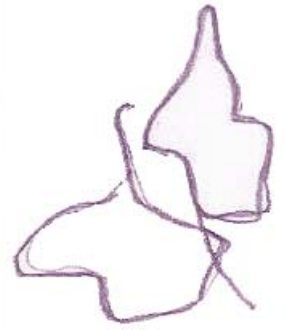
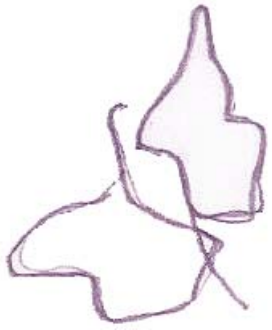


Containerised Gassing Units (CGU)

- Usable now
 - medium sized units (10 - 20,000 birds)
 - free range and caged units,
 - killing 6,000 birds per hour.
- Recommended for addition to OIE Standards

Conclusions

- Animal welfare and killing for disease control is a multifaceted challenge
- Preparation is of vital importance
- Key people are essential to success
- Operations can be humane and quick
- Substantial progress has been made
- There is an ongoing implementation challenge



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Killing animals for disease control

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