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**OIE AD HOC ON THE REVISION OF  
CHAPTER 7.5. “SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS” AND  
CHAPTER 7.6. “KILLING OF ANIMALS FOR DISEASE CONTROL PURPOSES”<sup>1</sup>  
Paris, April – July 2020**

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## **1. Introduction**

Due to the COVID-19 sanitary crisis, the OIE *ad hoc* Group on the revision of Chapter 7.5. “Slaughter of animals” and Chapter 7.6. “Killing of animals for disease control purposes” (the *ad hoc* Group) met via video conference (i.e. Zoom) between April and July 2020.

The *ad hoc* Group met five times during the first semester 2020 (31st March, 27th April, 11th May, 4th June and 7th July 2020), to respond to Members’ comments on the revised Chapter 7.5 Animal welfare during slaughter corresponding to animal arriving freely to the slaughterhouse, and to develop the articles corresponding to animals arriving in crates to the slaughterhouse. The participants in the Zoom meetings are presented in Annexes I. During the first meeting of the *ad hoc* Group on 31 March 2020, the Secretariat, explained the *modus operandi* for the review of Chapter 7.5 in the context of the sanitary crises.

The OIE would like to thank and acknowledge the important effort made by the *ad hoc* Group Members for working under such difficult conditions to deliver their expert opinion.

## **2. Update on the February 2020 Code Commission meeting**

The *ad hoc* Group noted the Code Commission’s support to continue its work to review and amend definitions for slaughter, euthanasia, stunning and death according to Members comments received after the September 2019 Code Commission meeting.

## **3. Review of comments of a new draft Chapter 7.5. “Animal welfare during slaughter”**

Comments were received from Australia, China (People’s Republic of), Japan, Mexico, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, United States of America (USA), European Union (EU) and the International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW).

The *ad hoc* Group considered all comments and made amendments to improve clarity and readability, where relevant. Where amendments were of an editorial nature, no explanatory text has been provided. In addition, the *ad hoc* Group did not consider comments where a rationale had not been provided, that were difficult to interpret, or were too specific in nature, for example when a comment was relevant to only one region or housing system.

Additionally, the *ad hoc* Group drafted the articles which corresponds to the animals arriving in crates to the slaughterhouse, for the Code Commission’s consideration in its September 2020 meeting. Therefore, all received comments regarding animals arriving in crates to the slaughterhouse will be considered in the next

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<sup>1</sup> Note: This *ad hoc* Group report reflects the views of its members and may not necessarily reflect the views of the OIE. This report should be read in conjunction with the September 2019 report of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission because this report provides its considerations and comments. It is available at <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/specialists-commissions-groups/code-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>

round of comments of the draft.

### **General comments**

The *ad hoc* Group noted the positive feedback from Members regarding the proposed structure for Chapter 7.5. Nevertheless, Members asked the Secretariat to discuss the possibility to retain, in Chapter 7.5, content that was proposed to be taken out of the new version of Chapter 7.5 to include as additional technical information in the OIE website.

Regarding the hazard definition, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to present a proposal to the Code Commission to be include in this Report.

Regarding the suggestion of a Member to use the term “matanza” instead of “sacrificio, which may have religious connotation in Spanish, the Spanish speaking members of the *ad hoc* Group proposed to use the term ‘muerte por sangrado’.

### **Article 7.5.1. Introduction**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to the suggestion of a Member to include the concept of economical return as a positive aspect to consider and subsequently modified the proposal to be more specific regarding the importance that several factors may have on the improvement of the economic aspects.

### **Article 7.5.2. Scope**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to include donkeys and mules in the scope of the chapter as they are relevant species currently slaughtered for various purposes.

### **Article 7.5.3. Definition for the purpose of this chapter**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the comment to include the term ‘rapid’ in the definition of bleeding as it does not improve the text and could be subject to interpretation. It was noted that a ‘slow’ death by bleeding may happen.

### **Article 7.5.4. Animal welfare hazards**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to include a new sentence at the end of the paragraph to consider pain as a hazard, as this is a consequence.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed that other measures like resource or management-based measures are related to the presence or not of the hazard (not the impact on the welfare). Therefore, they modified the paragraph to indicate that other measures could be used to assess animal welfare.

The *ad hoc* group did not agree to include “and operation” regarding the reduction of animal welfare hazards which is already covered by “good management”.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to include the term “potentially”, because animals in a slaughterhouse setting animals are always exposed to the hazard, however their exposure may not always lead to welfare consequences.

The *ad hoc* group agreed with the suggestion of a Member to change ‘additive’ for ‘cumulative’, ‘forced movement’ for ‘physical exercise’ and ‘ineffective’ for ‘inadequate’ to improve the readability of the text.

### **Article 7.5.5. Criteria (or measures)**

The *ad hoc* Group disagreed to add the term “regularly” to the first paragraph of the article because there is no definition of what “regular” is. In addition, the idea is already included in the following paragraph with the use of the term “routine”.

#### **Article 7.5.6. Management**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to add the term « manuals » after procedures as it did not add additional information.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to include a new bullet point regarding “operating procedures and corrective action”, as it completes the content of the operating plan of the slaughterhouse.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to move the training requirements at the beginning of the list.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to include two new bullet points, one on the operation of equipment and facilities and another one on animal welfare. The first one is already covered in the draft text and, the second one (animal welfare) is not a component of the plan but the aim of the chapter.

#### **Article 7.5.7. Training and competency of personnel**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add wordings regarding the identification of sign of life before dressing or scalding occurs. This is also in line with the need to take corrective action.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to include the knowledge regarding some behavioural aspects and to add additional signs to identify animal welfare issues.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to include a new paragraph regarding the need to control the people present during slaughter operations. They proposed a text which, highlights the importance that only the people specifically working in that area should be present.

#### **Article 7.5.8. Design of premises and choice of equipment**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with part of the suggestion to add more details to support physical comfort of animals in a broad range of environmental conditions using a better design and choosing the appropriate equipment. The *ad hoc* Group modified the text to improve readability.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add ‘and age’ of the animals as one aspect to consider when designing a slaughterhouse, which is also supported by Tarrant (1990).

#### **Article 7.5.9. Throughput (number of animals slaughtered per hour)**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to modify the first paragraph of this article following the suggestion to adapt the throughput not only to the equipment specification but also to operational factors.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add a new sentence about the conflict between the number of personnel and the potential impact on the welfare of the animals as this was already considered in Article 7.5.7.

#### **Article 7.5.10. Maintenance and cleaning procedures**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add the importance to include concrete references to the manufacturer’s instructions and agreed to delete the safety of the personnel as this chapter is related specifically to animal welfare.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include “handling” as an aspect that contributes to the movement of the animal.

#### **Article 7.5.11. Contingency plans**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include more consideration to the contingency plans as it is difficult to establish an exhaustive list.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to mention the need for the personnel to be knowledgeable regarding the contingency plan in place but decided to reformulate the proposal and added a new paragraph to the article.

### **Article 7.5.12. Arrival of free-moving animals**

#### **1. Animal welfare concerns:**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to change the wording regarding the consequences on the delay of the animals and to replace the term ‘main’ with ‘major’.

The *ad hoc* Group amended the second paragraph on the arrival of animals following the proposal to highlight that animal are exposed to several risks with important welfare consequences.

#### **2. Animal-based and other measurables include:**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to add a sentence about the reporting of mortalities and injuries as this corresponds to a recommendation not an animal-base measure.

#### **3. Recommendations:**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add the word ‘unloading’, as animals may not be unloaded directly into the lairage areas.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include two new sentences regarding the need to provide water after unloading the animals, as well as to give special attention to specific categories of animals after long journeys. However, it did not agree to include some specifications for the use of the ramps, as this text could fits better in the article regarding handling.

#### **4. Species-specific recommendations:**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include ‘young animal and weaned or not’ in the species-specific recommendations as there are other categories that are especially sensitive.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add text for ‘shorn sheep’, ‘lactating animals’ and ‘unweaned’ to this section because these are particularly susceptible to cold and heat stress, as well as being sun burnt if left exposed on trucks during delays. Nevertheless, the *ad hoc* Group amended slightly the proposed text. Also, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add a sentence regarding some ‘overhead restriction’ as this corresponds to a recommendation.

### **Article 7.5.13. Handling of free-moving animals**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace the word subtitle of the article for ‘handling’ which is a clearer and more widely used term.

#### **1. Animal welfare concerns:**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to include a new sentence to the first paragraph of the animal welfare concerns highlighting the importance of having ramps to unload the animals.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add a sentence about inappropriate ramp design as it does not provide additional information.

#### **2. Animal-based and other measurables include:**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add wording to indicate that the measures should consider observable injuries (lacerations, puncture wounds etc.) which result in lameness.

The *ad hoc* Group agree to add the concept of ‘vocalisation and the frequency of it’ to the list as can be an important measure of distress.

#### **3. Recommendations:**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to modify the first paragraph on the handling of animals to emphasise the use of ramps when available and to give indications of their design. The *ad hoc* Group also included a new sentence to note that the design should promote, as far as possible their natural movement.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the recommendation to use steel floors as it might lead to injuries.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include ‘loud noises’ as an example of ‘distractions’ that animal could suffer during unloading, and to add the concept of sudden to ‘noises’.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to add a new sentence to note the need of ensuring continuous improved change in these practices.

The *ad hoc* Group proposed to delete the term “euthanasia” to avoid any misunderstandings following a comment to include more details of euthanasia method. The *ad hoc* Group discussed and agreed that it was the same as for the stunning and killing.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a new sentence regarding the position only, following the comments on the number and position of the personnel during the unloading process. The number required is very vague, and it will depend on the task of each worker. Normally the problem is the lack of personnel.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to separate the recommendation of the use of ‘mechanical aids’ to move the animals and ‘electric goads’, as it might be more appropriate to recommend not to use electric goads at any time. Also, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to move the recommendations on the use of electric goads further up to improve readability.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add a sentence with examples of impediments for animals to move as the examples given were not clear.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree the suggestion to change the word ‘should’ with “must” as the language is too restrictive.

The *ad hoc* Group included equids as species in which electric goads should not be used.

#### 4. Species-specific recommendations:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to add a new sentence regarding the special care of calves and the text proposed did not provide any concrete information on what special care is.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to include the specific maximum ramp angle for different species; it considered this too detailed and restrictive.

#### **Article 7.5.14. *Lairage of free-moving animals***

##### 1. Animal welfare concerns:

The *ad hoc* Group agreed partially with some suggestions to modify the list of animal welfare hazards in the lairage, and included a new point concerning the exposure to hard or abrasive surfaces.

##### 2. Animal-based and other measurables include

The *ad hoc* group agreed to include the frequency of vocalization as an animal based measurable, to assess in the lairage area.

##### 3. Recommendations

The *ad hoc* Group discussed lengthily regarding the effects of feed withdrawal on the animals while waiting in the lairage. The *ad hoc* Group agreed to develop a new text for animals that are not expected to be slaughtered immediately, for whatever reason, once arrived at the slaughterhouse. Those animals should be fed with appropriate feed for the species and age. The *ad hoc* Group agreed that the important part of this

recommendation is to consider the whole fasting period; nevertheless, there some aspects that are not under the scope of this chapter, but rather in the transport ones.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a reference to the need of shade as a way of preventing heat stress.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include some examples of animals that should not be mixed, as the proposal did not add to the clarity of the text.

4. Species-specific recommendations:

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a text to recommend that pigs should be kept in groups when resting in the lairage area.

**Article 7.5.15. Restraint for stunning or bleeding (free-moving animals)**

1. Animal welfare concerns:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to include some text regarding neurological effects due to neck cutting in the slaughter without stunning context because this section correspond to the restraint procedures.

2. Animal-based and other measurables include:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include a new bullet regarding the mis-stuns frequency as this section correspond to restrain.

3. Recommendations:

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to be more specific regarding the width of the restrainer, as this is only relevant for individual restraint.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to add two new sentences about the position of the head, when using slaughter without stunning, for all species using this device and not only for cattle. Also, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a second sentence emphasising the need to keep the animal in the restrainer until unconsciousness.

The *ad hoc* Group did not consider the comments that are related to the animals arriving on cages or crates to the slaughterhouse, as this will be developed in another part of the chapter.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the comments regarding the use of rotating boxes as according to the expert opinion, there is no conclusive evidence that rotating box is worse than upright position.

See: [https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/aw\\_practice\\_slaughter\\_com\\_borest\\_report.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/aw_practice_slaughter_com_borest_report.pdf).

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a new sentence regarding the design of boxes that intentionally cause a loss of balance in the entrance of the restrainer or box.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal of adding additional examples of distractions at the entry of the restrainer.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the modification proposed on the management of individual restrainer as did not improve the readability of the draft article.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to add a new sentence, as the Group considered that a restrainer should be designed to conduct a proper assessment of the animal, because the animal eventually could be conscious when released from the restrainer. However, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add a new sentence regarding the management of the restrainer during work breaks.

The *ad hoc* Group considered that they need more information and clarification regarding the comment on the use of hydraulic restraint devices before being able to address its in a proper way

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a sentence about the conditions, cleanliness, and non-slippery conditions to use the restrainer. The *ad hoc* Group noted that inadequate cleanliness could also become an animal welfare issue.

#### **Article 7.5.16. Stunning of free-moving animals**

The *ad hoc* Group decided to wait until after the next round of comments to see if it is necessary to restructure this section to improve the readability of the different articles by separating the different stunning methods.

For the moment, the *ad hoc* Group would like to suggest staying with the current format.

##### **1. Animal welfare concerns:**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with part of the suggestion to highlight the importance of stunning before slaughter and decided to modify the proposal by adding some aspects related to the safety of the workers as well as to the decrease of pain and suffering of animals.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add some text in the fourth paragraph on ‘stunning using a mechanical method’ following the suggestion to include the concept of importance of good maintenance of the stunning device, which can cause inefficient stunning. The *ad hoc* Group also agreed to make some amendments on the skull thickness, which is associated with the age of the animal, to improve readability of this article.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to add a sentence indicating that the gas used for stunning should not be aversive as this is a recommendation, and not an animal welfare concern. However, the *ad hoc* group agreed to include a new sentence to note that carbon dioxide at high concentration is painful to inhale and should preferably not be used in pigs.

##### **2. Animal-based and other measurables include:**

The *ad hoc* Group partially agreed with a comment regarding the monitoring, the stunning process and beyond. Therefore, the Group amended the first paragraph of the animal based and other measurables to be monitored, to be more inclusive for other species like pigs in which neck cutting does not apply.

##### **Mechanical *stunning*:**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include a relaxed jaw and flaccid tongue as a characteristic of an effective stun as this occurs during bleeding not after stunning in which there is tonic seizure.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to amend the second paragraph of the indicator of effective stunning with mechanical methods to stress the indicators of ineffective stunning. Also, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to include the presence of rapid eye movement as an indicator of ineffective stunning.

##### **Electrical *stunning*:**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the amendments proposed to include some indicators of effective stunning as the response to ear or nose pinch, which is an indicator of sensibility, but not of consciousness. Also, the *ad hoc* Group stressed the idea that no singular sign should be used.

##### **3. Recommendations:**

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to add a new sentence regarding the achievement of immediate unconsciousness provoked by an electrical or mechanical stunning method, as this is mentioned in the description section.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add a new paragraph regarding the recommendations to use a head-to-back electrical stunning method, but with a modification to emphasise the fact that this method should be applied as a two-step process.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a new sentence regarding the maintenance of the equipment but replaced the term 'test' by 'calibration' from the original proposal.

b) Electrical:

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace the word 'pressure' with 'contact' for a better readability of the recommendation of the use of an electrical stunning method.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a mention on the information that should be provided by a visual display, such as the voltage and current applied.

c) Controlled atmosphere:

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a new bullet point regarding the rate of decompression when using low atmospheric pressure systems for stunning only in poultry. The *ad hoc* Group also added the word gas in the first bullet point for better understanding of the concern.

4. Species-specific recommendations:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to exclude the use of non-penetrating captive bolt in mature pigs as there is no conclusive information in this regard.

**Article 7.5.17. Bleeding of free-moving animals**

1. Animal welfare concerns:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the amendments proposed the last paragraph of the animal welfare concerns section regarding bleeding as it does not improve the current text.

2. Animal-based and other measurables include:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the amendments proposed to the third paragraph of the animal-based and other measurables section regarding bleeding as it does not improve the current text.

3. Recommendations:

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a new bullet 'a)' in the recommendations to note the importance of which major vessels are affected in the bleeding process.

The *ad hoc* Group, responding to a comment on point c) of the recommendations, replaced the term "cessation" with "death", which is a term that explains, in a better way, what is expected before continuing the slaughter process.

*Slaughter with stunning:*

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include a recommendation on the maximum stun-to-stick time, as this would depend on the stunning method. The *ad hoc* Group noted that, rather than mentioning any specific period of time, it is more important to check the loss of consciousness.

*Slaughter without stunning:*

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a species-specific consideration for cattle, as during slaughter, bilateral vertebral arteries can continue to provide the brain with blood, and occlusions of the cut peripheral arteries (e.g. carotids) may occur by clotting and/or constriction of the neck cut leading to delay the bleeding out and death.

**Article 7.5.18. Slaughter of pregnant free-moving animals**

2. Animal-based and other measurables include:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include new text in the animal-based and other measurables section, regarding the gain of consciousness of the foetus, as this is already mentioned in the animal welfare concerns section.

3. Recommendations:

Responding to a question, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a new sentence in the recommendations to explain that it is possible to remove the uterus as long as the foetus has no possibility to breath; It is only when breathing starts that it becomes conscious.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a reference to captive bolt followed by bleeding in response to a request to give further information on the method to euthanise a foetus.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed partially with a suggestion regarding the management of pregnant females and added to the text the word ‘pregnant’.

**Article 7.5.19. *Emergency killing of free-moving animals***

1. Animal welfare concerns:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to include a new sentence regarding the impact of long journeys, as that recommendation corresponds to Code Chapters 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 Transport of animal by sea, land and air respectively.

3. Recommendations:

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to add new text about the fact that animals should not be lifted, as this is a general statement of handling, not specific for emergency killing.

**Article 7.5.20. *Methods, procedures or practices unacceptable on animal welfare grounds for free-moving animals***

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to amend point 2) because the text seems to just prohibit these practices for sensitive areas, while they should be completely banned.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to amend point 4) as the electrical current might go through the head without spanning the brain, which is an essential condition for an effective electrical stunning.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a new point regarding the practices of forcing animals to the ground.

**4. Revised draft version of Chapter 7.5. Animal welfare during slaughter**

The *ad hoc* Group developed the revised draft Chapter 7.5. “Animal welfare during slaughter” attached in Annex II. This draft also provides text for animals arriving in crates to the slaughterhouse.

**5. Next steps**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to continue their work on Chapter 7.5. and to start the development of a revised version of Chapter 7.6 Killing of animal for disease control purposes, pending feedback from the Code Commission.

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.../ Annexes



**OIE AD HOC ON THE REVISION OF  
CHAPTER 7.5. "SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS" AND  
CHAPTER 7.6. "KILLING OF ANIMALS FOR DISEASE CONTROL PURPOSES"**

**Paris, April – July 2020**

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CHAPTER 7.5.  
**ANIMAL WELFARE DURING SLAUGHTER**

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