Practical Experience: Slaughter of Animals for Human Consumption

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Outline of Presentation

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- OIE achievements and objectives on Animal Welfare
- Problems associated with the slaughter of animals for human consumption
- Practical experience with the slaughter of animals in Africa
- Recommendations for improvement
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Introduction

- Delegates from African countries fully subscribe to OIE Animal Welfare standards
- Too ‘busy’ to ensure implementation
- Appointment of focal points for Animal Welfare is a good step in the right direction
- >70% of livestock production in Africa is semi-pastoral, away from major urban centers
- As a consequence animals are transported long distances to slaughter
- Slaughter of animals in Africa - cultural or traditional and regulated or conventional systems occur
- Many African countries do not meet basic sanitary requirements for regional or international trade
- Largely as a consequence they are not subjected to consumer animal welfare demands
Problems associated with the slaughter of animals for human consumption

Extensive Animal Production System

- Animals travel long distances to slaughter facilities - no rest, food or water
- Most roads are in a poor state
- Truck drivers drive without due care
- Most drivers lack training on transporting live animals to slaughter

Consequences

- Distress, bruising, trampling - often resulting in severe injuries and at times death
- Accidents - resulting in injuries such as lacerations, fractures, bruising, horn loss, death etc
Problems associated with the slaughter of animals for human consumption

Inadequate Slaughter Facilities

- Animals travel long distances to slaughter facilities
- Overcrowding
- Illegal slaughter, bush abattoirs

Consequences

- Crowding and congestion of animals - not enough ventilation
- Equipment failure and postponement of slaughter for many hours, even up to days
- Injuries causing pain and suffering
Problems associated with the slaughter of animals for human consumption

Legislation

- The majority of African countries have not updated their laws in line with OIE Animal Welfare standards
- Supervision of slaughter facilities is fragmented under different control such as Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Local Government and Environment

Consequences

- No centralized competent authority with oversight and supervision of slaughter facilities
- Wanton disregard of welfare standards and guidelines
- Lack of enough adequately trained personnel with relevant knowledge on animal science and animal behaviour
Practical experience - slaughter of animals for human consumption

Conventional Slaughter - regulated

- Most animal welfare violations occur when animals are moved from farms or other holdings where they are kept to slaughter houses.
- Animals are driven long distances on poor roads and in vehicles not suitable for transportation of animals.
- No provision for rest, watering and feeding of animals.
- Power shortages and equipment breakdown.
- Common violations are as already elaborated above.
Practical experience - slaughter of animals for human consumption

Non-Conventional Slaughter - traditional

- Largely un-regulated
- No stunning
- Practices to meet cultural and social norms
- Illegal slaughtering at ‘bush’ abattoirs
- Animals are not stunned prior to slaughter
- Game slaughter or culling
- Home consumption
- No proper animal restraining facilities
- Some times animal are slaughtered at night without adequate lighting
Most common Animal Welfare Violations

Non-Conventional Slaughter - traditional
- Cattle are shot with free bullets without stunning
- No immediate death - animals may get injured and often take-off with injuries

Cattle
- Severing neck using an axe
- Spears often used to puncture the heart - may miss at times resulting in repeated stabbing leading to a very painful death

Sheep and Goats
- Throat and major vessel severed

Donkeys
- Although not very common at times they are just hacked

Chickens
- Necks cut off or twisted

Game Animals
- Free bullet or animals chased in bomas. Injuries as a result of poor shooting, animals trampling on each other, often escaping with injuries and dying later. Adults killed leaving suckling ones!
Recommendations

- Capacity building through training, publicity, and in-country workshops for Veterinary Services, producers and other key stakeholders
- Include teaching of animal welfare in agricultural colleges and universities
- Developing and implementing appropriate legislative frameworks and policies
- Encourage construction of more slaughter facilities
- Building partnerships - government, producers and the private sector
Conclusions

- Meeting OIE Animal Welfare standards or guidelines for the slaughter of animals for human consumption remains a big challenge to many African countries.
- The OIE has made excellent progress in addressing animal welfare concerns.
- However, African countries need technical and financial assistance in capacity building to implement these standards.
- Need for an aggressive publicity drive that reaches the majority of relevant stakeholders.
- The OIE must assist with the development of appropriate model legislation to help countries come up with their own national legislation on animal welfare.
- Then a better World for all!
THANK YOU

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