

Salient points from the Växjö Declaration: Animal protection and food

Adopted: Jun 25, 2007

The Council of Ministers for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MR-FJLS)(1) *believes that animals are sentient beings with their own intrinsic value and should be respected as such. The Council stresses the importance of good animal welfare and the need for it to reflect the ethical values of our societies. It also wishes to reiterate the pioneering traditions of the Nordic Region, which are based on deep insight into the links between animal health and animal welfare.*

On 16 April 2008, a group of Nordic experts met in Stockholm to review the latest findings on the importance of animal welfare in the production of animal-based foodstuffs. The issue was later discussed further at the MR-FJLS meeting in Växjö on 26 June. The ministers:

- *agree that animal-welfare issues are important and that proper animal welfare represents a significant competitive advantage for the Nordic Region;*
- *will support further research on animal welfare issues, including into the links between good animal welfare and high-quality animal-based foodstuffs;*
- *believe that, in this context, the word 'quality' covers food safety, nutritional value, taste and appearance, as well as ethical considerations and production methods that are environmentally and climatically aware;*
- *will work more closely together and organise exchanges of information in the Nordic Region to facilitate the drafting of joint positions;*
- *will stress the importance of the Nordic Region playing an active role in EU/EEA forums and other international bodies in which animal welfare is discussed, e.g. the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Council of Europe.*

The ministers calls upon the Committee of Senior Officials on Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ÅK-FJLS) to look more closely at the welfare of animals in the food-production process. Nordic consumers expect food production to be based on good animal welfare.

Where appropriate, the ministers will ensure that animal welfare is a significant parameter and is accorded adequate consideration when applications for Nordic project funding are being assessed.

Relevant sections from Animal Welfare Act 1988, Sweden

Section 1 – the Act applies to domestic and laboratory animals and other animals kept in captivity

Section 2(1) – animals shall be treated well and shall be protected from unnecessary suffering and disease

Section 4(1) – animals shall be accommodated and handled in an environment that is appropriate for animals and in such a way as to promote their health and permit natural behaviour

Section 5(2) – animals must not be beaten or driven with implements which may hurt or otherwise injure them

Section 8(1) – the means of transport used for the transportation of animals shall be suitable for the purpose and provide shelter against heat and cold and protect the animals from shocks and abrasions and the like. To the extent necessary, the animals shall be kept separate from each other.

Section 9 - If an animal is sick, injured or in other ways, through its behaviour, shows signs of ill-health, the animal shall be given the necessary care without delay, if necessary by a veterinarian, or other measures shall be taken, unless the illness or injury is so severe that the animal must be killed immediately.

Section 13 – Animals shall be spared unnecessary discomfort and suffering when they are taken to slaughter and when they are slaughtered.

Section 14(1) - Domestic animals shall be stunned before being bled prior to slaughter. No other measures may be taken in connection with slaughter until the animal is dead.

Section 14(2) - The first sentence of subsection (1) shall not apply to animals which, owing to illness or accident, must be slaughtered immediately.

Section 36(1) – offences might be committed deliberately or through negligence

Relevant sections from Animal Welfare Ordinance 1988, Sweden

Section 22 - Persons who transport live animals shall attend to the animals and take the necessary steps to ensure that the animals are not injured or subjected to any suffering during loading, transport and unloading.

Section 25 - Male reindeer may be gelded by persons other than veterinarians.

Section 30 - (1) Animals shall be stunned prior to slaughter in such a way as to cause rapid unconsciousness. They must not regain consciousness.

Section 32 a - (1) If an animal is subjected to or it may be presumed that it will be subjected to unnecessary suffering at a slaughterhouse, the official veterinarian shall prohibit slaughter, order the animal to be killed immediately or take other measures that are required immediately from an animal welfare perspective.

Relevant sections from Animal Welfare Act 1996, Finland

Section 1 — Objective of the Act

(1) The objective of this Act is to protect animals from distress, pain and suffering in the best possible way.

(2) The objective of this Act is also to promote the welfare and good treatment of animals.

Section 2 - Scope of application

(1) This Act applies to all animals.

Section 3 - General principles

(1) The animals must be treated well and no undue distress may be caused to them. Inflicting undue pain and distress on animals is prohibited. In addition, maintaining the health of animals must be promoted in keeping of animals and the physiological and behavioural needs of the animals must be taken into account.

Section 5 - Care of animals

(1) An animal that is being cared for may not be left without care or abandoned. The animal must obtain suitable feed, drink and other necessary care in sufficient quantities. When an animal falls ill, it must obtain appropriate care. The welfare and conditions of the animal must be checked often enough.

Section 6 - Treatment of animals

(1) Excessive exertion, unreasonable discipline and training as well as too rough handling of an animal are prohibited. Tying up an animal in a way that causes undue distress is prohibited. The animal must be allowed to rest properly and it must be allowed to move.

Section 32 - Killing of animals

(1) The killing of animals must be performed as quickly and painlessly as possible.

Section 33 - Slaughter and related procedures

(1) No undue distress, pain or suffering may be caused to the animal when it is handled or kept at the slaughterhouse, place of slaughter or other place in connection with slaughter, stunning or bleeding. The animal must be appropriately stunned or killed before bleeding. However, for religious reasons a special method of slaughter where bleeding is started simultaneously with the stunning of the animal is allowed as set down in further detail by Decree. No other procedures related to the slaughter may be performed on the animal before it is dead.

(2) Approved slaughterhouses and places of slaughter must have an appropriate facility for stunning and bleeding of animals which are significantly ill or injured.

Relevant sections from Animal Welfare Decree 1996, Finland

Section 8 - Caring for health and welfare

(1) The health and general welfare of an animal which is being cared for as well as cleanliness of the animal and other necessary physical care must be taken care of.

Section 11 - Ill or injured animal

(1) When an animal falls ill or is injured, appropriate care must be given or provided for to the animal without delay. Where necessary, an animal which is ill or injured

must be placed in an appropriate facility separate from other animals. When required due to the nature of the illness or injury, the animal must be killed or slaughtered.

Section 12 - General requirements

(1) An animal must be treated calmly and it may not be unnecessarily frightened or agitated. In the handling of animals efforts must be made to take advantage of the behaviour characteristic to the species, such as herd instinct.

(2) An animal may not be injured or treated in a violent manner. Kicking or hitting an animal with an instrument which injures the animal for training or other similar purpose is prohibited.

(3) An animal may not be dragged by the horns, legs, tail or fur or by pulling directly by the head or otherwise handled in a way which causes undue suffering.

Section 14 - Inflicting undue distress, pain and suffering

(1) Inflicting undue distress, pain and suffering to an animal referred to in section 3(1) of the Animal Welfare Act (247/1996) means:

7) killing a reindeer or other domestic animal or an animal farmed for production purposes by shooting as in hunting, except for shooting of a reindeer by a reindeer herder or other domestic animal or an animal farmed for production purpose for an acceptable reason which requires the immediate killing of the animal;

Section 23 - Allowable procedures

(1) Notwithstanding section 7(1 and 2) of the Animal Welfare Act, the following procedures performed on animals are allowed:

1) piercing or notching the ears of a pig, bovine, sheep, reindeer, goat and other production animal, tattooing, putting an earmark on or microchip in an animal and marking of the above-mentioned animals in other manner which causes minor pain of short duration by a qualified person;

5) castration of a piglet aged no more than seven days by open surgery procedure without tearing the tissue performed by a qualified person, burdizzon castration of a sheep aged less than six weeks performed by a qualified person, burdizzon castration of a reindeer performed by a qualified person as well as castration of a goat, horse, bovine, piglet aged more than

seven days and sheep aged more than six weeks performed by a veterinarian using appropriate anaesthesia and pain relief;

7) dehorning a bovine, sheep and goat by a surgical procedure performed by a veterinarian as well as destroying the horn-producing cells of an animal aged less than four weeks performed by a qualified person;

(2) A qualified person in subsection 1 means a person who has sufficient knowledge on the technique of performing the procedure and sufficient skills to perform the procedure.

(3) The devices and equipment used to perform procedures on animals must be suitable for the purpose, clean and in working order.

(4) In addition to the allowable procedures to be performed on animals referred to in subsection 1 above the competent Ministry may grant exceptions to the provisions of section 7 (1 and 2) of the Animal Welfare Act.

Section 25 (4.5.2000/425) - Farmed animals

(1) Of the wild mammal and bird species found in Finland animals belonging to the following animal species may be farmed for the production of meat or eggs or breeding animals for their production:

1) white-tailed deer, fallow deer, forest reindeer, roe deer, mountain hare, brown hare, mouflon and wild boar; and

2) pheasant, mallard, partridge, capercaillie, black grouse, willow grouse, bean goose, greylag goose and Canada goose.

(2) In addition to the animal species listed in subsection 1 above, coypu (nutria), sika deer, red deer (elk), water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalus*), American bison (*Bison bison*), ostrich, emu and common rhea (nandu) may be farmed for the production of meat or eggs or breeding animals intended for their production.

Section 30 - General requirements (for killing of animals)

(1) An animal may only be killed by a person who knows how to do this. A person who performs the killing must have sufficient knowledge of the method and technique of killing the animal species concerned as well as sufficient skills to perform the procedure.

(2) An animal to be killed must be held or restrained in another appropriate manner so that an animal is spared all avoidable pain, distress, suffering, injury and bruising in the killing. An animal to be killed may not be hung before killing, nor may its limbs be tied.

(3) The killing of an animal must be performed so that no undue pain, distress or suffering is inflicted on the animal and the disturbance caused to the other animals is minimised.

(4) The person who kills an animal must ensure that the animal is dead before undertaking its disposal or any other measures.

Section 33 - Production animals

(1) A production animal of a mammal or bird species, except for a fur animal, may be killed only by shooting or by using electric current or carbon dioxide. In addition, a poultry animal may be killed by cutting the neck swiftly by a sharp instrument or by breaking the neck of an animal which weighs less than three kilograms rapidly and efficiently. (17.3.2005/171)

(2) A fur animal kept for production purposes may be killed in a manner to be specified by the competent ministry only by electric current, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, shooting or mechanical instrument which penetrates into the brain.

(3) In hatcheries hatchlings may only be killed by a mechanical instrument which kills immediately or with carbon dioxide. Unhatched eggs in hatcheries must be treated with the above-mentioned mechanical instrument.

(4) In addition to the provisions of subsections 1-3, an animal may be killed by a veterinarian using an appropriate anaesthetic. If necessary for combating or diagnosing animal diseases, a production animal may, under a permission and supervision of a veterinarian, be killed by means of a killing method other than set down above in this section.

Section 34 - Killing in emergency situations

(1) In emergency situations, to prevent the prolonging of a animal's distress and if the means referred to in sections 32 or 33 above cannot be used or if the animal cannot

be captured, it may also be killed in a manner other than those set down above, provided that no undue distress is inflicted on the animal.

Section 35 - Transfer of an ill or injured animal to be killed

(1) An ill or injured production animal may be transferred elsewhere to be killed or slaughtered only if the transport of the animal or handling it for transfer does not cause any further distress to it.

(2) A seriously ill or injured horse, bovine or similar larger animal may be transported elsewhere to be killed or slaughtered only under a permission of a veterinarian.

Section 36 - Slaughterhouse and place of slaughter

(1) The fittings and equipment of a slaughterhouse and place of slaughter must be such and the activity in these must be organised so that no undue agitation, pain or distress is inflicted on the animals.

(2) A slaughterhouse and place of slaughter must have appropriate and sufficient premises for keeping the animals. The premises for keeping the animals must provide sufficient protection against adverse weather conditions and excessive cold, heat and humidity and they must have enough stalls, pens or other places for keeping the animals.

Section 37 - Keeping of animals to be slaughtered

(1) An animal brought for slaughter which is not slaughtered immediately must be taken to a facility for keeping animals without delay, unless it can be kept in an appropriate manner in the means of transport.

(2) Animals which due to their species, sex, origin or age are hostile or may cause injury to each other must be kept separate from each other.

Section 38 - Care of animals to be slaughtered

(1) Animals kept to be slaughtered, except for poultry, must have access to drinking water at all times.

(2) If animals are not slaughtered within 12 hours from their arrival at a slaughterhouse or place of slaughter, they must be given enough feed upon their

arrival and after this they must be fed at intervals suited to the animal species concerned and milked, where necessary.

(3) The condition and state of health of animals to be slaughtered must be checked daily in the morning and evening and, where necessary, even more frequently.

Section 39 - Animals to be slaughtered urgently

(1) An animal which is significantly ill, hurt or injured as well as an unweaned animal must be slaughtered without delay, but within no more than two hours from the arrival at the slaughterhouse or place of slaughter. Before the slaughter the above-mentioned animals must be kept separate from the other animals.

(2) Animals which are brought to a slaughterhouse in a cage, box or other similar transport container must be slaughtered as soon as possible after the arrival at the slaughterhouse.

Section 40 - Keeping of animals when performing slaughter

(1) Animals to be slaughtered may not be kept waiting in a room or premises where the slaughtering is performed.

Section 41 - Qualifications of the slaughterer and person performing procedures preceding slaughter

(1) Staff which performs the care and handling and stunning and bleeding of animals to be slaughtered must have sufficient knowledge and skills for performing the procedures in an appropriate manner.

(2) Professional slaughter may be performed only by an experienced or trained person who is at least 18 years of age.

(3) No unauthorised persons may be present at slaughter.

Section 42 - Stunning

(1) When an animal is slaughtered it must be stunned before bleeding rapidly, efficiently and for a sufficiently long time. However, a poultry animal may be slaughtered by cutting its neck rapidly with a sharp instrument.

(2) An animal to be stunned must be held or restrained in another appropriate manner so that an animal is spared all avoidable pain, distress, suffering, injury and bruising in the stunning. An animal to be stunned may not be hung before stunning, nor may its limbs be tied. A poultry animal or a rabbit may, however, be hung for stunning if the stunning can be performed in an appropriate manner and without delay.

(3) Stunning must be performed, depending on the animal species and as specified in further detail by the competent ministry, by a mechanical instrument which penetrates into the brain, by electric current or gas which stuns immediately, or by hitting the animal on the head by an appropriate instrument or by shooting an animal in the head.

Section 43 - Devices and equipment used for stunning

(1) Devices and equipment used for stunning must be suitable for the purpose and in working order. To ensure that the devices and equipment are in working order they must be checked and serviced on a regular basis.

Section 44 - Bleeding

(1) Bleeding of a stunned animal must be started immediately after stunning. Bleeding must be rapid, abundant and complete so that the animal does not regain consciousness.

(2) No other procedures may be performed on the animal before it is dead

Section 45 - General requirements

(1) Notwithstanding the provisions set down in section 42(1) above concerning the stunning of an animal before bleeding, if required by religious reasons bleeding may be started simultaneously with stunning, in compliance with the provisions of this Chapter.

(2) An animal may be slaughtered in a way set down in this Chapter only in a slaughterhouse or place of slaughter in the presence of the veterinary officer for meat inspection of the establishment.

Section 46 - Restraining an animal

(1) A bovine must be restrained by a mechanical device which is designed so that the animal is spared all avoidable pain, distress, suffering, injury and bruising. Otherwise the provisions of section 42(2) above apply to restraining an animal.

Section 47 - Stunning

(1) An animal must be stunned by a suitable stunning instrument referred to in section 42(3) simultaneously with the cutting of the jugular veins. However, a poultry animal may be slaughtered by cutting its neck rapidly with a sharp instrument.

Section 48 - Cutting of jugular veins

(1) The cutting of jugular veins may be performed only by an experienced person approved by the religious community concerned.

(2) Jugular veins must be cut as swiftly as possibly by a suitable sharp instrument.