Humane Disposal of Infant Calves and Possible Outlets

On farm slaughter - Infant calves must be killed humanely, and without avoidable excitement, pain and suffering.

Calves killed on farm within 36 hours of birth (dairy), 20 days of birth (non-dairy), do not require eartags or passports, however their births and deaths must be notified to BCMS.

Methods

Fire arms suitable for the on-farm killing of calves are as follows:

1) **Rifles** (22 rim-fire) should only be used as a last resort, as there are safety problems associated with the exiting of the bullet from the carcase.

2) **Shot guns** (410, 28, 20, 16, 12 bore) - The correct use of shot guns obviates the need to bleed or pith, and is safer than a rifle or pistol, as the shot is dispersed within cranium, reducing the risk of operator injury. Firearms should never be used in full contact with the target, but discharged 2 to 10 inches away.

   NB. Operators must be in possession of a current firearm certificate or shotgun certificate. Shotguns should not be used in enclosed spaces or on hard surfaces. The physical appearance of the calf after being shot can be distressing.

3) **Captive-bolt equipment** - Effective and safe, but they are humane stunners and not killers. For calves it is recommended that the heaviest charge available for the captive bolt be used.

   NB. The animal must be either pithed or bled via a deep cut from ear to ear with a sharp knife ensuring all major vessels are severed to ensure rapid death. Captive bolt equipment is no longer subject to the firearm legislation. However when using captive bolt equipment for the routine culling of livestock in the course or furtherance of a business, you must hold a current Slaughterman’s licence.

4) **Humane killers** (Greener ‘Bell’ Guns and ‘Safti-Killers’, general-purpose handguns and purpose-built pistols). Extremely dangerous, and must only be used by experienced operators such as veterinary surgeons, or knackermen. They should not be used in enclosed spaces, or on hardstandings due to the liability of the bullet to exit the carcase and rebound causing injury to the operator.
NB - All weapons must use the correct ammunition and be regularly maintained, as failure to do so can result in unnecessary suffering for the animal and potential danger for the operator.

**Technique**

It is essential that calves are shot efficiently and effectively by a competent person. If there are any doubts as to the technique to use, or you are inexperienced, you should take instruction from a professional/competent person. Prior to shooting, calves should be situated on soft ground with an absorbent material behind them such as a muckheap, so the possibility of the bullet exiting and ricocheting is reduced. Which ever of the above weapons is chosen to kill the calf, the target area is the same:

**Step 1.** The target area is in the middle of the forehead, at the crossing point of two imaginary lines drawn from the middle of each eye to the opposite horn bud, as shown in fig 1.

**Step 2.** The aim should be initially at right angles to the skull, and then tilted slightly to direct the shot through the lower brain and into the higher reaches of the neck, as shown in fig 2.

![Fig. 1](image1.png) ![Fig. 2](image2.png)

**Possible Outlets**

1. **Markets**
calves must be over 7 days old to be sent to a market

2. **Direct to slaughter**  - Drury's Slaughterhouse - Telephone Number: 01793 852467. Drurys are paying a minimum of £5 per calf at the time of publication of this leaflet.
   NB Calves must be double tagged in accordance with Cattle Identification Regulation 2007.

3. **Hunt Kennels**  - Will shoot on farm, a nominal charge may be incurred.

4. **ABP Collectors**  list available from Animal Health Inspectors, at your local authority or contact National Fallen Stock Company (NFSC) on 0845 054 8888.

NB - Removal to a hunt kennel alive, for slaughter, will require calves to be ear tagged and have a passport. Passport to be returned to BCMS by the keeper within 7 days.
**Disposal of Carcases**

Please note that carcases must be disposed of in accordance with the Animal By-Products (Enforcement)(England) Regulations 2011. General provisions are as follows:

These Regulations require that fallen farm animals (including stillborn animals) are collected and transported without **undue delay** to an approved premise:

- For Incineration
- For Rendering
- To Technical Plants
- Or to the following ‘Registered Premises’:
  1. For Diagnostic, Educational or Research purposes
  2. For Taxidermy
  3. Knacker Yard
  4. For Feeding to:
     - Zoo and Circus Animals, reptiles and birds of prey
     - Dogs from recognised kennels, recognised packs of hounds or dogs and cats in shelters
     - Maggots and worms for fishing bait

Burial or burning is **only** permitted on the Isles of Scilly and Lundy Island. Animal by-products must be transported in covered leak-proof containers/vehicles, which must be maintained in a clean condition.

**Further information**

- Correct use and maintenance of firearms and captive-bolt equipment contact the Humane Slaughter Association – Telephone Number: 01582 831919.

- Slaughterman’s licensing and practical training – AHVLA, Telephone - 01785 231900

**Further reading**

- Casualty Slaughter.
- Captive-Bolt Stunning of Livestock.
- Humane Killing of Livestock Using Firearms.

Obtainable from – The Humane Slaughter Association, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Whreathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8AN

- DEFRA Codes of Practice – Telephone Number: 08459 556000.

This is not an authoritative document on the law, and is only intended for guidance. In the interests of brevity, some details have been omitted. Always refer to the Legislation for the exact requirements.