

process, the land area of the EU will increase by 34 per cent and its population by 105 million. Very large numbers of farm, laboratory and other animals will gain the welfare protection afforded by the EU legislation.

The Eurogroup for Animal Welfare and the International Branch of the RSPCA have worked together to produce a useful report reviewing the status of existing animal welfare legislation in the applicant countries, and outlining the RSPCA/Eurogroup programme to assist them in developing animal welfare legislation. Actually, it does considerably more than this, providing also brief accounts of the history of the EU and its institutions, and synopses of current and planned animal welfare legislation of the EU and Council of Europe. The report also provides contact details for relevant organizations in the applicant countries.

In providing a bird's-eye view of the current animal welfare legislation in applicant countries for contrast with EU legislation, the report provides a valuable background to help target the efforts of those wishing to help promote animal welfare in these countries.

The European Union Accession and Animal Welfare: An Introduction to European Animal Welfare Legislation (2000). Eurogroup for Animal Welfare and RSPCA: UK. 55pp. Ring-bound. Obtainable from RSPCA, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG, UK. Free.

Humane slaughter

The use of electricity to stun animals before slaughter was first developed in Germany and France in the 1920s. Electrical stunning systems are now used widely in the slaughter of pigs and sheep and, increasingly, for cattle. The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA), as part of its endeavours to promote high standards of welfare at slaughter has recently published an excellent set of guidance notes on the subject. This, the fourth in the HSA's 'Guidance Notes' series, describes the theory and practice of the use of electricity to stun and kill 'red meat' animals: cattle, sheep, pigs and goats (electrical stunning of poultry is not covered).

Following a brief introduction to the electrical principles, the effects of using electricity to stun or kill, and the use of head-only and head-to-back systems are described. There are also sections on equipment and safety and maintenance. The document is very well presented and important points are illustrated with clear diagrams and tables. For example, there are tables of recommended currents for stunning and killing animals, of the expected duration of insensibility following head-only stunning, and of time to loss of brain function following various sticking methods. The correct positioning of electrodes is illustrated with diagrams and photographs.

Many millions of animals are slaughtered in the meat production industry every year. The humaneness of the procedure depends very greatly on the skill and knowledge of those who operate the equipment. These guidance notes are an excellent resource to help in the training of abattoir operators and supervisors in these important aspects of humaneness. Although the list of useful addresses provided on the inside back cover includes only UK organizations, these guidance notes, in clearly presenting the principles of the use of electricity for stunning and killing, are likely to prove valuable in the promotion and teaching of humane slaughter techniques worldwide.

Electrical Stunning of Red Meat Animals. Guidance Notes No 4 (2000). Humane Slaughter Association: Wheathampstead. 23pp. Paperback. Obtainable from: Humane Slaughter Association, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AN, UK (ISBN 1871561159). Price £3.50.