



Wensum Valley Veterinary Surgeons FARM Newsletter

August 2022

Emergency Slaughter of Cattle - A Reminder:

We are frequently asked about casualty slaughter of livestock and how farmers should go about this. This month's newsletter is aimed at trying to give an overview of what is quite a complicated subject.

If an animal requires emergency slaughter there are 3 options:-

1. Live transport to an abattoir
2. Emergency Slaughter on farm
3. Slaughter and disposal on farm as Fallen Stock

For an animal to be accepted at an abattoir live, it must be healthy and be outside of all medicine withdrawal periods. However, it **cannot be transported if this will cause unnecessary suffering**. This means it must be able to walk freely on all limbs and be loaded unassisted. If it is lame it is almost certainly in pain and should not be transported.

If the animal does not fulfil the above on welfare grounds, it can be slaughtered on farm if it is “*An otherwise healthy animal that has suffered an accident that prevented its transport to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons*”. This can only be done in an “**emergency**” and implies an event requiring immediate action. An example would be an animal that has just suffered a broken leg, not an animal with an infected hock joint. A **veterinary surgeon must be present**, examine the animal pre-slaughter and sign a declaration to accompany the carcass. The carcass must reach the abattoir within 2 hours. **The abattoir must be notified prior to slaughter** but in many cases will not be able to take such an animal for logistical reasons.

If the animal cannot be transported live for welfare reasons and cannot be slaughtered under point 2 it must be humanely destroyed on farm and be disposed of as fallen stock. This can be performed by a knacker man, a vet or the owner.

These are only very brief guidelines and a more detailed description can be found at:

http://www.adlib.ac.uk/resources/000/264/566/Emergency_Slaughter_Booklet.pdf

There is a guidance for veterinary surgeons pdf. on this page which is easy to read and covers most aspects of the subject.

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