

Meat and Poultry Animal Welfare Regulation in the United States

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Objective

- To offer an overview of local, state and federal laws governing meat and poultry animal welfare in the United States
- To outline potential future legal and regulatory activity

Regulatory Overview

- U.S. Department of Agriculture exerts most authority at packing plant level
- Array of state and local laws on farm animal side
- Increasing calls for greater regulation
- High profile activity reflects cultural bias
 - Example: Horses an American icon

Transportation

- Department of Transportation 28-hour rule
 - For every 28-hour confinement in interstate transport, animals must be allowed at least five hours of rest, during which time they are offloaded and given feed and water.
- Animal rights groups sued to encourage enforcement

Horse Transportation Rules

- Feb. 5, 2002 -- new USDA rules on care of horses destined for slaughter
 - Prohibiting transport of horses who are under six months of age, severely debilitated, likely to give birth during transit, or blind in both eyes.
 - Horses must have access to food, water, and rest for six hours, immediately prior to loading.
 - Owners must now provide back tags for proper identification of animals, and separate stallions and aggressive horses during transport.
 - No electric prod use allowed
 - Double-deck trailers for moving horses began five-year phase-out

Pig Production

- No federal animal welfare laws apply
- State and local anti-cruelty laws may apply
- States of Florida and Arizona have banned gestation crates
- California, Colorado and Oregon expected to be next battle fronts

Veal Production

- Bill pending in Oregon Senate (694) that would make it a “crime punishable by a maximum of one year's imprisonment or \$6,250 fine or both for confining pigs or calves in a stall that restricts the animals' ability to turn around freely in a complete circle without touching any side of an enclosure.”
- Animal rights groups fought unsuccessfully to ban veal production in New Jersey.

Cattle and Sheep Production

- No federal animal welfare laws apply
- State and local anti-cruelty laws may apply

Foie Gras Major State and Local Target



News

[THE PRESS](#) - March 30, 2007

MPs sign motion to ban foie gras from UK

[CBS 2 CHICAGO](#) - March 29, 2007

Hot Dog Stand Owner Pleads Guilty To Foie Gras Use

[REUTERS](#) - March 23, 2007

Foie gras, crated meats off chef Wolfgang Puck's menus

[YAHOO! NEWS](#) - March 22, 2007

Chef Wolfgang Puck bans foie gras

[Los Angeles Times](#) - March 22, 2007

Puck says it's time to hold the foie gras

[New York Times](#) - March 22, 2007

Celebrity Chef Announces Strict Animal-Welfare Policy

[York Press](#) - March 16, 2007

Paul's paté problems...

Humane Slaughter Act (HSA)

- Passed by Congress 1958
 - Applied to meat plants supplying federal government
- Expanded in 1978
 - Applies to all meat plants except those engaged in religious slaughter
 - Poultry plants not covered

HSA – Key Components

- Pens, alley ways and driveways must be kept in good repair
- Water must be provided at all times
- Food must be provided when animals held beyond 24 hours
- Sufficient room in the holding pen for animals held overnight to lie down.
- Livestock must be stunned prior to slaughter
- May not drag a conscious animal

HSA Key Components, Contd.

- Dying, diseased, and disabled livestock shall be provided with a covered pen sufficient, to protect them from the adverse climatic conditions of the locale while awaiting disposition by the inspector.
- Livestock pens and driveways shall be so arranged that sharp corners and direction reversal of driven animals are minimized.
- Driving of livestock shall be done with a minimum of excitement and discomfort to the animals. Livestock shall not be forced to move faster than a normal walking speed.

HSA Key Components, Contd.

- Pipes, sharp or pointed objects, and other items which, in the opinion of the inspector, would cause injury or unnecessary pain to the animal shall not be used to drive livestock.
- Disabled animals and other animals unable to move shall be separated from normal ambulatory animals and placed in the covered pen provided for in § 313.1(c).
- Disabled animals and other animals unable to move may be moved, while conscious, on equipment suitable for such purposes

HSA Key Components, Contd.

- Electric prods, canvas slappers, or other implements employed to drive animals shall be used as little as possible in order to minimize excitement and injury.
- Electrical prods attached to AC house current shall be reduced by a transformer to the lowest effective voltage not to exceed 50 volts AC.

HSA Enforcement

- Federal veterinarians must oversee slaughter
- Inspectors can be withdrawn for violations of the HSA, which closes the plant

Humane Poultry Slaughter

- 2005 Notice – “Live poultry must be handled in a manner that is consistent with good commercial practices, which means they should be treated humanely.”

USDA Notices/Directives

- Food Safety and Inspection Service Directive 6900.2
 - Makes clear that when a truck is on the plant premises, it is considered part of the establishment
 - Details how inspectors should interpret compliance with Humane Slaughter rules

Notices/Directives

- 9/04 – *Federal Register* Notice encourages plants to take a systematic approach to animal welfare.

Horse Slaughter

- U.S. House of Representatives in 2006 passed federal ban on horse slaughter; Senate did not act and bill died.
- U.S. House and Senate reintroduced in 2007
- Illinois State Legislature considering a ban
 - One horse slaughter plant in Illinois
- Texas has banned slaughter in the state and a Texas Court upheld a legal challenge to the law
 - Two horse slaughter plants in Texas

Other Legislative/Legal Activity

- Downed Animal Protection Act
 - Would require euthanization of any animal that becomes non-ambulatory
- Humane Poultry Slaughter
 - Past legislative activity; likely in this Congress as well
 - HSUS filed suit against USDA to include poultry under Humane Slaughter Act; suit currently pending

***Future
Battlegrounds...***

Look at the hot buttons – literally!

April 4, 2007

Factory Farming CAMPAIGN


THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES. Working to reduce the suffering of animals raised for meat, eggs, and milk


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Burger King Sets a Fast Food Precedent

The burger biggie announced a change in animal welfare policies to reduce its support for some of the worst factory farm abuses.



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TAKE ACTION!

Wow, Wolfgang!


Chef Wolfgang Puck, who rules a large empire of eateries, leads the way for other restaurateurs by implementing nine measures to reduce the suffering of farm animals. His new menu adds vegetarian options and leaves off especially cruel products like foie gras and battery-cage eggs.

Please **tell Chef Puck "thank you."**

CELEBRITY CHEF

Puck Making Progress for Farm Animals

World-famous chef Wolfgang Puck recently implemented a nine-point plan to ease the suffering of farm animals. [Read more »](#)



HSUS News Ticker [View all stories](#)

Thank you!

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