

Slaughter of Organically Farmed Livestock

Organic requirements are in addition to other statutory requirements
Statutory information is for guidance only and is correct at time of going to print

There are comprehensive and detailed regulations in the UK for the slaughter of all farmed animals, whether organic or not. These regulations stress the importance of providing good welfare for animals, up to and including the time of slaughter. They also set out general hygiene rules (based on HACCP) and training, cleaning, structural and maintenance requirements.

The basic welfare requirements for slaughterhouses are as follows:-

- Animals must not be subjected to avoidable excitement, pain or suffering at any time
- Anyone handling live animals or carrying out stunning or sticking, must have the knowledge, skill and equipment necessary to perform the task humanely and efficiently
- At every premises there must be a member of staff responsible for safeguarding animal welfare

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

A slaughterhouse registered with OF&G for slaughter of organic livestock must comply with all relevant legislation and industry good practice, with the welfare of the animals being paramount.

For a company with good systems in place, the additional requirements for organic certification should present few problems. These are:-

1. The organic status of animals must be checked at intake;
2. Organic livestock must be kept separate from non-organic livestock at delivery, intake and during lairage and slaughter;
3. Pens containing organic animals must be clearly labelled;
4. All product contact surfaces (including knives) must be thoroughly cleaned and rinsed (to remove any residues of cleaning chemicals) before organic slaughter or meat cutting commences. Details of time of slaughter and pre-cleaning must be recorded;
5. Organic carcasses and the meat subsequently butchered from them must be kept separate at all times from non-organic carcasses and meat. Normally the best way to do this is to schedule organic slaughter as the first operation of the day;
6. Only approved pest control chemicals (such as licensed rodent baits) should be used and these must not contaminate meat or packaging materials;
7. Organic carcasses and cuts (sides or quarters) must be marked using an "organic" stamp. (Obtainable from OF&G once certification has been awarded.)
8. Traceability of livestock must be maintained, from intake through to despatch of carcasses or butchered meat. (OF&G must be able to correlate the number of organic livestock slaughtered with the number of carcasses or amount of meat produced.)
9. There must be a written procedure for the slaughter of organic livestock (This is the company's "Organic Procedure" and should include the points detailed above.);
10. Staff must be trained to understand the organic requirements (as laid down in the "Organic Procedure"). This training should be documented and staff monitored to ensure they comply;
11. The company must have a written animal welfare policy, including details of how it is implemented and monitored.

Application and Inspection Leading to Organic Certification

Please contact the OF&G office, (details below) for an application form, our charges leaflet and Technical Leaflet 201 detailing the organic inspection and certification process

These are also available on the OF&G website: www.organicfarmers.org.uk

In brief, once the Application Form and cheque are received, OF&G arranges for an inspection to take place at an agreed time. The inspection report is sent to our Processor Certification Department who review it and may then ask for further information or proof that any non-compliances raised have been resolved.

Once the operation is judged satisfactory, certification is awarded and is valid for one year. Annual re-inspection and certification are required to maintain organic status.

Further Information

For further information or an application pack, please contact the OF&G Processor Certification Department on:-

T: 01939 291800 / 0845 330 5122 (local rate call)

F: 01939 291250 / 0845 330 5123

E: processors@organicfarmers.org.uk

W: www.organicfarmers.org.uk