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STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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**1996 No. 558**

**Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing)  
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996**

**Part I**

**Preliminary**

**Interpretation**

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

“animal” includes bird;

“adverse weather condition” means any weather condition, including direct sunlight, which has an adverse effect on the welfare of an animal;

“authorised person” means any person authorised in writing by the Department for the purposes of these Regulations;

“commercial”, in relation to the slaughter or killing of an animal, means slaughter or killing—

- (a) in the course or furtherance of a business or for reward;
- (b) by, or on behalf of, the purchaser of an animal on premises belonging to, occupied by or under the control of the seller of the animal; or
- (c) in a market place;

“container” means any transport crate in which an animal is delivered to a slaughterhouse or knacker’s yard;

“contravention”, in relation to any provision of these Regulations, includes a failure to comply with that provision;

“the Department” means the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland;

“horse” includes any hinny, ass or mule;

“killing”, in relation to an animal, means causing the death of the animal by any process other than slaughter;

“knacker’s yard” means any premises used for the commercial slaughter or killing of solipeds, ruminants, pigs, rabbits or birds, the flesh of which is not intended for human consumption, including any associated facilities for moving or lairaging such animals;

“lairaging”, in relation to an animal, means keeping the animal in a stall, pen, covered area or field used by a slaughterhouse or knacker’s yard in order to confine it until it is slaughtered or killed to give it any necessary attention before it is slaughtered or killed;

“movement”, in relation to an animal, means unloading it or driving it from an unloading place, stall or pen at a slaughterhouse or knacker’s yard to the premises or place where it is to be lairaged, slaughtered or killed;

“pithing”, in relation to an animal, means the destruction of its brain tissue after stunning to the extent that irreversible loss of consciousness is ensured;

“restraining pen” means a pen or compartment which is—

- (a) suitable for restraining for slaughter by a religious method (as defined in paragraph 2 of Schedule 12) in an upright position any ox, bullock, cow, heifer or steer or any calf which is too large to be restrained manually on a cradle or on a table;
- (b) constructed so as to permit one animal at a time to be confined in it without discomfort and so as to prevent any substantial movement of the animal forwards, backwards or sideways once it has been placed in position for slaughter; and
- (c) approved by the Department under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12;

“restraint”, in relation to an animal, means the application of any procedure designed to restrict its movements in order to facilitate effective stunning or killing;

“slaughter”, in relation to an animal, means causing the death of the animal by bleeding;

“slaughterhouse” means any premises used for the commercial slaughter or killing of solipeds, ruminants, pigs, rabbits or birds the flesh of which is intended for human consumption, including any associated facilities for moving or lairaging such animals;

“stunning”, in relation to an animal, means any process which causes immediate loss of consciousness which lasts until death;

“stunning pen” means a pen or compartment which is suitable for confining adult bovine animals while they are being stunned and which is so constructed that it—

- (a) permits one animal at a time to be confined in it without discomfort;
- (b) prevents any substantial movement forwards, backwards or sideways of an animal confined in it;
- (c) restricts the movement of the head of any animal confined in it without causing the animal any avoidable excitement so as to permit accurate stunning and allows the head of the animal to be released immediately after the animal has been stunned; and
- (d) allows unimpeded access to the forehead of the animal confined in it;

“wild game” means wild land mammals which are hunted (including wild mammals living within an enclosed area under conditions of freedom similar to those enjoyed by wild game) and wild birds.

(2) For the purposes of these Regulations, a person permits any act or omission if he knows of, or might reasonably be expected to know of, that act or omission.

(3) Any provision in these Regulations which applies to an animal awaiting slaughter or killing applies until that animal is dead.

(4) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954(1), except section 20(2) and (3), shall apply to these Regulations as it applies to a Measure of the Northern Ireland Assembly.