

## Summary:

Animal slaughter is the killing of non-human animals, usually referring to killing domestic livestock. In general, the animals would be killed for food; however, they might also be slaughtered for other reasons such as being diseased and unsuitable for consumption. The animals most commonly slaughtered for food are cattle and water buffalo for beef and veal, sheep and lambs for lamb and mutton, goats for goat meat, pigs for pork and ham, deer for venison, horses for horse meat, poultry (mainly chickens, turkeys and ducks), and increasingly, fish in the aquaculture industry. A few guidelines are however worth observing in selecting livestock for slaughter. These deal with the health condition and the physical quality characteristics of the animals. Sanitation is focussed on the establishment and maintenance of healthy environmental and appropriate physical conditions congenial to the attainment of a wholesome product.

### i. Electrical stunning

Stunning by electricity is used widely on small animals especially pigs. The simplest mechanism consists of electrodes or probes built in the form of tongs with insulated handles and applied between the ear and eye of the animal for 1–4 secs. About 5–7 secs must elapse before the animal is bled. The level of voltage used for sheep and goats is between 60 and 70 volts/ac 50–60 cycles.

### ii. Carbon dioxide gas stunning

Chemical stunning is a term applied to the use of carbon dioxide in making animals immobile before bleeding. The animals are led individually or in pairs into a pit, tunnel or a compartment where  $\text{CO}_2$  of 65–75 percent (optimum 70 percent) concentration is released for 60 sec. The animals quickly pass into an unconscious state, but are not suffocated. They are then removed and bled immediately.

#### a. Bleeding

Stunned animals must be positioned first for bleeding. A vertical or hanging position is achieved by shackling below the hock of one hind leg and hoisting the animal (head down) to a convenient height. Alternatively, the animal can be placed horizontally on a concrete slab or a sturdy plastic pallet for bleeding.