



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the on farm chemical euthanasia of bovine animals by lethal injection in Wales

1.1 Purpose of this document

1.1.1 This document describes the eligibility criteria and process for the chemical euthanasia of bovine animals during a pilot exercise to run from January 2020.

1.1.2 Described are the roles required of Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), the Veterinary Delivery Partner (VDP), and the Official Veterinarian (OV).

1.2 Eligibility

1.2.1 Only a single category of bovine animals which require slaughter/removal following TB tests (e.g. skin test reactors, gamma reactors, inconclusive reactors) will be eligible for farm chemical euthanasia:

‘Bovine animals unable to travel as they are due to calve or have recently calved thus rendering them unfit for transport.’

1.2.2 All other bovine animals removed under TB controls currently requiring on farm killing are not eligible e.g. those unfit to travel due to other welfare reasons and animals within their medicine withdrawal period.

1.2.3 Owners of these other categories of animals will continue to be able to request they are killed by on farm chemical euthanasia however this will not be funded by WG.

2. Notification

2.1.1 Where on farm euthanasia is required APHA Wales will instruct the appropriate VDP.

2.1.2 Instructions will be issued by email on a standard replicated template using a unique reference number and not via Sam.

2.1.3 Instructions will require the OV to attend farm to euthanise the animal(s) on the afternoon of day 9 after TT2. The animal(s) will be removed by the haulier on day 10.

2.1.4 The only exception to 2.1.3 is where the day following day 9 is a Saturday or Bank Holiday in which case euthanasia will be required on day 8, with the haulier then attending on day 9.

3. Safety

3.1 OV's will be responsible for their own health and safety requirements whilst conducting this work, this includes the safe handling, administration and storage of controlled drugs.

3.2 OV's are reminded not to take unnecessary risks in the handling of animal(s) to ensure completion of the work.

4. Materials

4.1 Chemicals and reagents

4.1.1 The OV will be responsible for adhering to the required controls for safe handling, storage and recording of administered drugs. OV's will be required to use products approved for use for the animal(s) being killed.

4.1.2 The OV will be responsible for providing and using any material or equipment necessary to aid them in the safe completion of the work e.g. restraining aids

5. Method

5.1 Euthanasia of cattle

5.1.1 The OV conducting on farm euthanasia must be both experienced and competent in performing the required procedure.

5.1.2 The OV must be both experienced and competent in the safe handling of cattle, requesting where necessary, additional support to ensure both the welfare of the animals and safety of attending personnel are not compromised.

5.1.3 The OV must consider the location of animals once killed i.e. ensuring they are located as not to hinder safe collection and to minimise predation by farm animals and wildlife. It is the responsibility of the attending vet to advise the animal keeper of the risks posed by chemically euthanised animals and discuss potential risk mitigation e.g. covering the carcass.

6. Identification

6.1.1 The instruction from APHA to the VDP will include the Official Animal Identification (OAI) to correctly identify the animals for lethal injection.

6.1.2 The OV should on the day of the visit further identify the animal(s) killed via lethal injection. This will ensure the animal(s) is subsequently processed correctly. A suggested form of identification is to wrap coloured tape around the distal part of one limb - in the metacarpal or metatarsal region.

7. Contingencies

7.1 Failure to correctly identify the animal

7.1.1 Where there is uncertainty regarding the identification of the animal the OV must contact APHA within operating hours.

7.2 Failure to safely handle and subsequently kill the animal

7.2.2 Where there are issues that prevent the work being completed e.g. fractious animals, unsuitable facilities etc and cannot be addressed at the visit, these must be reported to APHA within working hours. Details of the reasons why the work could not be completed must be accurately described, this will ensure appropriate alternate arrangements can be made.

7.3 Failure to attend the holding

7.2.3 If the OV is unable to attend the holding within the agreed time the OV, in the first instance, must contact the relevant VDP to arrange a suitable alternate OV. If no suitable alternative is available APHA must be contacted within operating hours.

7.4 Default position

7.4.1 The cattle keeper will be advised that where the OV is unable to provide the service within the agreed window, the VDP will be tasked with looking for an alternative OV. Failure to provide an OV will result in on farm killing being conducted by the assigned collection company - as per other animals killed on farm under TB controls. On farm killing will then not be performed using lethal injection.

8. Invoicing

8.1 VDPs will include this work in their monthly invoice to APHA Finance, identifying these activities separately as 'On Farm Killing via Lethal Injection' and providing the unique reference number allocated by APHA on the instruction template.

16th Dec 2019