

# Breeders' opinions about mobile-slaughter of cattle in Flanders

Hilde Vervaecke<sup>1</sup>, Mariella Debille<sup>1</sup>, Paul Verbeke<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>: Odisee University College, Agro- & Biotechnology, Salto Research Group, Sint-Niklaas, Belgium; hilde.vervaecke@odisee.be; <sup>2</sup>: Bioforum Vlaanderen, Antwerp, Belgium.

Contact: hilde.vervaecke@odisee.be; mariella.debille@odisee.be

Most meat-animals are confronted with the stresses of manipulation, transport and slaughter. Transport results in stress, increased potential for injuries, and a higher potential for subsequent lower meat quality and quantity.

The European legislation allows for national initiatives that investigate animal-friendly alternatives of live transport to the slaughter-house such as the development of a mobile slaughter unit.



*"Mobile slaughterhouses reduce the need for animals to be transported over long distances and therefore may contribute to safeguarding animal welfare. However, technical constraints for mobile slaughterhouses differ from fixed slaughterhouses and **technical rules may need to be consequently adapted**. Therefore, this Regulation should provide for the **possibility to establish derogations exempting mobile slaughterhouses from the requirements on layout, construction and equipment of slaughterhouses**. Pending the adoption of such derogations, it is appropriate to **allow Member States to establish or maintain national rules regarding mobile slaughterhouses**."*

Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 september 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

The main animal welfare benefits consist of a decrease in transport time and transport-associated stressors such as loading and unloading, the shocks and sensory stimuli of driving, injuries, fatigue, waiting time, deprivation of water, inadequate micro-climate,...

***We carried out focus group-meetings to describe the opinions on mobile slaughter among on-farm meat processing cattle breeders, cattle farmers and American bison breeders.***

## Profitability

- ⇒ Profitability is an open question for most breeders.
- ⇒ Most breeders trust that consumers will be willing to pay a higher price.
- ⇒ On-farm marketers are confident that their current customers of conventionally slaughtered animals will continue to buy on-farm slaughtered meat.

## Practical concerns

- ⇒ Organisation (timing, control,...)
- ⇒ Price
- ⇒ Subsequent meat temperature and conservation
- ⇒ Transport to the meat processing place
- ⇒ Waste treatment
- ⇒ Practical slaughter and manipulation guidelines
- ⇒ Animals that are too wild to enter the unit: shooting on meadow?

## Potential benefits of mobile slaughter for the animals perceived by on-farm meat processing cattle breeders, cattle farmers and breeders of bison:

- ⇒ the low-stress, respectful, relaxed, familiar, quiet context for the animal, translating in higher meat quality;
- ⇒ important welfare benefits for wilder species and individuals;
- ⇒ the farmers appreciate the possibility to follow up the treatment of the animal from birth till death, with a maximum transparency;
- ⇒ they consider a respectful death of high importance;
- ⇒ parallel with the decreased animal-stress, the farmers expect to stress less themselves;
- ⇒ on-farm mobile slaughter offers an attractive marketing story;
- ⇒ some breeders see a potential for on-farm education concerning slaughter.

## Feasibility?

- ⇒ most farmers think it will be feasible to overcome the concerns;
- ⇒ most farmers "just want to do this", they need political support and want a dialogue with the food safety services;
- ⇒ the majority of the breeders is positive towards the functioning of an mobile slaughter unit in Flanders.

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(Pictures: GlobalMeatnews.com; Friesla.com; www.mobileslaughter.com; natuurvlees.be; trivan.com/mobile-processing-unit; wilddeabuffalo.com; reporterre.net)

