

HSA has taken a leading role in both research and training in the handling and slaughter of these new farmed species. The HSA has also taken a leading role in the promotion of humane methods for the stunning and slaughter of farmed fish. The Association provided funding for research into the successful development of an electric stunner for farmed trout, and continues to work with equipment manufacturers and farm managers to audit and improve equipment designed for the humane harvesting of both fresh and sea water species.

The Association is respected as a source of constructive advice:-

- to governments on new legislation;
- to the livestock and meat industries through training materials, practical demonstrations and lectures;
- to the general public in providing independent and straightforward responses to their queries.

During the foot-and-mouth outbreak in 2001 the HSA provided support and technical advice to the government, the armed forces and concerned members of the public, and stands ready to provide such support in the future.

The Association publicises its work and disseminates information at relevant events throughout the country. Funds are also provided for essential research and development work, for example the development of a captive-bolt device for killing casualty poultry on-farm, and improved handling systems for pigs at slaughter.

The HSA takes a realistic, practical approach to a subject most people prefer to ignore; namely how their meat reaches the table. Arguably it is unique as a charity that has the practical expertise to identify problems and to provide real solutions which offer lasting improvements to food animal welfare.

The work of the HSA continues to expand rapidly, both in the UK and overseas, and financial resources are needed urgently.

#### How you can help

The HSA depends upon voluntary subscriptions, donations and legacies for its income. Support is needed from both individuals and corporate organisations so that the Association may continue to play an effective role in improving the welfare of food animals.

The annual subscription for individual members is £15, for corporate organisations £50 and for those in full-time education £5.

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## MAKING PROGRESS



#### The early pioneers....

The Council of Justice to Animals (CJA) was formed in 1911 to promote more humane methods for the slaughter of food animals and for destroying cats and dogs, and to improve the welfare of food animals in livestock markets and transport facilities. The Council also maintained a number of dispensaries to provide veterinary services for the animals of the poor. In 1928 the CJA amalgamated with the Humane Slaughter Association and today the organisation is generally known as the HSA.

The Association has always maintained a practical approach to animal welfare. Over a period of almost a century it has played a major role in the introduction of many of the improvements in animal welfare during transport, in markets and at slaughter, that are now taken for granted.

#### Welfare at slaughter

The Association's first major campaign was aimed at replacing the pole-axe with a mechanically operated humane stunner. In the early 1920s the Association carried out an eight month demonstration of the effectiveness of the captive-bolt stunner at a slaughterhouse in Islington, London. During this period almost sixty-four percent of the blows administered with the pole-axe failed to stun the animals successfully the first time. In contrast, when the captive-bolt stunner was used, only 4 out of 1255 animals were not stunned the first time, and this was due to faulty cartridges which meant the bolt failed to leave the barrel. Initially there were objections from the meat trade to the use of the captive-bolt stunner but these were overcome. As a result of the Association's efforts, humane stunners were adopted by 28 London boroughs, and later by 494 other local authorities.

In the early 1930s there was still no legal protection in the UK for animals at slaughter. The HSA campaigned strongly for change and in 1933 the *Slaughter of Animals Act* was introduced. This required that in slaughterhouses all cattle and calves be stunned by a captive-bolt stunner before slaughter, and that pigs be stunned either with a captive-bolt or an 'electrolethal' (electric stunner). However, in slaughterhouses without electricity pigs could still be bled while fully conscious, and the method of killing sheep was left to the discretion of local authorities. Appeals by the HSA eventually brought these animals within the scope of the Act.

During the Second World War thousands of pigs were reared for home consumption and many were being bled while fully conscious. To help

History of the HSA

relieve the situation the HSA distributed almost 500 captive-bolt stunners to licensed slaughtermen all over the country. *The Slaughter of Animals (Pigs) Act 1954* finally made it compulsory to mechanically stun pigs slaughtered outside a slaughterhouse.

The Association continued to campaign against the appalling conditions in red meat slaughterhouses, many of which lacked basic sanitation and had inadequate accommodation and facilities for livestock. This finally resulted in *The Slaughterhouses Act 1958* and the *Prevention of Cruelty and Hygiene Regulations 1958*, being enacted.

The HSA helped to develop the first hand-held, low voltage electric stunner for poultry and later arranged for a Danish automatic stunner, dealing with 4,500 birds per hour, to be trialled in the UK. *The Slaughter of Poultry Act* was introduced in 1967, and during the debate in the House of Lords special mention was made of the work of the HSA.

### **Market reforms**

In the early years the HSA visited many markets in the UK and found that animals suffered from exposure, lack of water and rough handling in antiquated temporary street facilities. It was clear that purpose built markets were needed and the Association worked with the authorities to ensure that provisions for adequate cover, lighting, ventilation, drainage and non-slip floors were included in plans for new and renovated markets. Where necessary, the HSA gave financial support to provide calf shelters, loading bays, poultry pens and water troughs. In 1992 a video 'To Market to Market', together with a practical guide, was produced to aid those handling livestock, particularly in markets.

The Association continues to provide advice and assistance to livestock markets and in 1989 introduced its first annual market award. The 'Market Development Grant' has been given to help fund improvements to market facilities, thus ensuring improved welfare for farm animals.

### **Animal transport**

The HSA campaigned for many years for cattle arriving in Glasgow by ship from Ireland to be moved to the abattoir by rail rather than walking through the city, and in 1941 the necessary lines were laid. The Association continues to promote high welfare standards in the transport of livestock both in the UK and overseas. The HSA released its first transport training video in 1989. This was updated in 2000 and 'The Road Ahead' video has been translated into 10 European languages. In January 2007 the new EU Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and related operations came into effect. The HSA subsequently produced Technical Notes on the new Regulation to assist those involved in the commercial transport of farm animals and horses, poultry and farmed fish.

### **Overseas**

As early as 1924 the Association exerted pressure in Greece and Italy for improvements in animal welfare. In 1950 a member of the HSA left £6,000 to help promote humane slaughter in Canada. A joint project was set up between Miss Sidley (HSA) and Mr Shelvoke of Accles and Shelvoke, the major UK

firearms manufacturer. Slaughter demonstrations were arranged, and an expert slaughterman carried them out at Canada Packers. As a result, the Canadian Parliament passed regulations enforcing the use of humane methods.

The HSA frequently receives requests to provide training materials, advice and training to countries overseas. In many parts of the world there remains an urgent need to improve the welfare of food animals and the Association provides assistance, promoting humane slaughter methods worldwide.

In 2005 the HSA was awarded a contract by the EU Commission to organise and run an international training workshop on welfare standards concerning the stunning and killing of animals in slaughterhouses, or for disease control. The very successful three-day workshop was held in Bristol in 2006 and was attended by eighty-five delegates from 53 countries worldwide, with speakers from seven different countries.

### **Religious slaughter without prior stunning**

The HSA campaigned in support of a Private Member's Bill in 1956 to remove from the *Slaughter of Animals Act 1933*, the exemptions from stunning for Jewish and Muslim methods of slaughter. However, the Bill was defeated by 178 votes to 132. A second Private Member's Bill was introduced in 1968, but despite a campaign by the HSA which cost over £25,000, this was defeated by 219 votes to 69. *The 'Slaughterhouses Act 1974'*, and later the *'Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995'*, continued to allow religious slaughter without stunning. The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), the Government's independent advisory body on animal welfare, has investigated the welfare of animals slaughtered by religious methods on two occasions. It published reports in 1985 and 2003 in which it recommended that religious slaughter without prior stunning should be phased out. The HSA supported this recommendation on both occasions, but the Government's response was that it supported the rights of religious groups and rejected the recommendation.

Whilst respecting religious beliefs, the HSA's position on the pre-slaughter stunning of animals has always been unequivocal, all animals should be effectively stunned prior to being bled.

### **The way ahead**

The 1980s saw the HSA shift its emphasis towards education and training, and this continues to be one of the primary objectives of the Association. Educational materials for all those responsible for the welfare of animals in markets, during transport and at slaughter continue to be developed. Training videos on both the transport and the slaughter of animals have been produced and distributed widely. Both of these award-winning videos are available in several languages. In 2005 the HSA was honoured by the British Society of Animal Science/Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals with an award for 'Innovative Developments in Animal Welfare'; and in 2006 it was awarded the Meat Industry 'Training Initiative of the Year' Award for its training DVD 'Poultry Welfare – Taking Responsibility'.

Recent years have seen more and more exotic species, including water buffalo, bison, wild boar and ostrich, being farmed in the UK for both meat and milk. The