



National Council of SPCAs



South Africa

# HUMANE END OF LIFE (EUTHANASIA) FOR THE PURPOSES OF DISEASE CONTROL



**Methods That Comply With Relevant Legislation  
And The OIE Terrestrial Code Chapter 7.6**

National Council of SPCAs

[www.nspca.co.za](http://www.nspca.co.za)

# Introduction to the NSPCA

- Non profit, non government organisation (NGO). Our mandate is to prevent cruelty to animals through education and law enforcement.
- We are a statutory body
- Only SA animal welfare organisation to have an act of parliament (SPCA Act No 169 of 1993)
- **SPCA enforce over 90% of animal welfare legislation (Animals Protection Act No. 71 of 1962)**
- Less than 10% of investigations result in prosecution. Most problems are resolved with education, advice and/or warnings.



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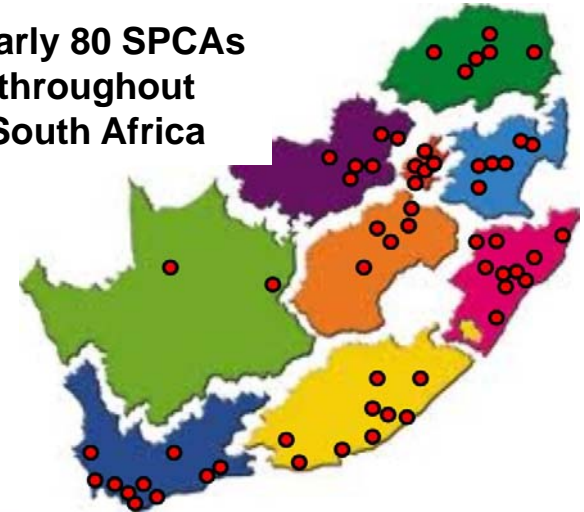
## National SPCA

We operate nationally and works with industry and government to achieve change.

We have 6 Specialised Operational Units  
:- **Farm Animal Protection Unit**

## Local SPCAs

Nearly 80 SPCAs  
throughout  
South Africa



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# Avian Influenza (AI)



- **A FEW DEATHS MAY OCCUR OVER SEVERAL DAYS FOLLOWED BY RAPID SPREAD AND A MORTALITY RATE THAT CAN THEN APPROACH 100% WITHIN 48 HOURS**
  - Highly Pathogenic AI and Economic Impact
    - Suffering
    - Culling inevitable



# Experience With Government And Industry During 2017 AI Outbreak

- Lack of a contingency plans identified by the NSPCA in mid 2016
- Lobbying of government and industry
- Humane methods identified
- All of above fell on deaf ears

## **HPAI CULLING IN PARTICULAR REQUIRES EXPERTISE**

**Experts invited ONLY when disease had already manifested in  
2017**

**LACK OF CONTINGENCY PLANS = DISASTER**



# Problems

1. Animals suffering from infection
2. Disease spreads exponentially
3. Farms having 100s of 1000s of birds
4. Ineffective and cruel methods need to be fiercely prevented **using national legislation and international standards (OIE)**
5. Effect on personnel
6. Responsibility of parties

**SOLUTION: BE PREPARED**



# Acceptable And Practical Methods

- Containerised gassing units (Inert gas mixtures)
- Cervical dislocation
- Nitrogen foam
- Mechanical aids

## VENTILATION SHUTDOWN PREVENTED IN SOUTH AFRICA BY THE NSPCA

- Inducing organ failure and heat stroke in animals over hours can never be justified
- Wanting to introduce large heaters and gas to complement the “procedure”?

Obviously not as simple as previously thought



# Containerized Gassing Units (CGUs)

Only Inert gas mixtures ( Argon at 80% and CO2 at max. 20%) in order to prevent unnecessary suffering



Modified CGU used on a farm in South Africa

- Ideal dimensions will fit 800kg weight in birds (as per DEFRA research)
- Each load should take 1.5 minutes to induce anoxia and death
- Used widely
- Still requires proper planning, including a good working relationship with the local gas companies
- Raj, M., O`Callaghan, M., Thompson, K., Beckett, D, Morrish,. Love, A., Hickman, G., and Howson, S (2008). Large scale killing of poultry species on farm during outbreaks of diseases: evaluation and development of a humane containerised gas killing system. *World Poultry Science Journal*, **Vol. 64**, 227-244



# Nitrogen Foam Delivery System (NEFD)



- Rapid euthanasia as whole house is filled without handling
- Nitrogen an inert gas so prevention of animal suffering
- No foam found in trachea of the birds
- Human interaction minimal
- Nitrogen is cost effective
- Natural decay over 12 hours
- Raj M., De Luca., R, and Li., J(2015). Novel method for killing poultry in houses with dry foam created using nitrogen, *Veterinary Record*, **162**, 933-944
- McKeegan., D, Reimert H., Hindle., Boulcott, J., Sparrey., Wathes, C., ...Gerritzen, M (2013). Physiological and behavioural responses of poultry exposed to gas-filled high expansion foam, *Poultry Science* , **92**, 1145-1154





# Mechanical Aids for Cervical Dislocation

NEX DEVICE - Developed in the United Kingdom as part of a Masters degree

Improves the efficiency of the method (particularly large birds) and prevents fatigue of personnel carrying out the procedure

NEX Device

<https://www.livetecsystems.co.uk/>

**LIVETEC SYSTEMS**



# African Swine Fever (ASF)



- ASF is a deadly viral disease that is easily transmissible
  - A 100% mortality rate can result.
- Of concern is the Incubation Period of up to 19 days
  - Culling inevitable



# African Swine Fever (ASF)

## First Step: Prepare before the outbreak occurs

- Pig Boards and captive bolt pistols available throughout governmental services
- Adequate training cannot be over-emphasized
- Responsibilities established before outbreak occurs

## Important

- Swine fever outbreaks are notoriously done in a cruel manner throughout the world, even ignoring the OIE code
- All welfare bodies need to be aware and do all that they can to prevent cruelty



Small scale farmers are also affected



NSPCA officials undertaking euthanasia



# Prevention Is Better Than Cure

## A HIGH CAUSE FOR THE THE SPREAD OF ASF IN SOUTH AFRICA IS THROUGH SALEYARDS

- Alternative methods for sales must be a high priority
- This is a case whereby welfare and benefits to the economy of a country are intertwined
- Animal cruelty is a challenge at sale yards and certain strains can destroy a country`s economy and threaten food security
- The NSPCA helped cull hundreds of thousands of pigs infected with Classical Swine Fever in the past and without rapid action, not only would suffering have been immense but food security and economic disasters would have resulted



# Other Important Diseases

This is limited detail for common diseases whereby media coverage has exposed cruel practices in other countries that are members of the OIE but did not even adhere to their less comprehensive standards

It includes but is not limited to:

1. Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)
2. Rabies
3. Salmonellosis



**NB:** Not all approved OIE methods are humane, practical or even environmentally friendly. Example:- **whole house CO2 gassing** in poultry houses causes suffering, requires extraordinary amounts of CO2 and the release of this extraordinary amount of CO2 into the environment is controversial to say the least

**This makes non-compliance with OIE standards even more disturbing**



# DEBATE ABOUT ACCEPTABILITY?



# ANSWER – clearly no debate!

In African countries such as Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa, identical legislation for euthanasia states ..” *Cause or procure it to be destroyed, with such instruments or appliances and with such precautions and such manner as to inflict as little suffering as practicable..”*

OIE terrestrial code chapter 7.6 - *“when animals are killed for disease control purposes, methods used should result in immediate death or immediate loss of consciousness lasting until death; when loss of consciousness is not immediate, induction of unconsciousness should be non-aversive or the least aversive possible and should not cause avoidable anxiety, pain, distress or suffering”*

It is thus widely accepted that animals slaughtered during disease outbreaks deserve a “good death” - euthanasia



# QUESTIONS?



**NSPCA**  
**(011) 907 3590**  
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**THANK YOU**



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