Use of non-authorised methods of stunning – non-penetrative captive bolt

Some religious interpretations may allow the use of non-authorised methods of stunning.

Stunning of cattle can be done with a non-penetrative captive bolt device, or non-penetrative “stunner”. It strikes the forehead of the animal with great force without penetrating the skull.

This method can only be used as a derogation from the general principle of stunning. One should carefully assess whether it renders the animal unconscious.

Parameters

The charge or air pressure should be appropriate for the animals to be stunned. The stunner’s manufacturer instructions contain the necessary information and should be followed.

Positioning

The target of the stunner is on the forehead of the animal. Imagining two lines going from the middle of each horn / horn bud to the top of the opposite eye, the target is the intersection point between the two lines, aiming the stunner at right angles. The stunner should be aimed with the line of the spinal column in the neck.

Advantages

- The stunner’s impact causes concussion, and should make the animal immediately unconscious.

Disadvantages

- It does not always induce unconsciousness immediately, especially if used on heavy cattle.
- It is likely to break the skull of the animal. If not rendered unconscious, the animal will suffer.
- There is a cost for the purchase of the stunner.
- The stunner requires regular maintenance
- A back-up system should be available, should the stunner fail.

This stunning method constitutes good practice.
### Control procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should be checked?</th>
<th>What does good look like?</th>
<th>What might go wrong? How can it be fixed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitor indicators of unconsciousness after stunning</td>
<td>No regular breathing, eyes have a fixed, glazed expression, eye does not blink when touched with the finger, no noise, no response to pinch or prick on nose or ear, loss or posture, legs initially stiff and extended (tonic phase) followed by twitching and / or kicking (clonic phase). At least 3 indicators of unconsciousness observed</td>
<td>Ineffective stunning – review stunning equipment, positioning and parameters for the weight and size of the animal. Re-stun: where the first shot from a non-penetrative stun gun fails to stun the animal, it shall immediately be stunned with a shot from a penetrative stun gun or stunned electrically. A back-up system (penetrative stun gun, electric stunning) should be available and in good working order.</td>
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