

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - summary

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter.

Northern Ireland

There is a specific [home slaughter of livestock guide for Northern Ireland](#). This provides information on the law in this country.

Contact [Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(DAERA\) Direct Regional offices](#) for information on:

- [animal welfare at time of killing](#)
- [on the disposal of animal by-products](#)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in Northern Ireland. as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (331.46 KB)

Revision history

Revision number	Date	Purpose of revision	Revised by
-----------------	------	---------------------	------------

5	January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferred to new FSA guidance template. • Contents page updated. • Update to legislative references and links. • Update to Legal Status of the guidance. • Simplification of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies Regulations section. • Update to Animal By-Products Regulations section. • Update to Animal Welfare Regulations section. • Update to useful contacts section. • Update to SRM list in Annex C 	Meat Hygiene Policy Team and FSA Wales Hygiene Policy Team
4	September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow use of holders of a Certificate of Competence or licence to slaughter under Council Regulation 1099/2009. • Addition of best practices. • Addition of record requirements for the farmer. • Insertion of Animal By-Product section. • Update to legislative references • Addition of useful links/ contacts • Changes to the layout and format. 	Meat Hygiene Policy Team

Summary

Purpose

This guidance has been produced to provide information on the law covering the home slaughter of livestock.

Legal status

This guidance is intended to explain clearly the legal requirements relating to animal welfare, Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs), Animal by-products (ABPs) and meat hygiene. The guidance also identifies best practice.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- Livestock Owners
- Slaughterers holding a Welfare at the Time of Killing (WATOK) licence
- Holders of a Certificate of Competence (CoC) to slaughter animals
- Local authorities

Which UK countries does this guidance apply to?

- England
- Wales

Key words

- meat and livestock

- hygiene and food safety
- food law, monitoring and controls

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - introduction

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter.

Introduction

Home slaughter is the slaughter of a livestock animal by its owner on their property for their own personal consumption or for consumption by members of their immediate family living there. The slaughter may also be carried out by a licensed slaughterer, defined as a person holding either a Welfare at the Time of Killing (WATOK) licence or a Certificate of Competence (CoC), provided it is done under the supervision of the owner. Home slaughter does not take place in an approved slaughterhouse. Carcasses or parts of carcasses from home slaughtered livestock, other than those being disposed of as animal by-products (ABPs), cannot be moved to another premises for processing.

Home slaughter is distinct from 'private slaughter' which is when the owner of the animal sends it to an approved slaughterhouse to be slaughtered, and the dressed carcass is returned to the owner. Animals that undergo 'private slaughter' would be subject to formal inspection procedures by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) as determined by the [Official Control Regulation](#) (OCR), following which the carcass would receive a health mark to verify that it is fit for human consumption.

Home slaughter is also distinct from 'emergency slaughter' which is the slaughter of domestic ungulates (e.g. cows, sheep) outside the slaughterhouse, following an accident/injury under emergency procedures within legislation. This only applies to the slaughter of an otherwise healthy animal where the accident/injury has prevented its transport to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons. Under these circumstances, such animals must be subject to ante-mortem inspection and certification by an Official Veterinarian (OV). The carcass would then be subject to further veterinary examination by an OV and undergo formal inspection procedures by the FSA before a health mark is applied, if it is fit for human consumption. Unlike meat from home slaughtered animals, meat from animals slaughtered in compliance with emergency procedures may be placed on the market for sale for human consumption.

It should be noted that home slaughter is likely to carry a greater risk to public health than slaughter that takes place in approved premises where the animal and the meat are subject to formal inspection procedures to verify that it is fit for human consumption. The FSA website provides [a list of all establishments in England and Wales](#) that are approved to handle, prepare or produce products of animal origin and this includes the locations of approved slaughterhouses. Livestock owners can also find these details in [Annex A](#).

It is a legal requirement that all livestock owners maintain appropriate records of identification and movements of their animals. This includes ensuring that the home slaughter (deaths) of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and deer are recorded in farm registers and reported to the appropriate agency, such as the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS), [the Livestock Information Service \(LIS\)](#) or EID Cymru for sheep and goats, or the [electronic animal movement licensing \(eAML2\)](#) for pigs, in the usual way. Please see further information on record keeping of livestock in [England](#) and [Wales](#). Where it is found that appropriate records have not been kept, enforcement action will be taken as necessary.

Intended audience

Livestock [\(footnote 1\)](#) owners considering home slaughter at their farm [\(footnote 2\)](#) for their own personal consumption or for members of their immediate family living there.

Holders of a WATOK licence to slaughter animals, or a CoC issued by the relevant competent authority, who carry out home slaughter under the responsibility and supervision of the livestock owner on farm for the owner's personal consumption or that of members of their immediate family living there.

Regulatory and enforcement authorities responsible for the enforcement of Animal Welfare, the Food Hygiene Regulations, Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) Regulations and ABP Regulations on farm.

Purpose of the guidance

To provide advice on the conditions that must be met to allow the legal home slaughter of livestock.

To protect the food and feed chain and minimise any potential risks to human and animal health and welfare.

Legal status of guidance

Directly applicable EU legislation no longer applies in GB. EU legislation retained when the UK exited the EU became assimilated law on 1 January 2024, published on legislation.gov.uk. References to any legislation in FSA guidance with 'EU' or 'EC' in the title (e.g. Regulation (EC) 178/2002) should now be regarded as assimilated law where applicable to GB and as directly applicable EU law where applicable to Northern Ireland. References to 'Retained EU Law' or 'REUL' should now be regarded as references to assimilated law.

These guidance notes have been produced to provide:

- Best practice guidance
- Guidance on the legal requirements of:

[Regulation \(EC\) No. 178/2002](#) laying down the general principles and requirements of food law.

[Regulation \(EC\) No. 852/2004](#) on the hygiene of foodstuffs.

[Regulation \(EC\) No. 853/2004](#) laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin (as amended).

[Regulation \(EC\) No. 999/2001](#) (as amended) which lays down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) in animals.

[Regulation \(EC\) No. 1069/2009](#) laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption.

[Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#) lays down rules on the performance of official controls and other official activities by the competent authorities.

[Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1099/2009](#) on protection of animals at the time of killing.

[Food Hygiene and Safety \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) (as amended)

[Food Hygiene \(Wales\) Regulations 2006](#) (as amended)

[The General Food Regulations 2004](#)

[Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)

[Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies \(Wales\) Regulations 2018](#) (as amended)

[The Animal By-Products \(Enforcement\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) (as amended)

[The Animal By-Products \(Enforcement\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#)

[The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations \(England\) 2015](#)

[The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations \(Wales\) 2014](#)

The guidance notes on legal requirements cannot cover every situation and you may need to consider the relevant legislation to see how it applies in your circumstances. Livestock keepers or businesses with specific queries may wish to seek advice from their local enforcement agency, which will be the Trading Standards/Environmental Health department of the Local Authority (LA) where their farm is situated. Please see information on [Trading Standards contact details](#) and your [Local Authority details](#). Following these guidance notes will help you to comply with the law.

You are not required by law to follow best practice guidance, but you are encouraged to take up the actions recommended. All guidance on best practice is identified in shaded boxes, with a heading of Best Practice:

Best practice

All best practice guidance is clearly identified within this document by this style of format.

1. This Guide is not intended to cover all livestock species, but it does cover those species for which we receive most enquiries. It is particularly applicable to cattle, sheep and goats where TSE controls apply.
2. For the purpose of this guide, 'farm' is defined as any premises where livestock are kept.

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - food hygiene regulations

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter under food hygiene regulations.

Food hygiene regulations

[Regulation \(EC\) No 853/2004](#) (hereinafter Food Hygiene Regulation) indicates that in most cases, meat intended for human consumption must originate from animals slaughtered in approved slaughterhouses. Such slaughter is, amongst other things, subject to inspection and verification by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

The legality of slaughter outside approved premises depends on whether it is intended that the carcase or meat from the carcase will be 'placed on the market'. [Article 3 of Regulation \(EC\) No. 178/2002](#) defines 'placing on the market' as "the holding of food or feed for the purpose of sale, including offering for sale or any other form of transfer, whether free of charge or not, and the sale, distribution and other forms of transfer themselves". For example, the supply of a carcase back to the owner by an approved slaughterhouse amounts to placing on the market under this definition because:

- There is supply of food in the course of a business; and
- Supply occurs, because the product returned after slaughter (i.e. the dressed carcase or meat) is fundamentally different in kind to what was delivered to the slaughterhouse (i.e. the live animal).

Therefore, for home slaughter to be legal and exempt from the Food Hygiene Regulation, the owner must only supply members of their immediate family who share the same household. Carcases or parts of carcases from home slaughter livestock, other than those being disposed of as animal by-products (ABPs), cannot be moved to another premises for processing. It is illegal under the [Food Safety and Hygiene \(England\) Regulations 2013](#), [the Food Hygiene \(Wales\) Regulations 2006](#) and [The General Food Regulations 2004](#) for the owner to supply others, for example, give to friends or to family that do not live in the same household, or if the meat is sold via an on-farm shop or farmers markets.

Meat from home slaughtered animals placed on the market is illegal and may therefore be seized and destroyed. Local Authority (LA) officers may certify that meat has not been produced, processed or distributed in accordance with those Regulations mentioned above. Such meat would then be treated as failing to comply with food safety requirements under [section 9 of the Food Safety Act 1990](#). An order for its condemnation could be obtained from a Magistrates' Court. In carrying out this enforcement role, LAs may on occasion need to liaise with the FSA. A list of contact points is in [Annex A](#).

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies regulations

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter under Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies regulations.

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies regulations

The Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) regulations apply wherever a TSE susceptible animal is slaughtered. **This includes home slaughter.**

TSEs are a group of fatal degenerative brain diseases that affect both animals and humans. They are caused by prions which are abnormal forms of proteins that can trigger disease. In cattle, the TSE is known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or 'mad cow disease', and in sheep and goats, it is referred to as scrapie. Specified Risk Material (SRM) refers to the parts of cattle, sheep, and goats most likely to carry infectivity if the animal is infected with a TSE. It is essential that SRM is removed from both the human and animal food chains and destroyed to protect public and animal health.

After slaughter of cattle, sheep or goats, SRM must be removed, stained and disposed of in accordance with both [Regulation \(EC\) No. 999/2001](#) (hereinafter referred to as TSE Regulation) and [Regulation \(EC\) No.1069/2009](#) on animal by-products (hereinafter referred to as ABP Regulation).

A full list of SRM together with the staining requirements is in [Annex C](#).

SRM must be disposed of in an approved category 1 rendering or incineration plant. Annex A and GOV.UK provide details of [approved animal by-product operating plants](#).

In addition to removing SRM, the following cattle must still test negative for BSE prior to consumption of the meat:

- Healthy cattle aged over 30 months slaughtered for human consumption which were born in Romania, Bulgaria and all non-EU countries.
- Emergency slaughter cattle aged over 48 months (i.e. an otherwise healthy animal that has suffered an accident/injury that prevented its transport to the slaughterhouse).
- Cattle of all ages, showing signs of BSE. These cattle must also be reported, as BSE is a notifiable disease.

If the animal to be slaughtered requires BSE testing, you should contact an approved BSE sampling site to make the arrangements for testing. GOV.UK provides details of [approved BSE sampling sites](#) from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

Meat from the animal should only be consumed if the BSE test is negative. If the test is positive, the carcass and all parts of the body must be disposed of as category 1 ABP (SRM). Contacts to advise on BSE testing and the disposal of ABPs are listed in [Annex A](#).

The domestic TSE regulations allow LAs to appoint inspectors to enforce the legislation and provide powers for inspectors to enter premises, seize any carcass or part of the carcass and dispose of it as necessary. [\(footnote 1\)](#) Alternatively, an inspector may serve a notice on the owner requiring disposal.

1. [Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies \(England\) Regulations 2018](#) / [Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies \(Wales\) Regulations 2018](#) (as amended)

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - animal by-products regulations

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter under animal by-products regulations.

Animal by-products regulations

If you carry out home slaughter, any parts of the carcass you do not eat are considered animal by-products (ABPs) under the [ABP Regulation](#) and must be handled accordingly to protect public and animal health.

ABPs are whole bodies, parts of an animal, products of animal origin or other products from an animal which are not intended for human consumption.

Material becomes ABP when it is either unfit for human consumption or when a decision is taken that the material is not intended to be eaten, even if it is fit for consumption. Once classified as an ABP, it cannot later be used as food.

The ABP Regulation categorises ABP into 3 risk-based categories. [\(footnote 1\)](#) Home slaughter waste consisting of hides and skins, hooves, feathers, wool, horns and hair will fall into category 3 if those materials do not show signs of disease communicable through that material to humans or animals. [\(footnote 2\)](#) Other home slaughter waste fall into category 1 for example, if it includes specified risk material (SRM), or category 2. These categories determine how the material must be handled and disposed of. Please refer to the [ABP Regulation](#) for further information on disposing of ABPs.

All ABPs must be disposed of in line with the ABP Regulation. This usually means sending the waste material to approved or registered facilities for rendering or incineration. GOV.UK provides a list of [approved ABP operating plants](#). The Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) or your Local Authority (LA) (or, in some cases, Environmental Health department) can advise on disposal options.

The responsibility for enforcing ABP requirements on farms lies with the relevant LA for the area where the farm is located. Authorised officers have powers to enter and inspect premises and to issue notices where necessary. These may include, for example:

- Requiring the disposal of ABPs and derived products.
- Requiring the cleansing and disinfection of premises, including specifying the method where applicable; or
- Prohibiting the movement of ABPs and derived products onto or off the premises.

GOV.UK provides further guidance on [APB categories, site approval, hygiene and disposal](#) for England. GOV.WALES provides further [APBs guidance](#) for Wales.

1. [Regulation \(EC\) No. 1069/2009, Section 4](#)
2. [Regulation \(EC\) No. 1069/2009, Section 4, Article 10](#)

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - animal welfare regulations

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter under animal welfare regulations.

Animal welfare regulations

Legislation is in place to safeguard the welfare of livestock animals during slaughter. [\(footnote 1\)](#) Slaughter must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of [Council Regulation \(EC\) No. 1099/2009 on the Protection of Animals at the Time of Killing](#) (hereinafter the PATOK Regulation), the [Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations \(England\) 2015 \(PDF\)](#) and

the [Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing \(Wales\) Regulations 2014 \(PDF\)](#) (hereinafter referred to as the WATOK Regulations).

Under the PATOK and WATOK Regulations, when animals are slaughtered, they must be spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during the process. Home slaughtered animals may only be slaughtered after stunning in accordance with the requirements laid down in [Article 10 of the PATOK Regulation](#) and Schedule 2 of the WATOK Regulations. The loss of consciousness and sensibility shall be maintained until the death of the animal. Slaughter of animals by methods prescribed by religious rites without prior stunning is only permitted in approved slaughterhouses, in accordance with Schedule 3 of the WATOK Regulations.

Under the PATOK Regulation, [Article 7\(1\)](#) states that "killing and related operations shall only be carried out by persons with the appropriate level of competence to do so without causing the animals any avoidable pain, distress or suffering".

The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) publishes guidance and provides training for on-farm slaughter of livestock and provides detailed information on legislation and best practice for livestock owners on humane slaughtering. Several resources can be accessed on the [HSA website](#).

Outside approved premises (e.g. home slaughter), the [PATOK Regulation](#) is enforced by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) with the support of the Local Authority (LA). A LA may appoint inspectors for the purpose of enforcing the PATOK Regulation and the WATOK Regulations in establishments other than slaughterhouses. An inspector may, on giving reasonable notice (this is not always required), enter any premises at a reasonable hour for the purpose of executing or enforcing the Regulations; in this context "premises" includes any land, building, shed, pen, receptacle or vehicle of any description.

Any evidence of failure to comply with the relevant legislation, as detailed in this guidance, may be investigated and appropriate enforcement action taken. Should there be any doubt that the required welfare conditions to allow the legal home slaughter of livestock cannot be met, the animal/s must be slaughtered at an approved slaughterhouse where meat will be subjected to formal inspection procedures to verify that it is fit for human consumption. Details of the locations of approved slaughterhouses can be found at [Approved Food Establishments in England and Wales](#), and in [Annex A](#).

1. For further information, please go to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare>

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - practical examples

Practical examples showing correct and incorrect applications of the legal requirements of home slaughter.

Practical examples

The following examples illustrate the consequences of the application of the legal requirements in practical terms.

Home slaughter by the livestock owner for their own consumption and/or for their immediate family living in the same household: Lawful

As the livestock owner does not, in these circumstances, act as a food business operator, the Food Hygiene Regulation does not apply. However, home slaughter does fall within the scope of the Welfare At the Time of Killing (WATOK), Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) and ABP Regulations. Therefore, animals must be slaughtered humanely and specified risk material (SRM) must be removed, stained and disposed of as a category 1 animal by-product (ABP). Cattle requiring Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) testing must test negative before consumption. Carcasses or parts of carcasses from home slaughter livestock, other than those being disposed of as ABP, cannot be removed to another premises for processing.

Best practice

It is best practice to give the Animal Health and Welfare Team, at the Local Authority (LA) where the farm is located, advance notification of any home slaughter. If this is not possible, it is advised that notification takes place within 5 days following the slaughter of the animal. [Find contact details for your local authority food safety team](#) on food.gov.uk, or in [Annex A](#).

Slaughter and dressing on-farm by a licensed slaughterer: Lawful

If you are not prepared to carry out the slaughter process yourself, then you can employ a licensed slaughterer to stun, slaughter and dress the animal/s on farm under your responsibility and supervision. The slaughterer must hold a Certificate of Competence or a WATOK licence for the relevant activities which indicates that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the tasks humanely and efficiently. Any licensed slaughterer should be able to produce evidence of their licence. However, if necessary, verification of a slaughterers' Certificate of Competence or WATOK licence can be obtained by emailing WATOK@food.gov.uk with details of the individual including date of birth and address if possible. Carcasses or parts of carcasses from home slaughtered livestock, other than those being disposed of as ABPs, cannot be moved to another premises for processing.

The meat from a home slaughtered animal can only be consumed by the owner and/or that of their immediate family living in the same household. The sale or gifting of meat from a home slaughtered animal is **not** permitted.

Best practice

It is best practice to give the Animal Health and Welfare Team, at the LA where the farm is located, advance notification of any home slaughter. If this is not possible, it is advised that notification takes place within 5 days following the slaughter of the animal. [Find contact details for your local authority food safety team](#) on food.gov.uk, or in [Annex A](#).

The FSA advises both the livestock owner and the slaughterer carrying out the home slaughter (on behalf of the owner) to keep a record of when the slaughterer's services are used.

Home slaughter by the livestock owner for consumption by bed and breakfast guests: Unlawful

This is unlawful. The livestock owner would be supplying the meat in the course of a business i.e. carrying out the slaughter of their animal with the intention of supplying it to the guests staying at the farm's bed and breakfast business. Meat supplied to bed and breakfast guests must be from

animals slaughtered in an approved slaughterhouse. Livestock owners can obtain the locations of approved slaughterhouses at [Approved Food Establishments in England and Wales](#), and in [Annex A](#).

Slaughter own animal in someone else's unapproved premises: Unlawful

This is unlawful. It is against the law to have the animal slaughtered anywhere else away from your property other than in an approved slaughterhouse and it will be enforced by LAs.

Private slaughter in an approved slaughterhouse: Lawful

This is lawful. Please refer to paragraph 2 for the meaning of 'private slaughter'. Livestock owners can obtain the locations of approved slaughterhouses at [Approved Food Establishments in England and Wales](#), and in [Annex A](#).

References

1. A list of useful contacts and related links can be found at [Annex A](#).
2. A home slaughter questions and answers brief for livestock owners can be found at [Annex B](#).
3. Definition of specified risk material (SRM) can be found at [Annex C](#).

Review

We aim to keep all guidance up to date and undertake regular reviews to ensure guidance remains relevant. The next scheduled review date for this guidance is June 2027.

Contact us

We welcome your feedback on this guidance, including reports of any broken links or out-of-date content and will consider all feedback for the next intended review of the guidance. Please provide any feedback to meathygiene@food.gov.uk.

Home slaughter of livestock: A guide to the law in England and Wales - annexes

Legal requirements and guidance for home slaughter.

Annex A: useful contacts and links

Contacts

- [FSA Meat Hygiene Policy Team \(England\)](#)
- [FSA Wales Food Hygiene Policy Team](#)
- [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) \(England\)](#)
- [Welsh Government](#)
- [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#)
- [Trading Standards](#)
- [Local Authorities](#)

- [Humane Slaughter Association \(HSA\)](#)

Links

- [Approved food establishments in England and Wales](#), including slaughterhouses (England and Wales)
- [How to spot and report BSE](#)
- [Humane Slaughter Association](#)
- [Approved ABP disposal sites](#), including SRM
- [Approved TSE testing premises](#)

Annex B: home slaughter questions and answers for livestock owners

Q1. I do not have a cattle passport for my animal, and it is restricted to my holding. Can I carry out a home slaughter?

Yes. Subject to the normal rules for home slaughter, the [Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 \(as amended\)](#) does not prohibit livestock owners from slaughtering their cattle on farm for their own consumption, at their own risk, even if they are restricted due to non-compliance with identification, registration and movement rules.

Q2. Can I eat any meat from my own animals?

Yes, but you must ensure that your animal is slaughtered and dressed lawfully (see below). All SRM must be removed, stained and disposed of as a category 1 ABP, and it must not be consumed. Definition of SRM can be found in Annex C.

Q3. How should I have my own animals slaughtered for my own consumption?

There are two lawful ways in which to have your animals slaughtered and prepared for your own consumption:

1. in an approved slaughterhouse; or
2. on your farm by you or a licensed slaughterer (holder of a Welfare at the Time of Killing licence or a holder of a Certificate of Competence) under your responsibility and supervision. It would be unlawful in all cases to employ anyone apart from a licensed slaughterer to slaughter the animal on your property. It would also be unlawful to have the animal slaughtered anywhere else away from your property other than in an approved slaughterhouse.

Carcases or parts of carcasses from home slaughter livestock, other than those being disposed of as ABPs, cannot be moved to another premises for processing.

The FSA advises that home slaughter (option 2) is likely to carry a greater risk to public health than slaughter that takes place in approved premises (option 1) where animals and meat are subjected to formal inspection procedures to verify that it is fit for human consumption. Livestock owners can obtain the locations of approved slaughterhouses at [Approved Food Establishments in England and Wales](#), and in Annex A.

Best practice

It is best practice to give the Animal Health and Welfare Team, at the LA where the farm is located, advance notification of any home slaughter. If this is not possible, it is advised that notification takes place within 5 days following the slaughter of the animal. [Find contact details for your local authority food safety team](#) on food.gov.uk, or in Annex A.

Q4. What should I do with the waste material?

If you carry out a home slaughter, any part of the carcass you do not consume would be classed as ABPs under [Regulation \(EC\) No.1069/2009](#). The waste material would have to be disposed of in line with the Regulation, for example by arranging for the material to be rendered or incinerated in an approved facility and appropriate records kept of disposal. APHA or LAs (or, in some cases, Environmental Health departments) can advise on what your options are. SRM must be removed from cattle, sheep and goats and must not be consumed. SRM must be stained and disposed of as category 1 ABP. GOV.UK provides further guidance on [APB categories, site approval, hygiene and disposal](#) for England and Wales.

Q5. Can I sell the meat from my own animals?

Only if the animal has been slaughtered at an approved slaughterhouse would it be lawful for you to place the meat on the market. For example, by offering it for sale in your farm shop or serving it to guests of your bed and breakfast enterprise. Livestock owners can obtain the locations of approved slaughterhouses at [Approved Food Establishments in England and Wales](#), and in Annex A.

Q6. Does the restriction on supplying home slaughtered meat apply to partnerships or joint owners?

Yes, unless the partner or joint owners are family members living as part of the same household. It is unlikely that a Court would decide that supplying meat from a home slaughter would be rendered lawful simply because the supply was carried out within a partnership or to a co-owner.

Q7. What about TSE controls for home slaughtered pigs, poultry, farmed game or rabbits?

The TSE Regulations do not apply to pigs, poultry, farmed game and rabbits.

Q8. How do I get a BSE test done for my home-slaughtered cattle?

You should contact an approved BSE sampling site to make the arrangements for testing. GOV.UK provides details of [approved BSE sampling sites](#) from APHA.

Q9. Can an approved slaughterhouse undertake a private slaughter for me?

Yes, provided that the slaughter takes place in an approved slaughterhouse. A private slaughter would be subject to the same rules and procedures as a conventional (commercial) slaughter. Livestock owners can obtain the locations of approved slaughterhouses at [Approved Food Establishments in England and Wales](#), and in Annex A.

Q10. Can I have an animal privately slaughtered other than in an approved slaughterhouse?

Yes, but only on your premises under the following circumstances:

- By you or, if you are not prepared to carry out the slaughter yourself, a WATOK licensed slaughterer or holder of a Certificate of Competence under your responsibility and supervision on farm for your own personal consumption (see Q3 above).
- If an animal has an accident/injury that prevents it being moved to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons, it may be slaughtered on the farm under emergency slaughter provisions, with the meat then being returned to you. However, under these circumstances, such animals must be subject to veterinary examination and certification on farm before slaughter and onward transport to an approved slaughterhouse where the carcass would undergo formal inspection procedures to verify that it is fit for human consumption. If the meat is deemed fit for human consumption, it can be used for your own consumption and it can also be placed on the market.
- Under an exemption which allows you to slaughter on your holding small quantities of poultry or lagomorphs (rabbits) reared there and place their meat on the market for human consumption, subject to certain conditions. For further information, please see [Annex B, paragraph B of Operational policy for approval of food establishments](#).

Annex C: definition of specified risk material (SRM)

Cattle

- Under 12 months of age: no SRM
- Over 12 months of age: skull excluding the mandible and including the brain and eyes, and spinal cord

Sheep and goats

- Under 12 months of age: no SRM
- Over 12 months of age (or permanent incisor erupted or aged over 12 months as estimated by a method approved by the FSA): skull, including the brain and eyes and excluding the horns and spinal cord

Staining requirements for SRM

Staining involves treating the material (whether by immersion, spraying or other application) with a colouring agent using a solution of such a strength that the staining is clearly visible.

The stain must be applied in such a way that the colouring remains clearly visible:

- over the whole of the cut surface and the majority of the head in the case of the head of a sheep or goat, and
- in the case of all other specified risk material, over the whole surface of the material.

Revision log

Hide all updates

Show all updates

Published: 24 December 2025

Last updated: 19 January 2026

- **19 January 2026** Added HTML version of the guidance, updated legal status, and revised sections on TSEs, animal by-products, and animal welfare regulations. Updated useful contacts and legislative references.

- **16 January 2026** Added HTML version of the guidance, updated legal status, and revised sections on TSEs, animal by products, and animal welfare regulations. Updated useful contacts and legislative references.

[Back to top](#)