

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.