

Smallest abattoirs receive maximum support under FSA proposals

FSA Official Vets and Meat Hygiene Inspectors carry out daily checks to make sure food safety and animal welfare standards are met in abattoirs. This essential work keeps consumers safe, upholds public trust in the meat industry and enables businesses to export, supporting the UK's £11 billion meat sector.

The FSA recovers most of the costs of this regulation from operators, but smaller abattoirs can face a proportionately higher regulatory burden per animal than larger ones. The current discount system goes some way to address this, and the new proposals would better target that support.

Extensive engagement with industry and stakeholders highlighted the important role small abattoirs play in communities and consumer choice. They support farmers who specialise in rarer breeds and give the public the option to buy local. The revised proposals have been developed with these benefits in mind.

Under the proposals, in England and Wales:

- Over half of abattoirs would receive some support on a sliding scale.
- Nearly a third of abattoirs – those processing up to 1,000 LSU (Livestock Units) per year for red meat, or 150,000 birds annually for poultry / small game – would receive maximum support, with a 90% discount on charges. This is up to 50% on the number receiving maximum support under the current system.
- Larger abattoirs would no longer be eligible for support.

The agricultural sector in Northern Ireland has a number of differences and we are also seeking views on how best to reflect these in the support we give abattoirs in Northern Ireland.

Smaller abattoirs can play a vital role in local communities and the wider food chain, and these proposals would give the smallest businesses the certainty of maximum support.

We've listened carefully to the sector since we began this work in 2024, and we'd encourage everyone with an interest to respond to this consultation. We remain committed to working across government to support the meat industry and make sure people have food they can trust.

James Cooper, Deputy Director of Food Policy

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