

## **On-farm slaughter of cattle – prospects for efficient veterinary inspection and good animal welfare**

Jan Hultgren<sup>1\*</sup>, Charlotte Berg<sup>1</sup>, Katrin J. Schiffer<sup>2</sup> and Bo Algers<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Animal Environment and Health, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, P.O. Box 234, SE-53223 Skara, Sweden

<sup>2</sup> Eldrimner, Ösavägen 30, SE-83694 Ås, Sweden

\* Presenting author, jan.hultgren@slu.se

Extensively reared cattle may be less tolerant to handling at the time of slaughter. The high line speed in large-scale abattoirs results in demanding working conditions, making it difficult for stockpersons to deal with hassle and balking. For logistic reasons, a considerable proportion of the animals transported to slaughter spend one night at the abattoir before being slaughtered, which may increase stress levels if lairage conditions are poor. There is an interest among consumers and artisan food producers for locally produced meat from animals with good animal welfare. These are issues that contribute to an interest in small-scale on-farm slaughter. On-farm slaughter may be conducted at an on-farm stationary plant or in a mobile unit temporarily placed at or near the farm. It may also be done by stunning and bleeding on farm followed by carcass transport to a nearby plant for further processing, although current legislation only allows this for fenced game whereas domestic animals have to be brought alive into slaughterhouses. On-farm slaughter has the potential to reduce pre-slaughter animal stress by shorter or eliminated transports, minimised exposure to unfamiliar environments, animals and persons, minimal time in lairage and a reduced slaughter line speed. However, rigid regulations and comparatively high costs per kg carcass for official meat control impede the development of on-farm slaughter. The objective of this paper is to discuss methodological and practical concerns, as well as perspectives on the development of legislation, guidelines and practices, in relation to on-farm slaughter and efficient veterinary inspection.