

## Responsibility for animal welfare

All people who have animals in their care have a responsibility to ensure that they have adequate knowledge, training and skills to apply in the protection of the welfare of animals. The States and Territories have responsibility for the regulation of animal welfare in Australia, with the application of prevention of cruelty to animals legislation managed within the appropriate State or Territory government department.

## Animal welfare legislation

Under the current Australian constitution, legislative responsibility for animal welfare within Australia rests primarily with State and Territory Governments. Each state has an animal welfare department responsible for the management of animal welfare regulation and compliance. All states and territories have contemporary and comprehensive animal welfare legislation in place, relating to animal cruelty. Additionally, some States have 'Duty of Care' legislation for all persons in charge of animals that specifies responsibility to provide for animal needs.

The Model Codes of Practice will soon be regulated standards in a new initiative of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy ([www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au)) which aims to progress the welfare of animals in Australia by the adoption of sound animal welfare standards and practices.

The Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals at slaughtering establishments (pictured left) aims to guide all people responsible for the welfare of livestock at processing (slaughtering) establishments on required animal care and management. It promotes agreed standards of animal welfare in the meat processing industry and was developed in 2000 following full consultation with industry, animal welfare groups, Australian Government bodies and relevant state bodies.

## Australian Meat Industry Council's animal welfare Standards

In 2005, the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) developed national animal welfare standards in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industries Victoria and several other key stakeholder organisations (industry, welfare and science). These standards have been designed to reflect the key requirements of the Code of Practice and also other animal welfare provisions reflected in the Australian Standard for the Production and Transportation of Meat for Human Consumption (SCARM, 80, pictured left).



The Acts are underpinned by National (Model) Codes of Practice. Codes are agreed minimum guidelines for the management and care of animals ([www.csiro.com.au](http://www.csiro.com.au)) Model Codes enable inspectors to issue animal welfare directions to minimise animal suffering or address situations that might lead to suffering.

The AMIC industry Standards were developed to:

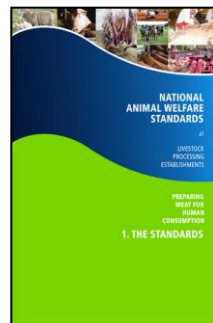
- harmonise existing national, international and commercial requirements for animal welfare;
- provide a sound scientific basis to underpin standards;
- meet existing and emerging animal welfare expectations;
- promote good animal welfare practices for livestock processing establishments.

These standards were recently revised (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) in 2009

Codes are developed through the forum of the Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG) of the Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC). The AWWG focuses on policy and animal welfare issues and comprises members representing the Australian, State and Territory departments of primary industries, CSIRO and the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. In addition, the Australian government Minister responsible for animal welfare is advised on significant national animal welfare issues by the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW).

## • The Standards cover the following:

- ✓ Planning and Contingencies
- ✓ Facilities and Equipment
- ✓ Staff Competency
- ✓ Identifying weak, ill or injured livestock
- ✓ Management of livestock at the plant
- ✓ Humane Slaughter procedures



Refs: Edge, M.K., Barnett, J.L., 2008. Development and integration of animal welfare standards into company quality assurance programs in the Australian livestock (meat) processing industry. Australian journal of experimental agriculture, 48, 1-5 (in press) J.L. Barnett, Edge, M.K., Maguire, T and Dorian, J. (2005a). National Animal Welfare Standards for Livestock Processing Establishments Preparing Meat for Human Consumption Part 1: The Standards. Published by the Animal Welfare Science Centre, Werribee, Vic. and the Australian Meat Industry Council, Crows Nest, NSW.

