

Written evidence submitted by the Abattoirs Sector Group (MAAB0071)

Key issues for Ministers to address to sustain a broad geographical and specialist range network of smaller abattoirs across the UK

Producer-led support for abattoirs

1. Confirm commitment that funding support related to producers use of abattoirs is in scope, and will be provided, under Agriculture Act clause 2 with focus on animal welfare and food safety outputs. This support to include for producer-led abattoir hubs for movable abattoirs, including funds for locally based shared processing facilities, lairage and chilling space and enhanced animal welfare.
2. Confirm that abattoirs and farmers can be enabled and funded to work together within the Farm Resilience programme.
3. Endorse RPA formally confirming to the Abattoir Sector Group (ASG) the mechanisms for separate CPH number provision for movable abattoirs and that there will be no negative impact on host producer's support payments in respect of their own CPH, by 2021 year end.

Improving the delivery of regulation of abattoirs

1. Signal support to the FSA Board for its Small Abattoir Project (SAP) to simplify and improve the consistency of regulation delivery with focus on animal welfare and food safety outputs.
2. Signal to the FSA that the findings and recommendations of the SAP should be reviewed and co-designed with the ASG before being presented to their Board.
3. Signal to the FSA that elements of its Operational Transformation Programme (OTP) impacting smaller abattoirs are fast tracked for delivery by the second quarter of 2022.
4. Commit to a review of the impact of the SAP and OTP by 2022 year end. If these efforts to improve the regulatory system are not successful, endorse a trial of the Primary Authority model as a means of regulatory delivery for smaller abattoirs with focus on animal welfare and food safety outputs as well the sustainability of these businesses.

Coordination across Defra and Agencies on abattoir policy and regulation

1. Improve cross functional coordination across Government by endorsing leadership via a slimmed down Defra:Industry SAWG to report back to Ministers and the ASG with focus on animal welfare and food safety outputs.
2. Endorse SAWG creating a user centric process map of regulatory requirements across the APHA, AHDB, FSA, DEFRA, EA etc., to facilitate regulatory coordination for abattoirs and report by 2021 year end.
3. Endorse communication by the Livestock Information Programme with ASG to ensure the needs of smaller abattoirs are taken into account.

Effective use of operational and regulatory skills in abattoirs

1. Endorse SAWG reviewing delivery of Official Veterinarian provision to smaller operators to make the best use of their expertise by the second quarter of 2022 in the context of:
 - i. Government's development of functions such as Certification Support Officers;
 - ii. Long term trend in the supply of Veterinarians and work on technician options;
 - iii. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeon's work on reform of regulation of allied professional/veterinary teams;
 - iv. Opportunities for flexible contractual approaches via a Primary Authority model.

Turning animal by-products from a cost to a benefit

1. Direct Defra's Resources and waste strategy policy lead to engage with the SAWG on:
 - i. Rapid visualisation of government data on anaerobic digester location to allow abattoirs to make connections with them for use of waste products;
 - ii. Restrictions in the animal waste disposal market that could merit a competition or market inquiry referral;
 - iii. The collapse of the hide and skin market and opportunities within the UK for a sustainable supply chain that fully reflects wider environmental cost;

iv. How abattoir waste could be integrated in local waste hubs.

24th August 2021