

**Advice 06-2010 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on the assessment of methods to put poultry and birds to death, a measure to be applied in the case of the official control of avian influenza.**

It is asked to the Scientific Committee to evaluate different methods of destruction for several categories of poultry and birds, to be applied in an eradication policy in the case of an avian influenza outbreak. The H5N1 virus has been taken as reference because of its high pathogenic and transmissible character, and its established zoonotic risk. The following criteria were considered for this evaluation : efficiency of the method, handling type, health risk for the workers, viral spread risk, animal welfare and social ethical considerations.

The Scientific Committee recommends not the use any of the following methods : immersion in foam (at least in the current state of knowledge), cervical dislocation, crushing and vacuum box (for animal welfare reasons) neither decapitation and gassing with CO or with HCN, because of the risk for the health of the workers.

The best method for destruction of a high number of professionally kept poultry (chickens and other poultry of the same type, ducks, geese, turkeys, quails and peacocks) is the gassing with a mixture of CO<sub>2</sub> (maximum 30%) in an inert gas (argon or nitrogen) with O<sub>2</sub> lower than 2%, in containers, preferably placed inside the stable and with mechanized methods to avoid direct manipulation of live poultry by the workers. This method minimizes the health risk for the workers and the risk of viral spread, ensures the best respect of animal welfare, is efficient, socially ethic, but requires a certain manipulation. The gassing is also recommended for the putting to death of one day old chicks.

Concerning the destruction of backyard poultry and/or birds, kept in smaller numbers, the Scientific Committee proposes the same considerations and recommendations as for the professionally kept poultry, i.e. the gassing with an appropriate mixture of gas, in containers of appropriate capacity, and if possible inside the stable. The collection and putting to death of backyard poultry in a central place is not recommended, because this necessitates the transport of live birds and increases the risk of viral spread.

Injection with barbiturates is recommended for the euthanasia of companion birds (canaries, budgies, etc.).

The best method for ratites (ostriches, etc.) is the use of a pistol, followed by a lethal injection.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section "Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen" and "Comité scientifique/Avis".