



UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK.

Tel: +44(0)1582 831818 Fax: +44(0)1582 831414

Website: <http://www.ufaw.org.uk>

Email: ufaw@ufaw.org.uk

Media Release

From the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)

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For Immediate Release:

Study highlights link between poor welfare and meat quality

A recent scientific study has shown that pre-stun shocks in commercial broiler processing significantly affect carcase and meat quality as well as bird welfare.

A report of a study into the incidence and effect of pre-stun shocks in a commercial broiler processing plant using an electrical waterbath stunning system (the most commonly used system in the UK) has been published in *Animal Welfare*, the journal of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW).

The study identified a significant level of pre-stun shocks, particularly in lighter, more active birds, correlated with a significant level of adverse effect on carcase and meat quality. Pre-stun shocks were also seen to be a contributor to the incidence of mis-stuns (by causing birds to 'fly' the waterbath). The results of the study indicate not only a serious welfare problem but also a significant financial burden for producers of broiler chickens stunned using the electrical waterbath.

The report states "EC Regulation (1099/2009) stipulates...that for electrical waterbath stunning a key consideration is the prevention of electrical shocks before stunning. The results reported here add very strong commercial and economic arguments to this legislative welfare requirement, entirely justifying any financial output that would be required to improve controlled entry of birds into a waterbath stunner...(pre-stun shocks) can be prevented by careful waterbath entry design and modification. It should be entirely possible to avoid (pre-stun shocks) in commercial processing plants and there is a strong economic reason to do so."

The research was undertaken by Muhammad Asif Rao, Toby Knowles and Steve Wotton of the University of Bristol, and supported by a Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholarship from the Humane Slaughter Association (HSA).

Animal Welfare is a quarterly journal of animal welfare science and ethics published by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW), an independent charity that seeks to improve the quality of animals' lives worldwide through a greater understanding of animals' needs and how best we can meet them. Visit www.ufaw.org.uk or email ufaw@ufaw for more information about the Federation's work.

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Media contact:

Dr James Kirkwood, Chief Executive and Scientific Director, UFAW. Tel: 01582-831818,

email kirkwood@ufaw.org.uk

SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Chief Executive and Scientific Director: James K Kirkwood BVSc PhD CBiol FIBiol MRCVS

Secretary: Donald C Davidson

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Note to Editors:

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) is an internationally recognised, independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity. It works to improve knowledge and understanding of animals' needs in order to achieve high standards of welfare for farm, companion, research, captive wild animals and those with which we interact in the wild.

UFAW improves animal welfare worldwide through its programme of awards, grants and scholarships; by educational initiatives, especially at university and college level; by providing information in books, videos, reports and in its scientific journal *Animal Welfare*; by providing expert advice to governments and others, including for legislation and 'best practice' guidelines and codes; and by working with animal keepers, scientists, vets, lawyers and all those who care about animals.

This work relies on the support of members, subscribers and donors.

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