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## **Gender and job characteristics of slaughter industry personnel influence their attitudes to animal welfare**

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### **Abstract**

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*The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the attitudes that those involved in the slaughter industry have towards animal welfare and animal welfare aspects of their work, and also to investigate if gender or characteristics of employment (eg previous training, role and experience) influence such views. A paper questionnaire consisting of 20 Likert items regarding either animal welfare or working in the slaughter industry and seven questions designed to gather information on participant gender and job characteristics was distributed to attendees at eleven Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) and Poultry Welfare Officer (PWO) courses run by the University of Bristol. Responses were received from 215 personnel involved in the slaughter industry. It was found that the views of the majority of the respondents towards animal welfare were positive. Being female, working routinely with mammals, having a longer period of time working in the industry, and having previous AWO/PWO training course experience were all associated with significantly more positive attitudes towards animals and working in the slaughter industry; while working with birds, and working in an enforcement or stockperson role had a significant negative influence on the response to some animal welfare- and employment-related statements. Although it should be considered that individuals attending an animal welfare course may already have an interest in animal welfare, the results suggest that gender and employment factors do influence attitudes to animal welfare in the slaughter industry, and that the origins and reasons for development of certain negative views warrant further investigation.*

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**Keywords:** animal welfare, attitudes, gender, questionnaire, slaughter industry, welfare training