STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1971 No. 661

POULTRY

HUMANE SLAUGHTER

The Slaughter of Poultry (Humane Conditions) Regulations 1971

Made - - -	*20th April* 1971
Laid before Parliament	*28th April* 1971
Coming into Operation	*1st August* 1971

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State, acting jointly, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by section 3 of the Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967(**a**) and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf and after consulting with the persons or bodies seeming to them representative of the interests concerned, hereby make the following regulations :—

Citation and commencement

1. These regulations, which may be cited as the Slaughter of Poultry (Humane Conditions) Regulations 1971, shall come into operation on 1st August 1971.

Interpretation

2.—(1) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires—

"approved instrument" means an instrument of a kind approved by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State, pursuant to section 1(1) of the Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967 ;

"bird" means a turkey kept in captivity or a domestic fowl so kept ;

"slaughter" means slaughter for purposes of preparation for sale for human consumption.

(2) The Interpretation Act 1889(**b**) shall apply to the interpretation of these regulations as it applies to the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

Requirements prior to slaughter

3. No person shall cause unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to any bird awaiting slaughter and under his control, or permit any such pain or distress of which he knows or may reasonably be expected to know.

(**a**) 1967 c. 24. (**b**) 1889 c. 63.

4. The occupier of any premises or the person in charge thereof shall ensure that any bird on those premises awaiting slaughter—

(*a*) is slaughtered as soon as is practicable ;

(*b*) is protected from the direct rays of the sun and from adverse weather;

(*c*) is provided with adequate ventilation ;

(*d*) is, if found because of injury or any other cause to be in a condition in which it may reasonably be supposed to be in pain, immediately slaughtered.

Requirements as to lighting

5. The occupier of any premises at which birds are slaughtered shall provide—

(*a*) in those parts of the premises where birds are awaiting slaughter, lighting which is adequate for inspection of such birds, and

(*b*) in those parts of the premises where birds are slaughtered, at all times when birds are being slaughtered, lighting which is adequate for the efficient carrying out of such slaughter.

6. In regulations 3, 4 and 5 of these regulations, the words "awaiting slaughter" shall (without prejudice to the generality of that expression) be deemed to apply to any bird which has been removed—

(*a*) from the premises upon which it was reared to other premises for the purpose of being slaughtered ;

(*b*) from one part of the premises upon which it was reared to another part of those premises for the purpose of being slaughtered.

Requirements as to slaughter

7. No person shall suspend, or cause or permit to be suspended, head-downwards, any bird for more than 6 minutes in the case of a turkey, or for more than 3 minutes in the case of a domestic fowl before such turkey or fowl is slaughtered or is stunned by means of an approved instrument for the purpose of slaughter.

8. No person shall cause or permit any bird which has had severed one or more of the major blood vessels in the neck to be immersed in a scalding tank or to be plucked before a period of not less than 2 minutes in the case of a turkey or of not less than 90 seconds in the case of a domestic fowl has elapsed after such severance.

Penalties

9. A person who contravenes or fails to comply with any of the provisions of these regulations shall, unless he proves that by reason of an accident or other emergency such contravention or non-compliance was necessary for preventing physical injury or suffering to any person or bird, be guilty of an offence against these regulations, and liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £50 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months, or to both.

In Witness whereof the Official Seal of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is hereunto affixed on 16th April 1971.

(L.S.) *J. M. L. Prior,*
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Given under the Seal of the Secretary of State for Scotland on 20th April 1971.

(L.S.) *Gordon Campbell,*
Secretary of State for Scotland.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This Note is not part of the Regulations.)

These regulations contain provisions for securing humane conditions in connection with the slaughter of turkeys and domestic fowls for human consumption.

The chief provisions require that such poultry, while awaiting slaughter, must not be subjected to any unnecessary pain or distress, must be slaughtered as soon as practicable and meanwhile must be protected from bad weather etc.

Maximum periods are prescribed during which birds may be suspended head downwards before slaughter or stunning with an instrument of an approved kind and minimum periods are prescribed which must elapse before birds are immersed in a scalding tank or plucked, after slaughter by cutting the neck.

Penalties of a fine not exceeding £50 or imprisonment not exceeding 3 months may be imposed on summary conviction for a breach of these regulations.