

POLICY NUMBER: ANHPD-05-01 Revision 1

DATE: May 1, 2020

SUBJECT: Euthanasia, Depopulation, and Slaughter of Livestock and Poultry

I. Background

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) has the following authorities and duties under state law:

- Assist law enforcement agencies investigating allegations of cruelty and neglect of animals.
- Assist organizations that represent livestock and poultry producers with issues and programs related to the care of livestock and poultry.
- Establish standards governing the care of livestock and poultry.

[IC 15-17-3-13](#); [IC 35-46-3](#).

The board is required to consider the following factors when establishing standards governing the care of livestock and poultry:

- The health and husbandry of the livestock and poultry.
- Generally accepted farm management practices.
- Generally accepted veterinary standards and practices.
- The economic impact the standards may have on:
 - livestock and poultry farmers;
 - the affected livestock and poultry sector; and
 - consumers.

[IC 15-17-3-23](#).

An important component of appropriate animal care is utilizing acceptable methods when animals must be euthanized, depopulated, or slaughtered.

II. Purpose

Pursuant to the above-described authorities and duties, BOAH veterinarians routinely advise animal owners, practitioners, law enforcement agencies, and the courts regarding humane methods of euthanasia in a wide variety of situations. Circumstances where such guidance is needed include routine farm animal management, alleged animal neglect and abuse investigations, and traffic accidents. Guidance is also needed when a large number of animals must be depopulated in a timely manner, such as natural disasters, animal disease events, and other urgent circumstances.

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health has determined that the standards set forth in this document are acceptable methods for euthanasia, depopulation, and slaughter of animals.

III. Policy

Since 1963 the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has convened a Panel on Euthanasia (POE) to evaluate methods and potential methods of euthanasia for the purpose of creating guidelines for veterinarians who carry out or oversee the euthanasia of animals. AVMA and its POE ensure the Guidelines reflect an expectation of continuous improvement.

In creating the 2020 edition of the *AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals*, the POE identified and applied the best research and empirical information available. Development of the guidelines entailed more than two years of review, deliberation, and revision by a panel of veterinarians, animal scientists, behaviorists, psychologists, and an animal ethicist. Their input helps ensure the resulting document is not only scientifically robust, but practically sound. The Guidelines set forth criteria for euthanasia and specify appropriate euthanasia methods and agents. They also recognize the importance of considering and applying appropriate pre-euthanasia sedation and animal handling practices.

The *AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals* are intended to help members of the veterinary profession make good decisions that support animal welfare in situations where the difficult decision to depopulate has been made. The recommendations seek to ensure as much consideration is given to animal

welfare as practicable within the constraints of an emergency event, such as a natural disaster, hazardous zoonotic disease outbreak, terrorist activity, or radiological incident. These are extraordinary circumstances, when rapid response and the need to prevent further devastation may impose severe constraints that limit available options. Drafted by the AVMA Panel on Animal Depopulation (POD) and its working groups, the Guidelines reflect the AVMA's concern for the ethical treatment of animals during every stage of life, including during emergency situations.

The AVMA Panel on Humane Slaughter (POHS) has identified and applied the best research and empirical information available to promote the humane slaughter of the species of animals addressed in its *Guidelines for the Humane Slaughter of Animals*. When animals are designated for slaughter, they should be treated with respect and handled appropriately, and the slaughter process should limit the harms experienced by these animals. Humane slaughter methods and agents are designed to bring about rapid loss of consciousness and, ultimately, a complete loss of brain function in animals during the induction of death.

The AVMA Guidelines are nationally recognized as a science-based resource for state and local units of government seeking to interpret animal care laws and rules. Bret D. Marsh, D.V.M., Indiana State Veterinarian, acting for the Indiana State Board of Animal Health hereby recognizes the *American Veterinary Medical Association's Guidelines for Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition*, the *American Veterinary Medical Association's Guidelines for Depopulation of Animals: 2019 Edition*, and the *American Veterinary Medical Association's Guidelines for the Humane Slaughter of Animals: 2016 Edition* for purposes of interpreting the state of Indiana's animal laws and rules. It is the position of the BOAH that the methods set forth in these Guidelines constitute both generally accepted veterinary standards and practices, and generally accepted farm management practices, that relieve unnecessary pain and suffering and ensure the respectful and humane treatment of animals.

IV. Contact Information

Direct all question and inquiries regarding this Policy to:
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