
RESOLUTION NUMBER: 7 Combined with 35

Approved as Amended

SOURCE:

COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES
COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL WELFARE

SUBJECT MATTER:

Euthanasia and Depopulation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a history of looking to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) for guidance on the euthanasia of animals (AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, available at <https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Guidelines-on-Euthanasia-2020.pdf>) and the depopulation of animals (AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals, available at <https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/AVMA-Guidelines-for-the-Depopulation-of-Animals.pdf>). However, during the 2022 highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak, individuals trained to properly euthanize individual birds after application of a depopulation method were asked to not use an AVMA-approved euthanasia method by USDA. This created an inconsistency in the application of AVMA guidelines.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service consistently accept the application of the American Veterinary Medical Association Humane Endings Guidelines documents (Slaughter, Euthanasia, and Depopulation) when conducting emergency response efforts in livestock and poultry.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

APHIS does not approve or disapprove specific depopulation methods. Instead, APHIS uses American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) guidance – the AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals, 2019 Edition, and the AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia for Animals, 2020 Edition – to assess Federal indemnification eligibility for the depopulated animals. Poultry depopulated by AVMA’s preferred methods or

permitted methods, with evidence that constrained circumstances exist, is eligible for Federal indemnification. When consulted, APHIS recommends the use of preferred methods whenever possible, or alternatives methods in alignment with the AVMA guidelines.

APHIS is committed to the continued use of humane methods of depopulation and euthanasia; and welcomes the opportunity to further discuss these issues with the USAHA Committee on Poultry and Other Avian Diseases and/or the USAHA Committee on Animal Welfare.