



## Media Release

14<sup>th</sup> October, 2013

**For Immediate Release:**

### **New stunning method may significantly improve animal welfare**

A new method for stunning livestock at slaughter may have the potential for significant animal welfare benefits, as well as having operational and economic advantages, concluded a recent workshop convened by the Humane Slaughter Association (HSA).

Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning (LAPS) is a method which utilizes controlled reduction in air pressure causing oxygen insufficiency – in humans unconsciousness caused by oxygen insufficiency is associated with little or no discomfort. The workshop was held in London, England, in September to discuss developments in this system, the outcome of scientific work regarding its humaneness, its potential for wide application, and what further work might be needed relating to this.

The meeting was attended by participants with scientific, technical, animal welfare and legislative interests, with presentations given by Dr Karen Christensen of OK Foods, Arkansas, USA, who are successfully using the method with broilers, and Dr Dorothy McKeegan of the University of Glasgow, UK, who has undertaken research work evaluating the humaneness of LAPS.

The LAPS system at OK Foods has been developed over three years with Mississippi State University and the University of Arkansas, together with the manufacturer, TechnoCatch of Kosciusko, Mississippi. It is capable of handling over 20,000 birds an hour and has been in full commercial use at OK Foods since early 2011. Dr McKeegan's research has focused on evaluating the humaneness of the method using EEG and ECG data from the birds.

“The experience gained in using the system, together with the research, appears to have produced very positive results from welfare, operational and economic perspectives,” said James Kirkwood, Chief Executive of the HSA. “The LAPS system appears to offer significant advantages over other commercial methods of slaughter currently in use for broilers and we hope that, by bringing interested parties together, the workshop will stimulate further research and development of the system both for broilers and other species.”

A full report of the workshop discussions is available at the HSA website ([www.hsa.org.uk](http://www.hsa.org.uk)).

The HSA is an independent charity that promotes the highest standards of welfare for livestock during transport, at markets, slaughter and killing for disease control and welfare reasons. If you would like more information about the HSA's work, or are interested in becoming a member or supporting this work please visit [www.hsa.org.uk](http://www.hsa.org.uk) or contact the HSA on 01582 831919, email [info@hsa.org.uk](mailto:info@hsa.org.uk).

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Note to Editors:

As an independent registered charity, the HSA is unique in working exclusively to achieve the highest worldwide standards in food animal welfare at markets, during transport at slaughter, and killing for disease control and welfare reasons, through scientific and technical advances, education and training. Its work includes researching, refining and demonstrating humane slaughter methods, publishing material such as guidelines, best practice, books and videos, funding research projects and the development of equipment. Specialist technical staff provide expert and practical advice on all welfare issues relating to food animals.

The HSA is funded by voluntary donations, subscriptions and legacies.

For more information about the HSA's work call 01582 831919, email [info@hsa.org.uk](mailto:info@hsa.org.uk) or visit [www.hsa.org.uk](http://www.hsa.org.uk)

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