

Inspection of Mutlular Gönen Entegre et Tesisleri slaughterhouse (Turkey) June 15, 2013



SUMMARY: Since 2010 teams from Animal Welfare Foundation and Eyes on Animals have regularly been at the EU/Turkey border, inspecting cattle and sheep trucks from the EU heading towards slaughterhouses in Turkey. A combination of exporters and transporters cheating and border bureaucracy lead to hours, days and even weeks of animals waiting on board vehicles at the border. Some improvements have been achieved with stricter enforcement and small provisional control posts being set up on the Turkish side. This time we wanted to see what the welfare conditions were like for the animals once they arrived at the slaughterhouses in Turkey. As at the moment the price of EU animals is high, there was little traffic of slaughter animals coming from the EU. Nevertheless we purposefully visited slaughterhouses where many EU animals had ended up slaughtered in the past. **Three of the six would not let us in (Elif Et, Apikoglu and Ornek Mah. Evren Oto San.Sit) but three were open.** Mutlular Gönen Entegre et Tesisleri was one of them.

The stories that the director told us about the conditions some of the EU animals arrived in sets off alarm bells. In comparison to the other two Turkish slaughterhouses we visited, this one made a calmer impression – likely because only one bovine at a time is moved along the raceway and into the chute. Nevertheless the tail-twisting, trip floor and live shackling used at this plant causes concern for the welfare of the animals. As well, during our visit a “downer” cow arrived in a truck loaded with tethered bulls. She was in pain and could not get up. Injured animals like this one are not euthanized on the truck, but instead driven up closer to the entrance of the plant and must go through the slaughter process while conscious and in pain. In this report we describe what we observe and propose several concrete steps the plant should take immediately to improve welfare. We also list violations to the Dzabiha, EU and OIE regulations. **According to the criterias of the OIE and the Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 the method of hoisting and suspending the conscious animals by one leg, is forbidden.**

Violations to Dzabiha (Halal regulations)

- The animal should be handled gently and individually
- The animal should not be slaughtered in front of other animals and no blood seen so that no stress or discomfort has been caused to the animal
- The knife should be very sharp.
- The animal must be healthy and free from injury at the time of slaughter.

1. Observations

Facts

Name and address of plant: Mutlular Gönen Entegre et Tesisleri, Manyas Yolu 1.km Gönen (Turkey) Tel: 0266 762 0686

Date and time of visit: June 15 10:00

Animals

Today bulls and some cows mainly of the Holstein breed were being slaughtered. Many EU animals have been slaughtered at this plant when the import was open but today only cattle with Turkish ear tags were observed.

Interesting information from the Director

They would prefer using the captive bolt to stun the cattle first, but the customer does not want it. The customers believe that the animal must be conscious while cut, if not the meat is not Halal. It would be difficult for them to sell their meat if they stunned animals first, so they are in a difficult position to change this.

The director explained that the condition of many of the bulls coming from the EU were arriving in was alarming. He felt that some of the drivers were not giving the animals enough water during the journey. When they cut open the carcasses of EU cattle, the lungs were sometimes stuck to the chest cavity and when they would cut through the lungs they would fall apart like sand. He named some transport companies that arrived with particularly dehydrated bulls- the names did not surprise us and match our findings during our border inspections.

Descriptions of pens and raceway:

The outdoor waiting pens have a roof and are located about 12 meters from the entrance into the plant. We are told that local Turkish animals are given 4 hours of rest, but no water, in the pens before being slaughtered and animals coming off the trucks from the EU were given 3 days with feed and water.



Slippery raceway



The raceway from the waiting pens to the entrance to the slaughterhouse runs straight, there are fortunately no sharp angles. Nevertheless, the sides are open causing lots of shadows which may make the bovine balk and may risk leg injury. As well, being open means the bovine can see people at the side, causing stress and hesitation from moving forward.

The floor of the raceway is cement and has been grooved to provide some anti-slip, but as you can see in the photos the accumulation of mud, feces and urine made a large part of it slippery.

A positive aspect of this plant over the other two we saw, was that they only move one bovine at a time towards the chute inside the plant. One time they did have two cattle in the raceway but then they placed a steel bar in between them to prevent the first one from moving backwards and to prevent the second one from trying to mount the one in front.

We did not see any hard beating of the cattle with sticks in the raceway, but 2 bulls that were hesitant to move forward were handled in an unnecessary cruel manner- they had their tails twisted very tightly. One even fell down during this process from the slippery floor and from being nervous. See photos below.



Just before entering the chute, there is a large opening with full view of the kill floor that the animal has to walk past. They can therefore see what is taking place inside.



Cattle entering chute first pass a large open gap with full view of kill floor

Description of slaughter installations and process:

The cattle are placed one by one into a chute/box with a shiny metal floor different flooring. The back door of the chute is closed so that the bovine can no longer back out. The box has a trip floor that causes the animal to fall down (once the animal enters, the worker presses a button that causes the floor to tilt making the bull or cow to lose its footing and fall down). As the back-door of the chute does not go to the ground (has a large open gap at the bottom), the bovine next in line sees the bovine in the chute ahead. We noticed that as soon as the floor tilted and the bull in the chute fell down, the one next in line became scared and backed up. His ears would flutter back and forth and he seemed very nervous, keeping his eyes glued on what was happening to the bull in the chute and every once in awhile looking out of the fence and behind him. Blood was also on the floor of the raceway right in front of the chute. See photo below.



The fallen bovine is then left on the tilted floor until the slaughterer is ready. During our visit this lasted between 20 seconds and approx. 1.5 minutes. One bull was left standing in the chute for 5 minutes. There was a problem further along the slaughter chain resulting in the slaughterer having to wait to “process” him. Fortunately he had not yet tilted the floor, but nevertheless the bull appeared stressed having to stand so long in the small box. He could not see the kill floor very well (just when he bent his head down) but could smell and hear clearly what was going on in the room.

When the slaughterer is ready to proceed, a chain is placed around the back right leg of the bovine in the chute and the side door of the chute then opens, resulting in the bovine falling onto the kill floor. The floor of this plant had less blood and fluids collected on the kill floor then the other two we visited. The director claimed it was because they had a lot of drainage installed and the floor was sloped, keeping the floor somewhat cleaner. (see photo below showing lots of drainage).



Nevertheless the bovine is dragged out of the chute onto the kill floor via a chain on its leg. The slaughterer then presses a button that hoists the chain upwards. The bovine ends up hanging by just one leg until only one hoof can lightly touch the floor. The bovine is then lowered so that his shoulders and head and top part of his torso are lying sideways, so that the slaughterer can approach with a knife to cut his throat.



Unfortunately the process of being hoisted fully upwards by one leg and then slowly lowered was repeated several times as the ideal position was not reached on the first time. The slaughterer would then cut the throat of the animal. We question the sharpness of the knives or technique used, as we observed the slaughterer having to make 4 cuts.

Immediately after making the cuts, the slaughterer would either grab a hose and spray the face and floor area or press the button to hoist the animal fully off the ground and let him hang there by one leg despite being still conscious.

We fortunately did not see any poking of the eyeballs at this plant during our visit, as seen at the plant in Bursa.

Description of unloading and local transports arriving:

At the end of our tour, a national livestock truck arrived. Inside were tethered cattle – approximately 5 bulls and one cow. The cow was lying down and seemed in pain. She could not get up, her hind legs and hips looked very sore and were dirty. One of the bulls was also lying down and had trouble getting his footing to stand up again once the workers walked in (the floor was so slippery!).



The bulls were unloaded one at a time- the workers would enter the truck, loosen the tether and then walk the bull out of the truck. Several bulls were hesitant to walk over the edge between the truck floor and the ramp, as the colour, texture and height were different.

Unfortunately one of the workers kept pulling on the tether, to the point that the hesitant bull slipped and landed then skidded on his knees. It looked very painful (see photo below).

Another bull slipped and slid inside the truck due to the slippery floor (it seemed to have no bedding or built-in traction).



Several men entered the truck to try and get the cow to stand up to no avail. Even after she was electrically shocked 4 times by one of the workers (see photo bellow), all she could do was cry out. Finally it was decided to drive her closer to the entrance of the kill floor and there, we were told, she would be taken out of the truck and slaughtered.



The mechanic and planner of this slaughterhouse admitted that this was not nice for her, but they cannot stun her on the truck as then her meat would not be fit to be sold for consumption. It would not be considered Halal. He claims they have no choice but both he and the director would prefer having the option to use a captive bolt pistol. It would be “much nicer for the animals but also much easier for their workers”. We were not allowed to stay and watch what happened to the downer, but while walking to our car in the parking lot we could hear her bellowing out very loudly.

2. Violations

2.1. Violations to Dzabiha (Halal regulations)

- **The animal should be handled gently and individually** (Some cattle had their tail twisted, which causes serious pain. The cattle are forced to enter a chute with a trip-floor, making it fall down. The bovine in the raceway could see the animal in front of it fall down in the chute, causing fright. The bovine are hoisted while still conscious by just one leg, high up until they could only touch the floor with the tips of their hooves. The bovines throat had to be cut 4 times. During this process the bovine shows signs of terror (vocalizations, wide open eyes, struggling). Animals arriving injured are given electric shocks and then still put through the slaughter process instead of humanely euthanized there where they lay, or at least stunned first and then put through the slaughterline).
- **The animal should not be slaughtered in front of other animals and no blood seen so that no stress or discomfort has been caused to the animal** (as of turning into the slaughterhouse, the bovine can see the entire slaughter process of the previous animals. There is also blood on the floor of the raceway leading into the chute).
- **The knife should be very sharp** (because of the way the slaughterer cut the animal and the fact he had to cut 4 different times, we are concerned that the knife was not kept sharp enough).
- **The animal must be healthy and free from any injury at the time of slaughter.** (the cow was not able to stand up. It was obvious that she was injured and yet she was still accepted and slaughtered).

2.2. Non-compliance with OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2012), Chapter 7.5. Slaughter of animals

In Chapter 7.5. of the OIE Code you find the following recommendations regarding general conditions and treatment of animals, as well as distractions in the raceway and the chute.

Article 7.5.1.

4. Distractions and their removal

Distractions that may cause approaching *animals* to stop, balk or turn back should be designed out from new facilities or removed from existing ones. Below are examples of common distractions and methods for eliminating them:

- reflections on shiny metal or wet floors – move a lamp or change lighting;
- dark entrances to chutes, races, stun boxes or conveyor restrainers – illuminate with indirect lighting which does not shine directly into the eyes of approaching *animals* or create areas of sharp contrast;
- animals* seeing moving people or equipment up ahead – install solid sides on chutes and races or install shields;
- uneven floors or a sudden drop in floor levels at the entrance to conveyor restrainers – avoid uneven floor surfaces or install a solid false floor under the restrainer to provide an illusion of a solid and continuous walking surface;

h) clanging and banging of metal objects – install rubber stops on gates and other devices to reduce metal to metal contact;

Article 7.5.2.

1. General conditions

e) *Animals* should be handled in such a way as to avoid harm, distress or injury. **Under no circumstances should *animal handlers* resort to violent acts to move *animals*, such as crushing or breaking tails of *animals*, grasping their eyes** or pulling them by the ears. *Animal handlers* should never apply an injurious object or irritant substance to *animals* and especially not to sensitive areas such as eyes, mouth, ears, genital region or belly.

4. Provisions relevant to restraining and containing animals

a) Provisions relevant to *restraining animals* for *stunning* or *slaughter* without *stunning*, to help maintain animal welfare, include:

i) provision of a non-slippery floor;

ii) avoidance of excessive pressure applied by *restraining* equipment that causes struggling or vocalisation in *animals*;

b) Methods of *restraint* causing avoidable suffering should not be used in conscious *animals* because they cause severe pain and stress:

i) suspending or hoisting *animals* (other than *poultry*) by the feet or legs;

iv) breaking legs, cutting leg tendons or blinding *animals* in order to immobilise them;

2.3. Violations against Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing

Article 15: Handling and restraining operations at slaughterhouses

3. The following methods of restraint shall be prohibited:

(a) suspending or hoisting conscious animals;

ANNEX II: LAYOUT, CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES

(as referred to in Article 14)

2. Lairage facilities for animals not delivered in containers:

2.5. Floors shall be built and maintained in such a way as to minimise the risk of animals slipping, falling or injuring their feet.

3. Restraining equipment and facilities

3.1. Restraining equipment and facilities shall be designed, built and maintained to:

(b) prevent injury or contusions to the animals;

(c) minimise struggle and vocalisation when animals are restrained;

(d) minimise the time of restraint.

ANNEX III : OPERATIONAL RULES FOR SLAUGHTERHOUSES (as referred to in Article 15)

1.8. It shall be prohibited to:

- (a) strike or kick the animals;
- (b) apply pressure to any particularly sensitive part of the body in such a way as to cause animals avoidable pain or suffering;
- (c) lift or drag the animals by the head, ears, horns, legs, tail or fleece, or handle them in such a way as to cause them pain or suffering;
- (e) twist, crush or break the tails of animals or grasp the eyes of any animal.

1.11. Animals which are unable to walk shall not be dragged to the place of slaughter, but shall be killed where they lie.

According to the criterias of the OIE and the Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 the method of hoisting and suspending the conscious animals by one leg, is forbidden.

3. Recommendations for quick improvements

Ideally, Eyes on Animals and Animal Welfare Foundation would like to see Turkish slaughterhouses adopt stunning the animals properly before slaughtering them. However, as this is a long on-going debate with many obstacles, we will just focus in this report on improvements that the plant should take immediately to reduce a lot of the suffering that takes place before the cut is made to the throat.

1. **Never force or drag or prod injured animals. They should instead be humanely killed or euthanized where they lay. As the Dzabiha regulations forbid slaughtering an injured animal anyhow, these animals should not need to be forced to go through the normal slaughtering process inside.**
2. **Close the gap between the raceway and the chute to prevent the animals from seeing the kill floor.**

Close this gap so animals entering chute cannot first see the kill floor.



3. Make the floor of the chute anti-slip (for example, install rubber mat of similar colour to floor).
4. Install more lighting (but non-direct) in chute area, to reduce contrast between brightness from the outdoor raceway and darkness once they enter into the building. This will ease movement and reduce hesitation.
5. Make the sides of the raceway taller and solid, to reduce shadows and view of workers.
6. Make the back door of the chute solid to the floor, so those waiting in line cannot see what is happening inside the chute (box).
7. Keep the floor of the raceway clean and dry so that the anti-slip grooves fulfill their purpose. This can be done by cleaning the floor more regularly.
8. As long as national trucks are arriving in such poor condition as what we saw, then sprinkle straw on the ramp and the area between the truck floor and ramp, so the cattle feel more confident to exit safely.
9. Instead of pulling bulls on a tether to exit from a truck with a very slippery floor and bumpy ramp, put some straw on the ramp and have a second worker with a plastic pipe or paddle to walk behind the bull.
10. Never prod a downer (injured to the point of not being able to get up or walk) animal or force it to move. Rather humanely slaughter or euthanize the animal there where he/she lays. **Should you still not be allowed to use a captive bolt pistol even for injured animals, nor perform euthanasia, then is it at least not possible to install a drain in the parking lot to cut her throat at the edge of the truck?**
11. Never make animals fall on purpose nor hoist conscious animals (particularly heavy cattle) by one leg. This causes all sorts of injury to the hip, leg and joint plus terror in the animals. It is a serious welfare concern but also leads to poor-quality meat.

We encourage the plant to seek advice from slaughter experts and animal scientists, as to what is the best available alternative restraint system on the market, whereby the animals can be slaughtered without being hoisted alive or made to fall on a trip floor. Here are some websites of experts on animal-welfare during slaughter. You can contact them. (Feel free to ask us for help with translation if needed as these sites are mostly just in English or English and German. We would be glad to assist).

www.grandin.com in particular see:

<http://www.grandin.com/ritual/evaluation.restraint.methods.kosher.halal.html>

www.hsa.org.uk

<http://www.bsi-schwarzenbek.de>