



# AgriFoSe2030

Agriculture for Food Security 2030  
- Translating science into policy and practice



## Slaughter hygiene and meat safety in Uganda

*Protection of animals and consumers of animal produce from infectious agents and unhygienic material and chemicals, should be the guiding principle for food producers and processors, including operators of slaughterhouses. Producers and consumers in developing countries, where the legislation on food safety may be inadequate, obsolete, or not fully implemented, are exposed to serious risk of diseases associated with handling and consumption of unsafe food, including meat.*

In the production of meat sold at local markets in Uganda, animals are usually slaughtered in slaughterhouses or slaughter slabs. Slaughter slabs are designated areas for slaughter, normally a small shelter/house, but without the regulations of an official slaughterhouse. An official slaughterhouse is compartmentalized to separate different slaughter activities, such as ante- and post-mortem inspections, bleeding, skinning, evisceration, cutting, weighing and storage both in time and space. It also has hoisting equipment, which are usually lacking in a slaughter slab. The slaughterhouses and slabs are privatized facilities; however, government veterinarians carry out meat safety checks in a regular manner.

The objective of this study was to review the legislation on food safety, its implementation and monitoring in Uganda in regards to animal slaughter, in comparison to the stringent food safety legislation implemented within the European

### Key messages

- The current designs and daily operations in the slaughter slabs cannot guarantee food safety.
- There is negligence in the implementation of regulations on slaughter hygiene in Uganda.
- Standardized construction and rules of procedure should be developed for slaughter slabs.
- Training of personnel in slaughter slabs on food safety requirements should be carried out.
- We need to increase knowledge sharing with all stakeholders on the importance of slaughter hygiene.

Union (EU). A comparison was made between Swedish and Ugandan slaughterhouses to learn and exchange knowledge and experience. Moreover, the study aimed to identify limitations and suggests improvements in the food safety procedures that are necessary to reduce disease burden and develop the export competitiveness of the meat industry in Uganda. The study was carried out as a literature review, with study visits to five slaughterhouses and three slaughter slabs in Uganda and Sweden. Interviews of selected informants were also conducted.

## Meat production in Uganda

In 2011, Uganda produced 191,280 tonnes of beef, 35,666 tonnes of goat meat and mutton and 20,867 tonnes of pork. According to FAO statistics, cattle meat has exceeded 200,000 tonnes in 2016, goat meat has increased to 37,000 tonnes and pork meat has exploded in the country, in 2016 estimated to more than 125,000 tonnes. Thus, meat production in Uganda has increased significantly in the past decade, a trend that is expected to continue. Much of the meat is locally consumed because of the difficulty to conform to international standards by many slaughter places.

Currently, there are three slaughterhouses, all of which are in, or near, the capital city. In comparison, there are no slaughterhouses in other districts but dozens of slaughter slabs, where most animals in Uganda are slaughtered. The slaughter slabs are generally designated by the local government.

Meat for export to countries in the East African region, China and other potential export markets

such as Middle Eastern countries and the European Union comes from the slaughterhouses.

Food safety regarding slaughterhouse hygiene may be an issue since diseases such as cysticercosis, taeniasis, brucellosis and salmonellosis are prevalent in human as well as livestock populations. Taeniasis is mostly spread to humans through consumption of undercooked infected meat.

## Slaughterhouse routines in Sweden and Uganda

Both Swedish and Ugandan slaughterhouses separate activities such as ante-mortem inspection, skinning, evisceration, cutting and post-mortem inspection, in both time and space. In both cases, Government veterinarians similarly did postmortem inspections. However, the Ugandan slaughterhouse was usually cleaned using water without a disinfectant. Furthermore, meat buyers and animal owners could enter the slaughterhouse as was not the case in the Swedish slaughterhouses, where entering is strictly restricted unless you are personnel. Thus, there is negligence in the



Small slaughter slab for cattle in Mukono district, Uganda. Bleeding, dressing, evisceration, cutting and retailing of meat were carried out on the same slab.



Disposal of ruminant stomach contents near a slaughter slab from Mukono district, Uganda.

implementation of regulations in Uganda as compared to Sweden although published regulations for the two countries are comparable.

### **Regulations in small slaughter slabs in Uganda**

The slaughter slabs in Uganda are small, not compartmentalized and usually without restricted entry of people, insects, birds and other animals. Apart from meat inspection by the veterinary

assistants and cleaning of viscera by specific personnel, all the other activities were carried out by the same staff and on the same concrete slab area. There was also no sterilization of cutting knives, no regular washing of hands or boots between activities and staff were not provided with cleanable plastic aprons. Two out of the three visited slaughter slabs were washed after slaughter using water only and one was not washed at all after slaughter. In the three slaughter slabs, the ruminant stomachs and



A slaughter slab in Mukono district, Uganda that was not washed after slaughter.

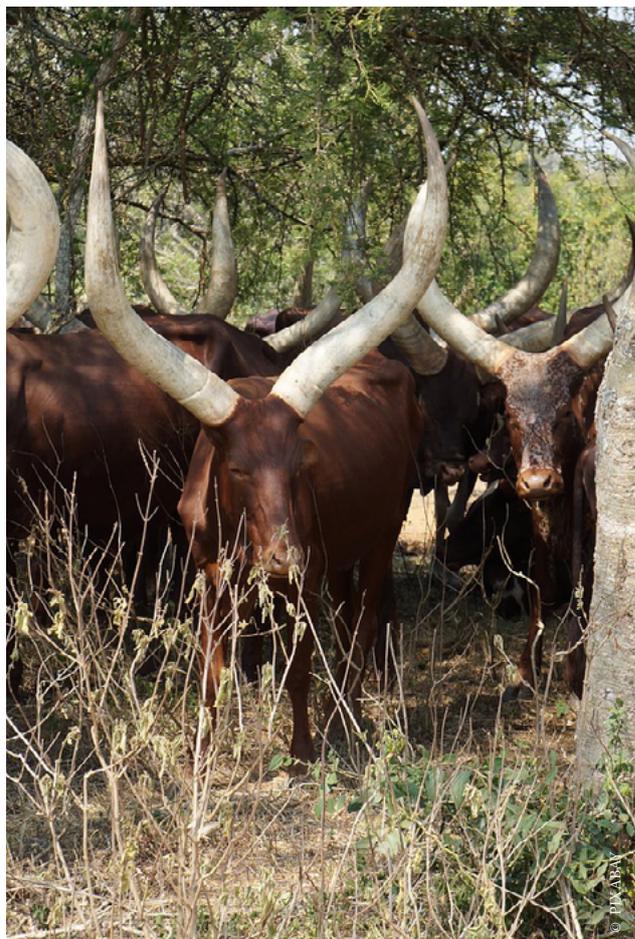
intestines were opened and cleaned on the slab or in a separate area near the slab, but the contents were deposited close to the slab. The carcass inspection in two slaughter slabs was limited to the lymph nodes, the heart, lungs, and liver. No carcass inspection was observed in the third slaughter slab. In addition, the assistant inspectors were not aware of the code of meat inspection for Uganda in any of the slabs. They carried out inspections based on the knowledge acquired during college training.

## Conclusions

Our study shows that there are large differences in the slaughter hygiene between slaughter slabs and slaughterhouses in Uganda, which pose significant effects/health risks for meat consumers in Uganda and that there are important lessons to learn from studying slaughter regulations and activities in countries with higher food safety and better standards for hygiene in slaughterhouses.

### Recommendations and ways forward

1. It is recommended that the Ugandan Government implements regulations on meat safety during slaughter via the veterinary department.
2. The Government should develop minimum rules and/or standards on the design of slaughter slabs to improve slaughter hygiene.
3. Training of personnel in slaughter slabs on food safety requirements is needed.
4. Feasible ways of ensuring compliance with food safety regulations during slaughter in slaughter slabs need to be identified.
5. Extensive sensitization of all stakeholders in Uganda on the need for adequate slaughter hygiene is further recommended.



The current designs and daily operations in the slaughter slabs in Uganda cannot guarantee food safety.

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