

Question for written answer E-014815/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D)

Subject: Slaughterhouse stunning methods: carbon dioxide gas stunning

Carbon dioxide gas stunning, which is permitted in the EU, is widely used in slaughterhouses. This method is considered to be effective and it is cheap, although studies suggest that it is not the best option for animals.

The use of carbon dioxide poses problems as regards animal welfare, as there is no legal requirement that the animals' reaction to the stunning should be possible to monitor. Animals are stunned by being exposed to carbon dioxide while being carried in a gondola or lift and their reaction cannot, therefore, invariably be monitored. In addition, carbon dioxide is very irritating to the airways. It burns the throat and causes coughing and a violent choking sensation. The animals' last moments are thus quite likely to be agonisingly distressing.

There are better ways to stun animals, but price and occupational safety factors have led many slaughterhouses to switch to the carbon dioxide method. Will the Commission help to ensure that the use of painless or less painful stunning methods is made mandatory under EU legislation?