



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

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London, SW1P 4DF www.gov.uk/defra

Your ref:
Our ref: AW/036
Date: 26 October 2026

Dear Consultee

Consultation on phasing out carbon dioxide stunning of pigs

1. I am writing to invite views on a policy proposal to phase out carbon dioxide stunning of pigs over a transition period in slaughterhouses and knacker's yards in the UK.
2. The following documents may be found on GOV.UK:
<https://consultations.defra.gov.uk/phasing-out-carbon-dioxide-stunning-of-pigs>
 - Consultation on carbon dioxide stunning of pigs.
 - Consultation Impact Assessment.
3. We welcome your views and comments on the proposal.

Responses

4. To submit your consultation response please complete the consultation questionnaire provided through Smart Survey - <https://consultations.defra.gov.uk/phasing-out-carbon-dioxide-stunning-of-pigs> (Smart Survey is an online consultation tool).
5. If you require a copy of the consultation, please contact us at aw.slaughter@defra.gov.uk or in writing to:

Carbon Dioxide Stunning of Pigs Consultation, Farm Animal Welfare Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Seacole Building 2nd Floor, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

Consultation criteria

This 8 week-long consultation starts on 26 October 2026 and closes on 21 December 2026. Any responses received after this date will not be analysed.

This consultation relates to proposals applying to the whole of the UK. It is issued by Defra on behalf of the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.



The evidence that carbon dioxide gas stunning causes significant pain, suffering and distress to pigs at the time of killing is well known. There is now clear evidence that alternative permitted stunning methods, such as the use of inert gases, will significantly reduce these welfare issues for pigs. We believe that a ban on carbon dioxide stunning of pigs in slaughterhouses and knacker's yards would result in a significant improvement to pig welfare at the time of killing. However, it is clear that any transition away from carbon dioxide stunning should be managed in a way that allows the industry to make the necessary technological changes to convert current systems and maintain economic viability.

We are seeking views on the policy proposal presented in the consultation document and on the transition period that would allow the industry to convert its systems while maintaining economic viability.

The government's modelling of costs and benefits of the proposal, based on extensive engagement with pig processors, slaughter equipment manufacturers, industrial gas suppliers, NGOs and other available data, have been brought together in the Consultation Impact Assessment. Evidence is also being sought through the consultation to refine this modelling.

After the consultation

We will summarise all responses once the consultation window is closed. This summary will include a list of names of organisations that respond but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Cabinet Office consultation principles. Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal data, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information legislation. We respect your personal privacy when responding to access to information requests. We only share information when necessary to meet the statutory requirements of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Using and sharing your information

How we use your personal data is set out in the consultation and call for evidence exercise privacy notice which can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-consultations-and-call-for-evidence-exercises-privacy-notice>

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Cabinet Office "Consultation Principles" which can be found at: [Microsoft Word - Consultation Principles \(1\).docx](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431212/Microsoft_Word_-_Consultation_Principles_(1).docx) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Complaints procedure

All complaints about the consultation process should be submitted to the Consultation Coordinator via email: consultation.coordinator@defra.gov.uk. To meet with Defra's service standard, all complaints will be responded to within 15 days of receipt.

Thank you for your help in this matter. If you have any queries, please contact us as above.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Aram
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs