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# HUMANE CHOICE STANDARDS - PIGS

November 2010



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The purpose of the Humane Choice program is to provide a credible, monitored and verified for the humane production of wholesome free range pork while caring for the environment in which we farm and offering assurance to consumers that these certified products meet these standards.

The Humane Choice Standards have been developed in conjunction with the free range pork industry to provide these standards for the rearing, handling, transport and slaughter of Pigs for use in the “Humane Choice” program.

Humane Choice also acknowledges existing state and statutory requirements that are in place for pork producers in general. We have incorporated the necessary requirements into our Standard so that free range producers are able meet the specifications for Food Safety, Risk Management, Herd Health and Animal Welfare expected of a responsible pork producer.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Operators should maintain conditions that promote the animals’ physiological and behavioural needs. In particular, livestock are able to forage on the land, move untethered and uncaged.

Animal breed selection should encompass consideration of breeds and genetics which are naturally suited to the farm and district environment.

Fences, yards and housing are constructed in ways which do not lead to injury or bruising as a consequence of poor design.

Farm systems shall ensure that the environment provided for pigs will permit safe, wholesome food production.

A system of animal identification should be implemented to ensure full traceability of all pigs. Care of the environment should be part of a responsible farm management plan.

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## PART1: INTRODUCTION

### THE HUMANE CHOICE LABEL

The “Humane Choice” program was developed to certify free range animals and the products derived from them. Upon satisfactory application and inspection, farmers who meet the *Humane Choice* standards will be offered a license to use the “Humane Choice” logo. Program participants are inspected and monitored for compliance to the program.

#### GUIDE TO THE USE OF THIS STANDARDS

- The guidelines and objectives of the standards are described at the beginning of each section.
- The Standards are numbered, all of which must be complied with.
- Producers must also comply with any local, state, or statutory requirements for pig production.
- Producers will need to make themselves familiar with the Australian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pig.

**OBJECTIVES:** *Animal health results from a combination of good management practices, a stress free environment and sound nutrition. Energy, protein and roughage supplies should be adequate to maintain good animal health and condition. Feed and water must be made available so that animals can eat and drink without fear of bullying or competition.*

STANDARD 1: FEED

1. 1: NUTRITION

- a. The diet must be balanced according to the needs of the animal.
- b. All pigs must have access to forage. When pasture is temporarily unavailable due to drought or circumstances beyond the producer's control, an alternative source of forage must be made available e.g. chaff, lucerne hay, fresh chop, fruit and vegetable waste, silage or similar.
- c. Suckling animals must be reared by their mothers in order to assist in their development of a natural immunity to infections.
- d. If meat by products are fed, they must be first heat treated.
- d. Feeds containing, faeces, urine, urea, food industry by-product treated with solvents, same species materials or other prohibited substances are not permitted.
- f. Pigs must be fed a good diet daily which is:
  1. Appropriate to their species, stage of production, and age.
  2. Fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health; and
  3. Sufficient for their nutritional needs.

1. 3: FEED RECORDS

- a. Producers must have written records of the feed ingredients, the inclusion rate and ingredients of concentrate feeds, and feed supplements,(bag tags may suffice) including records from the feed mill or supplier; and
- b. These records must be made available to the *Humane Choice* auditor upon request.

1. 4: SUBSTANCES PROHIBITED IN FEED

- a. Pigs must not be fed any hormones, growth promoters or be systematically fed antibiotics to increase growth or feed efficiency or as a preventative medicine.
- b. Antibiotics may only be given to individual pigs for therapeutic reasons (for disease treatment) and only under the direction of a veterinarian.
- c. Swill feeding is illegal.

1.5: BODY CONDITION

- a. Body condition of breeding animals must be carefully managed to allow them to maintain good health and condition through all stages of production.
- b. As required by the Australian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals, all pigs must have a body condition score above 2.

Score	Appearance	Condition
1	Extremely thin	Pelvic and backbone very prominent; deep cavity around tail head, very hollow flank; ribs prominent, bone structure apparent.
2	Thin	Backbone prominent, pelvic bones obvious, cavity around tail head, loin narrow, rib cage apparent.
3	Normal	Pelvic bones covered, spine covered and rounded, ribs covered but can be felt.
4	Fat	Pelvic bones only felt with pressure, no cavity around tail, spine only felt with pressure, rib cage not visible and difficult to feel..
5	Obese	Pelvic bones impossible to feel, impossible to feel spine, flank rounded and full, cannot feel ribs.

#### 1.6: AVOIDING COMPETITION FOR FEED

- a. All pigs must be fed in ways that avoid bullying and competition at feed troughs.

#### 1.7: FEED STORAGE

To reduce the risk of contamination, all feed hoppers, bins or silos used for storage must be covered.

#### 1.8: FEEDING OF WEANED PIGS

Particular care is needed in feeding newly weaned piglets. Feeders must be easily accessible with enough space for most or all piglets to eat simultaneously.

#### 1.9 FEEDING EQUIPMENT

- a. All feeding equipment must be kept clean and in good repair.
- b. Feeders will be checked daily to ensure functionality and free flow of feed.

### STANDARD 2: WATER

#### 2.1: WATER SUPPLY

- a. All pigs must have access to an adequate supply of clean, fresh drinking water at all times.
- b. Special care must be taken to ensure that drinkers are adjusted (height and flow rate) so that water is accessible for every pig.

#### 2.2: WATERING EQUIPMENT

- a. Drinking troughs and bowls must be kept clean.
- b. Drinkers must be checked daily to be sure they are functional. If nipple drinkers are used they must be regularly checked to see that they are working and not clogged.

#### 2.3: EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY

Provisions must be made to ensure an emergency supply of suitable drinking water in case of failure of normal supply (e.g., drought or electrical failure)

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## PART3: FARM ENVIRONMENT

**OBJECTIVES:** *Farm housing and paddock management should ensure that the environment provided for the pigs will permit humane, safe, wholesome food production. Care of the environment is a part of responsible farm management.*

### STANDARD 3: INFRASTRUCTURE

#### 3.1: HOUSING

Shelter and shade shall be provided to give all animals protection against the sun, wind and rain. Shelter in paddocks should include windbreaks and shade throughout the day. Shelters should be sufficient in number and size to allow all pigs to occupy them and lie down at the same time.

#### 3.2: STRUCTURE DESIGN

- a. Housing, hutches, fences, yards, feeders, waterers and loading facilities are to be constructed in ways which do not lead to injury or bruising as a consequence of poor design.
- b. All forms of shelter, equipment and fencing must be maintained in a condition that will allow it to safely serve its purpose.
- c. Hutches and shelters will provide adequate protection from the sun and all weather conditions for all pigs.
- d. Yards next to animal housing should be managed to provide comfortable and secure conditions without excessive mud, dust or hazardous material.
- e. Pigs must be allowed free movement and access to paddocks and mud wallows.

#### 3.3: THE USE OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES IN HOUSING AND PADDOCKS

- a. Pigs must not be able to come into contact with toxins from paint, wood preservatives, or disinfectants.
- b. Poisons for control of rodents or feral animals in the field is prohibited unless required by a statutory authority and the statutory authority confirms use in writing. Where baits are laid for rodents and feral animals, they must not be accessible to roaming animals and wildlife and concealed bait stations are recommended. A bait map will be maintained showing location of poisons and their use recorded in the Chemical Treatment Records. Refer to Standard 14.

#### 4: CLEANING

Housing must be cleaned of urine, manure and uneaten feed as often as necessary to minimize disease, unpleasant odours and to avoid attracting insects and vermin.

## STANDARD 4: INDOOR HOUSING

### 4.1: TEMPORARY HOUSING

- a. When livestock must be housed indoors on a temporary basis, at night, inclement weather, illness, or for any reason, the operator will comply with the following:
  1. Housing must be cleaned of manure, urine and uneaten or spilled feed as often as is necessary to minimize unpleasant odours and avoid attracting insects.
  2. The pigs must have enough space to stand up, turn around and carry out natural behaviour.
  3. Be supplied with a sleeping area with suitable bedding material.
  4. Supplied with fresh water and feed.
  5. Given ample sunlight, fresh air, ventilation and insulation from heat and cold.
  6. Pigs will not be kept in stalls, cages, or farrowing pens at any time unless they are being held for a short period of time for treatment or examination.
  7. Individual animals must not be kept in isolation unless they are being treated for illness or about to farrow.
  8. When livestock are housed on a temporary basis, the minimum “on ground” density shall comply with the following, for:

Small to medium animals	Not less than 1.5 square metres for every animal
Medium to large animals	Not less than 3 square metres for every animal

9. Housing, pens, equipment and utensils must be cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross infection and the build-up of disease carrying organisms.
10. Litter and bedding must be of good quality and be managed to maintain it in a dry and friable condition; it must be of a sufficient depth and for dilution of faeces and be skimmed or topped up as necessary with fresh litter.
11. Restraining sows by tether is illegal.
12. Mating pens must have a non slip floor area that will provide adequate footing during mating. Pens must be large enough to allow mating and related behaviour.

## STANDARD 5: REDUCING THE RISK OF HEAT STRESS & SUNBURN

### 5.1: SHADE

- a. Producers will provide adequate shade and windbreaks in any paddocks occupied by pigs. Shade must be made available throughout the day and must be sufficient enough to allow all pigs to access it at the same time.
- b. Pigs must have access to a comfortable and dry lying area large enough to allow all pigs to lie down at the same time. In inclement weather, (i.e., rain, cold) the pigs must have access to a covered comfortable, dry lying area that will allow all pigs to lie down at the same time.

### 5.2: WALLOWS

- a. With the exception of farrowing sows and pigs held indoors on a temporary basis, wallows will be made available to all pigs.
- b. Wallows must be allowed to dry out completely every few months and started again in a new location to help prevent the build of disease.
- c. If wallows cannot be provided due to state regulations or the like, a misting or sprinkler system will need to be installed as a substitute to cool the pigs with water during hot weather.

## STANDARD 6: GRAZING

### 6.1: PASTURE MANAGEMENT

All pigs must have free access to pasture. *Derogation:* Newly farrowed sows with piglets or pigs held temporarily in indoor housing.

- a. Each farm will have in place a management system that considers the impact of grazing pigs on the environment. A management plan, that should include soil testing, shall be in place to ensure that nutrients do not build up in the soil to unacceptable levels. The recommended soil monitoring parameters are set out in the National Environmental Guidelines for Piggeries 2010, section 17.2 Soils.
- b. A paddock rotation system shall be in place to help prevent nutrient build up in the soil, to aid in the control of parasite infestations and the over grazing of pasture or vegetation. As a guide, pasture cover should not fall below 40% before pigs are moved to new ground. (Refer also to section 6.1.a)
- c. Manure and spent bedding will be incorporated into the soil or collected and spread onto land that is not designated for grazing of pigs if kept on farm. Composting of bedding/manure is highly recommended.
- d. Paddocks must be monitored for signs of erosion and steps taken to minimize land degradation.
- e. Pigs must be provided with adequate alternatives to waterlogged paddocks, holding pens and accommodations.
- f. Run off into waterways must be prevented.
- g. A farm map will be provided and made available upon request of the *Humane Choice* Auditor.

### 6.2: STOCKING DENSITIES

- a. Stocking rates must be appropriate for the region, taking into consideration the feed production capacity, health, structure and nutrient balance of the soil as well as any possible environmental impact that grazing pigs may have on the land.
- b. Minimum stocking rates are 500 sq metres per dry sow, 10 lactating sows per hectare from farrowing to weaning and 40 sq metres per growing pig in a rotational grazing system.
- c. Producers must maintain conditions that enhance the animals' lives, physiological needs and behavioural needs.

### 6.3: PREVENTING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Pigs must be given enough space to enable them to avoid confrontation with other pigs. They must be able to feed and rest without undue interference from other animals.

## STANDARD 7: FARROWING SYSTEMS

### 7.1: FARROWING AREA

- a. When farrowing is imminent and during farrowing and the following lactation period, a sow must be provided with appropriate bedding and nesting material.
- b. Minimum floor space of farrowing huts or shelters shall be 4.3 sq metres.
- c. Stalls and crates are prohibited.
- d. Huts and housing for farrowing must be draft free and provide protection from all weather conditions.

- e. Farrowing sows must be protected from predators. An effective method for protection against predator attack must be in place. Guarding animals, mechanical deterrents and exclusion fencing are recommended.
- f. Feral animals may be managed using the following methods:
  - 1. Physical exclusion, chasing and guard dogs;
  - 2. Trapping of individuals using live traps with relocation or, where there is no alternative, humane euthanasia.

#### 7.2: BEFORE FARROWING

- a. Sows must be settled into a designated farrowing area or paddock and supplied with an individual hutch or space and appropriate bedding or nesting material.

#### 7.3: AFTER FARROWING

- a. The farrowing area must be cleared of any dead piglets and afterbirth to minimize attraction of predators and vermin.
- b. The diet of the lactating sow must be given careful attention. The sow must be fed an appropriately balanced ration in quantities that will provide adequate nutrition to allow the sow to sustain healthy piglet growth without loss of body condition.
- c. Piglets must not be weaned from the sow before the sixth week after farrowing, unless a veterinarian confirms that the welfare or health of the sow or piglets would otherwise be adversely affected.

**OBJECTIVES:** *Management should be based on the harmonious relationship between land, water, plants and livestock, the respect for physiological and behavioural needs of the pigs and the feeding of good, quality feedstuffs. Animal management is based on the principles of balanced nutrition and feeding for prevention of disease and resistance to infection, parasitic attack and metabolic disorders.*

STANDARD 8: ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

8.1: PHYSIOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS

- a. Animals must be allowed to practice their normal behaviours without interference. This shall include, but not limited to, being able to:
- Mate naturally
  - Carry out rooting behaviour
  - Nurture their young
- b. The following procedures are prohibited:
- Embryo transfer
  - The use of genetically engineered species or breeds
  - Hormonal treatments to induce birth or heat in females unless recommended by a veterinarian for individual animals.
- c. Artificial insemination is not recommended and will not be widely practiced in the herd.

STANDARD 9: STOCKPERSONS

9.1: UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARDS

- a. Any person involved in the care, handling and management of the pigs must:
1. Receive a copy of this Standard;
  2. be familiar with this Standard and,
  3. understand the content of this Standard.
- b. A suitable training program must be in place for all staff and employees to ensure implementation and compliance to this Standard.

9.2: HUMANE TREATMENT OF PIGS

- a. Stockperson should be able to demonstrate competence in handling animals in a positive and compassionate manner.
- b. Stockpersons should also be able to demonstrate their proficiency in procedures that have the potential to cause suffering (e.g. injections, castration)

STANDARD 10: HANDLING

10.1: FREQUENT HANDLING

Pigs must have frequent contact with stockpersons. All pigs must sight a human at least on a daily basis, especially those grazing in paddocks.

## 10.2: QUIET HANDLING

- a. Pigs must be handled quietly with minimal stress.
- b. Pigs must not be lifted by their tail or ears.
- c. Push boards and pig paddles may be used when handling and moving pigs.
- d. Pigs must not be slapped with such force that it results in welts or bruising.
- c. Use of electric prods is prohibited.

## STANDARD 11: IDENTIFICATION

Identification of animals is the basis for ensuring traceability, final product identity and permitting accurate and informed management.

### 11.1: IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- a. All sows, gilts and boar will be individually identified and a system to identify different groups of weaner, grower and finisher pigs will be put in place.
- b. All pigs must be identified before leaving the property.

### 11.2: IDENTIFICATION METHODS

- b. Approved methods of identification are:
  1. Ear notching
  2. Tattooing
  3. Ear Tags
  4. National Livestock Identification Scheme
  5. Electronic Collars

## STANDARD 12: BIOSECURITY

### 12.1: MANAGING BIOSECURITY RISKS

- a. A register of all visitors to the piggery will be maintained. The register will include visitor name, address, contact details and the date.
- b. Unauthorized vehicles will not have free access to areas in the vicinity of pigs.
- c. Fencing for pigs will prevent the animals from straying.
- d. Fencing shall be designed to exclude feral pigs.
- e. Brought in pigs present a risk to herd health. New arrivals must be quarantined for a period of 30 -60 days at a distance of at least 100 metres.
- f. Paddocks must be checked daily and any sick or dead animals removed promptly.

## STANDARD 13: FOOD SAFETY

### 13.1: RISK MANAGEMENT

Each producer must complete the Food Safety Risk Assessment supplied by Humane Choice as part of their certification and implement the systems for assessing risk to animal and human health, minimizing and monitoring those risk, verification and record keeping contained within it to ensure the production of safe, wholesome food.

## STANDARD 14: RECORD KEEPING

- a. A farm diary will be maintained as evidence of day to day events, monitoring of paddocks and watering systems, maintenance, cleaning, paddock rotations or any need for verification that the requirements within this Humane Choice Standard, that are not covered by the use of the documents set out in section 14:b. below, are being complied with.
- b. The farm diary must have dated entries.
- c. The following records will be maintained and made available for the Humane Choice Auditor. Records must be kept for a period of at least three years:
  1. Farm Diary
  2. Animal Treatment Record
  3. Medicine/Chemical Log
  4. Pasture/Crop Treatment Record
  5. Stored Grain Treatment Record
  6. Feed Purchase Record
  7. Feed Ingredients
  8. Records for animal deaths, births, sales and purchases

**OBJECTIVES:** *Herd health should be based on the prevention of disease through maintenance of the well being of the pigs with balanced nutrition, stress free living conditions and handling. The disease burden of pigs is reduced in the well managed outdoor herd.*

STANDARD 15: PIG HEALTH
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Health promotion and disease prevention should include the following techniques:

- Breeding and selection
- Exercise and access to the open
- Appropriate stocking densities and rotational grazing

Approved veterinary treatment should be considered as an adjunct to, and not a substitute for good management practices.

The aim should be to develop resistance in animals through breeding and selection and to correct the cause of the disorder, rather than treating the symptoms.

#### 15.1: ANIMAL HEALTH RECORDS

- a. All piggeries must keep accurate animal records that detail the following:
  1. Details of any vaccinations;
  2. Information on treatments and other aspects of herd health and welfare;
  3. Causes of mortality, when known;
  4. Mating and birth records
  5. Individual records for all breeding animals

#### 15.2: ANIMAL SURGICAL TREATMENTS

- a. Animal mutilations are not allowed.
- b. Surgical treatments shall only be carried out when the operator can demonstrate that the benefits of the action outweigh the consequences of non treatment and there are no other acceptable management options.
- c. When the following surgical treatments are shown to be necessary, they will be performed in such a way that minimizes stress and injury to the pig:
  1. Ear notching – before the age of 7 days
  2. Surgical Castration is permitted in conjunction with the use of a local anesthetic and must be performed before the age of 21 days (age limit is a Code of Practice requirement)
- d. The following procedures are not permitted:
  1. Nose ringing
  2. Tail docking
  3. Teeth clipping

#### 15.3: PREVENTATIVE TREATMENTS

- a. The following treatments are permitted:
  1. Immuno castration
  2. Vaccinations for diseases as recommended by a veterinarian

#### 15.4: MANAGING BROUGHT-IN ANIMALS

- a. Replacement animals brought in from other sources must be quarantined for a period of 30 -60 days and appropriately treated before integration.
- b. Brought in weaners must be less than 10 weeks of age upon arrival on farm. They must be accompanied by a Vendor Declaration and a statement from the seller declaring that the animals were born and raised without the use of farrowing crates or sow stalls.
- c. Brought in pigs of any age will be accepted as being free range for the purpose of this standard when purchased from another Humane Choice producer.

#### 15.5: CARE OF SICK AND INJURED ANIMALS

- d. Hospital pens must be made available for sick animals.
- e. Sick animals must be isolated from the rest of the herd.
- f. Injured or sick animals must be treated without delay and veterinary treatment must not be withheld.
- g. Hospital pens must be cleaned and disinfected after each use and all bedding material should be burned or spread on land not used by the pigs.

#### 15.6: CONTROL OF PARASITES

- a. Parasites, both internal and external, shall be treated promptly. Every effort shall be made to minimize parasite infestations.

#### 15.7: FOOT CARE

- a. Foot health in the breeding herd can become an issue. Feet must be inspected for overgrown claws and infection or lameness caused by lodgement of foreign bodies.
- b. Overgrown feet must be trimmed.

### STANDARD 16: EUTHANASIA

#### 16.1: ANIMAL SUFFERING

- a. The suffering of sick or injured animals will not be prolonged unnecessarily. If all reasonable steps have been taken to improve the animal's health without a timely response, the pig must be destroyed humanely.
- b. Pigs must be euthanized as per guidelines provided by the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs.

#### 16.2: CARCASS DISPOSAL

- a. The carcasses of all dead pigs will be disposed of responsibly and under the guidelines of any state or statutory requirements.
- b. In the absence of any state or statutory requirements, acceptable methods of carcass disposal are:
  1. Deep burial
  2. Incineration
  3. Composting
  4. Removal by Contractor

**OBJECTIVES:** *Transport of stock should be carried out in such a manner that it will ensure the best animal welfare and sanitation and the preservation of identity that will permit traceability of the animals. A management plan will be used to ensure that the holding, watering, transport and delivery of pigs is conducted with compassion, hygiene and oversight.*

STANDARD 17: TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS

Pigs should be transported to the nearest available facilities for slaughter and should not be unnecessarily transported between properties or owners unless required by feed shortages and drought.

17.1: GENERAL

- a. Transport of pigs between properties or to abattoirs shall take into consideration welfare requirements and shall ensure the minimization of stress to the animal at all times.
- b. Loading and unloading facilities must not have parts protruding or sharp edges that can cause injury, contamination or harm to the pigs.
- c. Transport vehicles shall be of suitable size to prevent overcrowding, damage and/or bruising.
- d. Gates must be used in transport vehicles to segregate pigs into compatible groups and to restrict movement of the animals that cause injury or bruising.
- e. Floors and ramps must be corrugated or suitably designed so the animal does not slip unduly.
- f. Unloading ramps (not less than 1.5 metres in length) should have a level dock before the ramps go down so that animals have a level surface to walk on when they exit the truck. A good target for the slope of the ramp is no more than 20° with a non-slip surface. The inside walls of the ramp should be constructed so animals cannot see activities outside the ramp.
- g. The use of electric prods is prohibited.
- h. Pigs will not be lifted by their tails, ears or legs.
- i. Water must be made available before and after transport.
- j. Time period from loading to unloading must not exceed 8 hours.
- k. Unfit animals must not be transported.
- l. Heavily pregnant sows or piglets under the age of 7 days will not be transported.
- m. Each consignment of pigs will be accompanied by the correct version of the National Vendor Declaration indicating that this document has been completed by a nominated competent person.
- n. Feed will be made available for pigs being held overnight.
- o. A Transport Management Plan that addresses the following shall be in place and documented and made available to the *Humane Choice* Auditor.

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|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mustering | 5. Identification | 9. Delivery       |
| 2. Holding   | 6. Loading        | 10. Documentation |
| 3. Feeding   | 7. Travel         |                   |
| 4. Watering  | 8. Oversight      |                   |

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## PART 7: SLAUGHTER

STANDARD 18: ABATTOIRS
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Slaughter will be carried out quickly and without undue stress.

- a. For waiting periods in excess of 6 hours, provision of clean and dry areas must be made for animals to lie down and feed must be provide if pigs are to be held overnight.
- b. Animals may not be held or herded in an area where the killing of other livestock is visible.
- c. Animals must not be conscious during slaughter.
- d. Stunning pigs with exposure to gas is the preferred practice to affect unconsciousness.
- e. A stun device must be backed up by emergency measures in the case of failure.
- f. Death by bleeding, without stunning, is not permissible.
- g. Clearly identifiable labelling such as branding of all carcasses must take place which differentiates them by colour from conventional carcasses and identifies them as "Humane Choice".
- h. Where stock is slaughtered for "Humane Choice" sale **the processing facility must be inspected as a certified component of the operator's operation or certified in its own right before the 'Humane Choice' Label may be applied.**

HSI concentrates on the preservation of endangered animals and ecosystems and works to ensure quality of life for all animals, both domestic and wild. HSI is the largest animal protection not-for-profit organisation in the world, with over 9 million supporters globally and has been established in Australia since 1994.



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