Euthanasia Methods in Poultry

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Euthanasia Versus Mass Destruction

- Euthanasia is a term that applies more to the humane destruction of an individual animal.
- Mass destruction applies to the destruction of a large number of animals, usually on an emergency basis and done as humanely as possible.
- Methods that can be used for mass destruction might not be considered humane for the individual animal, and methods used for euthanasia might not be practical for mass destruction.
Who Determines Acceptable Methods of Mass Destruction and Euthanasia?

• American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) - AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2013 Edition

• The AVMA currently considers that destruction of poultry using water-based foam is a method of mass depopulation and not a form of euthanasia.

• Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
Cervical Dislocation

- Only practical for small numbers of birds
- Takes a certain level of training and expertise
- Can be poorly accepted by owners/onlookers
- Rapid loss of consciousness and death
- No chemical contamination of tissues
- Useful in small and medium-sized birds...not in turkeys
- Is approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
Carbon Dioxide Gas

- Relatively inexpensive, readily available and does not require sophisticated equipment
- Can accommodate disposal easily
- Valves and lines will freeze if not using a regulator
Foaming Agents

• Requires special equipment and chemicals
• Requires certain level of expertise in operating equipment
• Loss of consciousness and death comparable to CO2 gas
• Best for ground-raised birds (chickens, turkeys)
• Requires enclosed area
• Function of equipment may be compromised in freezing temperatures
Foaming Agents

Broilers – 2 to 3 minutes after head coverage

Ducks – rule of thumb is 10 minutes