Key facts...
★ Following investigative media coverage, and recent investigations by the Food Standards Authority on a horse and halal abattoirs, there is increased public pressure to ensure animals are treated humanely in slaughterhouses.
★ CCTV is not currently a legal requirement, although the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) are both supportive of using this technology.
★ 51% of red meat and 30% of poultry slaughterhouses do not currently operate CCTV.
★ Installation has been required to meet the RSPCA standards as used by the RSPCA Assured (previously Freedom Food) scheme since 2011 with no financial penalties and no members leaving the scheme.
★ CCTV is cost-effective and can be extremely helpful for monitoring procedures, training personnel and also for providing objective evidence, should allegations of malpractice be made.
★ Brexit provides an opportunity to make CCTV mandatory as previously it was difficult to achieve this under EU Regulation 1099/2009 which did not specifically mandate it

How does CCTV work in a slaughterhouse?
For CCTV to be effective, there needs to be a sufficient number of appropriately placed cameras throughout the production line within a slaughterhouse that can enable continuous and simultaneous monitoring, including in areas/activities posing a high risk to animal welfare, such as the stunning area. Well-placed cameras can monitor activity in a way that the Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) or other slaughterhouse managers cannot.

Case study of use of CCTV
In 2012, the RSPCA received a complaint about alleged malpractice at a Freedom Food (now RSPCA Assured) approved pig slaughterhouse. Pigs had been reportedly heard to be squealing to an unusually high degree during unloading into the lairage, leading to concerns that they were being mistreated. The complainants provided information about the exact time of the alleged incident, allowing an RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer to ask to view CCTV of the unloading area at the precise time in question. The footage showed that staff had behaved appropriately and in line with RSPCA standards, and that the vocalising had not been caused by any staff malpractice.

The limitations of CCTV
Huge amounts of footage may be collected and stored depending on how many cameras are in place, and it is therefore impossible for inspectors/managers/etc to view everything all of the time. There is a danger that the presence of CCTV per se might in itself engender a false sense of security, unless footage is regularly viewed on a random basis. It is also a reality that the spatial limitations associated with the structure of some premises may impede or limit the ability of CCTV to cover all areas effectively.

The benefits of CCTV
CCTV can provide a number of different benefits to employers, employees and the public as well as farm animal welfare. For example, it can enable monitoring by auditors/vets/managers/AWOS/etc of practices and activities that take place outside of a ‘snapshot’ inspection visit, and enables verification of...
compliance with legal and/or farm assurance requirements.

CCTV can be extremely helpful for staff training, development and monitoring, as it enables managers to focus on practices and behaviours that a) need improvement and/or b) are good and should be maintained. It also provides objective evidence for internal (and external) investigation of allegations of malpractice and incidents of alleged poor animal welfare.

CCTV can also be useful to slaughterhouse for security purposes and also for monitoring the flow of animals through the plant, especially in systems where it is difficult or not possible to monitor the animals at all times during the slaughter/killing process.

**Current use of CCTV in slaughterhouses**
According to the FSA¹, the latest figures (for 2016) on the number of approved establishments in England and Wales operating CCTV facilities for animal welfare monitoring were:

- For red meat slaughterhouses, 102 of 207 establishments (49.3%) were operating CCTV, with 37% of these using CCTV to cover the stunning area, 32% to cover the bleeding area and 39% and 42% to cover the lairage and unloading areas respectively.
- For poultry slaughterhouses, 50 of 71 establishments (70.4%) were operating CCTV, with 37% of these using CCTV to cover the stunning area, 52% to cover the bleeding area and 55% and 56% to cover the lairage and unloading areas respectively.

**Does CCTV cost too much?**
In 2011, when the requirement to install CCTV became mandatory in the 46 slaughterhouses operating under the Freedom Food scheme (now RSPCA Assured), it came to light that a significant proportion of them were already operating this technology. Of those who were required to install new systems, no members left the scheme due to problems of cost on installing the systems.

**Other views on the use of CCTV**
The FSA supports the use of CCTV as an effective monitoring tool for animal welfare². In February 2015 the FAWC gave its opinion on the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses³ and made a series of recommendations including:

- In order to realise the potential benefits to animal welfare and to businesses...FAWC recommends that all approved slaughterhouse operators...should install CCTV in all areas where live animals are kept and where animals are stunned and killed.
- FAWC recommends that all assurance scheme operators, food retailers and others in the food chain require that CCTV be installed in the slaughterhouses associated with them.

**Opportunities from Brexit**
Previously the Government has stated that they could not mandate CCTV in slaughterhouses as it was not expressly allowed under the EU’s slaughter Regulation 1099/2009. Brexit provides the opportunity for the Government to set higher standards than existing EU legislation.

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1. Food Standards Agency (FSA) Results of the 2016 CCTV survey in slaughterhouses in England and Wales, 2016.
2. ibid.
3. Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC), Opinion on CCTV in slaughterhouses, p.17, February 2015

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