Euthanasia or depopulation, from a systems perspective, includes consideration of pre-euthanasia or pre-depopulation animal handling, the characteristics of various euthanasia or depopulation techniques, and issues around the disposal of remains.

What are some things I need to think about?
- Have I been provided with full information as to why euthanasia/depopulation may be necessary?
- Have I gathered the information I need regarding all the aspects of the process (i.e., handling considerations, techniques, remains disposal) so that I can make a fully informed decision as to best approach?

Have all alternatives to euthanasia or depopulation been explored?
- Can animals be moved to a different slaughter facility?
- Can animals be held on-farm longer without significant negative impact to animal health and welfare?

Do I have a conflict of duties among client, patient, other stakeholders, and public health?
- What are my professional obligations and my ethical commitments?

Can euthanasia methods be applied to this situation? Which method is most acceptable?
See the AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals

If euthanasia methods cannot be applied in this situation, can a “preferred” method of depopulation be used?
See the AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals

If “preferred” methods of depopulation cannot be applied, can a “permitted in constrained circumstances” method be used?
See the AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals

If “permitted in constrained circumstances” methods of depopulation cannot be applied, can a “not recommended” method be used?*
See the AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals

Other concerns
- Have I considered the worst-case scenario and endeavored to avoid it?
- Have I considered the best-case scenario and endeavored to achieve it?
- How will carcasses be disposed of following the applied technique? **

* In circumstances that are not clearly covered by the AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals, a veterinarian experienced with the species in question should apply professional judgment and knowledge of clinically acceptable techniques in selecting a method of depopulation or euthanasia (if required).

** State and federal agencies that include animal health officials and environmental officials, working collaboratively with the owners of the animals, determine the best carcass management options.

avma.org/HumaneEndings