



Improving conditions for “suspect” animals at slaughterhouses --updated issue 2014--



Eyes on Animals is greatly concerned about the welfare of “suspect” animals at slaughterhouses. These animals are considered fit enough for slaughter, but because of their symptoms of fatigue, fever or injury are kept in separate pens and in most many countries, such as France and The Netherlands, are only slaughtered at the end of the day. This is done so as not to risk contaminating the slaughter line. As a result, these “suspect” animals, which are already in a state of light suffering, are left on bare and often damp concrete floors for lengthy periods of time. Eyes on Animals would like to challenge the slaughter industry to improve conditions for these animals by providing warm bedding material to them.

In article 3.1 of the COUNCIL REGULATION 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing it is stated that “Animals shall be spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering” and 2a) “animals are provided with physical comfort and protection, in particular by being kept clean in adequate thermal conditions” and c) are housed taking into consideration their normal behaviour. After visiting several plants that provide bedding to these animals, Eyes on Animals argues that suspect animals would be spared avoidable suffering if all slaughterhouses did the same.

Standard practice:

suspect animals are left all day in damp, barren concrete pens.



Desired improvement:

providing straw to suspect animals permits them to rest properly and reach their thermal comfort zone.



How it works?

2009 Example: Cooperl pig slaughterhouse (France)



At Cooperl, fresh straw is placed in the pen destined for “suspect” animals.



The soiled straw is regularly removed from the pen and placed on the manure pit.



The soiled-straw is then picked up....



.....and transported to a field where soiled-straw and manure is spread (part of the slaughterhouse's manure removal system).

Should the slaughterhouse's manure-handling or sewage system not be able to handle straw, an alternative (although less favorable than straw) is using woodchips. Eyes on Animals has observed this at Vion slaughterhouse in the Netherlands (2011).



Pen used to house “suspect” pigs at Vion is covered in woodchips

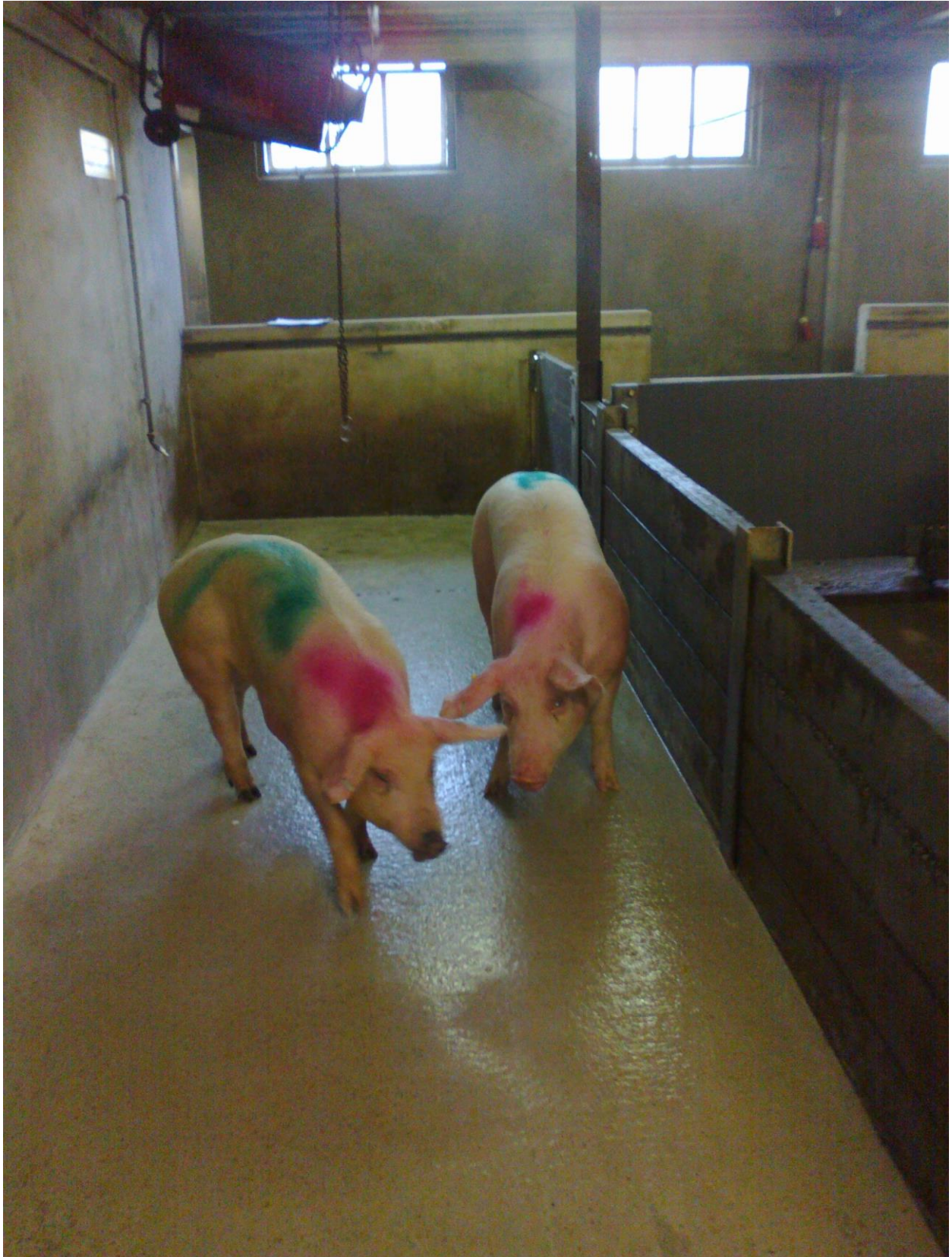
2012:

Westfort slaughterhouse in Gorinchem made improvements to their pen for “suspect/fragile” pigs; they installed floor heating and sealed the gaps between the floor of the pen and the side walls with rubber curtains, to stop drafts.



October 2013

Compaxo slaughterhouse in Zevenaar installed floor heating in their pen for “suspect/fragile” pigs.



December 2013:

Vion Groenlo no longer places “suspect/fragile” pigs in one of their pens where they used to house them. They agreed with our concern that this pen was in an area of the lairage that was too noisy and drafty to be considered suitable for such animals.

Additionally, Vion Groenlo made an effort to improve their larger pen for “suspect/fragile” pigs by placing rubber mats and woodchips on the floor so that the pigs can stay warm.

