



Eyes on
Animals

Watching
out for their
welfare



**GOOD NEWS INSIDE:
CHICKEN CATCHERS & TURKISH VET
STUDENTS TRAINED IN WELFARE // CCTV IN
SLAUGHTERHOUSES // IMPROVEMENTS IN
SLAUGHTERHOUSES**

**EYES ON ANIMALS NEWSLETTER
FALL 2013 / WINTER 2014**

Dear donors and friends,
This fall and winter has been very productive and full of successes that have led to a reduction of animal-suffering. I am so pleased with our team and with our on-going projects that are bringing concrete results for animals today and in the long-term. By sticking to our projects, and «diplomatically and politely attacking» from all sides, we are really making progress. I hope you will take some time to read this newsletter and that my message of how, when we work together and stay focused and positive, things will happen! I also want to encourage everyone to [check out our new Eyes on Animals website](#), that Jack and Ingrid, with the help of some volunteers, created in their own time to help improve our communication efforts.

Welfare-training for chicken-catchers

As you know, in the past two years EonA teams have focussed their efforts on inspecting chicken trucks and loading of birds into crates. Additionally we have been giving presentations and holding meetings with the EU, Dutch officials and some chicken-industry members themselves about what we have seen in the hope of getting improvements. We have successfully proved that **the biggest problem lay in the way the chickens were being stuffed into the crates**.

Chicken-catchers are not required to go through any training or have any previous experience in handling poultry. Some chicken catchers even show up drunk at work after a visit to the local pub, as the birds are often loaded late at night.

We wrote letters to all chicken-catching companies showing photos of the suffering we had witnessed and encouraged them to get their employees



EonA teams observed horrible suffering during inspections of poultry trucks in Holland. We witnessed that rough and rushed handling during loading lead to enormous suffering.

trained and fire those that do not handle the birds humanely. This led to **one company calling us and revealing that they agreed with our concerns and thought training sessions were a brilliant idea**. They promised to encourage other companies to follow suit.

We then met with a company in Holland specializing in training various people in the food industry called SVO, to ask them to develop a training course for chicken catchers. They have now started such a training program partly using our material and reports!



The boss of the company that called us had his employees go through this training in late December. Several other chicken-catching companies have also signed up. **We will keep putting pressure on the rest of the chicken catchers to get this training started and stay in touch with the SVO school to check that the training sessions have a positive effect.** Annemarieke and Margreet are also preparing a professional manual on correct handling of poultry to be incorporated in the training of the catchers.

Parallel to these efforts, we have also been **pushing the EU, NVWA and the chicken transporters themselves to redesign the transport crates**. Poultry all around Europe are being loaded into crates without side access doors. This means that, once the crates are stacked up, there is absolutely no access to the birds should they fall sick or become injured. **Access to the animals during transport is actually a requirement of the EU legislation but has been completely ignored by the poultry industry!**

We have given talks, held meetings about this and now are seeing the results: in mid-March one of the crate manufacturers called to tell us that they have made a prototype crate with side access doors for us to check on. **We are going to do our best now to promote these crates and phase out the old “jail” crates.**

Improve welfare at Dutch horsemarkets

Ingrid, Monique and Annemarieke visited the horse markets again this year, and Monique has been busy with all the follow-up work and meetings. After initial consultations in December 2013, Eyes on Animals was again invited



by the Dutch Organization of Horse Markets to evaluate and help update the protocol for horse markets to abide by. Monique reports that finally everyone is at one table and finding common ground that will lead to further improvements next year.

So far the team has already succeeded in **reducing loud music during the markets, access to feed and water, some bedding for younger animals, suitable holding pens and more constant police and vet supervision.**

Eyes on Animals will send teams again to as many of these markets as possible next fall, to see that promises put on paper are put into practice, and that the animals really benefit from them.

Visit of Dutch pig collecting stations

Two teams have been keeping their eyes on Dutch collecting stations where pigs, including sows often in poor condition, are collected and then further transported to slaughterhouses abroad.

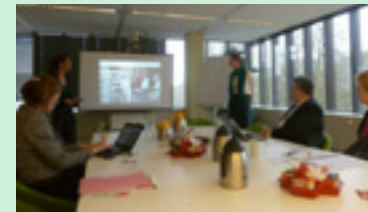
Slightly sick or injured animals are still legally allowed to be transported but it is a grey zone - what we consider to be clear signs of pain, players in the industry argue that the animal is fit enough. Annemarieke and Monique were successful in **organizing that 2 sows in very poor shape be immediately put out of their misery instead of being further transported** to a slaughterhouse. Their report is now with the Dutch authorities, which have admitted that this is a common problem that they want to look into further. We arrive unannounced and will continue to do so to increase the chances that unfit animals are not put through such agony.



Presentation to Dutch banks about transport

The “Dierenbescherming” (Dutch equivalent of the SPCA) put out a report this year about which Dutch banks are involved in financing Dutch livestock traders and transporters. Eyes on Animals’ reports on livestock transport we had inspected were referenced in this report. We were asked to come in January to **give a presentation to the two large Dutch banks, ING and Rabobank to show them what violations some of their clients had committed on animals.**

We also stressed the importance of their asking the right questions to their clients involved in the farm industry, to push them forward into taking better



care of animal-welfare. For example, the poultry transport companies should use catchers that have participated in poultry welfare-workshops or they should avoid transporting slaughter animals over long-distances to countries where it is known that the welfare is extremely poor.

Decrease suffering in European slaughterhouses

IMPROVED WELFARE AT TÖNNIES (GERMANY)

In February we visited Tönnies, the largest pig slaughterhouse in Germany, together with Groothedde, a Dutch meat importing company that supplies Jumbo supermarket here with pig meat from Toennies. **We were pleased to see that they had taken further steps since our last visit in 2011.**

Toennies remains a huge slaughterhouse, where 20,000 pigs are killed each day, but they have a new veterinarian in place whose task is just to improve welfare. We must admit that they are much better than other plants we have been to thanks to these extra efforts. **They check that each pig is adequately stunned;**



EonA and Groothedde inspect Tönnies

animals arriving in poor condition are immediately killed where they lay down on the truck; corn is sprinkled in the lairage pens as environment enrichment and to prevent fighting and reduce stress.

We learned that Tönnies had been receiving sows from France that were routinely in very bad condition. **They stopped accepting from this client and went to visit him** - finding out that he had major economic and private problems and convinced him to stop keeping pigs, which he has now done.

PROPOSING WELFARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR YOUNG PIGLETS

Monique and I **arranged a visit to a Dutch slaughterhouse that kills very young piglets**. These piglets all have some deformity, and thus the farmer gets rid of them instead of fattening them up. It was **extremely disturbing to see such young animals, especially these cute pink intelligent creatures, waiting their death**. Some were only 10 kg.

Nevertheless, the slaughter of piglet is common but not many people know about it because the plants usually keep their doors closed. We managed to convince one to let us in. **We have some ideas on how to decrease the suffering for these piglets** - a better manner of restraining them to be sure that they are properly stunned and various actions they can take to decrease the noise level, which puts unacceptable fear into the piglets.



Margreet and I were invited to discuss how to implement these improvements. A humane slaughter specialist/veterinarian from southern Germany joined us.

We also had a meeting with a Dutch company that builds slaughterhouse installations (restraint boxes, stunning equipment, chutes etc) that has asked to “hire” us to give them our opinions about what they can do to improve their design and make it welfare-friendlier.

IMPROVED WELFARE FOR FRAGILE PIGS AT SLAUGHTERHOUSES

As you know, EonA remains focused on decreasing the suffering of suspect/fragile pigs that are legally still allowed to be transported to slaughter, but are not as fit as the others. **Often left all day on barren cold cement floors in the slaughterhouse. We have now convinced a fourth Dutch pig slaughterhouse to give them bedding or floor heating.** After our visit to Vion Groenlo slaughterhouse, they sent us a photo of the improvement:



Before: cold and wet cement floor pen.
Before EonA intervened, “fragile” pigs were left in these drafty and wet pens all day



After: floor with rubber mats and woodchips. EonA strives to get more comfort for these poor animals

CCTV AT SLAUGHTERHOUSES

Another one of our projects to decrease suffering at slaughterhouses is to get CCTV into the plants. This winter EonA teams **managed to convince another two large slaughterhouses, one in Belgium and one in the Netherlands, to install CCTV!** When employees and transporters know they are on camera when unloading the animals, lairaging and slaughtering them, they think twice before taking out their frustrations on an animal!



Belgian horse and Halal cattle plant has CCTV now (left), Dutch pig slaughterhouse too (right)

Improving welfare on livestock transports

PRESENTATION TO DUTCH AUTHORITIES

In the fall Annemarieke and Herman, our “welfare-friendly” livestock driver who helps us with workshops for drivers, **gave a talk to the Dutch government inspectors (NVWA) about what steps are important to take to cut down on suffering during transport.** The team gave them tips on common problems and what to look out for when they were out on their inspections. They got very good feedback from the audience and our network among authorities continues to grow thanks to this.



LESS STRESS DURING UNLOADING

During an unannounced inspection of a pig collecting station in Brabant this winter, a team observed piglets being unloaded that were slipping and sliding down the ramp of the truck. There was no anti-slip layer on the unloading ramp, and it made the piglets really nervous to exit. They also had to jump over a ledge which further stressed them out. **We sent out a letter of complaint to the Italian manufacturer of this truck** who confirmed that the ramp was not being used properly and the Dutch transport company had modified it making the ramp easier to clean but indeed more slippery for the animals. We then got in contact directly with the large Dutch transport company who responded:

« Both things about this truck we know and it is in repair now to give the animals more grip during unloading »

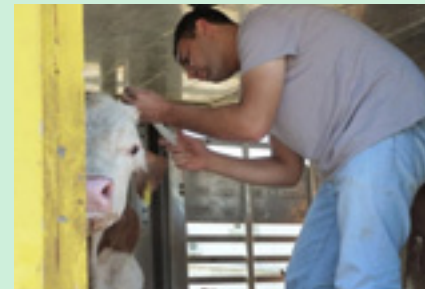
I am now in discussion with them and a training session for their Romanian drivers is in the works for next year.



BETTER ACCESS DURING TRANSPORT

As I wrote earlier, access to animals during transport is vital to ensure their safety and well being, not to mention retaining a higher quality product.

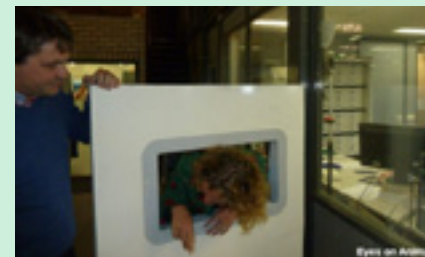
There is unfortunately no access to chickens during transport, but it seems also that there is less and less access to larger animals during transport too, since more and more trucks are being built either completely sealed, or just with small inspection doors. **EonA teams met several times with EU and Dutch authorities about this, and published a big report on it.**



Access to animals is vital to provide emergency care during transport

Herman and I visited several Dutch manufacturers of livestock trucks to stress the importance of their building large enough doors for drivers to enter the truck, should an animal need assistance.

Cuppers, a Dutch company that builds and repairs livestock trucks, has agreed to build larger doors as of now, and the Dutch authorities are meeting with the other manufacturers to set a minimum standard.



Cuppers agreed to make the doors bigger after Lesley and Herman showed they are too small

Halal slaughterhouses in Turkey

This is always a difficult topic to write about. **We have never seen such animal agony as in the slaughterhouses we have been to in Turkey, where Turkish, but also EU, American and Australian livestock are slaughtered.**

But shying away or making unrealistic demands will not bring any relief for the animals that continue to be slaughtered in these places each day. That is why **we sent a team again for two weeks in December, just before Christmas, to inspect, educate and encourage practical improvements.**

Let's start with the good news that brings us all a feeling of hope. In early January, two weeks after Asalet and I got back we received this email:

« Dear Lesley Moffat. In December 2013 you visited our Ministry and you gave us a presentation and showed some videos from Turkish slaughterhouses that you had visited. In the following weeks we are going to arrange a training program for our official veterinarians. Animal welfare issues are added to this training program. In this scope, we would like to benefit from your presentations and videos. If you could send them to us we will be so grateful. We thank you for your help and we look forward to hearing from you. »

A few weeks after sending him the presentation material he wrote us:

« Dear Lesley. The trainings are going on very well. Your material helped us to show wrong situations and behaviour. The film definitely inspired the discussions on what steps to take. I will inform you about results from the training sessions as soon as they are ended. Warm wishes. »

RETURN TO TURKEY - IMPROVEMENTS

So what were we doing now? In December Asalet and I returned to Turkey to do a follow-up inspection of the slaughterhouses we had been to in June to see if they had put any of our suggestions for improvement into place.

As I already reported to all of you from my hotel room there, the greatest news was that the slaughterhouse in Bursa, after receiving our report, fired their employee that we caught on tape stabbing the eyeballs of the bulls.

They also **installed a light above the restraining box, to ease movement of cattle being led up the outdoor chute** and into the slaughter room. Animals move more easily from dark to light, but in June they were moving them from bright outdoors into a very dark room causing panic in the cattle. They claim that **80% of the cattle move more calmly than before**, without the need for their workers to hit them. Another slaughterhouse we had checked in June poured new concrete on the floors of the slaughterhouse to fill in potholes that risked animals injuring their legs.

Thanks to having teams in the field, we can celebrate such successes like this one - worker seen poking eyeballs of bulls has been fired!



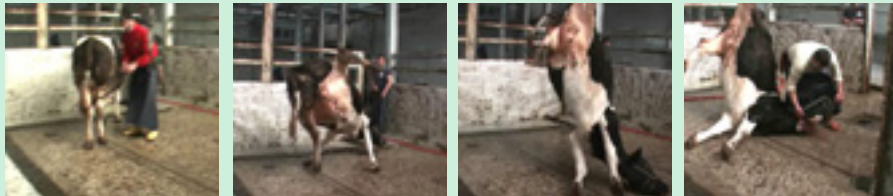
Slaughterhouse worker poking in eyeball of bull - the worker was fired after our investigation

One slaughterhouse had not taken any steps because they have a new manager and thus did not even receive our report. We however met with him and showed him the footage from June and re-explained the problem... one needs patience in this job!



VISIT OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES

We took the time to visit as many new plants as possible. Not all of them let us in to see the actual slaughter, but then we would at least hold discussions with the manager and veterinarian about animal behaviour and welfare.



Live hoisting in Cimet slaughterhouse

Most plants did let us see the slaughter. Most were similar to what we saw in June - same poor installations, live hoisting, old lairages and chutes with potholes and broken parts.

But one plant in particular (Aygüler Dericilik) was really horrible, worse than any slaughterhouse we have ever seen. Here they were slaughtering 900kg Charolais bulls, originally from France. The design of the chute was completely flawed and the floor so slippery that animals were getting their legs caught and falling down everywhere. The workers were repeatedly using electric prods, even on their genitals to make the confused and scared animals move. They were then hung by one leg, fully off the floor and left for 2 minutes like that. Before heading to the slaughter room we were talking to the manager and I remember hearing all the roaring of the animals from his office, entering the kill floor. It was clear why.



The suffering of the Charolais and Holstein bulls at Aygüler Dericilik slaughterhouse

The pain they feel from being hung this way is unbearable to imagine. The butcher then used a very short knife, **stabbing away at the neck of each animal at least 5 times before getting blood to pour out**, leaving the animals **fully conscious for another 3 minutes** before fading painfully away.

We have decided not to let this horror get to us. We have lost so much sleep over it already; now we must just get improvements into place. No thinking about other things - just action.

So...Turkey is in the midst of drafting legislation to protect welfare of animals during slaughter. Thus **we gave the team responsible for writing this legislation a two-hour presentation** on what the problems are, how we think they could be solved, and what definitely needs to be made illegal. It will be another two years before this legislation is published and enforceable, but it is in the works. It is a little celebration, because currently there is absolutely no legislation protecting the welfare of farm animals during slaughter.



Then we also **gave a talk to 100 veterinarian students and professors at the Veterinarian Faculty at Istanbul University**. Most of these large-animal veterinarian students will end up working at slaughterhouses - what better audience to educate!



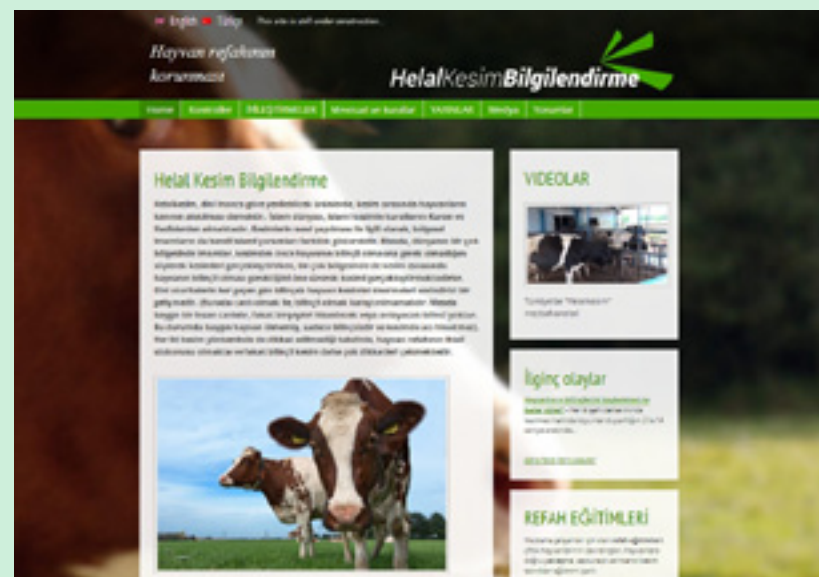
After the talk many came up to us with more questions and concerns, one also offered his volunteer services. The vice-president of the Veterinarian Club, Berker, has been helping us now for 3 months write letters, do internet research and translate text for our Halal Slaughter Watch website. He is truly great!

We also **met with Imams from Halal certification programs**, to show them our reports of slaughterhouses that are clearly not following the Halal rules and should thus not be given Halal certification. We encouraged them to spread more awareness among the slaughterhouses about humane treatment, which they say is what they are doing more and more now.



When we came back we **prepared an education film** about the problems in Turkish slaughterhouses and showed best practices for how they could be solved. [Click HERE](#) to watch the film.

We **finished a website all about our halal slaughter observations**, animal behaviour and practical tips to make improvements easily. This website is now well known among vet students in Turkey, Halal certification programs, the Ministry inspectors and the slaughterhouses themselves. It is in Turkish, so those that have an actual ability to help the animals can actually read the information. This remains a big problem in the world - information about animal welfare and behaviour is still too often published only in several Western languages. People in the Middle East and Asia also need access to this info! [Click HERE](#) to open the website.



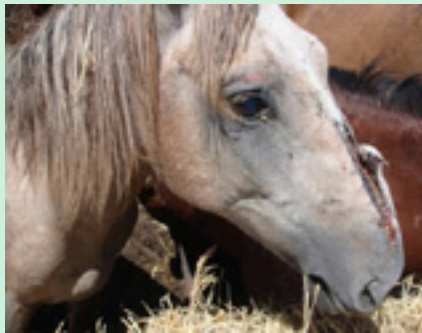
www.halal-slaughter-watch.org

We **wrote an article, 6 pages with photos and diagrams, that is going to be published in the Veterinarian Faculty of Istanbul University Magazine**, at a time when the Vet Faculty is holding a conference where veterinarian students from 15 other countries will be attending! The article is all about farm animal welfare at the time of slaughter and what steps veterinarians need to take to improve the slaughterhouses.

Horse transport and slaughter

Together with Tierschutzbund Zuerich, AWF, Animals'Angels USA, L214 and Gaia, we have been busy since the fall researching the link between European importers and retailers and the horrible treatment of horses during transport and slaughter in Canada, USA, Mexico, Argentina and Uruguay. In late March we passed the investigative results to the media and to the Dutch supermarkets and retailers themselves. Our aim is to put an end to The Netherlands accepting horse meat from these countries, as the welfare condition there are abhorrent.

To watch the show on RADAR, [click HERE](#).



UPDATE

Right after the broadcasting of the RADAR show, Deen and Coop supermarkets released a message to the press that **they were immediately stopping selling horse meat from these American countries!** Coop called Eyes on Animals several times to discuss in details the horrors of the horse transport and slaughter from the countries they had been getting their meat from.

They are shocked and are now looking for a **supplier that only slaughters EU horses in well-inspected EU slaughterhouses**. They are not even going to accept Romanian slaughterhouses, but want one close to home that they can keep their eyes on. RADAR broadcasted this news one week later, [please see HERE](#).

We have been up to lots more, but it would be too much for a newsletter. I would like to invite you, dear donors and friends, to become friends with Eyes on Animals over Facebook and follow us on Twitter. We paste things in English and Dutch to regularly keep you up to date on our efforts. Our inspections and photos are also pasted onto our website and our videos onto our Youtube account. Please do visit us:

Twitter: twitter.com/Eyes_on_Animals

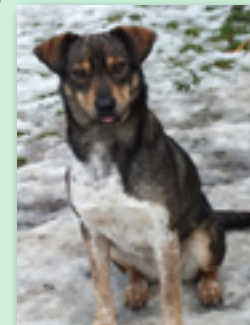
Facebook: facebook.com/eyesonanimals

Youtube: eyesonanimalsinspect

Website: www.eyesonanimals.com

On behalf of everyone at Eyes on Animals, I wish everyone a lovely spring!

Lesley



NIKA NEEDS A HOME!

Our good friend Iris at AWF/TSB runs a dog castration project in Poland. It is very strenuous and depressing work, as she often finds dogs in a very poor condition where they would die without her intervention. We want to help her and AWF find homes for some of these lovely dogs that she and her Polish team have rescued. Please if you know anyone interested in Nika, let us know and we will put you in contact directly with Iris.

Nika is around 3 years old female dog, knee height. She was found together with her seriously injured mother in a small town. The team brought Nika and her mother to a veterinarian clinic to be treated. Because of the political situation in the town regarding what happens to stray animals, it would have been a death sentence to release them back to where they came from. She is now in a temporary home waiting desperately for a loving full-time family. Nika is very shy and needs time to come out of her shell, for this reason she has not yet found a new home in Poland. The TSB/AWF team would be willing to transport her to her new home if there was a serious interest from someone in adopting her. Nika walks well on the leash, and obeys commands like sit and lie-down. She likes other dogs and even horses, appears to have respect for cats. If interested, please contact info@eyesonanimals.com.

Please Donate

We are a non-profit organization largely made up of hard-working volunteers. Some core people receive a small compensation or freelance allowance.

With your generosity, we can send our inspectors into the field to watch out for the welfare of animals being farmed, transported and slaughtered.

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Thank-you



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