

Dear international slaughterhouse contacts,

Warm days are approaching again and this means that extra attention is needed to reduce the risk of animals arriving at your plant experiencing heat stress.

In recent years Eyes on Animals has worked with various slaughterhouses on measures to prevent heat stress as much as possible. We are grateful for the important steps that have been taken.

But there is still a lot of room for improvement. In recent years we have observed long waiting lines at various slaughterhouses resulting in severe heat stress and animal mortality.

The main problem: lairages are too small for number of animals being accepted

Slaughterhouses have been slaughtering an increasing number of animals over the years but the lairages in the buildings have not been renovated or expanded proportionally.

As a result, there is not enough room in the lairage for all the animals to be unloaded immediately, especially if many trucks arrive at the same time, and thus more and more animals now have to wait on stationary trucks. Although we don't always see eye to eye, I think we do all agree that we do not want animals to suffer unnecessarily because they have to wait in hot trucks.

Slaughterhouses have a legal obligation to unload animals as soon as possible and to protect them from extreme temperatures (*Regulation 2009/1099, Annex III, 1.2 and Chapter II, Article 3*). Your lairage must therefore have adequate capacity to unload all animals immediately. We also recommend maintaining a 10% capacity buffer in case there is a disruption in the slaughter process, for example. In addition, waiting pens must be adequately ventilated and cooled so that the climate for the animals is acceptable (*Regulation 2009/1099, Annex II, 1.1*) - this was also a concern during our inspections in recent years with the climate inside the lairage being hot and sticky with little air movement.

Do trucks have to wait at your slaughterhouse regularly? If so, we really encourage you to expand your lairage as soon as possible and increase the number of unloading facilities in order to tackle this problem effectively. We understand that this cannot be achieved quickly, but we do ask that your company plans concrete steps towards this goal. Until then, we recommend taking at least the following inexpensive and fast measures to at least reduce some of the heat stress (keep in mind the tips below are just band-aid steps and are not to be used to postpone or avoid the ultimate goal of enlarging your lairage):

- 1. Create a canopy that provides shade.** Provide a parking area where livestock trucks can wait in the shade. This space should be covered or located next to a row of tall and full trees that provide shade. Make the canopies light in color to reflect sunlight and make sure there is enough space above the trucks to allow heat to escape.



Light-coloured rooves built at Vion Boxtel pig slaughterhouse and Remkes poultry slaughterhouse to provide shade for trucks needing to wait.

2. **Place large industrial fans in the parking areas.** The fans must be able to reach all levels and compartments of the animal trucks. Multiple fans are therefore required per truck, which can be positioned at different heights, and need to have sufficient power.



Good fans at GPS, VION Boxtel en Storteboom slaughterhouses in The Netherlands

3. **Paint the asphalt of the parking area white so that sunlight is reflected.** At VION in Boxtel, they did this on our recommendations and they noticed a big difference: the temperature under the roof with whitewashed asphalt was 6-8 degrees lower than outside.



White-painted floor at Vion Boxtel

Please visit our website for more tips:

- [Read all the tips on how to reduce heatstress in pigs here](#)
- [Read all the tips on how to reduce heatstress in poultry here \(page 22-27\)](#)

In the upcoming months we will increase our inspections again to see to what measures are being taken to avoid waiting times and limit heat stress as much as possible. We hope that your slaughterhouse will also take the necessary precautions to minimize animal suffering this summer.

Do you have any questions or need tailored advice? Feel free to contact us!

Sincerely,

Lesley Moffat
Director, Eyes on Animals