

Eyes on Happy Pigs

Educational center for Pig Behaviour and Welfare



Be a part of the solution: help put an end to pigs being kept on uncomfortable slatted floors above the stench of their own slurry pits. Give them the chance to root and nest in dry bedding, so they can enjoy a happier life.

The foundations for the educational pig center are already in place: the animals, the land, the building permits, the skills, and the passion. With your help, we can make this a reality.

URGENCY

Pigs are one of the most intelligent animals, yet they are still kept in factory-farm conditions that we know harm their welfare. Change is urgent. Now is the time to design pig farming systems that better respect the emotional and behavioural needs of pigs, better support farmers' well-being, and protect the environment. We are bringing more empathy into animal agriculture.

The main focus of pig farming should not be on efficiency or production, but on the question: what does the animal need to fully express its natural behavior and dignity, and how do we translate that into an economically and ecologically sustainable system? In this approach, care for the animal is not an emotional idea, but a practical design principle. It influences concrete choices in housing, management, genetics, nutrition, and supply chain collaboration. The educational pig center will be the practical outcome of this vision: a place where pig farming, research, and education come together in a "living lab," enabling system change from within.

This new educational farm will show that animal welfare, economic viability, and societal relevance do not exclude each other, but instead reinforce one another.

The urgency to move pigs off slatted floors is high. Pigs hardly have a life worth living when in this kind of environment.

Many of those pigs develop pleuritis, around 15-20% in the Netherlands, making breathing painful due to inflammation of the lungs and pleura.

At the same time, they continuously live above their own excrements, where ammonia irritates the respiratory tract. For pigs, with their highly sensitive snout and sense of smell, this intensifies the discomfort with every breath.

TAIL BITING

On slatted floors, pigs are also unable to root, which is a fundamental behavioral need for pigs. Their snouts and brains are specifically designed to explore their environment and search for food; being unable to perform this behavior leads to frustration and tail biting. The floors themselves also contribute to lameness and injuries due to poor grip and the gaps between the slats. Phasing out slatted floors in barn design is therefore an absolute necessity to improve pig welfare.

Nowadays: Dirty, uncomfortable slatted floors and ammonia-stench



**Future: Intelligent Pig toilet.
Clean, dry straw and fresh air**



Who

This initiative was developed by Dr. Kees Scheepens, a Dutch pig veterinarian from the Walnoot & Wilg Foundation. He is also known as “the pig whisperer”. Drawing on years of hands-on experience and a deep understanding of pig behaviour, he developed the concept for this educational center. Kees is an expert on pig behaviour and knows what pigs need to express their natural behaviour like rooting and living in social groups.



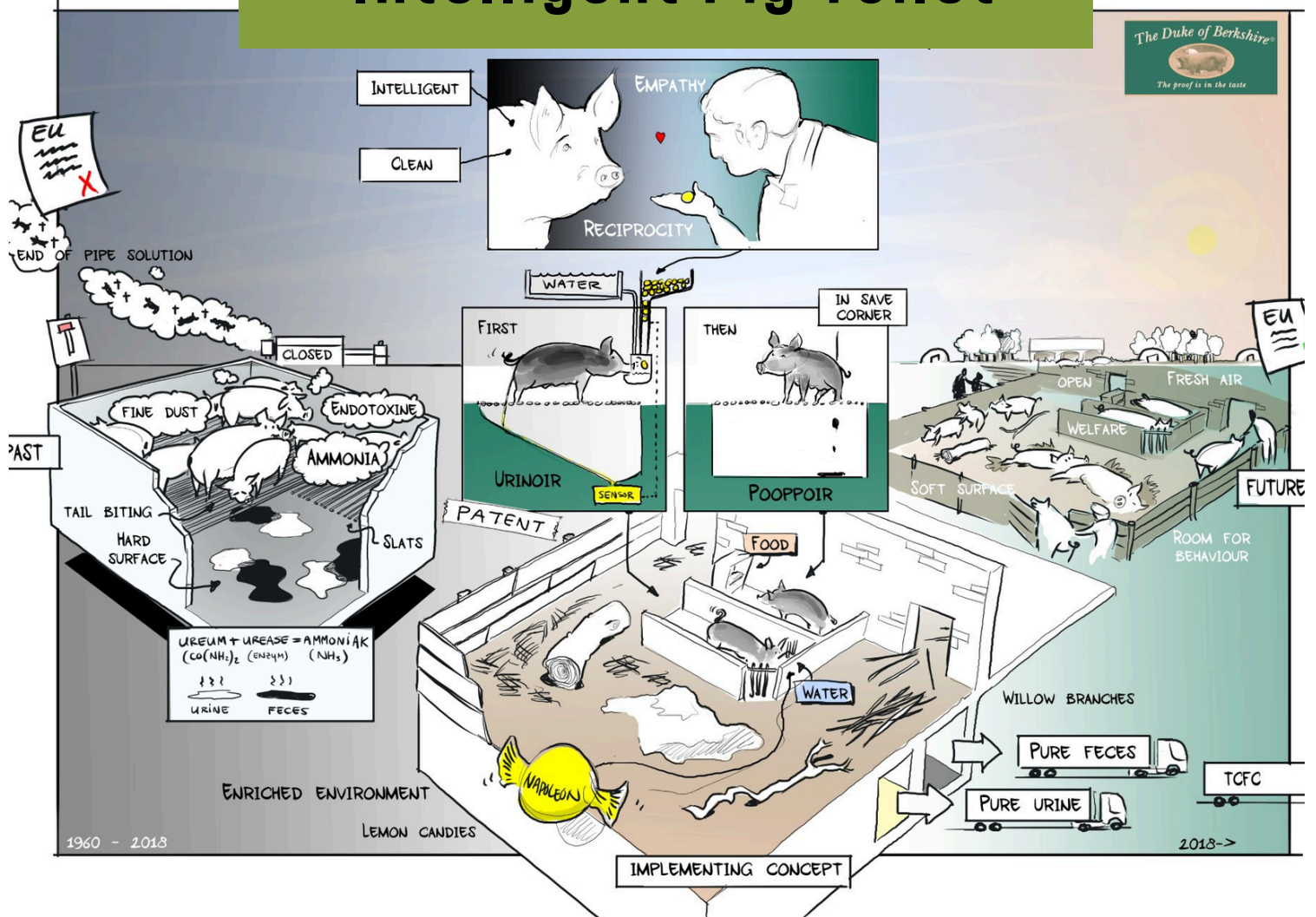
What

The goal is to build and run an innovative educational center and pilot barn where animal-friendly, empathy-driven pig farming is not only taught, but put into daily practice. The knowledge developed here will be actively shared with farmers, agricultural and veterinarian students, and other professionals. In this new housing system pigs can root, follow their natural curiosity and live a happy life on straw and bedding in a clean environment with fresh air. Earlier similar initiatives in the Netherlands, like the pig research facilities in Raalte, Sterksel, and Rosmalen were closed-down by Wageningen University & Research, creating a big void. This initiative will re-establish a much-needed, hands-on learning environment—serving as an international knowledge hub for farmers and professionals from around the world.

How

The educational center is designed around the question: what do pigs need to express their natural behaviour and to have a good life in a farm setting? This translates into economically and ecologically sustainable choices in housing, management, genetics, nutrition, and supply-chain collaboration. A key element of the center will be the installation and demonstration of Dr. Kees Scheepens’ patented Intelligent Pig Toilet, which reduces ammonia emissions by 85% and enables the reintroduction of straw bedding and solid floors into pig farming. Solid floors and straw bedding will once again allowing pigs to root and benefit from a clean and comfortable living environment.

Intelligent Pig Toilet



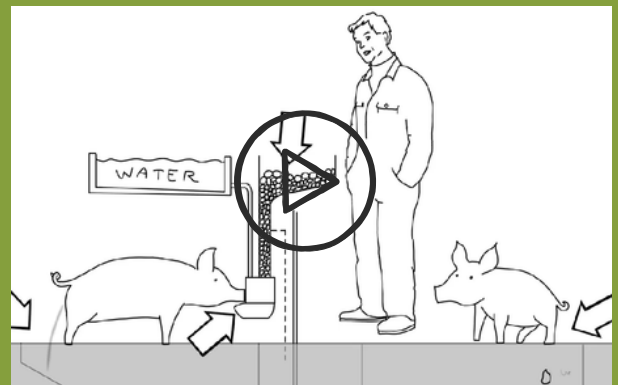
Intelligent Pig Toilet

The patented Intelligent Pig Toilet, developed by Dr. Kees Scheepens uses, the intelligence of pigs to separate urine and feces at the source. By rewarding the pigs with a hazelnut, pigs learn within a few days to urinate in a separate urinal. This reduces ammonia emissions by 80-85% and produces high-quality fertilizer for sustainable soil management. On factory-farms, ammonia is very high and polluting as urine and feces are mixed in a slurry pit below the pigs. There is no separation of urine from feces.

Because the Intelligent Pig Toilet reduces ammonia almost entirely, energy-intensive air washers are no longer necessary. Air washers are often a fire-hazard so it is good to phase them out.

Want to learn more about the Intelligent Pig Toilet? Click the link below for an animated film explaining how it works.

[The Intelligent Pig Toilet 2021](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)).



Outcome

The educational center serves as a practical hub where research, education and farming practices converge enabling system-change from within. It demonstrates that animal welfare, ecological responsibility and economic viability are not opposing forces but can actively strengthen one another. In doing so, it provides a concrete and scalable alternative to factory-farming systems. Visitors from around the world are actively invited to come, learn and apply the gained knowledge themselves.



Where

The educational center will be built just outside the town of Oirschot in the Netherlands. Oirschot is in the Dutch province of North-Brabant, the area with the greatest number of factory-farmed pigs of the world. The perfect place to start!



From an old dairy barn to a pig educational center

The old dairy barn on site will be transformed into a modern, sustainable pig barn featuring 16 patented intelligent Pig Toilets. The barn is designed so that pigs can express their natural behaviors: rooting, sniffing, playing, and illustrate their intelligence in using the toilet. They will have access to wood chips, long-stemmed straw (great for rooting and chewing in) and even outdoor fields to further root in.

Beyond animal-welfare the farm serves as an educational platform offering interactive workshops and guided tours that demonstrate empathic agriculture in practice. The project also underlines the value of preserving robust heritage breeds, such as Berkshires. In collaboration with Wageningen University, further testing will be done on the emission reduction potential of the Intelligent Pig Toilet and fine tuning will continue to take place to reach full potential.

The use of leftovers from the food industry will be incorporated into the center, not only for environmental reasons but also to further increase joy for the pigs.



Pigs Deserve It

System change and innovation require investment. To make our educational center a leading example of empathetic and sustainable pig farming, we need support. Your contribution makes it possible to further develop pig welfare, education and disseminate the principles of empathic pig farming.

The total project budget is €1,365,000 and covers the costs for construction, infrastructure, and the first 5 years to operate it and run the training activities of the educational center. Below is an overview of the main costs:

Construction of the educational barn including the interior pens each one equipped with an Intelligent Pig Toilet and gates for outdoor access.	€750.000
Construction of a storage shed for the food leftovers (for pigs),	€50.000
Educational venue with training facilities	€100.000
Preparation and fencing of large outdoor fields.	€50.000
Operational costs education center (2026-2030)	€300.000
Research (WUR-collaboration)	€65.000
Unexpected costs	€50.000
Total costs	€1.365000

The total amount of €1,365,000 may seem high but the educational farm can already be realized if 28 companies or organizations each contribute €50,000.

With your support we can create a lasting impact together!



Your Donation Your Impact

With your support, Walnoot & Wilg Foundation can drive positive change in pig farming making factory farms redundant. Through our educational center, we share this knowledge with farmers, policy makers and consumers creating a ripple effect not only in the Netherlands but across Europe and beyond. Together, we work towards a future where pig welfare and sustainability come first.

As a donor you receive immediate recognition:

Your name will be honoured on a special plaque on the front door of the barn, you will receive exclusive updates on research results and trainings given, and you will have the opportunity to be among the first to see live how empathetic pig farming works in practice. There will be guided tours and special visit days.

Your name on Eyes on Happy Pigs:

A plaque with your name at the Eyes on Happy Pigs Educational Center represents a personal contribution of €50,000 and measures 60 x 12 cm. This visibly supports our mission.

Not everyone can donate the full amount - and we understand that. That's why we also offer the option to partner up with another organization or company. By jointly contributing €50,000, both names will appear on a single plaque.

Smaller contributions are also possible and very welcome. The names of smaller donors will be publicly listed.

Endorsers of this project

