

Optimizing automatic electric stunning for improved pig welfare

By Lesley Moffat, Kees Scheepens, Madelaine Looije and Roy Melsert

Why optimize electric stunning?



CO₂ stunning is widely used, but causes serious respiratory distress and painful burning of the eyes and airways before loss of consciousness.

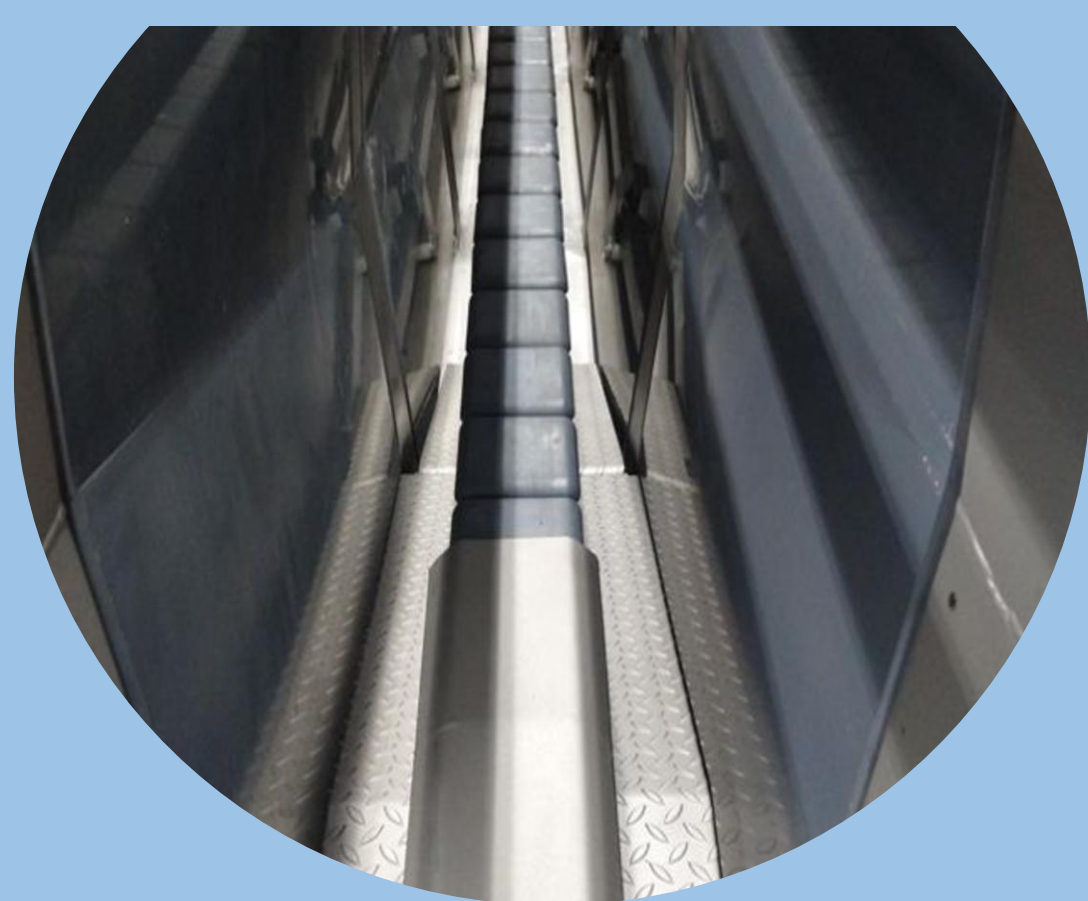
Electric stunning induces immediate, painless unconsciousness, but current systems force pigs from large groups into single-file raceways at high speed, causing jamming, panic and heavy electric prod use.

In cooperation with a large slaughterhouse, Eyes on Animals redesigned the electric stunning system to reduce stress, improve pig flow, and make it a viable alternative to CO₂.

The 8 crucial factors to reduce stress and ease flow

1. Use four stunners instead of one to reduce time pressure by 75%

2. Use a false floor to avoid colour contrasts and "cliff effect"

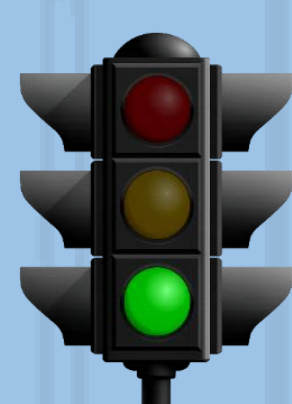


3. Use side-by-side single files with an open divider so pigs can enter together and maintain visual contact

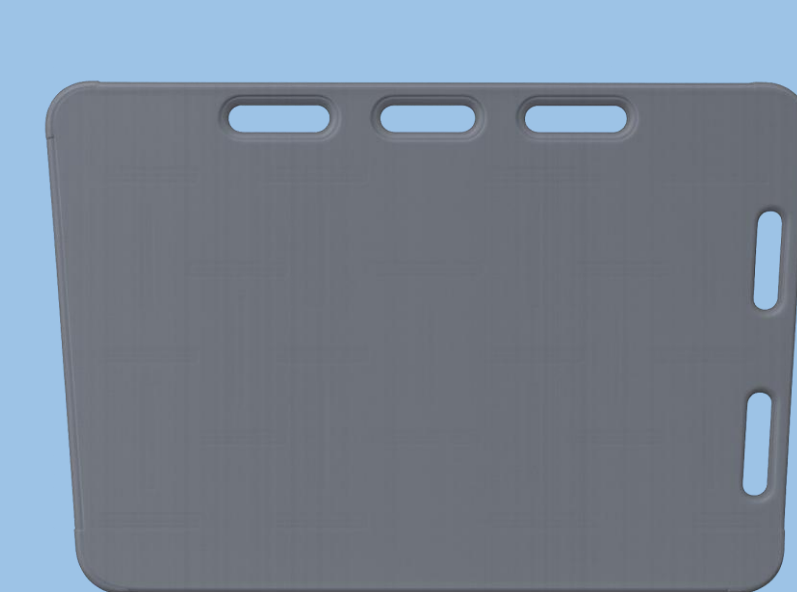


4. Move small groups (max. 6 pigs) to prevent smothering

5. Use traffic lights to time group movement carefully



6. Reduce noise by using silent tools and rubber-coated gates



7. Use solid walls to block visual distractions and prevent balking



8. Use AI cameras and practical training to ensure good handling



Watch the system in operation



Eyes on
Animals

Watching
out for their
welfare