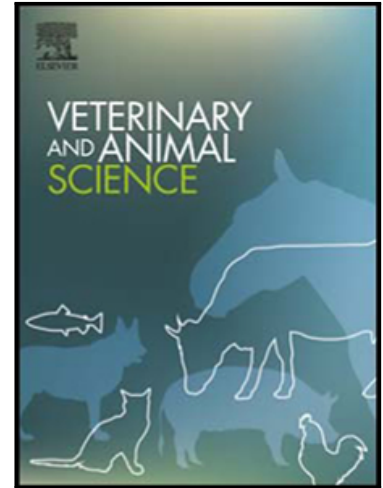


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## Swine welfare at slaughterhouses in Valle de Aburrá (Colombia)

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) makes recommendations related to the slaughter of animals for human consumption. Colombia has some regulations on animal welfare in slaughterhouses. This study assessed welfare of pigs in slaughterhouses in Valle de Aburrá, Colombia using measures from existing welfare protocols (Welfare Quality: Assessment protocol for pigs; Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide for Cattle, Pig and Sheep). **Objective:** To determine the degree of compliance with some welfare protocols recommendation (Welfare Quality. Assessment protocol for pigs and Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide for Cattle, Pig and Sheep) in regards to welfare of pigs in slaughterhouses in Valle de Aburrá, Colombia. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted using data from four slaughterhouses during 2017. Univariable analysis was performed, depending on the type of variable. Frequency distribution was assessed for descriptive variables, while quantity variables were assessed by central tendency and dispersion measures. **Results:** It was found that electric prods are often used for moving pigs to lairage pens and to stunning area, the animals remain in lairage pens in too high stocking densities and also some signs related to inadequate loss of consciousness during stunning were shown. Some pigs were kept more than 10 hours in lairage pens and some did not have access to water. Skin lesions occurred in 93.6% of the observed animals. **Conclusions:** It is concluded that the assessed slaughterhouses do not manage to keep animal welfare on a required level.

**Key words:** *animal welfare; Colombia; lairage pens; pigs; slaughterhouses*

### INTRODUCTION

Animal handling previous to slaughter is one of the most stressful circumstances for pigs (Warriss 1994, Warriss 2003, Averós et al 2008). Several protocols are available to assess animal welfare in slaughtering plants. The "Welfare Quality® assessment protocol for pigs", developed by The European Welfare Quality Project, and the "Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide" developed by the American Meat Institute/Animal Welfare Committee are among such

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