



Humane Slaughter Association

## Media Release

11 July 2017

### **HSA commits to new research and development to improve the welfare of pigs at slaughter**

***Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) joins forces with Defra to fund research into a more humane stunning method for pigs***

The Humane Slaughter Association and the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) are jointly offering up to £400,000 of research funding for a project to develop a more humane way to stun pigs during commercial slaughter.

The stunning of pigs by direct exposure to high concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is currently common practice for the commercial slaughter of pigs. The use of CO<sub>2</sub> in high concentration is permitted under EU and national regulations and this method is used in the UK as well as other EU member states.

However, research has shown that pigs find direct exposure to high concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> aversive. In 2003, the Farm Animal Welfare Council's (FAWC) report on animal welfare recommended that this method should be phased out. The following year, a report by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) confirmed the effectiveness of the method, but noted that it resulted in respiratory distress in pigs. Similar concerns were expressed for poultry and alternative controlled atmosphere systems are now in use within the poultry industry.

The HSA and Defra are both committed to improving the welfare of animals at slaughter and the funding aims to develop and or validate a more humane method which could replace high-concentration CO<sub>2</sub> stunning of pigs. The project aims to ensure that any proposed method is not only more humane but also practically and economically viable so that it is likely to be widely adopted by the pig industry.

HSA's Chief Executive & Scientific Director Dr Robert Hubrecht said: *"the HSA hopes that this collaborative funding opportunity with Defra will lead to improvements in the welfare of pigs at the time of slaughter"*

For further information on the funding and how to apply, see [www.hsa.org.uk/grants-awards](http://www.hsa.org.uk/grants-awards). Applications will need to be made through Defra's electronic tendering portal Bravo – [defra.bravosolution.co.uk](http://defra.bravosolution.co.uk). Any enquiries regarding this opportunity such as eligibility criteria etc should also be

made through the Bravo system. Deadline for submissions is 12.00 GMT on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2017.

-ENDS-

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**Note to Editors:**

The HSA is an independent charity recognised internationally for promoting scientific, technical and educational advances towards improving the welfare of food animals worldwide at slaughter, killing, marketing and transport.

Its work includes researching, refining and demonstrating humane slaughter methods, publishing material such as guidelines, best practice, books and videos, funding research projects and the development of equipment. Specialist technical staff provide expert and practical advice on all welfare issues relating to food animals.

The HSA is funded by voluntary donations, subscriptions and legacies.

For more information about the HSA's work call 01582 831919, email [info@hsa.org.uk](mailto:info@hsa.org.uk) or visit [www.hsa.org.uk](http://www.hsa.org.uk)

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