Optimal handling of entire male pigs at the day of slaughter

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AIM
To investigate animal welfare at different ratios between entire male pigs and female pigs in the pens during one hour of lairage before slaughter.

METHODOLOGY
On five successive days during a warm period (up to 29°C outdoor temperature), ten pens each containing 14 pigs were observed for one hour. The gender combination in the pens were: 0/14, 4/10, 7/7, 10/4 or 14/0 entire male pigs/female pigs resulting in a total of 10 observed pens per ratio.

Every five minutes, a scan was made identifying how many (and which) pigs were laying down.
Rest index = the total number of pigs laying down*100/the total number of observed pigs
Previously, studies have shown that the rest index is closely related to aggression as well as mounting behaviour.

To the left an example of how pens with different combinations of entire male pigs (EM) and female pigs (F) were placed on one day of observation. Each day had a new combination, and all combinations were represented in all pens.

RESULTS
Every though a lower rest index was seen in pens having many entire male pigs compared to pens with mainly female pigs, there is no reason to give specific guidelines regarding the ratio between entire male pigs and female pigs.

CONCLUSION
Even though a lower rest index was seen in pens having many entire male pigs compared to pens with mainly female pigs, there is no reason to give specific guidelines regarding the ratio between entire male pigs and female pigs.

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