

Editorial Announcement

Letters to the Editor

It is the policy of the journal to publish letters only when the editor-in-chief believes that an exceptional topic has been raised that warrants debate through this medium.

The journal recently received a letter expressing concern about a paper by Gerritzen *et al.* entitled 'Castration of piglets under CO₂-gas anaesthesia' (*Animal*, 2008, 2(11), 1666–1673). We affirm that the manuscript followed the normal process, that is, handling by an editor under the supervision of the section editor, and evaluation by two independent referees. In addition, the experimental conditions and procedures were in line with the ethical policy of *Animal*, as well as with the European recommendations. However, we consider that the subject is of sufficient importance to merit further debate. In this issue, we publish the letter followed by the response from the original authors. We do not intend to publish further letters on this topic since we believe that all the important issues have been raised. We do however hope that the publication of these letters will generate further research for the benefit of animal welfare.

This subject of surgical castration of piglets without anaesthesia or analgesia, as is currently normal practice in most countries of the world, is one of great topical concern. In many countries, there are current legal or voluntary moves to change this situation, but identifying a suitable alternative that meets the requirements of all stakeholders poses many scientific and practical challenges. In recognition of this, *Animal* publishes in this issue a series of papers on the specific question of pig castration arising from a session at the EAAP (European Association for Animal Production) Annual Meeting held in 2008. These will provide additional information for the present debate.

Michel Doreau
Editor-in-chief

Sandra Edwards
Section Editor

Cledwyn Thomas
Chair of the Management
Board

Reference

Gerritzen MA, Kluivers-Poodt M, Reimert HGM, Hindle V and Lambooij E 2008. Castration of piglets under CO₂-gas anaesthesia. *Animal* 2, 1666–1673.