



World Society for the Protection of Animals

## News Release

# Cruel contest sees pigs force-fed sand and metal

A cruel and illegal contest that sees pigs force-fed until they are up to four times their normal body weight before being ritually slaughtered must be stopped, say animal protection groups.

A hard-hitting online campaign by The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and the Environment and Animal Protection Society of Taiwan (EAST) calls for public support to end the contest.

“The ‘Pigs of God’ contest sees pigs force-fed to obese proportions over a two-year period, sometimes being made to eat sand or metal until becoming so heavy that many cannot even stand up,” said Leah Garcés, WSPA International Programmes Director.

The average pig in the UK is 150 kilograms when it goes to slaughter, a ‘Pigs of God’ pig can weigh up to 600 kilograms. Taiwan’s existing animal protection laws make force-feeding and the inhumane and public killing of animals illegal - WSPA and EAST want these laws enforced.

“We want to bring a complete end to this grotesque freak show that ends in the public killing of animals,” said Garcés.

“We are sure that Taiwan would not wish to see its image as a modern and progressive country tainted by the continuation of this contest,” she added.

WSPA and EAST are urging people to go online to protest to the Taiwanese government by placing a virtual flower on a virtual pig that forms the central focus of this online campaign. This activity mirrors real events in Taiwan where some communities now make pigs of flowers instead of killing animals.

The organisations recently achieved one major step forward in animal protection in Taiwan, thanks to their hard-hitting video campaign that showed disturbing footage of cruel practices in Taiwanese slaughterhouses. Scenes included a man repeatedly striking a pig with an iron bar before slitting its throat while it was fully conscious.

“A swift amendment to the Animal Protection Act (APA) has now been passed. It makes animal cruelty - including inhumane slaughter - a criminal offence which results in one year’s imprisonment if violated twice within five years. This is stricter than the UK for example, which doesn’t have this level of requirement. This legislation must be applied to the Pigs of God contests,” said Garcés.

The public can support this campaign by visiting [www.pigsofgod.org](http://www.pigsofgod.org)

-Ends-

For more information contact the WSPA Media Office on:

89 Albert Embankment London SE1 7TP United Kingdom Phone +44 (0)20 7587 5000  
Fax +44 (0)20 7793 0208 Email: [wspa@wspa.org.uk](mailto:wspa@wspa.org.uk) Website: [www.wspa-international.org](http://www.wspa-international.org)

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### Editor's Notes

The 'Pigs of God' contests have been running for about 30 years and claim to be religious events.

The pigs involved end up becoming up to four times heavier than normal and are unable to support their own body weight.

Having been castrated without anaesthetic at a young age, due to a belief that this can help make it fat, the pig then suffers from being force-fed food on a regular basis until it cannot move without being dragged or carried.

These highly social animals are kept in isolation in barren conditions, often in a pen where they cannot turn around or even stand. The pig's sheer body weight places an almost unbearable strain on the animal's skeleton and cardiovascular system.

WSPA is the world's largest alliance of humane societies and animal protection organisations, representing over 800 member societies in more than 147 countries. EAST is one of these. Through direct field work, campaigning, legislative work, education and training programmes, WSPA strives to create a world where animal welfare matters and animal cruelty ends.