

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Dutch Slaughterhouse Closed After COVID-19 Detected

Country: Netherlands

Post: The Hague

Report Category: Livestock and Products, Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) has suspended its inspections at a swine slaughterhouse in Groenlo after coronavirus (COVID-19) was detected among the workers and the plant was temporarily closed. The plant, owned by Vion Food Group, slaughters approximately 1.25 million hogs annually -- roughly eight percent of total swine slaughter in the Netherlands.

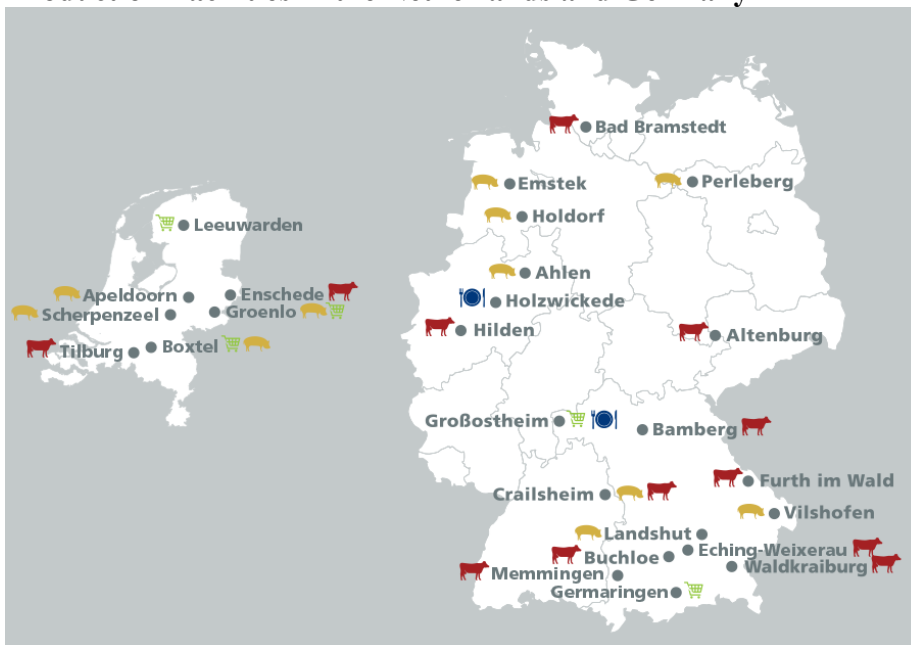
General Information

On May 20, 2020, the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (known by its Dutch acronym of NVWA) temporarily suspended veterinary inspections at a swine slaughterhouse owned by Vion Food Group (Vion) in Groenlo, Gelderland. In turn, Vion was forced to close the plant -- one of four swine slaughter facilities in the Netherlands. This is the first slaughterhouse in the Netherlands to temporarily shut down operations due to coronavirus (COVID-19) infections among its workers.¹ Roughly 7.5 percent (45 out of 600) of the employees at the Groenlo slaughterhouse tested positive for COVID-19. Another 388 employees will be tested in the near-term (NOTE: 167 have tested negative).

The Vion plant in Groenlo predominantly slaughters swine for the European processing and food service sector. Approximately 1.25 million swine are slaughtered at the plant annually, accounting for eight percent of total swine slaughter in the Netherlands. The NVWA is currently in discussions with the Dutch Municipal Health Service (known by its Dutch acronym of GGD) to determine how veterinary inspections can safely resume after a two-week employee quarantine period concludes.

Earlier in May, 28 employees at Vion's pork processing plant in Scherpenzeel, Gelderland tested positive for COVID-19, but the plant was able to remain operational. The employees that tested positive, mostly Romanian migrant workers, were quarantined on a riverboat in Arnhem, the Netherlands.² The Scherpenzeel plant, which employs roughly 1,100 workers in total, produces belly cuts for the European, Japanese, Chinese, South Korean, North American, and Australian markets.

Figure 1 - Vion Production Facilities in the Netherlands and Germany³



Source: <https://www.vionfoodgroup.com/about-vion>

¹ <https://www.boerenbusiness.nl/varkens/artikel/10887407/medewerkers-vion-groenlo-in-thuisquarantaine>

² <https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2020/05/romanians-hit-by-coronavirus-worked-for-meat-processing-firm/>

³ The company has also battled COVID-19 outbreaks among its staff in Germany as well. See, e.g., <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/05/11/geme-m11.html>

Vion is the largest meat processing company in the Netherlands,⁴ with almost 12,500 European employees and a turnover of €5.1 billion (\$5.6 billion) in 2019. Annually, Vion slaughters approximately 15 million swine and 900,000 cattle in their 29 European slaughterhouses and processing plants.

Attachments:

No Attachments.

⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/805123/leading-companies-in-meat-processing-in-the-netherlands-by-revenue/>