

DOSSIER: Destroying animals that are useless for production. A central activity from the point of view of the ethical suffering of employees in swine industrial production.

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Summary: Relying on enquiries in occupational psychodynamics realised in 2006 with employees in swine industrial production in Québec, this paper shows how the economical destruction of animals is experienced by them as a “dirty work” which goes against the moral sense they confer to their working relation toward animals. To rear is to contribute to animal lives in trying to save them from diseases and death. It is also to have the courage to take the moral responsibility for killing animals suffering from an incurable disease, in order to avoid useless sufferings. To endure this death job, employees deploy collective defence strategies. However, the adoption of behaviours based on manly courage stigmatises the difficulties of those who cannot manage to destroy animals, while these behaviours are themselves weakened by an important turn-over.

Keywords: Swine industrial production, dirty work, animal death, moral sense, ethical suffering, courage, manliness.