

Poultry slaughter in residential areas, why does it still exist in Indonesia?

As part of her MSc-study at Wageningen University in the Netherlands Astrid Vangerven did a case study¹ in Bogor City to analyse why poultry slaughter in residential areas still exists in spite of many efforts to move these activities to more acceptable areas. Astrid did her research in the last quarter of 2015 by conducting interviews. This research was facilitated by the DIFS-live program through input of the WUR experts and guidance of Centras. This note contains a summary of the main findings as these are of interest to the DIFS-live program on poultry meat.

Slaughter in residential area

In Indonesia poultry meat consumption is increasing, especially in urban areas. The majority of poultry meat is coming from manual slaughtering by small enterprises, called TPUs (tempat pemotongan unggas) or slaughter points, employing several workers, often family of the owner. These TPUs slaughter a few hundred to up to a few thousand birds during night hours. Often, 10 to 20 of such TPUs are clustered in a residential area along a river in town, close to the consumers that buy the poultry meat at a traditional market. Slaughtering is done at the ground floor, while the slaughter men themselves live upstairs. Generally, only feathers are collected and delivered for processing to animal feed. All other waste and waste water are released without treatment in the river. Already in 1929, the colonial government considered to move such slaughter activities to more suitable areas outside residential areas. For decades now, the formal policy is to forbid poultry slaughtering in residential areas. However, in many cities in Indonesia poultry slaughtering still takes place in TPUs in residential areas under conditions that pose a threat to public health. Why is it so difficult to relocate the poultry slaughter from residential areas to more suitable industrial or agricultural areas?

Pondok Rumput community

Astrid tried to answer this question for the Pondok Rumput community in Bogor City. The slaughter community in Pondok Rumput originates from mid-Java and started to inhabit Pondok Rumput from the 1970ties onwards. Only later in 1995, Pondok Rumput became formally a residential area. In Pondok Rumput, poultry slaughter men, truck drivers of the live birds and vendors of the poultry meat live and work together with people not related to the poultry business. The majority of inhabitants of Pondok Rumput do not get their income from the poultry slaughter business. Small scale industrial activities are tolerated, provided waste management is taken care of. However, the Pondok Rumput area is unable to hold small scale industrial activities like poultry slaughter in a decent way, because it is located on an unstable river bank that cannot hold for instance waste water tanks. Currently, in Pondok Rumput there are about 22 TPUs, which are illegal, not registered and consequently not pay taxes.

IWPA, organisation of slaughter men

The poultry meat community of Pondok Rumput is organised in the IWPA, an informal organisation originally set up to ease communication between the local authorities and the slaughter men. IWPA has about 300 members, who do not pay a fee. Some of the TPU owners donate funds to the IWPA to stimulate social activities in the neighbourhood. Together with the government the IWPA arranges activities related to poultry slaughter, such as Halal certification, hygiene management courses and training. However, the last years no training could be given due to lack of governmental staff. Moreover, as the current slaughter business in Bogor City is illegal, no retribution is paid when participating in such activities and thus there is no income for the government. Furthermore, the IWPA finances activities in the area such as governmental health programs on vaccination, mother and child nutrition, religious programs and celebration of national holidays, and it supports individuals for specific health care and wedding ceremonies.

Residents

The people not working in the poultry business object against the presence of poultry slaughter activities, and in 2004 the mayor of Bogor decided that such slaughter activities should be phased out from the area in two years and move to the Bubulak area. However, no enforcement followed. The residents not working in the poultry business are mainly of Sundanese background, in general having a more shy culture than the Javanese slaughter men. It looks like they do not dare to stand up against the slaughter men and to demand removal of slaughter activities. Formal complaints on the nuisance of poultry

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slaughter are not available. Furthermore, the slaughter community in Pondok Rumpit has quite a strong political position. Availability of sufficient and affordable meat is an important political issue, and the slaughter community of slaughter men and poultry meat vendors is essential in this. It is estimated, that 70% of all poultry meat sold in Bogor and 90% of the poultry meat sold at the traditional markets in Bogor comes from the TPU's in Pondok Rumpit.

Bubulak, government public slaughter facility

The Bogor city government arranged public slaughter facilities in Bubulak in 2002, with the idea that the Pondok Rumpit slaughter men would move their business voluntarily to these facilities through government persuasion. Although moving was discussed a few times between the IWPA and representatives from the government, no action followed. For slaughter men it is not attractive to move for different reasons: 1) there is not sufficient space for poultry slaughter, as space is limited and often priority is given to slaughter of cattle, 2) increased travelling time and costs of workers from Pondok Rumpit to Bubulak, 3) the distance from the slaughter location to the meat market is too time consuming, and 4) the slaughter men fear they never can own facilities at Bubulak. The Bubulak facilities are government owned and legally government property can only be sold in public auctions. This favours 'big money' instead of small scale entrepreneurs renting the facilities. Currently, the (very limited) poultry facilities at Bubulak are used by one or two poultry slaughter men that were never active in the Pondok Rumpit area. Moreover, the management of the Bubulak facilities is not actively attracting more poultry slaughter activities to Bubulak.

Governmental organisation

The culture in governmental organisations is hierarchical. Only if higher up in the organisation a decision is made, a follow up of this decision on lower levels can be expected. A formal law is not sufficient for action at the grass root level. The enforcement of formal governmental policy to remove slaughter from residential areas is hampered by the complex governance structure in Indonesia. Pondok Rumpit is part of Bogor City. Above the level of Bogor City there is the level of the region, above that of the province and then the national government. Pondok Rumpit is in fact a conglomerate of three Rukun Warga (RW), each RW consists of 5-15 Rukun Tetangga (groups of 10-15 households). Above the RW level, there are two more levels under the Bogor City level. Each of these six government levels has its own rhythm of elections. For change in the field all levels have to agree and to cooperate and preferably in a top down order. This is further complicated by the fact that, at the Bogor City level, policy is carried out by 4 different committees. For the slaughter business the committee on taxes, economy and finances is the most important for running business. However, the commissions on governance and permissions and on infrastructure are important for the long run. Moving the slaughter activities requires coordinated action from the different committees.

Jakarta situation

Astrid examined the situation in Bogor. However, DIFS-live also has activities in the Jakarta area. In the Jakarta area a similar situation of governmental slaughter houses that are hardly used for poultry slaughter and illegal slaughtering in residential areas exists. However, in spring 2016 a change occurred for two government poultry slaughter locations in Jakarta, namely Rawa Lele and Rawa Kepiting. During night hours, Rawa Lele is currently filled with slaughter activities up to its capacity, and at Rawa Kepiting slaughter activities increased significantly. In the Jakarta area the governmental system differs from the Bogor area with more power for the DKI Jakarta governor. Flooding management is a strong key at this governmental level to have pressure on clearing river banks and thus moving slaughter activities from the river banks to Rawa Lele and Rawa Kepiting.

Enforcement of the regulations appears to be a prerequisite in moving illegal slaughter in residential areas to the legal (governmental) slaughter places. Just providing slaughter facilities is not sufficient to move the slaughter business.

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