



Straw usage in swedish pig farms

We investigated how Swedish producers use straw to pigs and how it affects the occurrence of tail biting. The project was part of a large EU project aiming to stimulate the development of a non-docking policy in the EU. We wanted to collect the experiences of Swedish producers (that do not tail dock). We think that both Swedish and European producers can benefit from the compilation of swedish experiences of how to rear pigs with intact tails.

WHAT DID WE DO?

We conducted a telephone survey during July to November 2014. A total of 60 producers were interviewed regarding straw usage and tail biting. The farmers that had growers answered grower related questions and farmers that had finishing pigs answered questions regarding finishers. Farrow-to-finish farms answered questions regarding both growers and finishers.

WHAT DID WE ASK?

- Production information
- Tail biting (e.g. frequency, cause)
- Straw usage (e.g. species, amount)
- Pen conformation (e.g. size, floor)
- Feed (e.g. feeding system)
- Manure handling (e.g. type, problems)

This brochure focus on straw usage

OUR MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS

- **99 % of the producers provided the pigs with straw**
otherwise, the pigs were provided with wood shavings or saw dust
- **About 66% of the producers supplemented the straw with other material**
'Other material', as wood shavings or pite, was commonly provided to keep pens dry, around moving or if straw was scarce
- **The straw rations were estimated from the amount of straw bales used per year**
- **The grower pigs recieved a mean of 29g straw/pig and day**
the straw ration varied between 8-85g straw/pig and day
- **The finishers recieved a mean of 50g straw/pig and day**
the straw ration varied between 9-225g straw/pig and day
- **24 % of the producers would like to increase the straw ration**
The most common reason not to increase the straw ration was that it could cause issues in the manure handling system or block the slatted floor
- **The most common manure handling system was rope/cable with arm scrapers**
56 % of the grower and 81 % of the finishing pig farms had however never experienced manure handling problems caused by straw