



Tail biting 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 tail biting

OUR MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS

- **Tail biting was seen in 50% of the grower farms**
commonly twice/year and commonly in one pen/outbreak
- **Tail biting was seen in 88% of the finishing pig farms**
commonly 3-12 times/year and commonly in one pen/outbreak
- **A mean of 1.6% of the pigs had tail damage at the slaughter house**
the amount of tail damage varied between 0.1-6.5% between farms
- **The more often the farmer saw tail biting outbreaks, the more pens and pigs were subjected per outbreak**
- **The underlying cause of the outbreak varies and the most common cause is thought to be;**
*stocking density, salt deficiency and chance in grower farms
feed, genetics, stocking density and unknown in finishing pig farms*
- **Tail bitten pigs are commonly treated with antibiotics**
only one farm used pain treatment although it is known that tail biting could be very painful