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Official controls regarding welfare of pigs for export

The Danish Veterinary Association (DVA) conducted a survey amongst its members employed by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) to perform official controls of pig welfare on farms and at assemblies prior to export from November 2018 to January 2019. The survey investigated the perception of official veterinarians (OVs) towards the efficacy of official controls in safeguarding the welfare of pigs during transport. A total of 112 OVs, corresponding to a response rate of 61%, responded to the survey. The survey was followed up by a focus group interview in January 2019 to identify solutions to improve the quality of the official controls.

The survey indicated a perceived lack of resources allocated to official controls concerning pig welfare during transport. The number of growing pigs exported from Denmark to other EU Member States has increased by 400 % over the last 10 years, but the OVs do not perceive the resources allocated to official controls regarding animal welfare requirements to have increased accordingly. The controls at assemblies were generally perceived to be of lesser quality than on-farm controls. Three out of four OVs found that controls regarding pig welfare during transport should be intensified. The OVs also found that time pressure, insufficient physical working conditions and lack of clear guidelines were limiting factors for the quality of their work. Controls regarding space allowance, water and ventilation requirements were perceived as insufficient at assemblies by 83% of the respondents and on farms by 63% of the respondents. Suspicions of violations of space allowance requirements were common (regularly experienced by 69% of the respondents) and controls of journey logs were perceived as meaningless as data on available area on the vehicle, average weight of the animals and the journey time rarely were in accordance with reality. The OVs experienced a lack of options to verify data in the journey log and lack of legal basis to sanction violations of space allowance requirements in particular.

The DVA published the results of the survey in a report in March 2019. The report is available in Danish: <https://www.ddd.dk/politik/aktuelt-i-ddd/kontrollen-med-dyretransporter/>.

In December 2018, a parliamentary agreement on strengthening official controls with transport of pigs was reached. The agreement addresses many of the findings in the DVA survey, but still lacks to address the perceived current lack of resources for OVs to perform their jobs satisfactorily in the longer term. The DVA consistently works to highlight the shortcomings as initiatives in the agreement are implemented during 2019.

Danish efforts to reduce usage of antimicrobials for animals recognized by FAO

The DVA contributed to a working group initiated by the FAO to produce a report on lessons learned in Denmark about reducing usage of antimicrobials in the pig sector. The report describes the joint efforts by authorities, private veterinary practitioners and pig producers in reaching the common goal of consumer protection, including restructuring the relationship between the veterinary services and farmers. The report is available in English, Spanish and Chinese. Find it here: <http://www.fao.org/antimicrobial-resistance/resources/publications-archive/case-studies-series/en/>

1 in 4 pig farmers non-compliant regarding handling of sick and injured animals in 2018

A nationwide official control campaign in 400 Danish pig herds in 2018 showed that app. 25% were non-compliant regarding handling of sick and injured sows and finisher pigs. The non-compliances were primarily related to animals not having been timely treated or euthanized, or the lack of soft bedding material in sick pens. Regarding finisher pigs, the most prevalent conditions, that had not

been handled correctly, were arthritis, hernias and tail lesions. Regarding sows, the most prevalent conditions were leg conditions with lameness, shoulder wounds and lack of soft bedding material in sick pens. Reasons for not having moved a sick or injured animal to a sick pen were both related to the animal not having been observed, the animal having been assessed and not considered in need of being moved to a sick pen or other reasons, e.g. lack of available sick pens.

The DVA has since worked with both the authorities and industry to improve guidelines for farmers on decision making in terms of correct handling of sick and injured animals. Similar control campaigns in 2016 and 2017 showed similar results and the 2018 campaign is being followed up by official controls of 10% of Danish pig herds in 2019.

Scheme to allow veterinarians and pharmacies to divide packages of pharmaceuticals

National legislation to allow veterinarians and pharmacies to divide packages of pharmaceuticals when prescribing and distributing drugs to farmers or pet owners entered into force on January 1st 2019. Although, the DVA has lobbied for a practical solution to minimize unnecessary distribution of pharmaceuticals for veterinary use for many years, the new scheme unfortunately involves several documentation steps. The intention of the scheme is to minimize unnecessary distribution of pharmaceuticals for veterinary use and to increase options for evidence-based drug choices and thereby fight AMR, but the DVA fears that the scheme will only be used by very few veterinarians and pharmacies and therefore not have the intended impact.

Simulation exercise on African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak in Denmark

As part of the National ASF Action Plan, a full-scale exercise on the control and eradication of ASF took place from 28 to 31 January 2019 in Denmark. The aim was to:

- Test and further develop the ASF contingency plan.
- Ensure that staff members of the Danish Veterinary Administration and external partners obtain a good knowledge of contingency planning and routine in handling designated tasks during simulated disease suspicions and outbreaks.
- Enhance the cooperation with the Veterinary Administrations in Germany related to cross-border activities during animal health emergency situations.

The exercise involved external partners, including the Danish Veterinary Association, the Danish Agriculture and Food Council, the Technical University of Denmark, the Police, the Danish Emergency Management Agency and the Feed, Meat and Rendering Industries and others.

The DVA secretariat used the exercise to test the coordination of recruitment of veterinary practitioners to assist the authorities during an outbreak as well as handling crisis communication.

New legislation on documentation of tail biting occurrence and risk assessment in force

The Danish action plan to reduce the proportion of tail-docked pigs in Denmark involves three legislative initiatives that have or are about to enter into force:

- January 1st 2019: Written documentation of the prevalence and severity of tail biting.
- April 1st 2019: Written risk assessment of tail biting and action plans to counteract any risks, including a timeline for mitigating the risks. The Danish Pig Research Centre SEGES has produced a risk assessment tool that can be used by farmers. Available in Danish: https://svineproduktion.dk/Aktuelt/Temaer/Halebid_risikovurdering
- July 1st 2019: Written documentation of the prevalence and severity of tail biting in herds receiving tail-docked pigs (whether Danish or not).

If the risk assessment does not identify any risk factors and there is no or minimal evidence of tail biting – the guidelines of the DVFA defines below 2% as minimal – the farmer is required to gradually stop tail docking, or in case of a fattening farm, gradually cease to buy in tail-docked pigs. The requirement applies to both sow herds (where tail-docked pigs are reared) and herds that receive

tail-docked pigs (whether Danish or not). The farmer is responsible for documenting the prevalence of tail lesions, to perform risk assessments and to make decisions on phasing out tail-docking, although he/she is advised to seek advice from the veterinary practitioner.

Launch of the Better Welfare label on dairy, beef and veal products expected in October 2019

The DVA participates in a governmental working group to develop a State animal welfare-labelling scheme called Better Welfare. The label has so far been implemented nationally on pork (December 2016), processed pork products (May 2017) and chicken meat (October 2018). Proposed criteria for beef, veal and dairy products are currently in consultation. Labels on beef, veal and dairy products are expected to launch in October 2019.

Collective labour agreement for veterinary practitioners renewed at third vote

The collective labour agreement governing salaries and working conditions of veterinarians employed in clinical practice in Denmark was renewed by April 1st 2019 for a three year period. The road to agreement was unusually bumpy with two previous votes turned down by a majority of members of the Employed veterinarians' association (ADO). Primary disputes have been on salary level, access to parental leave and organization of work.

Minimum salaries agreed in collective labour agreement 2019-2021

Full time employed (=37 hours/week) Basic monthly minimum gross salary Number of years since graduation*	Per 1st April 2019	Per 1st April 2020
1	32.511 DKK	33.074 DKK
2	36.981 DKK	37.731 DKK
3	39.750 DKK	40.900 DKK

* Number of years of relevant work since graduation. New graduates employed in clinical practice start at level 1 as a minimum. After 12 months of min. 8 hours of relevant work per week, level 2 is reached, etc.

Healthy breeding working group

The DVA subgroup of small animal veterinary practitioners (DSAVA) has initiated a joint working group of veterinarians, breeders, geneticists and authorities to work on healthy breeding, with special emphasis on the brachycephalic breeds. In November 2018, the working group initiated a study with the objective of investigating the occurrence of BOAS in the Danish population of English Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs. Data is collected by veterinary practices in all of Denmark. The results are expected to be published in Autumn 2019.

Antibiotics guidelines for small animal practitioners available in English

The second edition of the guidelines for antibiotics use in companion animals was published by the DSAVA in September 2018. The guidelines are now available in English:

https://www.ddd.dk/media/2175/asmsembled_final.pdf