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National Report Denmark October 2019

New President of the Danish Veterinary Association

On September 27th 2019 the general assembly of the Danish Veterinary Association (DVA) elected a new President, Hanne Knude Palshof. Hanne has 25 years of experience, primarily from companion animal practice, but also from meat inspection and teaching of veterinary nursing students. Hanne is the first female President in the 170-year history of the DVA and will replace past President Carsten Jensen in the Danish delegation at the FVE GA.

Changes to official controls regarding welfare of pigs for export

The latest National Report for Denmark described results of a survey amongst members of the DVA employed by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) to perform official controls of pig welfare on farms and at assemblies prior to export. The survey indicated a perceived lack of resources allocated to these controls.

In December 2018, a parliamentary agreement was reached on strengthening official controls with transport of pigs. The parliamentary agreement addresses many of the findings in the DVA survey (), but lacks to address the existing perceived 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.

The following initiatives have been implemented to date:

- On July 1st 2019 the number of controls of vehicles before loading pigs for export at assemblies and on farms was increased to 250 per month corresponding to 10% of vehicles, compared to previously 100 controls per year. In July 2019, preliminary results show that app. 10% of 257 controls detected non-compliances.
- On July 1st 2019 the Order on Protection of Animals during Transport was adapted to include a table to aid assessment of minimum space allowance of pigs on vehicles based on average body weight and number of pigs. The DVA has highlighted that for the change of legislation to ensure a better protection of pigs, the OVs need enough time and legal basis to retrieve valid information on number of pigs, their average body weight and space available on the vehicle.
- On July 1st 2019 stricter enforcement commenced of the requirement for organizers to submit the journey log 2 working days prior to transport. This resulted in intense debate as transport businesses and farmers experienced a lack of flexibility to later changes to journey logs, which were previously granted.
- On 15th August 2019, the time allocated to assessment of fitness for transport of pigs was increased by 50% in an attempt to ensure an improved quality of controls. The DVA has criticized this for not addressing the shortcomings of the physical working conditions of OVs and for not defining sufficient assessment of fitness for transport.

The DVA plans a follow-up survey in November 2019 to re-assess the experience of OVs and to identify needs to adapt the control system.

VetStat 2.0

The Danish national database for antimicrobial usage in animals, VetStat, is undergoing a revision to increase user-friendliness and data quality. The DVA works together with the authorities to ensure the database will become a relevant tool, not only for the authorities, but also for private

practitioners. New features include graphical presentation of data on herd level, easier correction of errors and simulation of consequences of prescriptions in terms of the “Yellow Card” threshold before prescribing. The authorities also plan to implement benchmarking of veterinarians’ prescriptions of antimicrobials to raise awareness of usage. The DVA will work with the authorities to ensure a meaningful scheme. VetStat 2.0 is expected in operation from end of 2020.

Danish Animal Welfare Law

A simplification of the legal framework governing animal welfare in Denmark has been proposed. The proposal is for a single framework law supplemented by orders to implement species-specific requirements as to ensure a more flexible legislation based on current scientific evidence. The proposal for an Animal Welfare Law has been through public consultation and is expected to be passed through Parliament before the end of the year.

Police units specialized in animal welfare

Three police units specialized in animal welfare cases have been operating since July 1st 2019. Initially their focus is on around illegal trade of dogs, e.g. puppy factories, trade of illegal animals, animal neglect and prevention of animal neglect.

DANMAP report 2018

The 2018 DANMAP report of antimicrobial usage in animals and humans showed that the antimicrobial usage in animals had decreased by 14% from 2013 to 2018.

Read the full report here: <https://www.danmap.org/downloads/reports>

1 in 5 pig farmers non-compliant regarding handling of sick and injured animals in 2018

The risk-based official controls of compliance with animal welfare legislation in pig herds in 2018 showed that one in five pig farmers were non-compliant regarding handling of sick and injured animals. In total, more than one in three pig farmers were non-compliant. The DVA reacted to the result with a press release criticizing that the training of farm workers is insufficient and that vets are challenged by high staff turn-over and too infrequent herd advisory visits to improve their competences. The press release was not well received by the pig farmers’ association criticizing the DVA in the farming press for only being interested in keeping vet jobs and for the control results being exaggerated.

Action Plan for Better Welfare for Pigs 2014-2020 – final evaluation of progress

The Action Plan for Better Welfare for Pigs is a governmental initiative started in 2014. The progress is being evaluated the fourth and final time in November 2019. Read more about the action plan here:

https://en.mfv.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/FVM.dk/Dokumenter/Landbrug/Indsatser/Dyrevelfaerd_og_transport/Svinehandlingsplan_engelsk_final.pdf

Short status on the actions:

- Increase piglet survival by one pig per litter in 2020, corresponding to a total piglet mortality of app. 16%. Status is that piglet mortality has increased by 0.8 %-points to 22.5% from 2017 to 2018.
- Reduction of sow mortality. The industry has set a target of reduction to 9% by 2018. Total sow mortality in 2018 was 12.6%, which was an increase from 11% in 2017, potentially due to the hot summer of 2018.
- Loose housing of 10% of sows in the farrowing unit by 2020. Currently 2.3% of sows are loose housed in the farrowing unit. A public investment aid scheme has been in place to

support farmers to convert barns to loose housing since 2013, but unfortunately, the funds have not been fully utilized. According to the industry, the reason behind is that banks are unwilling to provide the farmers with mortgages to fund the remainder of the investment.

- No surgical castration of piglets without anesthesia by 2018. This has been achieved by changing legislation so that farmers can administer local anesthetics prior to surgical castration and making local anesthesia mandatory for farmers to stay compliant with the DANISH Product Standard since January 1st 2019. The DVA is in principle against allowing farmers to administer local anesthetics and view the continuation of surgical castration as a suboptimal solution. The DVA continues to promote rearing of intact males and immunocastration as better alternatives. Efforts to increase rearing of entire male pigs as part of the action plan has to date been almost unsuccessful.
- Increase the proportion of pigs with intact tails. The Danish action plan to reduce the need for tail docking has been fully implemented and the authorities are currently running an official control campaign to check compliance with the legislation. The proportion of pigs with intact tails have been assessed on a random sample of pig carcasses on Danish abattoirs in 2018 before the implementation of the action plan. The result showed that 1.1% of conventional pigs had intact tails, whereas an additional 2.5% of pigs were reared as part of product schemes requiring intact tails.

The Better Welfare label on dairy, beef and veal products launches on January 1st 2020

The Danish State animal welfare-labelling scheme, Better Welfare, has so far been implemented nationally on pork (December 2016), processed pork products (May 2017) and chicken meat (October 2018). The range of products will be extended to beef, veal and dairy products by January 1st 2020. The label has so far been a success with surveys showing that more than 75% of Danes know the label and a market share of app. 25% of the Danish pork meat market.

Survey on wellbeing in clinical practice in Denmark

The veterinary employers' organization launches a survey on wellbeing of veterinary practitioners, whether employers or employees, in Autumn 2019. The survey will assess wellbeing for veterinarians and veterinary nurses.

Hygiene in companion animal practice

The DVA subgroup for small animal practitioners has set up a working group to develop preventative hygiene guidelines to improve biosecurity within companion animal practices. The group will translate the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's hygiene guidelines into Danish (<https://www.ddd.dk/media/1313/ccarguidelinesfeb09.pdf>) and develop and disseminate information material to pet owners via small animal practices.

Extent of horse and companion animal owners' use of alternative medicine provided by non-veterinarians

The DVA launched a survey in Spring 2019 to assess the extent and type of alternative medicine used by horse and companion animal owners before consulting a veterinarian due to an increasing number of cases where animals had not received timely veterinary care. The survey received 244 responses by veterinary practitioners. The practitioners reported that they frequently experienced clients having consulted non-veterinary alternative treatment prior to a veterinarian – 6% on a daily basis, 25% on a weekly basis and 32% at least once per month. The most prevalent types of alternative treatment was massage, chiropractors, physiotherapy, craniosacral therapy, healing, homeopathy. A total of 43% of veterinarians reported not to know enough about alternative medicine to advise their clients. 84% believed that alternative medicine should only be allowed when performed by a veterinarian. Based on the results, the DVA has launched a working group to investigate how



veterinarians can ensure the quality of alternative medicine performed by non-veterinarians to safeguard animal welfare.

Annual report of zoonoses in Denmark 2018

Every year the Technical University of Denmark publishes the Annual Report on Zoonoses in Denmark. The 2018 report describes the results of the Danish surveillance of zoonotic bacteria in food, animals and humans in 2018. Find the report here:

<https://www.food.dtu.dk/Publikationer/Sygdomsfremkaldende-mikroorganismer/Zoonoser-aarlige-rapporter>

Seminar targeted veterinary students about ethics and euthanasia

The DVA hosts a seminar on November 26th targeted veterinary students about the ethics around euthanasia and how the DVA works to preserve the veterinarian's right to euthanize animals as an act of animal welfare. Invited speakers are Mette Uldahl, President of FEEVA, Mads Bertelsen, Lead Veterinarian of Copenhagen Zoo, Peter Skov, Veterinary Specialist in Oncology, and Peter Sandøe, Professor of Bioethics, University of Copenhagen.