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TITLE

PATHOLOGICAL-ANATOMICAL FINDINGS OF THE LOCOMOTOR SYSTEM IN SOWS FOUND DEAD OR EUTHANIZED

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CONTENT

Background and Objectives

Lameness is one of the most common reasons to euthanize sows. However, lameness is a symptom, and the specific diagnosis of lame sows often remains unresolved. In many cases, post mortem examination is needed in order to get a proper diagnosis. The objective of this study was to investigate pathological-anatomical diagnoses (PAD) of locomotor system in spontaneously died and euthanized sows.

Material & Methods

The findings associated with locomotor system were studied as a part of standardized post-mortem examinations in 65 sows. The sows originated from 15 commercial Finnish farms; 38 of sows were euthanized and 27 found dead. The median parity of the sows was 3.

Abnormalities in shoulder-, elbow, hip- and knee joints were described in detail. Cloudy or purulent synovial fluid and changes of synovial membrane indicative of inflammation was regarded as infective arthritis. The presence of gross lesions (at least erosion or thinning of the joint cartilage) in one or more joints without changes indicating an acute inflammation was regarded as arthrosis.

Results

Majority of the sows (91%) got post-mortem findings in the locomotor system. One-third of sows had a primary PAD associated with locomotor system. Of these, the most prevalent were arthritis and fracture (9 and 8% of all animals, respectively). Arthrosis was diagnosed in 71% of the sows, mainly as minor finding. Two-third of the cases were bilateral.

Discussion & Conclusion

Pathological findings in the locomotor system were very common in this study. This indicates that sows have disorders associated with locomotion in modern production facilities. There is a need to continue researching locomotor problems and finding means to prevent them in sows.