

TITLE

SEROPREVALENCE OF PRRS IN SOUTHERN BELGIUM (WALLONIA)

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CONTENT

Background and objectives. A national PRRS control program, on a voluntary basis, started in Belgium in 2018. In this context, it was useful to review the specific situation of Wallonia, where only 6% Belgian pigs are kept. **Material and methods.** A total of 1786 serums (585 breeders and 1201 growing/ fattening pigs), collected in 2016 as part of the official "Aujeszky" monitoring from 309 pig farms (106 farrowing and 203 weaning or wean-to-finish farms) have been kept at -20°C. A survey was addressed to these 309 farmers. For each farm, a maximum of 10 sera of sow and/or 5 growing/fattening pigs were tested. The ELISA PRRS assay used was the HerdCheck PRRS X3® Idexx Kit. An individual result was considered negative if the S:P ratio was <0.4; a herd was considered positive if at least one of the tested pigs had an S:P ratio ≥0.4.

Results. In 2016, for all farm types, the apparent herd and individual prevalences were respectively 51% (95% c.i.: 46-57%) and 45% (95% c.i.: 43-47%). Within these herds, individual prevalences observed in sows and fattening pigs were respectively 39% and 48% (p<0.001). Among farrowing farms, the apparent herd, individual and intra-herd prevalences were respectively 35% (95% c.i.: 26-43%), 36% (95% c.i.: 33-39%) and 38% (95% c.i.: 35-41%). In weaning or wean-to-finish herds, the apparent herd, individual and intra-herd prevalences were respectively 60% (95% c.i.: 53-67%), 54% (95% c.i.: 51-58%) and 85% (95% c.i.: 82-88%).

The survey gave 121 answers from 75 sow and 46 pig(let) owners showing that PRRS monitoring and biosecurity measures (i.e. for sperm and gilts/boars purchases, hygiene and batch system) may be improved. **Conclusion and discussion.** This study showed that in 2/3 of Walloon farrowing farms PRRS virus was not detected. In the context of a national control program, these indicative results will be useful when developing guidelines for PRRS control.