

TITLE

PIG HEALTH LEARNING NETWORK – A CONTINUOUS PROCESS AIMING TO IMPROVE THE HYGIENE LEVEL ON FARMS

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CONTENT

Background and Objectives

In mechanical engineering, learning factories are implemented, besides other aspects, mainly for the continuous improvement of work processes (such as customer-oriented order processing). The aim of the project was to prove transferability of the tool “Kaizen” (i.e. continuous improvement) on pig farms to enhance pig health and reduce the use of antibiotics.

Material and Methods

A learning network was formed with 9 pig farmers, specialist advisors, veterinarians (swine health service, local veterinarians) and scientists (TiHo, UNGOE, IFA, MSG) to adapt the Kaizen processes for continuous improvement in a realistic and innovative way on farms.

In addition, obstacles and fears were investigated to guide the learning network through motivation.

Furthermore, at the beginning and at the end of the project, attitudes and behaviour of farmers and veterinarians were investigated in order to analyse the stabilization of awareness during the project. Regular meetings of workgroups (farmer, advisor, vet) guided by the swine health service were conducted on farm. In addition workshops with all project participants were organized to support the exchange of experiences and methods improving farm hygiene and management. To improve hygiene and pig health, measures were defined (at the workshops), executed (on the farms) and tracked. Finally, the effect of measures was analysed.

Results

The design of the innovative project helped to improve the salmonella status of two farms, the piglet losses in one farm, hygiene status of 3 farms. Due to already low use of antibiotic there was no great improvement. The awareness of networking to achieve enhancements improved.

Discussion and conclusion

By building a learning network, knowledge from different disciplines was combined. New solutions to improve awareness of importance of hygiene and animal health in order to reduce the use of antibiotics and achieve enhancements in production were established.