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TITLE

ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT IN GERMAN FATTENING PIG UNITS – CLINICAL EVALUATIONS (PART OF THE MULTIVIS-PROJECT)

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CONTENT

Background and Objectives

The holistic MulTiViS-project was launched to develop indicators to measure animal welfare. The project takes into account various data sources (information from fattening units and slaughterhouses and information on pig health and behaviour). As part of this approach the present study provides results of the experiences of the clinical evaluations on the farms and the impact of various factors on animal health.

Material & Methods

On approx. 200 fattening pig units, two veterinarians gathered basic information on housing, feeding, keeping, and pig health. In each fattening unit, a sample of eight pens was selected to assess behaviour of the pigs as well as clinical issues by means of ca. 20 variables like skin lesions or flank biting.

Concerning housing, information (e.g.) was recorded on ventilation system, number of pigs per pen, amount and kind of enrichment materials, feeding equipment and technology.

Using multi-factorial analysis the impact of these factors on animal welfare is analysed.

Results

Experiences of the clinical investigation and results of analysis of data will be presented with respect to impact of various factors on animal welfare. The figures for instance reveal a higher number of pigs per pen is associated with a higher number of skin lesions. The importance of flank biting does not differ between pens of different group sizes.

Discussion & Conclusion

The outcome of the analysis increases the knowledge about the production and health situation of pigs on the farms, on factors affecting on animal health as well as on skills to assess and improve animal welfare.

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