



## HERD HEALTH MANAGEMENT & ECONOMY

HHM-025

### **ASSESSMENT OF SUBJECTIVE HEALTH STATUS PERCEPTION IN WEANER PIG HOLDINGS WITH RECURRING RESPIRATORY DISEASE OUTBREAKS**

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#### **Introduction**

Respiratory diseases are identified as a priority issue in raising weaners. One approach to reduce the application of antibiotics for treatment of such respiratory diseases is to improve assessment of early disease development to maintain a good health status of the pigs after weaning. Therefore in this study the subjective respiratory disease assessing by the farmers was evaluated by comparing their individual estimation with an objective respiratory health score.

#### **Material/Methods**

30 piglet producer farms with preceding recurring respiratory diseases in weaner units were visited twice. The first visit (day1) took place when according to the farmer the health status of the weaners was not affected; the second visit (day2) when the farmer recognized a respiratory disease outbreak requiring antibiotic treatment. During each visit the respiratory health of 15 weaners was evaluated by a scoring system including the parameters breathing type, respiratory rate, coughing, posture, general behavior and body temperature. For scoring the clinically sickest pigs of the affected groups, if existent, were chosen.

#### **Results**

The analysis shows that on day1 24.0% of the assessed weaners showed no respiratory symptoms whereas 76.0% showed mild respiratory symptoms. At day2 1.9% showed no symptoms, 94.2% mild symptoms and 3.89% moderate symptoms of a respiratory disease. None of the weaners examined showed severe clinical symptoms. Calculating the median of the scores six farms were considered healthy without clinical symptoms on day1; none on day2.

#### **Discussion/Conclusion**

In summary most farmers considered mild symptoms of a respiratory disease as an acceptable health status. Early disease development was therefore often not recognized. Although the farmers sensed a significant worsening of the disease situation, in many cases there was only a slight shift within respiratory health status by objective consideration. Environmental and social factors influencing the subjective cognition of the health status need to be further investigated.