



Opinions of Members of the European Parliament regarding lack of compliance with the Council Directive on Pigs

*Åsikter hos ledamöter i Europaparlamentet angående
bristande efterlevnad av EUs grisdirektiv*

Isabelle Toro

Skara 2015

Etologi och djurskyddsprogrammet

Studentarbete
Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa

Nr. 612

Student report
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Department of Animal Environment and Health

No. 612

ISSN 1652-280X



Opinions of Members of the European Parliament regarding lack of compliance with the Council Directive on Pigs

Åsikter hos ledamöter i Europaparlamentet angående bristande efterlevnad av EUs grisdirektiv

Isabelle Toro

Studentarbete 612, Skara 2015

G2E, 15 hp, Etologi och djurskyddsprogrammet, självständigt arbete i biologi, kurskod EX0520

Handledare: Bo Algers

Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa, Box 234, Gråbrödragatan 19, 532 23 SKARA

Biträdande handledare: Kristina Nordéus

Näringsdepartementet, 103 33 Stockholm

Examinator: Stefan Gunnarsson

Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa, Box 234, Gråbrödragatan 19, 532 23 SKARA

Nyckelord: Council Directive on Pigs, EU Parliament, Pig Welfare, tail docking, manipulable material

Serie: Studentarbete/Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa, nr. 612, ISSN 1652-280X

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet

Fakulteten för veterinärmedicin och husdjursvetenskap

Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa

Box 234, 532 23 SKARA

E-post: hmh@slu.se, **Hemsida:** www.slu.se/husdjurmiljohalsa

I denna serie publiceras olika typer av studentarbeten, bl.a. examensarbeten, vanligtvis omfattande 7,5-30hp. Studentarbeten ingår som en obligatorisk del i olika program och syftar till att under handledning ge den studerande träning i att självständigt och på ett vetenskapligt sätt lösa en uppgift. Arbetenas innehåll, resultat och slutsatser bör således bedömas mot denna bakgrund.

Table of Contents

Abstract	4
1. Introduction	6
1.1 European Pig Production	6
1.2 Current housing systems	6
1.3 Current Legislation	7
1.4 Manipulable material	7
1.5 Tail biting & tail docking	8
1.6 The Commission & the development during the past years	9
2. Purpose and questions	12
3. Methodology	13
4. Results	14
4.1 Questionnaire	14
4.2 Interviews	18
5. Discussion	19
5.1 Questionnaire	20
5.2 MEPs role	21
5.3 Interviews	22
5.4 The future and how to accomplish full compliance	23
6. Conclusion	24
Acknowledgements	26
References	27
Annex	31
Annex 1: Cover letter and Questionnaire	31
Annex 2: Phone script	35
Annex 3: Interview Questions	35

Abstract

The reality of current pig production practices in the European Union is that a majority of Member States are in violation of current legislation. This violation of minimum level legislation has been ongoing for several years. The latest version of the directive of pigs is Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs, which clearly states that provision of manipulable material is a requirement. In addition tail docking is not to be performed on a routine basis. Before tail docking farmers must first try to prevent tail biting by changing inadequate environmental conditions. In recent years this issue has drawn attention from various directions; universities, animal welfare societies, European Parliament's Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Member State Ministers, yet the issue remains unresolved.

The aim of this study was to collect and analyse the opinions of Members of Parliament regarding the subject of lack of compliance with the Directive on Pigs, as well as to investigate how involved Members of Parliament are in the issue. This was done through an email questionnaire.

The results should be interpreted with caution. The knowledge of Members of Parliament on pig welfare legislation is varied and the actual knowledge of the current situation is very diverse. The issue of lack of compliance to current legislation has different views of prioritization among Members of Parliament. However full compliance is of importance. Members of Parliament express that the European Commission has not actively lived up to their role in the issue of non-compliance among Member States.

It can be concluded that there is a wide variation in the perceptions of Members of Parliament regarding lack of compliance with the Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs. Furthermore through strict office policies of some Members of Parliament to not answer surveys, it is impossible to examine what issues these politicians are prioritizing to work with.

This study presents a first glimpse at the attention paid to pig welfare amongst Members of Parliament and the attitudes towards non-compliance with current legislation. Members of Parliament expect the European Commission to do more on the issue of non-compliance to pig legislation. It is of the utmost importance that the Commission takes urgent action to improve the compliance rate among Member States to the Directive on Pigs.

Abbreviations

EU: European Union

EC: European Commission

EP: European Parliament

MS: Member States

CA: Competent Authority

MEP: Member of Parliament

AGRI: Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

ENVI: Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee

1. Introduction

In today's society there is a growing concern for how farm animals are treated. The farm animal welfare concern has recently become somewhat of a movement and consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the topic. During the 2014 EU-elections, the subject of pig husbandry was brought to the fore of political debate in Sweden and has since then continued to be discussed. One of the main concerns regarding pig production in the EU is the lack of producer compliance with the current legislation regarding routine tail docking and the provision of manipulable material.

1.1 European Pig Production

In the European Union (EU) all current Member States (MS) are pork producers. The EU together produces 152 million pigs, with a yearly production of circa 23 million tons carcass weight, making the EU the second largest producer of pork in the world (Pigmeat, 2015). The EU is also the biggest exporter of pork in the world (Pigmeat, 2015). Germany, Spain and France account for half of the EU total slaughter number and are the main producer countries of pork (Pigmeat, 2015).

The highest agricultural output in the average proportion of pig production is Denmark (29 %), followed by Belgium (20 %), Spain (14.7 %) and Germany (14.5 %) (Eurostat, 2015). Denmark is the leading EU country in piglet export (56.9 % of the total) (Eurostat, 2015). Out of all MS of the EU, Germany is the main importer of young pigs (55,1 %) followed by Poland (23,2 %). These two countries are also the biggest importers of slaughter animals (Eurostat, 2015).

Pig production in the EU today is highly specialized, for example Denmark for breeders and Spain for fatteners (Eurostat, 2015), but there are also mixed producers such as Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands (Eurostat, 2015). The trend in the EU is toward increased economies of scale (Eurostat, 2015).

1.2 Current housing systems

From a pig welfare perspective housing system designs need to recognize that space and pen design, flooring, bedding material, temperature, ventilation and air hygiene are all critical components (EFSA, 2007a). Designs of housing systems are influenced by factors such as legislation, economics, farm structure, climate, traditions and research (EFSA, 2007a).

Besides outdoor housing systems, there are three groups of indoor systems: deep-litter-, scraped- or slatted systems based on the manure-handling system adopted (EFSA, 2007a). Most frequently used throughout the EU are slatted flooring systems (EFSA, 2007a). In fully slatted systems the entire floor area in which the pigs live are slatted meanwhile partly slatted systems have a solid lying area that requires more space (EFSA, 2007a). It is important in partly slatted systems that there is sufficient space for separate dunging and lying areas for the pigs (EFSA, 2007a). With slatted flooring hygiene is better in the immediate environment of the animal, which adds to better animal health (EFSA, 2007a).

There are a variety of systems for weaners though usually piglets are directly moved after weaning to housing in partly or fully slatted heated pens with varying group sizes (EFSA, 2007a). For fattening pigs, fully slatted or partly slatted flooring dominate the EU production systems (EFSA, 2007a).

A fair amount of straw can be used in party slatted flooring, however it is very limited with fully slatted floors (EFSA, 2007a). The main risk of straw use in liquid manure handling systems is the blocking of the manure removal system (EFSA, 2007a).

1.3 Current Legislation

Legal requirements concerning routine tail docking state that it shall not be practiced routinely and this has been in force since January 1st 1994 in the Council Directive (EEC) 91/630/EEC of 19 November 1991 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs. The latest version of the directive of pigs is Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs, which codifies all earlier versions.

Annex I, Chapter I (4) states “*pigs must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities. The examples of such materials are: straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of these, which does not compromise the health of the pigs.*”

Annex I, Chapter I (8) forbids routine tail docking. It states, “*Before tail docking is performed other measures shall be taken to prevent tail-biting, taking into account environmental and stocking densities. Furthermore for this reason inadequate environmental conditions or management systems must be changed*”.

1.4 Manipulable material

The pig species that are used in today's pig production emerged from the European wild boar (*Sus Scrofa*) in which the behaviours have been well conserved even through domestication (Jensen, 2002). Wild boars often live in groups of closely related sows with their piglets (Jensen, 2002). Pigs like wild boars are social animals and have a large tendency to feed simultaneously (Jensen, 2002; Broom & Fraser, 2007; Spinka, 2009). Pigs use their body posture, ears and tail for signalling during communication with conspecifics (Jensen, 2002). As a result of domestication the tail is curly and this unlike a hanging tail exhibits a healthy pig (Jensen, 2002; Zonderland *et al.*, 2009).

Pigs are curious animals and show a wide range of explorative behaviours (Fraser, 1980; Wood-Gush & Vestergaard, 1991; Spinka, 2009). These exploratory behaviours are closely associated to the foraging behaviours such as smelling, nibbling, rooting and chewing (Fraser, 1980; Jensen, 2002).

In natural conditions of free-ranging pigs many behaviours, such as exploring, develop early and consume a considerable amount of the pigs' time budget (Jensen, 2002). Piglets are relatively mature and mobile from the moment of birth (Jensen, 2002). From personal observations by Oostindjer *et al.* (2014) piglets as young as two days showed an interest in straw by chewing it.

Piglets in semi-natural enclosures show a wide range of different play behaviours (Newberry *et al.*, 1988). Play behaviours in pigs can possibly be interpreted as exploration (Wood-Gush & Vestergaard, 1991). Rooting behaviours continue even if pigs are presented with nutritionally adequate and finely ground foods (Fraser, 1980). There is a strong motivation in pigs to explore and manipulate in order to benefit from their environment. Pigs need manipulable material to express their investigatory behaviour (Lahrman *et al.*, 2015). Newness of materials used as enrichment is of great importance for the reward received by the pig (Wood-Gush & Vestergaard, 1991). Providing piglets with environmental enrichment during lactation and preweaning encourages early exploration of food and intake as well as food intake postweaning, which have long-term positive welfare effects (Oostindjer *et al.*, 2014).

The production environment doesn't allow the animal much choice or control and has the possibility of inducing a great amount of frustration (Lewis, 1999). Frustrations in pigs, as well as pigs being unable to control their environment are welfare problems (Broom &

Fraser, 2007). Frustration in an animal can be explained as when the animal is thwarted from performing a behaviour through interference such as lack of stimuli when motivated to perform a specific behaviour sequence (Wood-Gush & Vestergaard, 1989). Newberry *et al.* (1988) suggest that frustration in piglets may arise if play is limited by physical constraints. Therefore when a certain environment is not provided pigs become frustrated by their exploratory and investigative behavioural needs.

The state of frustration can increase activity levels such as oral manipulation, often a deviation of focus to other stimuli (Lewis, 1999). This shift from feeding to oral manipulation, such as objects in the environment and other pigs, may result in tail biting (Lewis, 1999). Also, chewing on pen structures and floors may increase the spread of disease (Lewis, 1999). Stress factors for weaned piglets including among other factors, the lack of stimuli in the environment (Dybkjaer, 1992). Redirected oral behaviours could suggest an unsatisfied need to explore, the need for oral tactile and olfactory stimulation in the piglets and may be experienced as stressful (Dybkjaer, 1992).

If given the opportunity pigs will show rooting behaviours, even on concrete floors, for an extended period of time (Jensen, 2002). This suggests that even without stimuli pigs are strongly motivated to perform exploratory behaviours (Wood-Gush & Vestergard, 1993). Abnormal behaviours can develop when pigs are not provided with suitable material (Spinka, 2009). A normal behaviour pattern that is performed out of context and at a high rate is indicated as an abnormal behaviour (Wood-Gush & Vestergaard, 1989). In an official report to the EC it was concluded that the main leading motivation for pigs and the welfare of pigs is the need to perform exploration and foraging behaviours (EFSA, 2007b).

1.5 Tail biting & tail docking

Tail biting has a multifactorial causation that makes it complex to prevent and is considered by many as a leading pig welfare concern (Sonoda *et al.*, 2013; D'Eath *et al.*, 2014; Di Martino *et al.*, 2015). The origin of the tail biting behaviour is not completely known although it is a problem in today's conventional housing systems for pigs (Ursinus *et al.*, 2014). It is considered an abnormal behaviour that mainly, but not always, occurs in barren environments (Jensen, 2002).

Tail biting is first observed in the pre-weaning period of piglets, but occurs in all phases of production (weaner, grower and finisher) (Ursinus *et al.*, 2014). Pigs can develop the behaviour at any given time, as well as stop displaying the behaviour at any time (Ursinus *et al.*, 2014). Pigs that display tail-biting behaviour also tend to show a high frequency of other abnormal behaviours, which suggests that all these behaviours have the same motivational origin (Brunberg *et al.*, 2011).

Tail bitten pigs may be exposed to prolonged and/or repeated stress due to pain, which is seen in the stress physiology and carcass characteristics when slaughtered (Valros *et al.*, 2013). The results are from a small sample size at only one farm, however tail biting is associated with stress in pigs (Valros *et al.*, 2013).

There are negative consequences in the pigs welfare from tail biting, leading to pain and injury (EFSA, 2007a). Haemorrhaging can occur when chewing of the tail, which in turn can lead to extensive attacks on the bleeding pig and possibly death to the bleeding pig (Jensen, 2002). Tail biting behaviour is a sign showing that certain needs of the pig to perform behaviours are not being met (EFSA, 2007a).

Risk factors in production environments for tail biting:

- “Feeding system
- Climate conditions

- Stocking density
- Breed, gender
- Boredom
- If materials offered for enrichment become soiled with faeces or are difficult to reach
- If materials offered for enrichment are not replenished or are offered in such small quantities that they generate competition amongst the pigs
- The highest risk factors: a lack of long straw and a barren environment” (EUWelNet, 2013)

The first type of method used to deal with the problem of tail biting is symptomatic, which means tail docking is used to prevent tail biting (Jensen, 2002). The procedure includes cutting part of or the whole tail of the piglet at an early stage in life, within 7 days from birth (EFSA, 2007b). Tail docking is carried out without anaesthesia (Jensen, 2002). This is acknowledged as a painful procedure and has had links to negative health impacts (Jensen, 2002; Scollo *et al.*, 2013). When adverse housing conditions exist in intensive farming, tail docking does not fully eliminate the frequency of tail biting (EFSA, 2007b). Manipulative oral investigation can be more directed towards ears and abdomen in tail docked pigs (Di Martino *et al.*, 2015) rather than improving pig welfare.

The second method used to deal with the problem of tail biting is cause related solutions such as manipulable material. Tail biting is severely reduced when material is provided to occupy the animal with other natural behaviours (Broom & Fraser, 2007; Ursinus *et al.*, 2014). Straw provides a release for the explorative behaviour since floors often are slatted and pens barren which doesn't allow for much exploration (Fraser, 1980; Jensen, 2002).

It is important that enrichment be provided throughout the entire weaning phase, if piglets are moved from enriched environments to non-enriched environments at weaning this could cause extra stress (Oostindjer *et al.*, 2014). In the early stages of fattening, straw both increases explorative behaviour and prevents biting and lesions of tails (Scollo *et al.*, 2013). In heavy fattening pigs the interest in straw increases over time, which strengthen the speculation that when straw is available fresh daily it is the most efficient manipulable material (Di Martino *et al.*, 2015).

Both long and chopped straw maintains characteristics that are inviting to pigs and such material characteristics are ingestible, chewable, destructible and deformable which are the main properties for enrichment of pigs (Bracke, 2006; Studnitz *et al.*, 2007; Lahrmann *et al.*, 2015). In barren environments, objects are used as a substitute for foraging material and objects alone are not satisfactory enough to prevent tail biting, since they cannot be manipulated (Studnitz *et al.*, 2007; Ursinus *et al.*, 2014). It can be established that providing straw decreases the exploratory behaviour directed at penmates, such behaviours are nosing and chewing of pen mates (Beattie *et al.*, 2000; Studnitz *et al.*, 2007).

As mentioned above, pigs show a wide range of explorative behaviours, and these behaviours are redirected to pen structures and pen mates when fitting substrate is not provided (EFSA, 2007a). In the same official report to the EC it was also concluded that tail biting seems to occur in pigs due to frustration and the key hazard for tail biting in pigs is the lack of a particulate, rootable material (EFSA, 2007b).

1.6 The Commission & the development during the past years

The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) is a body of the European Commission (EC) which executes inspections and audits in MS to assure that EU legislation on animal health,

animal welfare and food safety are implemented and followed (European Commission, 2014b). The FVO assemble reports after these audits in which there may be recommendations to aid Competent Authorities (CA) in MS in taking disciplinary action when non-compliance is present (European Commission, 2014b). The Commission is informed of the findings of FVO-reports. It is the ECs obligation to monitor MS in questions of applying EU directives in national law and if suspicion arises in breaching of EU law (European Commission, 2014a).

On the 29th of February 2012 Dyrenes Beskyttelse, The Danish Animal Welfare Society, sent a letter of complaint to the EC concerning routine tail docking of pigs in Denmark (Riis & Jensen, 2012). This letter refers to several previous events: An audit report in 2011 by the FVO, which describes the Danish CA not doing enough to control routine tail docking and the EC recommendation that the CA must ensure that docking is not carried out systematically (Riis & Jensen, 2012).

The Ministry of Justice, who is responsible for animal welfare, commented on the EC recommendations and answered questions to the Danish Committee of Food that it is impossible to comply with the rules and through changed legislation it will be possible to comply with stricter documentation requirements (Riis & Jensen, 2012). Thereafter Dyrenes Beskyttelse sent a letter of complaint to both the Ministers of Justice and Minister of Food stating the violation of legislation for several years and the failure of Danish authorities to make an effort to comply (Riis & Jensen, 2011).

The sitting Minister of Justice replied to this by referring to the working group's report with these issues and stating that the problem in documentation lies in the fact that other MS will not buy piglets that are undocked, and changes should be made in EU legislation ensuring the need for tail docking is documented, and at the same time maintaining existing production (Riis & Jensen, 2012).

To sum up, Dyrenes Beskyttelse requested the EC to take action against the Danish government hence the fact that the then sitting Minister of Justice acknowledged the unsustainability of the current practices yet let it continue until a solution of piglet trade is found, when in truth the practices are illegal (Riis & Jensen, 2012).

On the 5th of July 2012 an answer was received from the sitting commissioner Demetris Vryonides stating that the EC “recognizes the problems of the Danish working group and have seen similar problems in other MS” (Vryonides, 2012).

Mr. Vryonides communicates that the EC will take measures such as: communication with stakeholders, training on animal welfare for veterinarians, guidelines will be presented in 2013 in the EU Strategy on Animal Welfare, and the EC will examine financial incentives (Vryonides, 2012). Furthermore, the EC stated their decision that infringement proceedings would not be taken because they are of the opinion that more practical solutions would be more beneficial (Vryonides, 2012).

1st of August 2012 Dyrenes Beskyttelse answered the sitting commissioners letter (Riis, 2012). Three counter questions were asked:

1. “On what basis does the EC conclude that practical solutions should stand above an actual violation of legislation?”
2. Does the EC agree that it is problematic to refer to practical obstacles when MS like Sweden does comply with current legislation; does this not produce an inappropriate imbalance in implementation of legislation in the different MS?
3. How has the EC reached the conclusion that more information to MS, better training for veterinarians and release of guidelines will have greater effect in

Denmark? What evidence is there that this information and training is enough in order to change the tail docking practices in Denmark?” (Riis, 2012).

The 3rd of September 2012 the EC sent a response to Dyrenes Beskyttelse (Vryonides, 2012). The EC states that they do not believe that launching infringement proceedings will lead to “concrete” results. As mentioned in the previous response, if no new information is presented this complaint is ended. The EC will be working closely with the MS on implementing legislation and further development of law. Furthermore the EC must find a compromise between the agricultural sectors, the reality of industry structure and animal welfare. To conclude the EC had the belief that starting infringement proceedings might lead to negative outcomes in the court, send the wrong signal to MS and therefore not be beneficial for the welfare of the animals

A document written by Peter Stevenson, Chief Policy Advisor at Compassion in World Farming, compiled of photographic findings of MS pig farms from 2011 and 2012 clearly shows that all of these MS are in breach of Council Directive 2008/120/EC (Stevenson, 2012). A similar document was released in July 2014, presenting the same findings from MS pig farms from 2013 and 2014 (CIWF, 2014).

In March 2014 an open letter was sent from 56 Members of Parliament (MEP) to Commissioner Tonio Borg and Member State Ministers who are responsible for animal welfare (Poc, 2014). This open letter draws attention to non-compliance with the Council Directive 2008/120 on the protection of pigs, specifically regarding enrichment material and the ban on routine tail docking (Poc, 2014). Furthermore the open letter encourages the Commission and the Member States to ensure enforcement of the Directive (Poc, 2014).

The response from Mr. Borg stated that the knowledge and misconceptions regarding the necessity for tail docking need to be resolved (Borg, 2014). Guidelines were also to be finalised by the summer of 2014 (Borg, 2014).

In November 2014, a study was released on behalf of the European Parliament Committee on Petitions which aimed to evaluate the issues raised by the 2012 petition from Dyrenes Beskyttelse, legislation and implementation of pig welfare specifically on tail docking and prior, current and future measures to ensure full compliance among MS (Marzocchi, 2014). This study concluded that there are high rates of non-compliance in regards to routine tail docking and that the EC guidelines, training, e-learning tools as well as framework on legislation could be effective measures to use in order to increase compliance among MS (Marzocchi, 2014). While stricter enforcement would be complimentary to these, it was also concluded that the EC could be bolder with enforcement tools as well as collect, monitor and publish information of non-compliance to be transparent with all MS (Marzocchi, 2014).

On the 1st of December 2014 Dyrenes Beskyttelse commented on the report on routine tail docking of pigs by the DG for internal policies. They noted that the guidelines have not yet been introduced, the infringement proceedings as an enforcement tool have not been launched against MS, as well as the market distortion outcome from non-compliance has not been discussed (Dyrenes Beskyttelse, 2014).

On the 17th of December 2014 an open letter was sent from 44 Members of the European Parliaments’ Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals to Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis. This letter requested an explanation for the missing guidelines expected in the summer of 2014. It also expressed doubt in the possibility of achieving full compliance with only guidelines, as well as a summary from Compassion in World Farming from July 2014, which provided evidence of non-compliance to the Directives

requirements in seven MS (Intergroup, 2014). Furthermore the letter requested the EC to take further steps on the MS to enforce legislation, as well as a meeting with the Commissioner in January 2015 to discuss these steps (Intergroup, 2014).

On the 25th of March 2015 a meeting was held between Commissioner Andriukaitis and MEPs Mr. Kofod and Mr. Eck. Some outcome points were (P. Johansen, email sent to MEPs who co-signed the letter on the Pig Directive to Commissioner Andriukaitis, 26th of March 2015).

- The Commissioners cabinet and The Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety are working on making sure more focus is placed on better enforcement with the presentation of guidelines
- He is aware that bad enforcement creates unfair competition to those farmers who actually comply with the legislation
- Dialogue is needed with countries that are not committed – if guidelines are not followed infringements procedures start immediately
- MEPs to be more active – MEPs have the right to send letters to their MS and national Minister and be active in relation to their national Parliament
- The Commissioner will very soon send out a letter to responsible EU-Minister on instructions to the national inspectors on how to get better compliance

The study by Edman (2014), using 58 FVO-reports, written answers from CA and two interviews with EC and FVO, found that 18 of 28 MS do not abide by the Pig Directive regarding manipulable materials and that 17 of 28 MS do not abide by the Pig Directive regarding routine tail docking.

2. Purpose and questions

Given these high rates of non-compliance, this study examines the attention paid to pig welfare within the European Parliament (EP) and to study attitudes toward non-compliance with the current legislation. More specifically it analyses the attitudes of MEPs who directly or tangentially deal with issues in the departments of Environment, Public Health & Food Safety as well as Agriculture & Rural Development well as investigates how involved the MEPs are in the issue. Furthermore this study might help to uncover whether or not there are any differences of opinion between the MEPs.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Do the Members of the European Parliament consider the lack of compliance regarding the Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs a serious problem within the European Union?
2. How do Members of the European Parliament interpret the non-compliance regarding 17 of 28 Member States of the European Union with the Council Directive of Pigs with reference to routine tail docking and 18 of 28 MS on manipulable material?
3. Are there any other actions that can be taken to accomplish full compliance? If so what are they?
4. When will all Member States of the European Union have full compliance with the Council Directive of Pigs regarding routine tail docking and manipulable material?

3. Methodology

This study used survey research to fulfil the purpose. The survey was designed as a questionnaire in the program Netigate and sent out via e-mail (Annex 1) to MEPs whose e-mails were acquired from the European Parliament website. A total of 136 MEPs in the departments of Environment, Public Health & Food Safety and 90 MEPs in the Agriculture & Rural Development received the questionnaire. A pilot-questionnaire was sent out on the 1st of April 2015 to students in the Ethology and Animal Welfare programme at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The questionnaire was sent out on the 8th of April 2015 at 07:00. 15 reminders were automatically sent out to those persons who had not answered the questionnaire between the 2015-04-10 and 2015-05-01. The questionnaire closing date was the 2nd of May 2015.

In total 191 e-mails were sent out since some of the MEPs are involved in both departments. Two MEPs were added to the list one day later because their email addresses were not available on the EP website. These two email addresses were gathered by e-mailing the website management. MEPs include Chairs, Vice Chairs, Members and Substitutes of AGRI and ENVI.

There were minor technical problems with Netigate, which resulted in 4 MEPs not being able to access the questionnaire. An apology email was sent out to these MEPs, and a new email reminder through NETIGATE was sent out at 10 am the following day.

Mr. Kofod, MEP, is one of the main persons in contact with the EC regarding the Pig Directive. Not a current member of AGRI and ENVI, he was initially overlooked in the questionnaire respondent list. Once the author received the outcome of the meeting between Mr. Kofod, Mr. Eck and Commissioner Andriukaitis he was contacted and added to the list of respondents.

Due to the low response rate, on the 20th of April 2015 circa 65 MEPs were called using the script (Annex 2). The following day the remaining MEPs to whom the original questionnaire was sent to were called.

On the 22nd of April 2015, Members of the Intergroup (Nov. 2014) for Animal Welfare of the European Union were added to the respondent list. There are 97 Members in total, however some of these are also members of AGRI or ENVI. 52 emails were added to the respondent list, bringing the total to 243 respondents.

Besides the questionnaire, interviews were also used in the study. Dan Jørgensen, the Danish Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries was interviewed the 30th of April 2015 at the International Conference on pig welfare: Improving Pig Welfare – What are the ways forward? (Annex 3).

Thereafter on the 5th of May 2015 an email was sent out with the same questions to Sven-Erik Bucht (Minister of Rural Affairs, Sweden). On the 6th of May 2015 the same email was sent out via a contact form to Christian Schmidt (Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Germany) and Sharon Dijksma (Minister of Agriculture, the Netherlands). This was decided because of the signing of the political position paper. On the 29th of April 2015, at the international conference on pig welfare, a political position paper was signed by the four ministers (FVM, 2015). The signing of the political paper from these four countries, urges the EC to bring forth an updated, transparent and straightforward framework of the Directive, based on scientific research (FVM, 2015). Furthermore this paper focuses on pig welfare issues such as production systems to reduce surgical castration, effect of stocking density, impact of stall design and flooring types, risk factors

with tail biting, reducing tail docking, group housing for pregnant sows and loose-housing for sows in service.

Given that the study is based on real time developments in the area of pig welfare legislation and the time constraint in which this study was to be completed, several important interview results were received at very late stages. Great effort has been made to include interview results from the ministers in Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands into this study.

4. Results

4.1 Questionnaire

During the 24 days that the questionnaire was open, 25 out of 243 MEPs answered, leading to a response rate of 10 %. Additionally 8 MEPs visited the questionnaire but did not proceed to fill it out. 210 MEPs never clicked on the link to access the questionnaire. Most answers were submitted during the 20th and 23rd of April. There was a certain extent of loss of responses, meaning that the MEP decided to leave without completing the entire questionnaire (Table 1).

Table1. Question at which a MEP discontinued the questionnaire.

Question	Number of MEPs
2	2
3	2
4	1
5	4
7	1
8	1
10	1

Interest in the issue

Self-assessment: Questions 10 &14

84% of the 13 MEPs who answered all of the questionnaire have a moderate, high or very high priority in working on the question of full compliance within the EU with the Council Directive of Pigs regarding routine tail docking and manipulable material (Fig. 1). Given Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty which recognizes animals as sentient beings; 77 % of the 13 MEPs who filled out the questionnaire consider full compliance among all MS of above average importance (Fig 2).

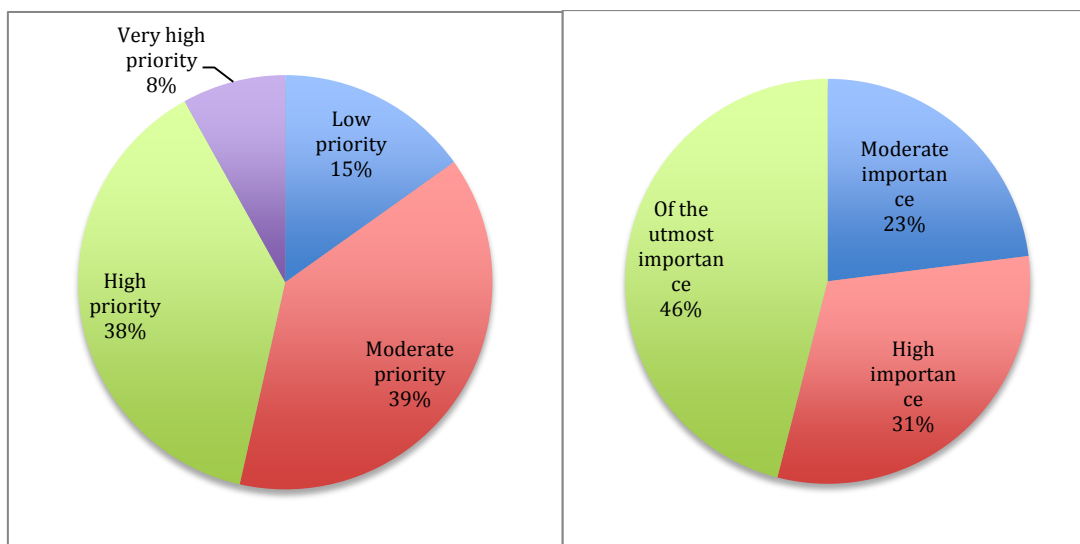


Fig.1. (Left) MEPs priority of working with full compliance regarding provision of manipulable material and routine tail docking. Fig. 2. (Right) The importance of full compliance among all MS of the EU.

Response rate: Question 17

Out of 243 respondents, 13 answered the entire questionnaire (Table 2).

Table 2. MEPs from MS who proceeded to fill out the entire questionnaire.

Country	Number of respondents
Sweden	3
Belgium	2
Germany	2
Denmark	1
Greece	1
Ireland	1
Lithuania	1
Portugal	1
United Kingdom	1

Effect of competition: Question 12

If there were to be a distorted competitiveness between MS because of the lack of compliance with the Council Directive on Pigs, what would the effect on pig production and trade business of pork be? 13 MEPs answered and 69 % perceive this to have a very negative or negative effect on the production and trade of pork. Whereas 31 % identified there to be a neutral or no effect at all on pig production and trade.

Knowledge of legislation

Self-assessment: Questions 1, 2, 3 & 4

72 % of MEPs who answered the questionnaire had above average knowledge on EU legislation on Animal Welfare and 57 % of MEPs had above average knowledge on specifically EU legislation on pigs (Fig. 3).

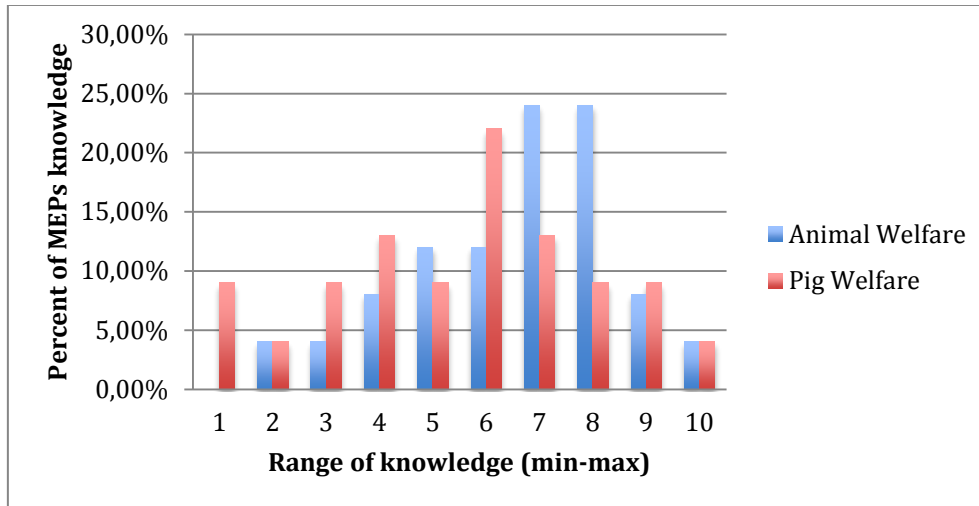


Fig. 3. MEP knowledge of EU legislation concerning Animal Welfare and Pig Welfare.

When the Danish Animal Welfare group Dyrenes Beskyttelse presented their petition in December 2014 not many MEPs were aware that pigs are to be provided with maniplable material and not to be routinely tail docked. More specifically the dispersion of awareness on the subject was little (Fig. 4.)

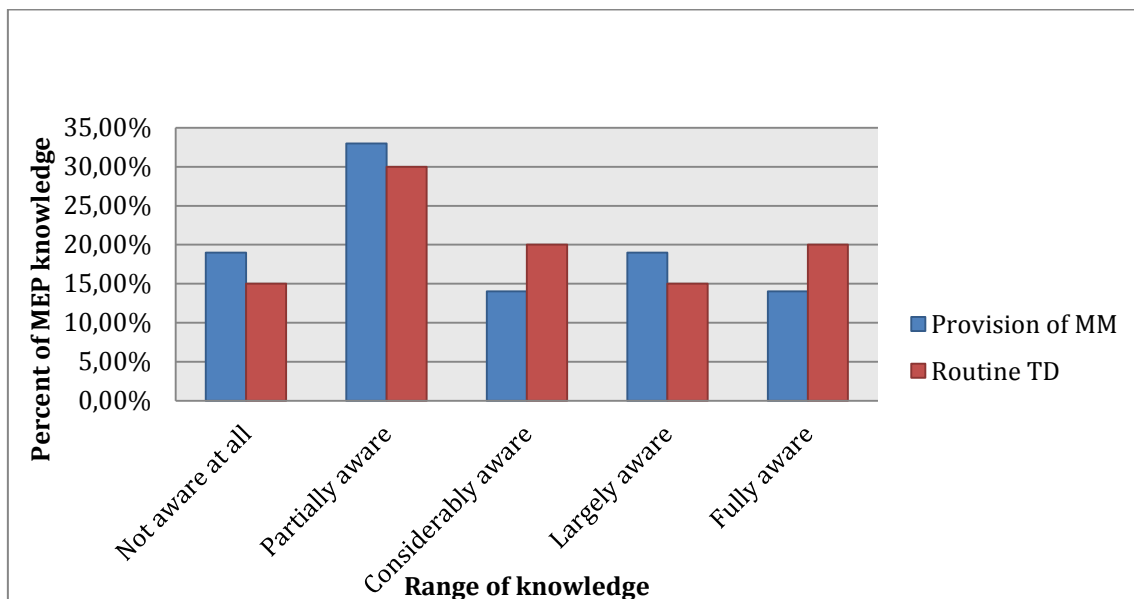


Fig 4. MEP Knowledge of EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (4) & (8)

Actual knowledge: questions 5, 6, 7 & 8

There is a wide variation of MEPs knowledge of their representing countries compliance rate with EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (4) & (8). Several MEPs did not have any perception of their representing countries compliance rate (Fig. 5). Additionally, no MEPs believed there to be full compliance within all MS of the EU regarding provision of manipulable material and routine tail docking (Fig. 6).

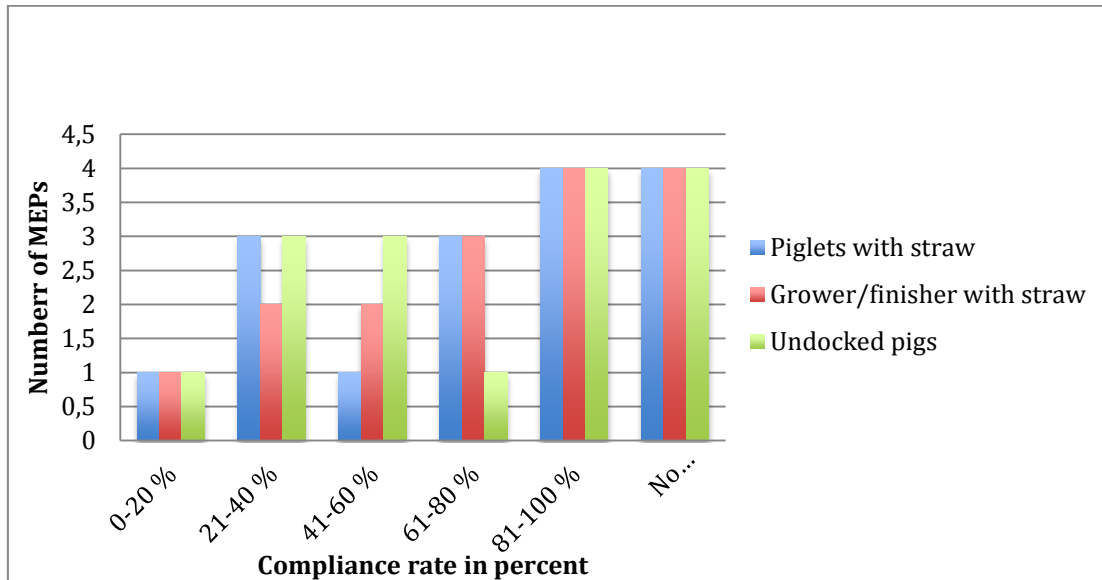


Fig 5. MEPs perception of representing countries compliance rate. (No = no perception).

Of the MEPs that answered this question (13), only four had a significantly different estimation of compliance compared to the reality of compliance. This suggests that of the MEPs that chose to answer the survey, they seem well informed about the current state of straw and docking of pigs. Of the MEPs that had a significantly different estimation, two overestimated compliance (Greece and Portugal) and two underestimated compliance (Lithuania and United Kingdom).

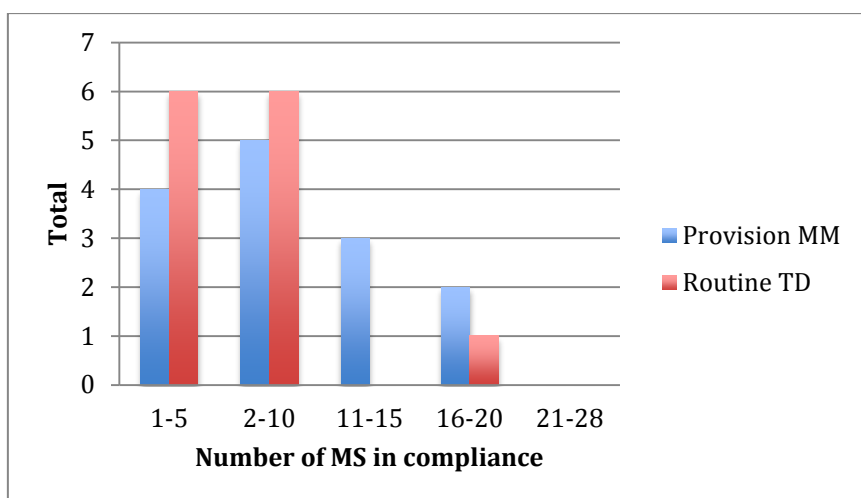


Fig 6. MEPs perception of full compliance within the EU.

The EC

Enforcement – question 13

When asked if MEPs believed there to be a perception within MS that no consequences exist for non-compliance; 46 % believed there to be such a perception. Furthermore 6 MEPs believed this perception to be somewhat widespread and 2 MEPs thought it very wide spread.

Does the EC do enough/adequately – question 9

64 % of MEPs considered the EC to poorly have lived up to their role in the issue of non-compliance among MS. Meanwhile only one MEP thought the EC has done a fair job.

What actions/steps should the EC take – question 11

None of the respondents thought that the EC had already taken the necessary actions to accomplish full compliance. All MEPs who answered the questionnaire indicated that they wish to see the EC make a greater effort to accomplish full compliance (Fig. 7).

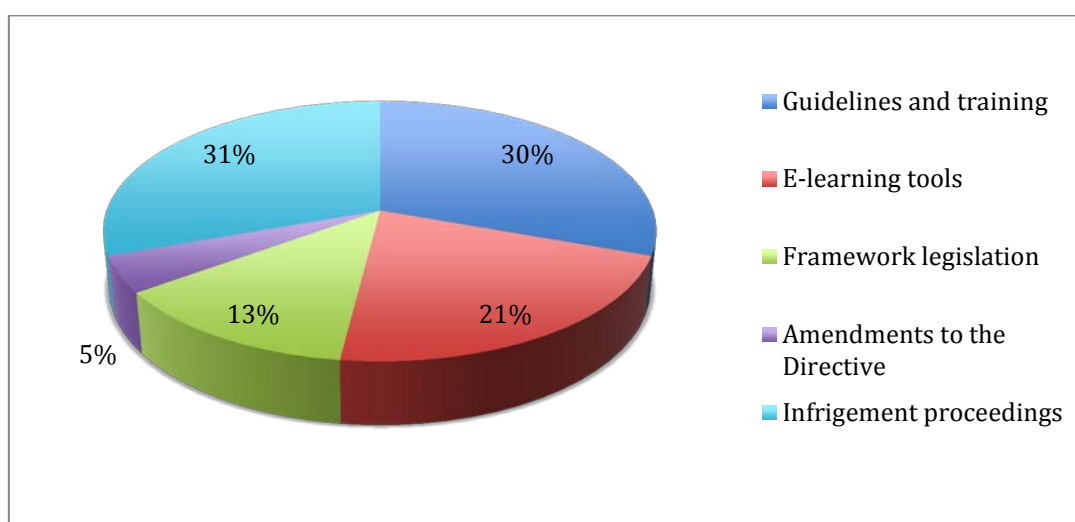


Fig. 7. Actions the MEPs wish the EC to take.

Other

14 MEPs from AGRI and ENVI had office policies of not answering surveys. MEPs not wanting to take part had to kindly ignore all the reminder emails. Also 72 MEPs in AGRI and ENVI did not answer when their offices were called.

4.2 Interviews

Dan Jørgensen, the Danish Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, answered three interview questions on the 30th of April 2015. Mr. Jørgensen acknowledged the non-compliance especially regarding routine tail docking, stating that “Denmark has this problem since 95 % of their pigs are docked”. He states that the normal instruments to ensure compliance such as controls and pressure may not be relevant in a country like Denmark. Mr. Jørgensen believed that a revision of the Directive and clearer regulations on how to achieve the goal of reducing tail docking needs to be written in the legislation. He believes it's necessary to clearly state that the underlying problem of tail docking is tail biting which happens because the pigs are stressed and bored and need to be mentally activated.

He continues to state that “there is probably a small distortion of competitiveness in pig production between the MS, but that it is probably smaller now than ever before compared on a global scale due to the EU having strict legislation. Furthermore countries like Denmark and Sweden however do not compete on equal terms with other countries since they have higher standards than EC standards. Though this is something that is of own choosing because the countries find it good for themselves and other reasons. (not necessarily for their economy).” There could also be other problems with implementation if some countries are more relaxed than others, however Mr. Jørgensen does not have a clear overview of the size of the subject.

“To improve animal welfare regarding tail docking it demands more work for the people in the stables because there is a need for better management. Sometimes even a new stable, which requires investments from the farmer.” In Denmark there is flexibility in the Common Agricultural Policy, which means you can for instance set demands for animal welfare. In Denmark there is incentive support for new stable buildings. “And even though the situation is probably not going to be perfect in those new stables either, still the animal welfare there is going to be far better than the old stables.”

On the 26th of May Sven-Erik Bucht answered the emailed interview questions. Mr. Bucht acknowledges that non-compliance with legislation leads to animal welfare problems and distorted competition. He states that “the EC has a clear focus on increasing compliance” and as “the present legislation and tools available to the EC have not been enough to ensure compliance, there is a need for additional measures.” He refers to the signing of the position paper in which suggestions are made to the EC to ensure compliance to legislation. He continues that due to non-compliance competition is distorted and farmers who comply may have higher costs though the market price for products are the same. He states “this is not acceptable – it must be profitable to abide by our common rules.”

On the 28th of May the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Animal Supply Chain and Animal Welfare Departement, the Netherlands, answered the emailed interview questions. Sharon Dijksma did not personally answer the questions.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs state that the EC “should supervise an adequate implementation and enforcement of the Council Directive”, as well as mentioning the important role of the FVO. They also suggest “guidelines of the European Commission for the interpretation of the directive can be helpful for clear interpretation of stipulations and better compliance with the directive”.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs acknowledges a cost price difference of pork producers however this is caused by production methods, feed cost, techno-economic production results and the structure of the production chain. They believe that the differences in national regulations of animal welfare only play a minor role. It is stated that “The extra costs which a pig farmer is confronted with enabling keeping pigs with intact tails should be covered via the market”. Furthermore “Additional costs of investments necessary to keep pigs with intact tails can be compensated via subsidies or tax schemes”.

No answer to the interview questions was received from the German minister Christian Schmidt.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess the attention paid to pig welfare within the EP and to study the attitudes towards the lack of compliance with the current legislation. Provided

with the results from the questionnaire, it is with the utmost caution that conclusions can be drawn from the findings. To answer the main question of this study, if MEPs consider the lack of compliance with EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (4) & (8) a serious problem within the EU, is quite difficult.

This study is based on earlier events on the issue. Research on pig behaviour and welfare have been on going for several decades. The issue of lack of compliance with legislation in the EU is not a new topic. The findings of non-compliance from Edman (2014) were a confirmation of the situation that had been going on for a while. This is one motive for why this study starts with previous events such as the Danish Animal Welfare Society's letter of complaint to the EC from a FVO inspection in Denmark from 2011. It would be unproductive to not involve the previous events in this study since they are of importance for the larger picture/problem of lack of compliance with pig legislation. An obstacle in doing this is that many of the previous findings are letters of communication between different parties and in different languages. This can at times be difficult to interpret.

The method of using a questionnaire to perform this study was chosen to efficiently reach a large population. To be even more effective in gathering answers, the email form was chosen instead of a postal questionnaire. However in this particular case, the outcome was not effective. The questionnaire was sent out to a large population, but did not receive the desired effect of a large response rate. Since there was a loss of responses for several questions, this could affect the results presented. Due to a low sample size, there were no statistical tests conducted to analyse the data.

The questions consolidated in this study are of importance for pig welfare, respect of legislation and of importance in regards to consumer trust. The respondents of the questionnaire were chosen because pig welfare concerns agriculture and food safety.

The application of this study can be used to further examine who could be involved to accomplish full compliance and which parties are responsible for taking actions towards this goal. This would in turn hopefully lead to compliance to current legislation and ensure a high welfare for pigs across the EU.

With better circumstances the application of this study could be immense. If the opinions of MEPs were lifted this could put pressure on the EC for actions to be taken to achieve the goal of full compliance among all MS. Research such as this and similar questionnaires, would contribute to increased compliance with animal welfare legislation and today's EU pig production would drastically be increased. If current legislation is followed, pigs would not be exposed to mutilations and they would receive appropriate enrichment materials to satisfy their behavioural needs leading to higher welfare for pigs in the production sector.

5.1 Questionnaire

There seem to be many explanations for the low response rate of the questionnaire. First of all, MEPs receive hundreds of emails each day making it difficult to catch their attention. The subject heading of an email can be very useful when trying to catch the receiver's attention. When using the method of sending an email questionnaire there is a risk of it being filtered to a spam or junk folder. Design strategies seem to play an important role in response rate to a questionnaire, where it is found that postal and telephone strategies are more effective than fax or web-based applications (VanGeest *et al.*, 2007). Other successful factors include brief, personalized questionnaires that are supported by professional associations (VanGeest *et al.*, 2007). This was not feasible for this study but future questionnaires of this sort should consider these aspects for possibilities of higher

response rates.

During the phone call sessions it was perceived that MEPs were not currently directly working with this question. Therefore it was not prioritized or of interest to take part in a questionnaire since MEPs were working with other issues. Several MEPs in ENVI voiced their opinion that they do not work with questions of pigs because this is found to be a question for AGRI only. It is interesting to note this perspective, when research shows that pig welfare concerns both agriculture and food safety.

In addition, 14 of the MEPs contacted through phone or email stated that their offices had strict policies of not taking part in surveys, no matter what the objective of the questionnaire was. This directly prohibits research of this kind from being carried out. It seems quite difficult to have an understanding of what elected officials are prioritizing to work with when they have such policies. Since they are elected officials, citizens who voted them into their political position should be able to know what they are working on not only through their voting record, but also through academic research conducted on opinions of MEPs. This policy directly obstructs research on policymaking at the highest political level in the European Union if offices are adopting these policies.

No conclusions can be drawn for those MEPs who did not partake in the questionnaire. One can wonder if it is not in the interest of MEPs to show their involvement in this current issue. One explanation for this could be because they are not currently working on this particular issue. An other could be that they do not emphasize the importance of working with the subject lack of compliance with current legislation on pig welfare.

The results from MEPs who did take part in the questionnaire should be discussed with prudence. The knowledge amongst MEPs on animal welfare legislation and specifically on pig welfare legislation is scattered (Fig. 4). The actual knowledge of the current situation is also very diverse amongst the MEPs who answered the questionnaire. Clearly the issue of non-compliance has different views of prioritization among the MEPs. Yet all 13 MEPs who answered the questionnaire consider full compliance to the Pig Directive of importance. Furthermore not one MEP considers that the EC has done a good, very good or excellent task at living up to their role in the issue of non-compliance among MS.

5.2 MEPs role

The results should be reviewed based on the context in which they are placed. There is a large prioritization in working with full compliance and 46 % of those MEPs who responded are of the opinion that this is a question of the utmost importance. Most MEPs consider themselves to have above average knowledge on EU legislation with animal welfare in general as well as specifically on pigs. However their knowledge is diverse.

The MEPs perception of their representing country's compliance rate is very high (81-100 %) or no perception at all. Yet when asked how many MS in total they perceived to be in full compliance, the majority of MEPs answered only 1-10 MS were in full compliance regarding legislation with provision of manipulable material and routine tail docking.

When in reality according to Edman (2014) seven MS comply with the legal requirements of provision of manipulable material and six MS comply regarding the practice of tail docking, it could be that the MEPs who answered the questionnaire are representatives from countries who actually are in compliance and that is why the perception is high. Which is partly shown in the results, though considering the response rate no principal conclusions can be drawn. It is questionable of how aware the MEPs who did not respond, are of the reality of the current situation of provision of manipulable material and routine tail docking of pigs within the EU.

According to the meeting with Commissioner Andriukaitis on the 25th of March 2015, he wishes to see MEPs have a more active role in the issue. He continues to state that MEPs can send letter to their MS and national Minister. In addition MEPs can send questions to the EC, which is a tool that can be used to draw the ECs attention to important issues.

How many questions have actually been sent to the EC from MEPs on the issue of lack of compliance with the EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (4) provision of manipulable material and (8) routine tail docking? From the results gathered in this report it cannot be concluded that MEPs actually play an active role in the issue. Whether this active role includes communications towards MS and/or the EC cannot be concluded. If maybe MEPs were better enlightened on the facts of the subject their commitment to the issue might be greater.

5.3 Interviews

Mr. Jørgensen acknowledged the problems with non-compliance to the Pig Directive and the underlying cause of tail biting as being boredom in pigs. Mr. Jørgensens opinion was that more effort is needed for on-farm management to work with tail docking. In Denmark, new stable buildings are supported through incentives to improve animal welfare. This could be a measure for other countries to take after in order to encourage farmers to improve animal welfare. However, The Netherlands feels this should be covered via the market. Another motivational factor for farmers to improve animal welfare could come from financially supporting proper enrichment materials (Bracke *et al.*, 2013). Mr. Bucht replies that economic incentives are not applicable to Sweden since tail docking is strictly prohibited. No mention was made regarding manipulable material, probably because straw is regularly used at Swedish pig farms. However some farmers are economically driven so it can be suggested that incentives may encourage farmers to continually improve animal welfare at farm level (Bernard *et al.*, 2014).

Mr. Jørgensen explained that the small competitive distortions between MS, which are probably lower now than ever before, are due to individual MS legislation where countries like Sweden and Denmark have enacted stricter legislation on pig welfare. The Danish minister did not comment on other MS that have problems with implementation of legislation, since it was unclear to him what the actual situation looks like. The reality is that the majority of MS are in non-compliance when it comes to routine tail docking and provision of manipulable material (Edman, 2014). However that parallel is not drawn that other countries have a difficulty implementing the minimum level of legislation presented. The Netherlands doesn't connect the different cost prices with the lack of compliance of tail docking. Mr. Bucht recognizes the distorted competitiveness and states that is it not acceptable.

The Swedish Minister seems to solely rely on the EC to take further actions to accomplish full compliance to legislation. The Netherlands emphasize the important role that the audits of the FVO play in this issue and also the guidelines. It seems that Mr. Bucht is of the opinion that through the signing of the political position paper, it is now up to the EC to take action.

The political position paper is an important role that the Ministers can play in the issue of non-compliance with provision of manipulable material and routine tail docking. To put pressure on the EC to start taking action to improve the compliance rate may be an effective tool. Furthermore it may be effective to in addition concentrate efforts, such as Mr. Jørgensen explains, to on-farm management. To actively engage farmers in the process as well as support them with new stable buildings would perhaps facilitate the situation.

The future will determine how the EC and the Ministers in EU countries work together to solve the issues at hand.

5.4 The future and how to accomplish full compliance

There is a vast amount of research on the topics of tail biting, tail docking and providing enrichment in the form of substrates. The studies that have been performed on these topics differ enormously in purpose and methodology. Since tail biting is a complex abnormal behaviour with various triggers, most research is not directly comparable. However there are compilations of independent scientific research through the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that is an agency for the EU (EFSA, 2015). EFSA is a tool that should be used by the EC, which is provided with scientific advice and communication on animal health and welfare (EFSA, 2015).

The reasons for continued non-compliance after more than two decades since the enforcement of routine tail docking was put in place is unacceptable. There are no reasons that can validate this practice. The extensive research that has already been published clearly shows that today's production systems for pigs are not adequately providing for the animals natural needs. Suboptimal housing and management are well known risk factors for tail biting, docking the tail only serves to alleviate the symptom of reduced welfare (Nannoni *et al.*, 2014). It is concluded that tail biting can probably be managed with proper housing and management without increasing the risk of tail biting (EFSA, 2014; Valros & Heinonen, 2015).

In 2001, the RSPCA sent out a questionnaire to members of the Freedom Foods Assurance Scheme to identify farmers' opinions of tail docking and risk factors for tail biting (Paul *et al.*, 2007). For the majority of farmers in this study it did not seem to be an ethical problem to tail dock and the authors suggest that if this attitude were to change maybe the thought of tail docking as the most effective preventative measure for tail biting would subside (Paul *et al.*, 2007).

Through a telephone survey conducted by Bracke *et al.* (2013) Dutch farmers identified tail biting as one of the main welfare problems in current pig production. However farmers expressed their fears of high prevalence of tail biting outbreaks if they don't tail dock, expressing tail docking as a necessity. Bracke *et al.* (2013) concluded that in order to reduce tail docking a change is needed in the attitudes of famers concerning awareness of the moral issues at hand since it is only feasible if the farmer is able and willing to take extra measures to avoid tail biting, and also to make it clear the uncertainty among conventional farmers on whose responsibility it actually is to stop tail docking.

A study was conducted through a convention between scientists and Dutch pig farmers to exchange knowledge on pig behaviour specifically on tail biting (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). There were constructive results through this dialogue on pig welfare, which is very complex, but obstacles were also unravelled (Bernard *et al.*, 2014).

Scientist and farmers had different opinions on the leading cause of tail biting due to different premises (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). Farmers' views were that climate, health and breed were the main components of tail biting behaviour, whereas scientists' acknowledged that these factors play a role, but that boredom is the leading cause (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). On-farm management of tail biting without tail dock is feasible however farmers need to be persuaded of this (Valros & Heinonen, 2015). Some production practices need be readjusted and farmers need to be made aware that tail biting won't perish completely (Valros & Heinonen, 2015).

The data from these dialogues show that some scientist and farmers have different notions

of what animal welfare is (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). Farmers have norms that define good welfare as biologically functioning animals while scientists have norms that maintain that good welfare is based on patterns of natural behaviour (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore there was a difference in the definition of what a pig is (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). Farmers defined pigs as 'production animals' when scientists used 'sentient beings' which recognizes pigs capabilities to experience emotions (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). Just as Bernard *et al.* (2014) explains; dialogue through one-way communication between farmers and scientists are ineffective, but through joint learning processes of carefully aided dialogues through reflections there may be a chance at a breakthrough to common understanding.

On the 29th and 30th of April 2015 an international conference on pig welfare was held in Copenhagen. The main goal of the conference was to bring scientist, farmers, stakeholders and politicians together for the first time to actually discuss the issues of pig welfare. This may be a starting point to finding a common understanding, however much more action is needed to see any results in the issue of non-compliance with legislation. MEPs who answered the questionnaire expressed the opinion that they wish to see the EC launch infringement proceedings against MS. The Commissioner Andriukaitis stated that if guidelines were not followed these infringement procedures would start immediately. The question is, when will these guidelines be presented? And how long will it take to conduct a meaningful dialog with MS who are not committed to full compliance? What role do MS Ministers play in this issue?

Therefore it is still unclear when all MS within the EU will have full compliance of the Council Directive of Pigs regarding routine tail docking and manipulable material.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is a wide variation in the perceptions of MEPs regarding lack of compliance with the Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs. MEPs have a skewed image of the reality of pig productions practices. This may be why there is a difference of views on how important the issue is. Still most MEPs indicate that the EC needs to make a greater effort.

This study presents a first glimpse at the attention paid to pig welfare amongst MEPs and the attitudes towards non-compliance with current legislation. When interpreting the responses to the questions, MEPs expect the EC to do more in the issue of non-compliance to pig legislation. It is of the utmost importance that the EC takes urgent action to improve the compliance rate among MS to the Directive of Pigs.

Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning

I dagens samhälle finns det en växande oro för hur produktionsdjur behandlas. Djurvälståndets intresset har ökat de senaste åren och konsumenterna blir allt mer medvetna om ämnet. Grisproduktionen uppmärksammades kraftigt under EU valet i Sverige våren 2014 och har sedan dess fortsatt att synas. En av de viktigaste frågorna inom grisproduktion i Europeiska Unionen är bristande efterlevnad av gällande lagstiftning där rutinmässig svanskupering och tillgången till manipulerbart material står i centrum.

Som medlemsstat i EU är man tvungen att följa de regelverk som finns. Det är förbjudet att rutinmässigt svanskupera grisar och har varit det sedan 1 januari 1994. Utöver detta har det även varit krav sedan 1 januari 1994 på att grisar ska ha tillgång till manipulerbart/bökbart material. Innan svanskupering utförs måste producenten först försöka förhindra svansbitning genom att ändra otillräckliga miljöförhållanden i stallet. Verkligheten av den nuvarande grisproduktionen i EU är att en majoritet av medlemsstaterna är i strid med gällande lagstiftning. Denna överträdelse av lagstiftningens miniminivå har pågått under flera år. Frågan har uppmärksammats från olika håll: universitet, djurskyddsgrupper, Europaparlamentets tvärvetenskapliga grupp för djurskydd och medlemsstaternas ministrar, men ändå är frågan fortfarande olöst.

Syftet med denna studie var att samla in och analysera parlamentsledamöters åsikter vad gäller frågan om bristande efterlevnad av direktivet om grisar, samt att undersöka hur engagerade parlamentsledamöter är i frågan. Detta gjordes via e-post enkät. Resultaten bör tolkas med försiktighet. Kunskapen som parlamentsledamöter har om grisars välfärd i lagstiftningen varierar och kännedom om den nuvarande situationen är mycket varierad. Frågan om bristande efterlevnad av gällande lagstiftning har olika prioritering bland parlamentsledamöter. Men fullständig efterlevnad är av betydelse. Parlamentsledamöter uttryckte att Europeiska kommissionen inte aktivt har levt upp till sin roll i frågan om bristande efterlevnad.

Man kan dra slutsatsen att det finns en stor variation i uppfattningar bland parlamentsledamöter om bristande efterlevnad av grisdirektivet. Vidare genom strikta kontorsregler (Office Policy) har parlamentsledamöter inte svarat på enkäten, vilket gör det omöjligt att undersöka vilka frågor dessa politiker prioriterar att arbeta med. Denna studie presenterar en första inblick i den uppmärksamhet som ägnas åt grisars välfärd bland parlamentsledamöter och attityderna till bristande efterlevnad av gällande lagstiftning. Parlamentsledamöter förväntar sig att Europeiska kommissionen ska göra mer i frågan om bristande efterlevnad av grisdirektivet. Det är angeläget att kommissionen vidtar åtgärder för att förbättra efterlevnaden bland medlemsstaterna till grisdirektivet.

Acknowledgements

There are many people who have contributed to making this study possible. First I would like to thank my supervisor, Bo Algers for his enthusiasm and dedication. He made me want to thoroughly think things through, rethink ideas and then think them over once again, always striving to do better. His knowledge and compassion for pig welfare are my inspiration.

I would also like to thank the MEPs for their time and support in participating in the questionnaire. Also Dan Jørgensen for taking the time to sit down with me and answer my questions. I believe that these issues of pig welfare can be solved. Thank you to my assisting supervisor Kristina Nordéus. She has continually helped me in this writing process and I appreciate all her advice.

I would like to thank my sister, Stephanie Toro for her never ending support and believing in me. And for always wanting me to be better. Lastly I would like to thank anyone who had a helping hand in the process of me gathering information for this study.

References

- Beattie, V. E., O'Connell, N. E. & Moss, B. W. 2000. Influence of environmental enrichment on the behaviour, performance and meat quality of domestic pigs. *Livestock Production Science*. 65, 71-79.
- Bernard, M., Schuitmaker, T. J. & de Cock Buning, T. 2014. Scientists and Dutch Pig Farmers in Dialogue About Tail Biting: Unravelling the Mechanism of Multi-stakeholder Learning. *Journal of Agriculture and Environmental Ethics*. 27, 431-452.
- Borg, T. 2014. Letter to Members of the European Parliament concerning 'letter of 4 March 2014 concerning the proper implementation of Council Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs (Ref. OJ L 47, 18.2.2009, p. 5)'. European Commission Ref. Ares(2014)1116102 - 09/04/2014.
- Bracke, M. B. M. 2006. Expert opinion regarding environmental enrichment material for pigs. *Animal Welfare*. 15, 67-70.
- Bracke, M. B. M., DeLauwere, C. C., Wind, S. M. M. & Zonderland, J. J. 2013. Attitudes of Dutch Pig Farmers Towards Tail Biting and Tail Docking. *Journal of Agriculture and Environmental Ethics*. 26, 847-868.
- Broom, D. M. & Fraser, A. F. 2007. *The Welfare of Pigs*. In: *Domestic Animal Behaviour and Welfare*, 4th Edition. Oxfordshire, CAB International.
- Brunberg, E., Wallenbeck, A. & Keeling, L. J. 2011. Tail biting in fattening pigs: Associations between frequency of tail biting and other abnormal behaviours. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. 133, 18-25.
- Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), 2014. <http://www.ciwf.org.uk/media/5508030/lack-of-compliance-with-the-pigs-directive-continues-urgent-need-for-change.pdf>, used 2015-04-01
- Council Directive (EC) 2008/120 of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs
- Council Directive (EEC) 91/630 of 19 November 1991 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs
- D'Eath, R. B., Arnott, G., Turner, S. P., Jensen, T., Lahrmann, H. P., Busch, M. E., Neimi, J. K., Lawrence, A. B. & Sandøe, P. 2014. Injurious tail biting in pigs: how can it be controlled in existing systems without tail docking? *Animal*. 8:9, 1479-1497.
- Di Martino, G., Scollo, A., Gottardo, F., Stefani, A. L., Schiavon, E., Capello, K., Marangon, S. & Bonfanti, L. 2015. The effect of tail docking on the welfare of pigs housed under challenging conditions. *Livestock Science*. 173, 78-86.
- Dybkjaer, L. 1992. The identification of behavioural indicators of 'stress' in early weaned piglets. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. 35, 135-147.
- Edman, F. 2014. Do the member states of the European Union comply with the legal requirements for pigs regarding manipulable material and tail docking?. Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa, SLU, Skara. Student Thesis available at: <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se/7178/>
- European Commission, 2014a. http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/applying-eu-law/index_en.htm, used 2015-04-13
- European Commission,

- 2014b. http://ec.europa.eu/food/food_veterinary_office/index_en.htm, used 2015-05-11
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). 2007a. Animal health and welfare in fattening pigs in relation to housing and husbandry. *The EFSA Journal*. 564,1-14.
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). 2007b. The risk associated with tail biting in pigs and possible means to reduce the need for tail docking considering the different housing and husbandry systems. *The EFSA Journal*. 611, 1-13.
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). 2014. Scientific Opinion concerning a Multifactorial approach on the use of animal and non-animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs. *EFSA Journal*. 12:3702.
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), 2015. <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/aboutefsa/efsawho.htm>, used 2015-05-17
- European Parliament Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals (Intergroup), 2014. http://www.keithtaylormep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/pig-welfare_Andriukaitis_December-2014.pdf, used 2015-05-26
- Eurostat, 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Pig_farming_sector_-_statistical_portrait_2014, used 2015-04-08
- EUWelNet, 2013. <http://euwelnet.hwmm001.topshare.com/Pages/0>, used 2015-05-12
- Fraser, A. F. 1980. Behaviour Patterns in Pigs. In: *Farm Animal Behaviour*, Second Edition. London, Baillière Tindall a division of Cassel Ltd.
- Jensen, P. 2002. Behaviour of Pigs. In: *The Ethology of Domestic Animals: an Introductory Text* (Ed. P. Jensen). Oxon, CABI Publishing.
- Lahrman, H. P., Oxholm, L. C., Steinmetz, H., Nielsen, M. B. F. & D'Eath, R. B. D. 2015. The effect of long or chopped straw on pig behaviour. *Animal*. 9, 862-870.
- Lewis, N. J. 1999. Frustration in goal-directed behaviour in swine. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. 64, 19-29.
- Marzocchi, O., 2014. Directorate-General for Internal Polices – Policy Department Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs: Routine Tail-Docking of Pigs. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/509997/IPOL_STU\(2014\)509997_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/509997/IPOL_STU(2014)509997_EN.pdf), used 2015-04-01
- Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark (FVM), 2015. Request for revision of Council Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs (Codified version). http://en.fvm.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/FVM.dk/Nyhedsfiler/position-paper.pdf, used 2015-04-30
- Newberry, R. C., Wood-Gush, D. G. M. & Hall, J. W. 1988. Playful behaviour of piglets. *Behavioural Processes*. 17, 205-216.
- Nannoni, E., Valsami, T., Sardi, L. & Martelli, G. 2014. Tail docking in pigs: a review on its short and long-term consequences and effectiveness in preventing tail biting. *Italian Journal of Animal Science*. 13, 98-106.
- Oostindjer, M., Kemp, B., van den Brand, H. & Bolhuis, J. E. 2014. Facilitating 'learning from mom how to eat like a pig' to improve welfare of piglets around weaning. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. 160, 19-30.
- Paul, E. S., Moinard, C., Green, L. E. & Mendl, M. 2007. Farmers' attitudes to methods for

- controlling tail biting in pigs. *Veterinary Record*. 160, 803-805.
- Pigmeat, 2015.http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/pigmeat/index_en.htm, used 2015-04-08
- Poc, P., 2014.http://www.animalwelfareintergroup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/SKMBT_C55414032117490.pdf, used 2015-05-26
- Riis, B. 2012. Vedr. svar på klage om rutinemæssig halekupering i Danmark (CHAP(2012)00655).1. august 2012 9.2.3.41. Dyrenes Beskyttelse
- Riis, B. & Jensen, P., 2011.<http://www.dyrenesbeskyttelse.dk/sites/default/files/landbrugsdyr/svin/Klage%20sen dt%20til%20justitsmin%20og%20f%C3%B8devaremin.pdf>, used 2015-05-26
- Riis, B. & Jensen, P., 2012.http://www.dyrenesbeskyttelse.dk/sites/default/files/rapporter%20o.lign./klage_halek upering.pdf, used 2015-05-26
- Scollo, A., Di Martino, G., Bonfanti, L., Stefani, A. L., Schiavon, E., Marangon, S. & Gottardo, F. 2013. Tail docking and the rearing of heavy pigs: The role played by gender and the presence of straw in the control of tail biting. Blood parameters, behaviour and skin lesions. *Research in Veterinary Science*. 95, 825-830.
- Spinka, M. 2009. Behaviour of Pigs. In: *The Ethology of Domestic Animals*, 2nd Edition (Ed. P. Jensen). Oxfordshire, CABI Publishing.
- Stevenson, P. 2012. Widespread infringements of EU Directive on the welfare of pigs. *Compassion in World Farming*.
- Studnitz, M., Jensen, M. B. & Pedersen L. J. 2007. Why do pigs root and in what will they root? A review on the exploratory behaviour of pigs in relation to environmental enrichment. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. 107, 183-197.
- The Danish Animal Welfare Society (DyrenesBeskyttelse). 2014. Comments on Report on routine tail-docking of pigs by the DG for internal policies. PETI meeting 02-12-2014. DyrenesBeskyttelse. Dok. Nr. D14-94512.
- Ursinus, W. W., Van Reenen, C. G., Kemp, B. & Bolhuis, J. E. 2014. Tail biting behaviour and tail damage in pigs and the relationship with general behaviour: Predicting the inevitable? *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. 156, 22-36.
- Valros, A. & Heinonen, M. 2015. Save the pig tail. *Porcine Health Management*. 1:2.
- Valros, A., Munsterhjelm, C., Puolanne, E., Ruusunen, M., Heinonen, M., Peltoniemi, O. A. T. & Pösö, A. R. 2013. Physiological indicators of stress and meat and carcass characteristics in tail bitten slaughter pigs. *Acta Veterinaria Scandinavica*. 55, 75.
- VanGeest, J. B., Johnson, T. P. & Welch, V. L. 2007. Methodologies for Improving Response Rates in Surveys of Physicians. A Systematic Review. *Evaluation & the Health Professions*. 30:4, 303-321.
- Vryonides, D. 2012. Letter to DyrenesBeskyttelse concerning 'Deresklage af 29. Februar 2012 ogbrev av 1. august 2012 (Ref.: 9.2.3.41), mitbrev av 5. juli 2012 (Ref. Ares(2012)815277 – (Vores réf.: CHAP(2012)00655)'. European Commission Ref. Ares (2012) 1023736 – 03/09/2012.
- Wood-Gush, D. G. M. & Vestergaard, K. 1991. The seeking of novelty and its relation to play. *Animal Behaviour*. 42, 599-606.

Wood-Gush, D. G. M. & Vestergaard, K. 1989. Exploratory Behavior and the Welfare of Intensively Kept Animals. *Journal of Agricultural Ethics*. 2, 161-169.

Wood-Gush, D. G. M. & Vestergaard, K. 1993. Inquisitive exploration in pigs. *Animal Behaviour*. 45, 185-187.

Zonderland, J. J., van Riel, J. W., Bracke, M. B. M., Kemp, B., den Hartog, L. A. & Spoolder, H. A. M. 2009. Tail posture predicts tail damage among weaned piglets. *Applied Animal Science Behaviour*. 121, 165-170.

Annex

Annex 1: Cover letter and Questionnaire

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that you have been selected to answer a questionnaire as part of a study on the attention to pig welfare in the food industry within the European Parliament, to assess the attention paid to pig welfare within the European Parliament, and to study attitudes toward non-compliance with the current legislation. This survey has been designed as part of a bachelor's thesis within the program of Ethology and Animal Welfare at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

The survey is designed as a questionnaire and sent out via e-mail. This questionnaire is sent out to all Members of the European Parliament who directly or tangentially deal with issues in the departments of Environment, Public Health & Food Safety as well as Agriculture & Rural Development.

This questionnaire will help answer the main question of the bachelor thesis, "Do the Members of the European Parliament consider the lack of compliance regarding the Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs a serious problem within the European Union?"

Your participation in the survey is voluntary, but it is of importance for the quality of the results that you answer the questionnaire. This questionnaire will take a maximum of 5 minutes to complete, is comprised of 17 questions and response options are included. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Your individual responses will be kept confidential!

If you have any problems answering the questionnaire or have any other questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at:

Email: isro0001@stud.slu.se

Phone: +46 768-979163

You may also contact my supervisor, Professor Bo Algers at Bo.Algers@slu.se

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Toro

Ethology and Animal Welfare Programme

Department of Animal Environment and Health

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

1. How familiar do you in general consider yourself to be with EU legislation on Animal Welfare?

Min – max scale

2. How familiar do you consider yourself to be with the European legislation on pig husbandry, such as the Council Directive on Pigs?

Min – max scale

3. When the petition from the Danish Dyrenbeskyttelse was presented on the 1st of December 2014, were you aware that according to the EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (4) all pigs are to have access to material that enables proper investigation and manipulation behaviours?

Not aware at all

Partially aware

Considerably aware

Largely aware

Fully aware

4. When the petition from the Danish Dyrenbeskyttelse was presented on the 1st of December 2014, were you aware that according to the EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (8) other measures shall be taken to prevent tail-biting before tail-docking is practiced, taking into account environment and stocking densities? Furthermore, the EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (8) states “For this reason inadequate environmental conditions or management systems must be changed.”.

Not aware at all

Partially aware

Considerably aware

Largely aware

Fully aware

5. What is your perception of your own representing country’s compliance rate with regards to EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (4) on manipulable material?

Percentage of piglets with straw:

0-20 %

21-40 %

41-60 %

61-80 %

81-100%

No perception on the subject

Percentage of grower/finisher pigs with straw:

0-20 %

21-40 %

41-60 %

61-80 %

81-100%

No perception on the subject

6. What is your perception of your own representing country's compliance rate with regards to EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (8) on routine tail-docking?

Percentage of undocked pigs:

0-20 %

21-40 %

41-60 %

61-80 %

81-100%

No perception on the subject

7. Without looking at eventual reported figures what is your perception of the full compliance rate within the EU regarding EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (4) on manipulable material? How many of the 28 Member States are in full compliance?

__ out of 28 Member States in compliance

8. Without looking at eventual reported figures what is your perception of the full compliance rate within the EU regarding EC 2008/120 Annex I, Chapter I (8) on routine tail-docking? How many of the 28 Member States are in full compliance?

__ out of 28 Member States in compliance

9. To what extent do you consider that the Commission has adequately lived up to their role in this issue of non-compliance among Member States?

Very poor

Poor

Fair

Good

Very good

Excellent

I don't know

10. To what extent do you prioritize working on the question of full compliance within the European Union with the Council Directive of Pigs regarding routine tail docking and manipulable material?

Minimal/not at all prioritized

Low priority

Moderate priority

High priority

Very high priority - I consider this one of the most important questions

11. What actions do you wish to see the Commission take in order to accomplish full compliance throughout the European Union with the Council Directive of Pigs regarding routine tail docking and manipulable material?

None – the Commission has already taken the necessary actions

Guidelines and training with Member States and stakeholders

E-learning tools for inspectors and farmers

Propose framework legislation on animal welfare

Propose amendments to the Directive

Launch infringement proceedings against Member States

Other, fill in your own answer:

Please explain your answer below:

12. Taking into account the lack of compliance issue with the Council Directive of Pigs regarding routine tail docking and manipulable material; in your perception what is the effect on pig production and trade business of pork if there is a distorted competitiveness between the Member States?

Very positive

Positive

Neutral/ no effect

Negative

Very negative

13. Speaking generally of EU Law – do you think there is a perception within Member States that there are no consequences for non-compliance?

No such perception exists

There is such a perception

I don't know

If there is, how wide spread is this perception?

Very wide spread

Somewhat wide spread

Not very wide spread

14. Given the EU recognition of animals as sentient beings, this implies that we have moral responsibilities towards them and an obligation to protect their welfare through legislation. How important do you consider it that the Council Directive of Pigs regarding routine tail docking and manipulable material is fully complied with among all Member States of the EU?

Not important

Low importance

Moderate importance

High importance

Of the utmost importance

15. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Other

16. What is your age?

17. What country are you representing?

Other comments regarding the content of the questionnaire or other remarks in general:

Annex 2: Phone script

Hi my name is Isabelle Toro.

I'm calling from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

I'm conducting research on the opinions of Members of Parliament regarding the Pig Directive.

Has your office received my email that I sent on April 8th? As well reminders last week regarding an Animal Welfare questionnaire?

Yes – Great! I have extended the deadline till Wednesday, and it's really important that I receive your representatives' response. As there is no other way for me to collect this data. It's anonymous and takes less than 5 minutes to fill out.

No – Is this the right email address? – say it – have you checked your spam folder? Could you please look for it? It's really important that I receive your representatives' response. As there is no other way for me to collect this data. It's anonymous and takes less than 5 minutes to fill out.

Don't know – Is there any way you could check the emails? – I can send it again. It's really important that I receive your representatives' response. As there is no other way for me to collect this data. It's anonymous and takes less than 5 minutes to fill out.

Ending – Thank you so much for your support – I look forward to your response. Please remember that these are anonymous – it takes less than 5 minutes to fill out.

Annex 3: Interview Questions

First of all, thank you for this amazing conference. And thank you for taking the time to speak with me and participating in this interview.

As you know a questionnaire was sent out to Members of the European Parliament in ENVI and AGRI as well as members of EP's Intergroup on the Welfare of Animals. This questionnaire was designed to assess the attention paid to pig welfare within the European Parliament, and to study attitudes toward non-compliance with the current pig legislation.

Is it okay that I record this, so I get everything correctly noted?

1. How would you work to accomplish full compliance? Or what actions do you wish to see the EC take to ensure full compliance to Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs?
2. You do perceive there to be a distorted competitiveness in pig production between the MS? If so how does this affect the trade business of pork across Europe?
3. To continually improve animal welfare an ongoing dialogue with industry and stakeholders seems to be of the utmost importance and to have cooperation with famers. What kind of economic incentive can you give farmers to improve their animal welfare regarding tail docking and manipulable material?

Ending – Thank you for your time. If you would like, I can send the results from the survey when they are compiled. I would appreciate if you could comment on them on that time.

Vid **Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa** finns tre publikationsserier:

- * **Avhandlingar:** Här publiceras masters- och licentiatavhandlingar
- * **Rapporter:** Här publiceras olika typer av vetenskapliga rapporter från institutionen.
- * **Studentarbeten:** Här publiceras olika typer av studentarbeten, bl.a. examensarbeten, vanligtvis omfattande 7,5-30 hp. Studentarbeten ingår som en obligatorisk del i olika program och syftar till att under handledning ge den studerande träning i att självständigt och på ett vetenskapligt sätt lösa en uppgift. Arbetenas innehåll, resultat och slutsatser bör således bedömas mot denna bakgrund.

Vill du veta mer om institutionens publikationer kan du hitta det här:
www.slu.se/husdjurmiljohalsa

DISTRIBUTION:

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Fakulteten för veterinärmedicin och
husdjursvetenskap
Institutionen för husdjurens miljö och hälsa
Box 234
532 23 Skara
Tel 0511-67000
E-post: hmh@slu.se
Hemsida:
www.slu.se/husdjurmiljohalsa

*Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal
Science
Department of Animal Environment and Health
P.O.B. 234
SE-532 23 Skara, Sweden
Phone: +46 (0)511 67000
E-mail: hmh@slu.se
Homepage:
www.slu.se/animalenvironmenthealth*
