‘ProPIG’
Organic pig health, welfare and environmental impact across Europe


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Background

Organic pig production is characterised through a holistic approach based on the EU Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and the IFOAM principles: ‘health, ecology, fairness and care’.

‘Health’ is defined as ‘the wholeness and integrity of living systems. It is not simply the absence of illness, but the maintenance of physical, mental, social and ecological well-being’ (IFOAM; 2006).

Applying those concepts to organic pig production can cause conflicts between animal welfare and environmental impact:

Outdoor systems allow natural behaviour, such as rooting, however, this can cause damage to the grass cover

Indoor with concrete outside run
Partly outdoor
Outdoor

Hypothesis

❖ When well managed, all three housing systems are similar
❖ Good animal health, welfare and proper nutrition is correlated with decreased environmental impacts at farm level

Aim of ProPIG

1. To identify animal - environment interactions in the three different housing systems for organic pigs (outdoor / partly outdoor / indoor with concrete outside run) across the European climate zones
2. To develop and implement farm specific strategies to reduce environmental impacts by improving health, welfare, nutrition and management of organic pigs
3. To disseminate knowledge to national advisory bodies and farmers

Methods

On-farm assessment protocols will be carried out on 75 farms in three pig husbandry systems in eight European countries.

❖ Evaluation of animal health and welfare from animal based parameters including clinical and selected behavioural parameters
❖ Life Cycle Assessment and calculations of nutrient balances at farm and outdoor area level
❖ Feedback of results to farmers to be used to decide farm specific goals and strategies to achieve these goals.
❖ All farms will create their individual health, welfare and environmental plan, which will be reviewed after one year to allow continuous development

Perspectives

ProPIG will provide the opportunity not only to investigate, but also improve the influence of organic pig farming systems on animal welfare and environmental impact.

This fulfils the fourth IFOAM principle of care: ‘Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment’ (IFOAM, 2006).

This project runs from 2011-2014, therefore no results are available yet.

www.coreorganic2.org/propig

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