

Food Chain Information Usefulness in Pig Meat Inspection

1. Background

The main purposes of the Food Chain Information (FCI) are to provide relevant data on public health, animal health and animal welfare and to assist the Official Veterinarian in choosing the appropriate inspection procedures. In the EU, the post-mortem meat inspection of pigs shifted towards a visual inspection in 2014 in the accomplishment of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 219/2014. As recommended by EU law, FCI support is particularly relevant for the risk-based approach that supports this change.

2. Objective

To evaluate the relevance of data included in FCI in pig meat inspection for the decision to perform visual inspection in opposition to the classic inspection method.

3. Materials and Methods

- FCI reports obtained between October 2016 and January 2017 at four abattoirs in the north of Portugal were analysed.

- Information provided on sanitary status, medication, disease occurrence, tests and results of previous ante and post mortem exams was classified as Plausible, Nothing to declare, Invalid and Nonresponse.

- Results of current ante- and post-mortem exams were assessed.

- Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS and Excel.

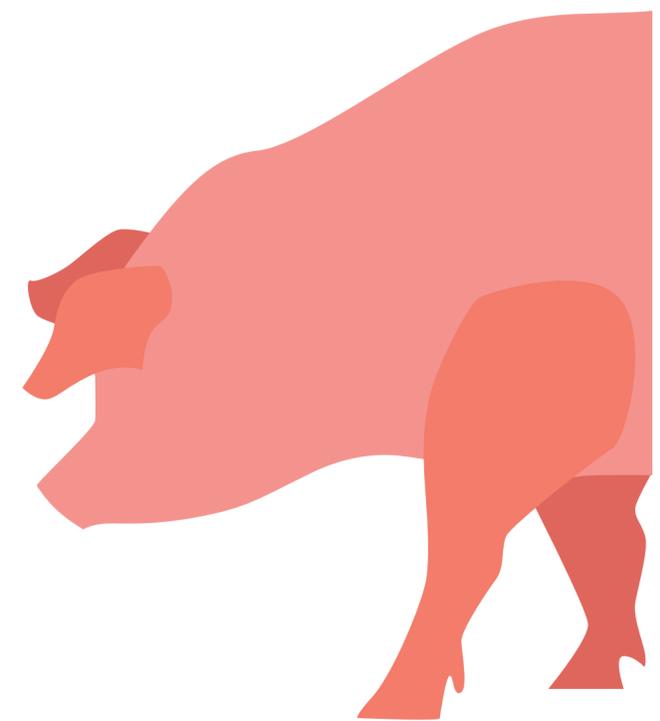
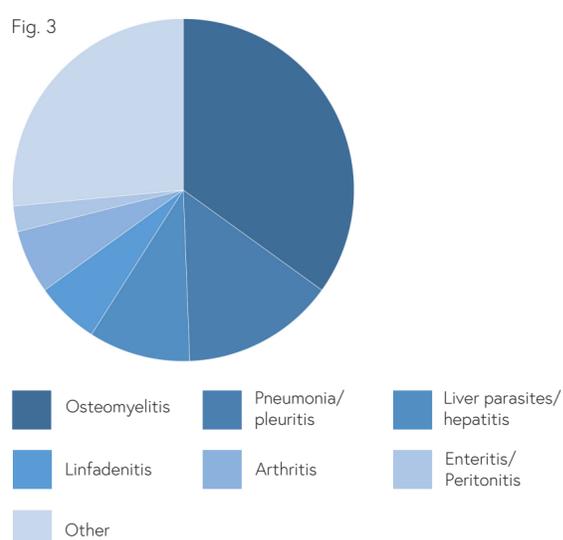
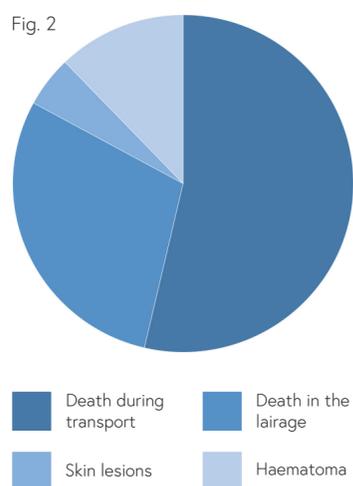
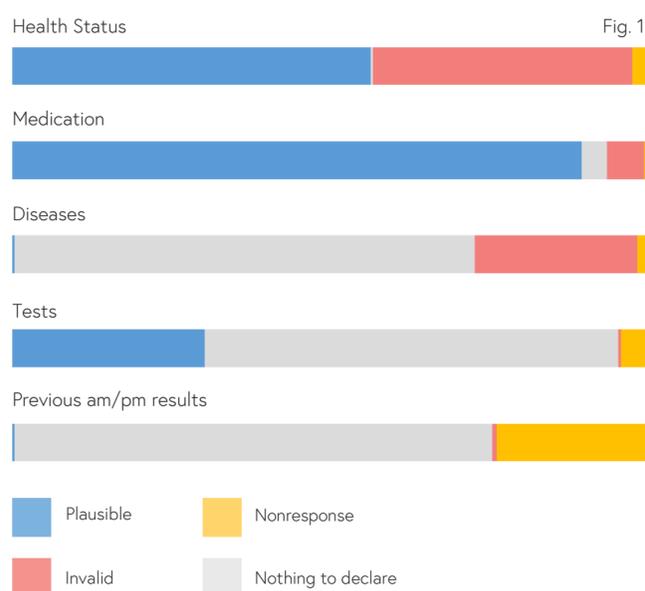
4. Results

- A total of 276 FCI reports comprising 33929 pigs were analysed. Of these, 56.5% declared the health status, 89.9%, and 30.4% gave plausible information on medication, and tests, respectively. Regarding diseases and results of previous ante and post-mortem exams, 0.4% had a plausible response. The standard reply "nothing to declare" was frequent on the items disease (72.5%), tests (65.2%) and previous results (75.4%) (figure 1).

- Regarding ante- and post-mortem inspection, at least one condemnation was registered in 11.6% and 26.0% of the batches, respectively (figures 2 and 3).

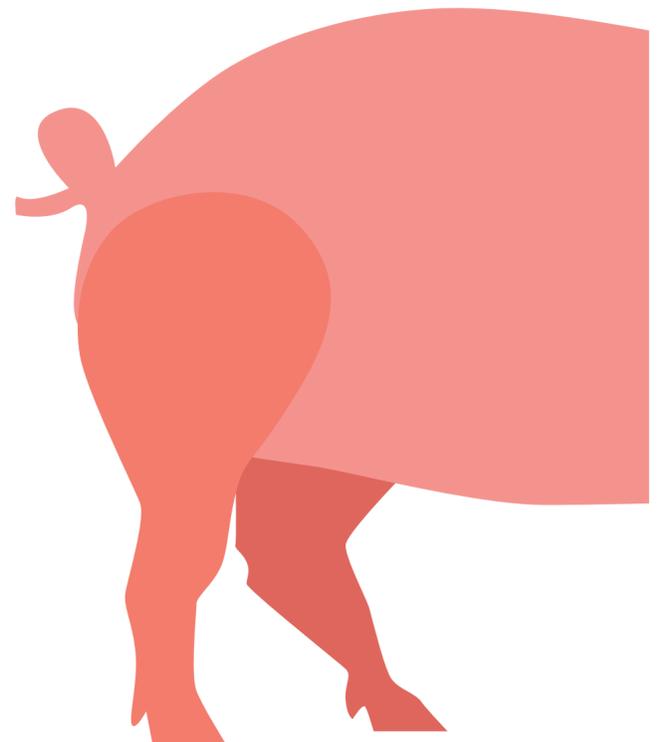
- The most common causes of total condemnation in post-mortem inspection were pneumonia and osteomyelitis, registered in 5.6% and 13.5% of the batches, respectively (figure 2). None of the respective FCI declarations reported disease or specific medication.

- Information delivered by FCI was analysed considering the ante- and post-mortem results. The quality and completeness of FCI were similar in batches with at least one total condemnation when compared to batches without condemnations.



5. Discussion and Conclusions

On topics of the FCI that should support risk-based inspection, imprecise or irrelevant information was delivered by the producers. To better fulfil the objective of FCI to contribute to meat inspection, the structure and the design of FCI forms could be modified so that they become easier to fill in and with more relevant information. The most valuable data for the risk assessment and the OV decision to perform specific inspection procedures should include a combination of previous inspection results but also surveillance information on high priority biological hazards as recommended by EFSA (2011). Incorrect and/or incomplete forms should be traced back and farmers trained on proper answering FCI items.



6. Perspectives

- The format of FCI forms could be improved by including closed-answer format with pre-defined response options that could be selected by the farmer.

- The motivation of producers to provide a valuable FCI should be enhanced and training considered.

References:
Commission Regulation (EU) No. 219/2014.
EFSA Panel on Biological Hazards, 2011. Scientific Opinion on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat (swine). EFSA Journal 9, 2351.