

*Perspective***A note on organic pig farming****Anand Goswami***

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DESCRIPTION

Organic pig farming requirements provide an opportunity to provide a pleasant life for animals. The space needs allow animals to engage in species-specific activity while also allowing them to get more exercise. Roughage and bedding are important in reducing production stress. From a veterinary standpoint, the most difficult question is how to manage animal health care. Vaccines, antibiotics, and anthelmintics can all be used in organic farming, but only to a certain extent. Although effective management can accomplish a lot, there are still times when medication is required. What is the minimum number of joint inflammations or liver spots required to warrant medication use? The problem must be addressed on a case-by-case basis. In an organic farm, production profitability is critical since a bad economy poses a serious threat to animal welfare.

Organic cattle are assumed to have good welfare standards by consumers. Consumers' perceptions of animal welfare are unclear, and it's difficult to establish a precise definition of the term. Professor Broom defined welfare as an animal's status in relation to its attempts to cope with its environment in 1986, and this is one of the most commonly used definitions. Van Putten defined animal well-being in the early 1970s: "Animal well-being is defined as living in tolerable harmony with the environment, both physically and psychologically, meaning that the environment must be of such quality that it is within the adaptability of the animal concerned." Animal welfare, it has been suggested, encompasses not only scientific but also ethical considerations. It's critical to bring up the topics of morals and animal feelings in the discussion because most people assume that's what animal welfare is all about. However, it is more vital to pay attention to animal health and behaviour than to animal feelings in order to obtain quantitative benefits.

Behaviour, space and roughage

The fundamental distinction between conventional and organic animal husbandry is how much emphasis is placed on the animals' natural behaviour. Natural behaviour is now taken into account in Nordic animal protection legislation, but it is even more essential in organic production.

The space limitations and prohibition on confinement allow animals to get more exercise. For example, better muscle condition lowers the incidence of MMA and joint problems. Fighting and injuries are lessened when pigs have ample space to escape higher-ranking animals in the hierarchy. There are no suggestions for group size, which is another crucial aspect in decreasing restlessness. Possessing the ability to demonstrate species-specific behaviour minimises stress, which aids in maintaining good health.

Because overcrowding is a common cause of tail biting, we can expect fewer tail biting and boils in organic farming.

In many aspects, bedding and roughage are essential for the welfare of pigs. Pigs are susceptible to temperature changes because they have a limited ability to control their body temperature. They get upset if the temperature fluctuates more than 1°C–2°C per day without bedding. The allowed fluctuation can be increased by up to 5°C with bedding.

Pigs enjoy rooting and biting as well. Biting a straw, for example, is more comfortable than biting each other. Tailgating is not permitted on organic farms. That makes sense because tail biting is a good signal of poor welfare, and removing the indicator does not eliminate the root of the problem. Roughage is also beneficial to the operation of the intestines and reduces appetite. Straw is required for the farrowing sow to construct her nest.

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The ability to engage in nest building behaviour improves the welfare of the sow. Farrowing without a crate is beneficial to the sow, but it can be harmful to the piglets. Traditional farrowing pens are frequently insufficient for free sows. New types of farrowing boxes for free sows have been created in

Switzerland, but we don't have much experience with them in Finland yet. It's critical to develop workable procedures since excessive piglet mortality is unacceptable from both welfare and a financial standpoint.