

Heart Pig - Welfare Scheme

Point of production: Farrow to Finish

Country of origin: Denmark



Producer Niels Aage Arve receives a price premium by marketing his pork under the 'Heart Pig' welfare brand. The higher price covers the additional costs of producing his pigs to the specific standards of the brand (according to calculations by SEGES).

The Weighing System

Pork products in Denmark can contain The logo 'Bedre Dyrevelfærd' (Better Animal Welfare) which contains three hearts which are coloured in to indicate improvements in animal welfare for the pig. The idea is to give consumers more choice and enable them to support animal welfare where it suits their preference and their purse. No matter whether consumers choose pork with one, two or three hearts, they can see how much more animal welfare they can buy for their money.

The solution - Scheme requirements

- Tail docking is not performed in the herd.
- The rearing and finishing pigs have 10% more space than normal.
- All animals must have continuous access to straw. Straw racks are used and they have found a key advantage of using racks compared with straw on the floor, this being that straw is accessible all the time.
- Sows are in loose housing for the entire cycle, except for a few days at farrowing.



Niels Aage Arve provides loose housing for all sows, except for a few days at farrowing

The animal-welfare label imposes strict requirements on pig farmers in order for pork to be labelled with the animal-welfare label, the conditions for pigs on farms must live up to a number of basic requirements. These requirements are considerably stricter than the current statutory requirements in Denmark and in the EU, and thereby stricter than the requirements in standard or conventional production.



Cost/Benefit analysis

Cost of production is higher as a result of the scheme requirements.

The extra space requirement increases fixed costs.

Sows have a higher feed consumption due to their movement in loose housing systems.

There is greater energy use to heat larger pens (33 kWh/sow).

In the breeding phase, a slightly higher pre-weaning mortality may be expected (+2.5%) and higher sow mortality (+1.5%), which requires recruitment of extra gilts.

Straw racks and significant quantities of straw (160 kg/sow/year and 21 gr/pig/day) need to be purchased.

The labour time to provide extra straw is more than 30% higher. Based on these assumptions, the production costs are 7.9% higher, rising from €1.41/kg up to €1.52/kg slaughter weight.

The extra production costs, described above, are covered by the higher market price, of about €0.17 per kilo. There is also potential for greater long-term stability for the business, from marketing its product through a well-defined supply chain and under a clearly differentiated added-value brand, for which consumer demand appears to be growing.

Further Research & Project Links

[https:// www.eupig.eu/](https://www.eupig.eu/)
Link to technical report
Contact RPiG (Denmark): Claus Hansen.

