

R&D Snapshot

A review of transport practices and mortalities in Australia

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Purpose:

- Rationalisation of abattoir sector has lead to longer transport distances, leading to perceived increase in welfare risk
- Industry has limited information to counteract adverse comment regarding welfare in transit.

Take home messages:

- Survey conducted on loads of pigs transported from farm to abattoir only
 - 197,451 market weight pigs sold in 2011/12 by 19 producers (14,260 sows)
 - Pigs transported by 6 independent transport companies and 9 owner operators to 3 abattoirs in QLD, NSW and SA
 - Herd size of participating production units ranged from 220 to 4000 sows
- 0.036% pig deaths in transit while the overall % of loads with deaths was 5.4%
- 2.04% for short trips (<2hrs); 5.93% for medium trips; 6.74% for long trips (>4hrs)
- % of loads with deaths in summer (7.3%) compared with winter (3.5%)
- Deaths in transit (this survey) lower than previous surveys (0.24% in 1982)
- Results demonstrate that the pig industry's welfare Codes, QA (farm & abattoir) & Fit to Load guides are positive influencers
- Pig transport mortalities in Australia lower than other North American and EU countries.

Additional information:

- Contact Pat Mitchell at pat.mitchell@australianpork.com.au or 03 5488 2306 for a summary of the final report.

