

Productivité du travail en élevage porcin : comparaison européenne et facteurs de variation

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Labour productivity in pig farms: European comparison and variation factors

Labour is the second largest cost item in pig production. Even if the working time per sow has decreased over the years, the dispersion around the average remains very significant. In France in 2009, the coefficient of variation was 40% vs. 11% for the number of pigs produced per sow and 6% for feed conversion. Labour has not been optimized as much as animal productivity, feed and construction. This study assesses and analyses the working time per sow on French pig farms and compares it to its European counterparts. The annual working time per sow in France and Germany was 21.3 and 19.7 hours, respectively, in 2009. The Netherlands and Denmark were much more efficient, with 16.6 and 15.1 h/sow/year, respectively. Per work hour, a Dutch farmer produces 141 kg of carcass, which is the level reached by the third-best French farms classified according to the time per sow. Differences in breeding may provide some insight: 3.25 piglets produced per hour in the Netherlands, 2.55 in Denmark but only 1.59 in France. The difference can be attributed to farm size, condition of buildings, the degree of automation, and the presence of hired labour but also, perhaps, human factors (organization, discipline, time management skills,) and maybe some inaccuracy in the work time estimations. The concentration and rapid expansion of farms in Northern Europe have been accompanied by a modernization and selection of the pig farms that lead to strong performance improvements including labour productivity.