



Preliminary exploration of caretaker and manager perspectives of on-farm euthanasia on swine operations

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Question Categories



Objective & Purpose
 The objective of this project was to identify how different euthanasia methods, the frequency of performing euthanasia and support network impact animal caretaker attitudes, job satisfaction, and mental and physical well-being with an ultimate goal of providing practical suggestions for improving management approach to euthanasia training and support.

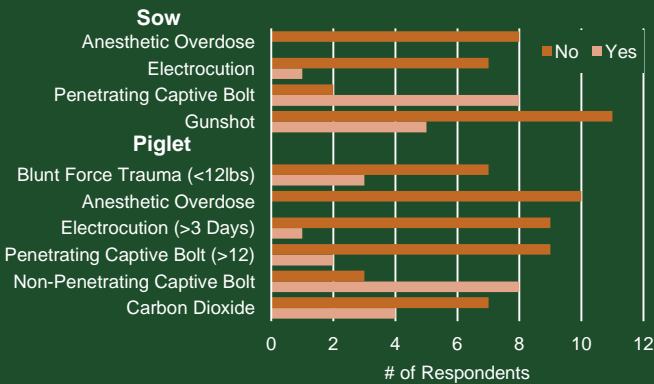


Background

- Animal caretakers that perform euthanasia experience stress manifested as: anger, sadness, fear, guilt, irritability, depression, anger, helplessness or hopelessness (Martin et al., 2004; Reeve et al., 2004; Rohlf and Bennett, 2005)
- Consequences of stress include: reduced job-satisfaction, work performance, and training retention (Matthis, 2004; Reeve et al., 2004; Anderson et al., 2013; Scotney et al., 2015)
- Quality of support shapes an individuals' ability to manage stress (Rohlf and Bennett, 2005)



Survey Question: What method do you use for euthanasia on the farm?



92%
 Agree that they have enough experience and knowledge to know when to euthanize a pig

25%
 Feel emotionally upset after euthanizing a pig

95%
 Believe that euthanasia is a humane way to end animal suffering

84%
 Said it was easier to euthanize a pig the more they did it

97%
 Felt euthanasia process on-farm is necessary

50%
 Of caretakers were involved with making euthanasia decisions

Methodology

- Survey with 38 questions was developed in Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) software (IRB #19-9050H)
- Distributed online by *American Association of Swine Veterinarians* e-letter & in-person at Pig Welfare Symposium in Minnesota (November 2019) & Illinois Pork Expo (February 2020)
 - Survey was available in English and Spanish
- Survey was opened from June 2019- March 2020
 - Collected data from 38 participants (17 caretakers, 21 managers) after requirements were met
- A \$25 gift card was offered as an incentive for participation
- Data was imported into Excel for preliminary statistical analysis

Question Categories

- Euthanasia method, frequency, & training
- Questions specific to managers
- Job satisfaction and well-being
- Attitudes towards performing on-farm euthanasia
- Management attitude
- Support networks
- Demographic and background information

Participant Requirements

- Must have been at least 18 yrs old & must have euthanized pigs within the past 12 months
- Survey had to be 80% complete in order to be included in final analysis



Demographics		
	Caretaker (n=17)	Manager (n=21)
Gender		
Male	10 (26%)	12 (31%)
Female	7 (18%)	9 (24%)
Average age (years)		
	33.4	40.7
Native Language		
English	13(34%)	12 (31%)
Spanish	2 (5%)	9 (23%)
Portuguese	1 (3%)	-
Ukrainian	1 (3%)	-
Total n=38		

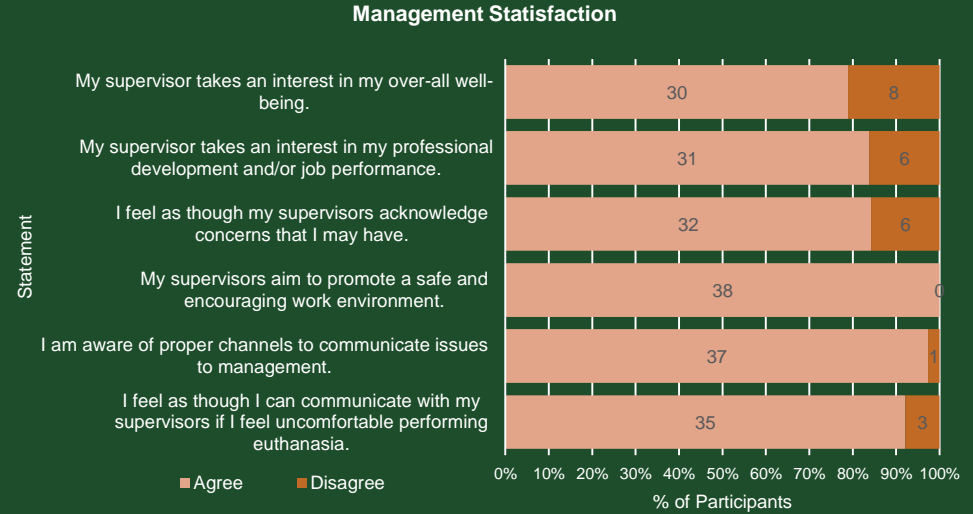


Preliminary Findings

- Data suggest that swine caretakers see the importance of euthanasia as it pertains to animal welfare and a majority did not feel discomfort when performing euthanasia
- Euthanasia was performed most commonly using penetrating captive bolt for sows and non-penetrating captive bolt for piglets for euthanasia on farms
- Current management systems and trainings appear to be adequate for most workers and managers that perform euthanasia
- Caretakers generally have some support system in place to discuss work or knew of outlets to speak with management about euthanasia



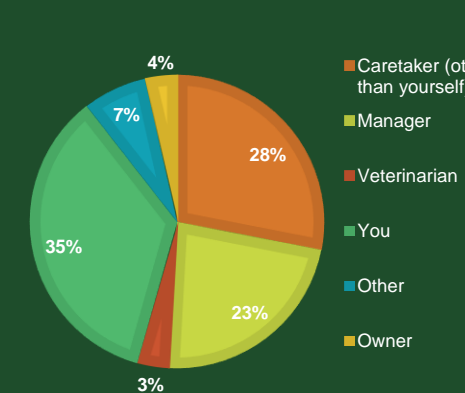
Moving Forward
 Even though most caretakers reported good management practices and little discomfort when performing euthanasia, relaying information regarding resources for handling stress and improving emotional wellness is always important and should be included in euthanasia trainings



On average, caretakers talk to:
4 Relatives
5 Friends
7 Work Peers or 6 Other people
 about their euthanasia work with pigs



Survey Question: Who makes the decision to euthanize?



References

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"Decline to answer" or "No response" were not included in the diagrams above.