

Improved pig welfare means reduced carcass losses

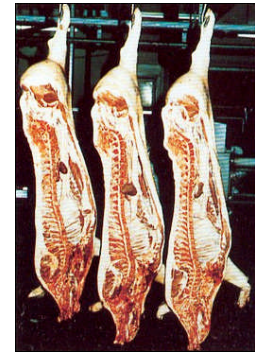
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Introduction

- Whole or partial carcasses are condemned as unfit for human consumption because of health problems in the pig
- Little info. on condemnation reasons, € value etc.
- Condemnations represent
 - Financial loss
 - 'Waste' of resources
 - Food safety risk
 - Welfare problems for pigs on farm
- Ethical concerns considered important by society
- Aim



To explore the reasons for carcass condemnation and the link with pig welfare on-farm



Why are pigs or parts of pigs condemned?

1. Clinical symptoms

■ Casualty animals

- Animals that die during transport or at the factory
- Visibly compromised (e.g. panting, injured) or abnormal (e.g. large hernia)

■ Identified on-farm or by vet in lairage

- Condemned and euthanised in the lairage
- Penned and managed separately

■ Casualty pigs are not necessarily condemned but the whole or large parts of casualty animals often are

■ *Why are they delivered to the factory in the first place?*

More ruthless euthanasia policies for sick and casualty pigs required on units



Carcass condemnations

2. Sub-clinical health problems

- Less likely to be visible in the live animal
- Animal often appears healthy
- Problems seen in the organs and carcass

Types of condemnations

- Whole carcass condemned if health problem systemic (e.g. fever, septicaemia) or extensive (e.g. multiple abscesses)
- Partial condemnation if problem is localised (e.g. head or individual limb)
- Trimmings (e.g. area trimmed around a swollen joint or damaged skin)
- Organs ('pluck') can also be condemned



Abattoir survey – Summer 2010

Aim - To determine the prevalence of tail docking and tail biting in Irish slaughter pigs

- Externally funded, cross-border collaboration between Teagasc – Moorepark, UCD and Queen's University Belfast
- Six factories visited over 3 consecutive days
- Tail length and lesion data collected for 36,963 pigs
- All partial and total carcass condemnation data also collected

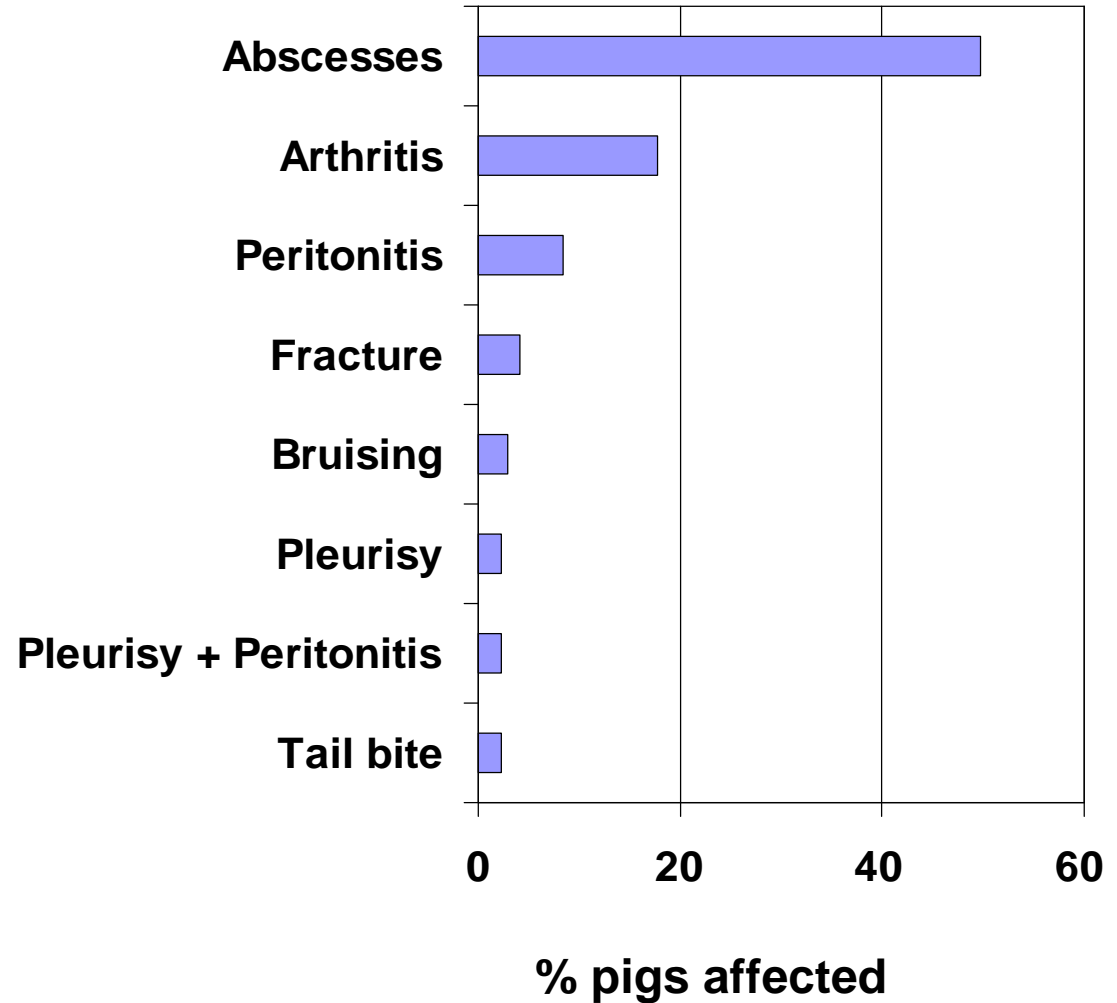


Total and partial condemnations in 36,963 pigs

Condemned	No. pigs	% of total
1 limb	239	0.65
Whole carcass	135	0.36
1 shoulder	15	0.04
Head	12	0.03
Other	40	0.11
Total	441	1.19

Reasons for condemnations

- 5 DOA
- 4 died in factory
- 7 condemned on welfare grounds





How are these conditions linked to pig welfare?

- Welfare of pigs that die in transit or at factory is obviously very poor
- Fatigue/heat stress, bruising, bitten tails and fractures associated with *fear, pain and extreme distress*
- Links between arthritis, peritonitis, pleurisy and pig welfare either related to risk factors (e.g. re-mixing) or because of associated pain

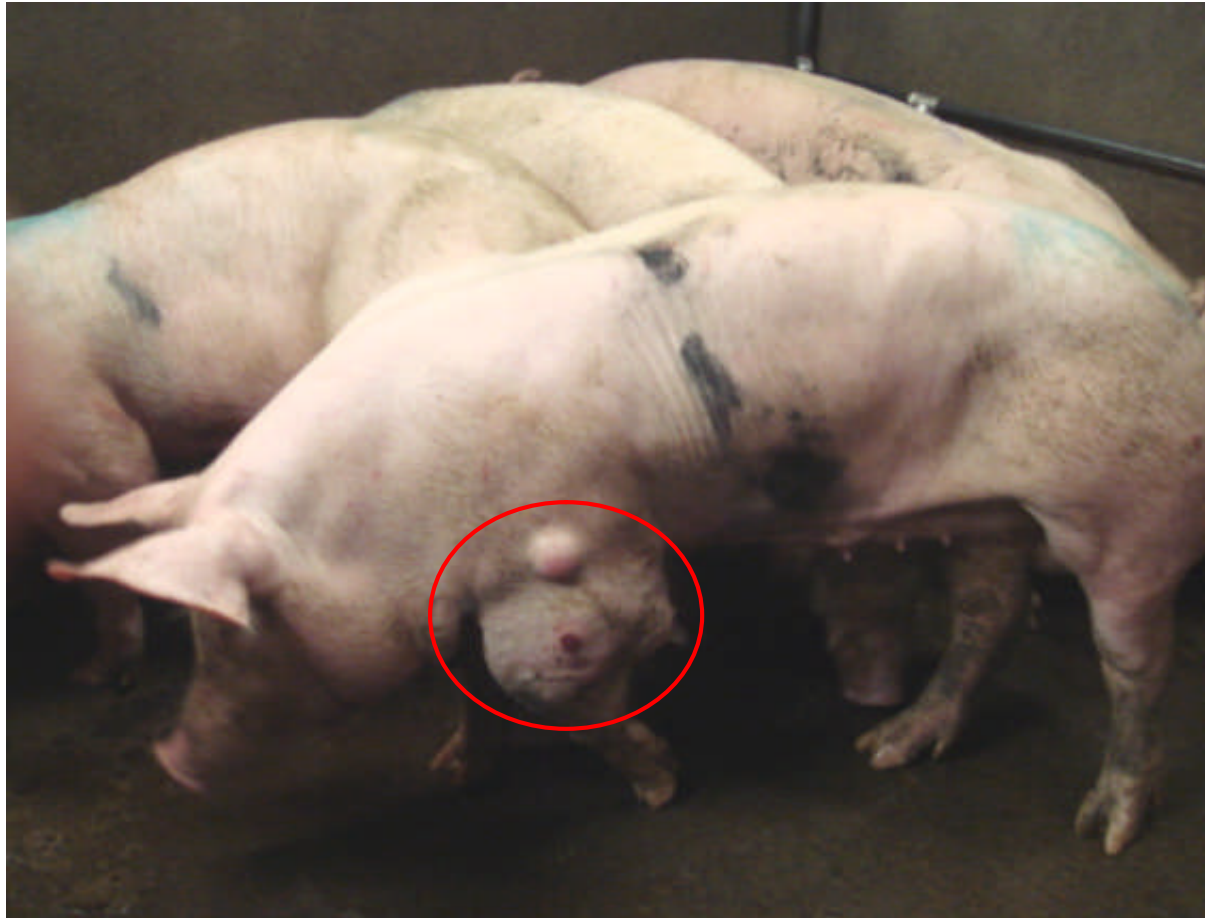
What are the links between abscesses and welfare problems for pigs on farm?

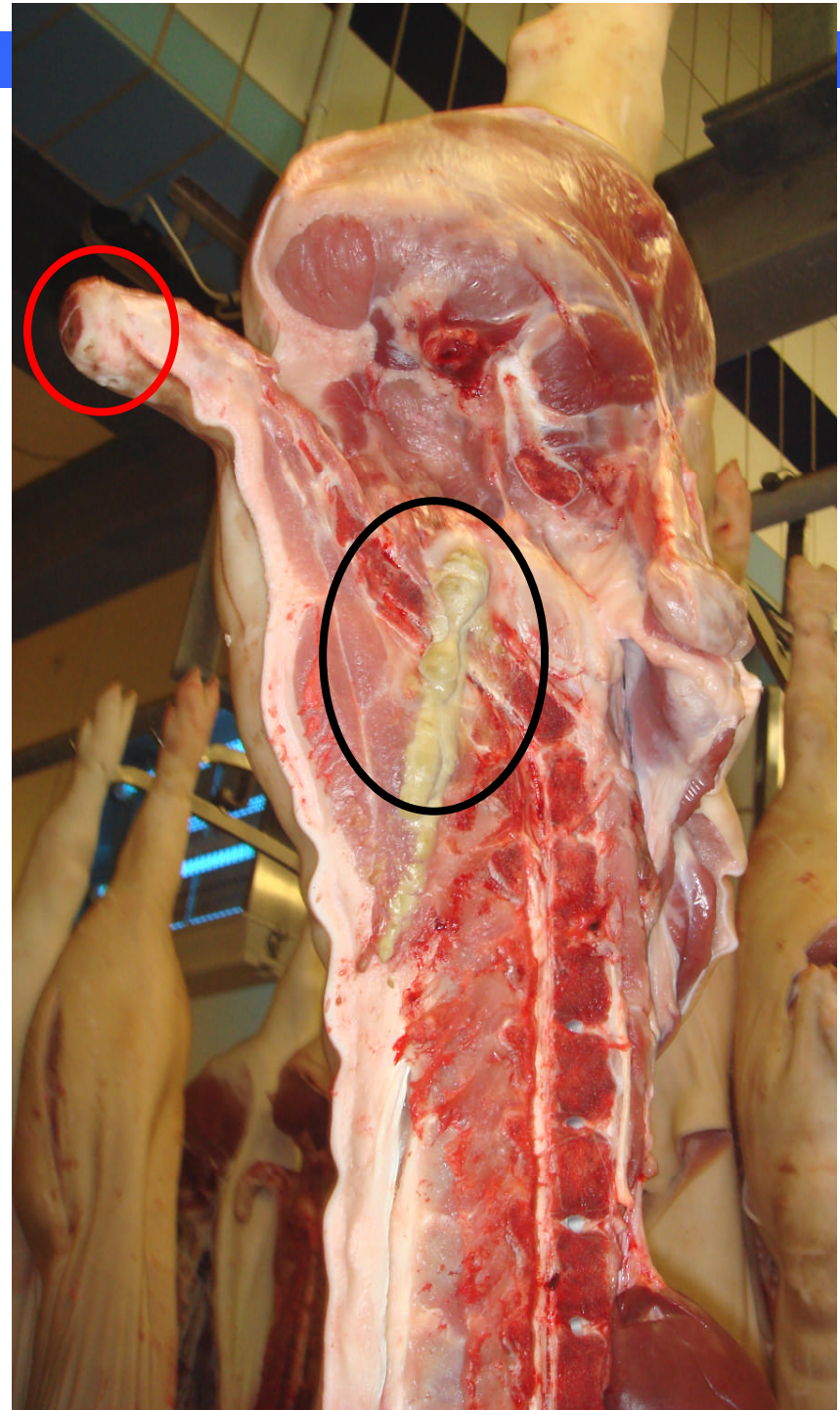
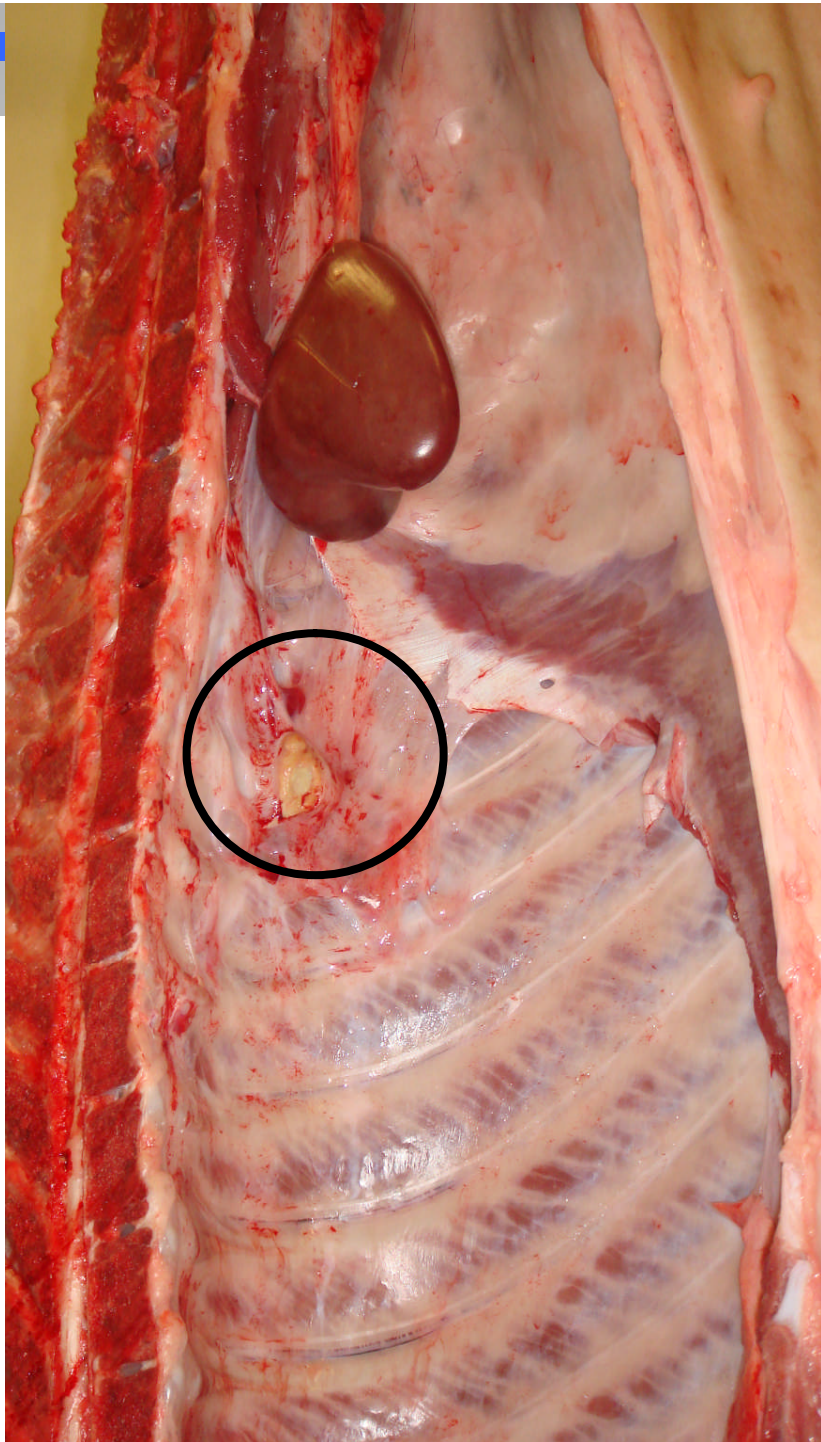


What are abscesses?

- Pockets of pus that contain dead cell material and large nos. bacteria
- Bacteria primarily enter the body through damage to the skin but can also arise as secondary infection to other conditions such as swine pox, PRRS or pneumonia
- Abscesses become walled off from the body tissues (localised) OR are disseminated in the blood to develop abscesses elsewhere in the body (multiple internal abscessation=pyaemia)
- Near the skin surface they may become painful with an inflamed appearance

External abscess

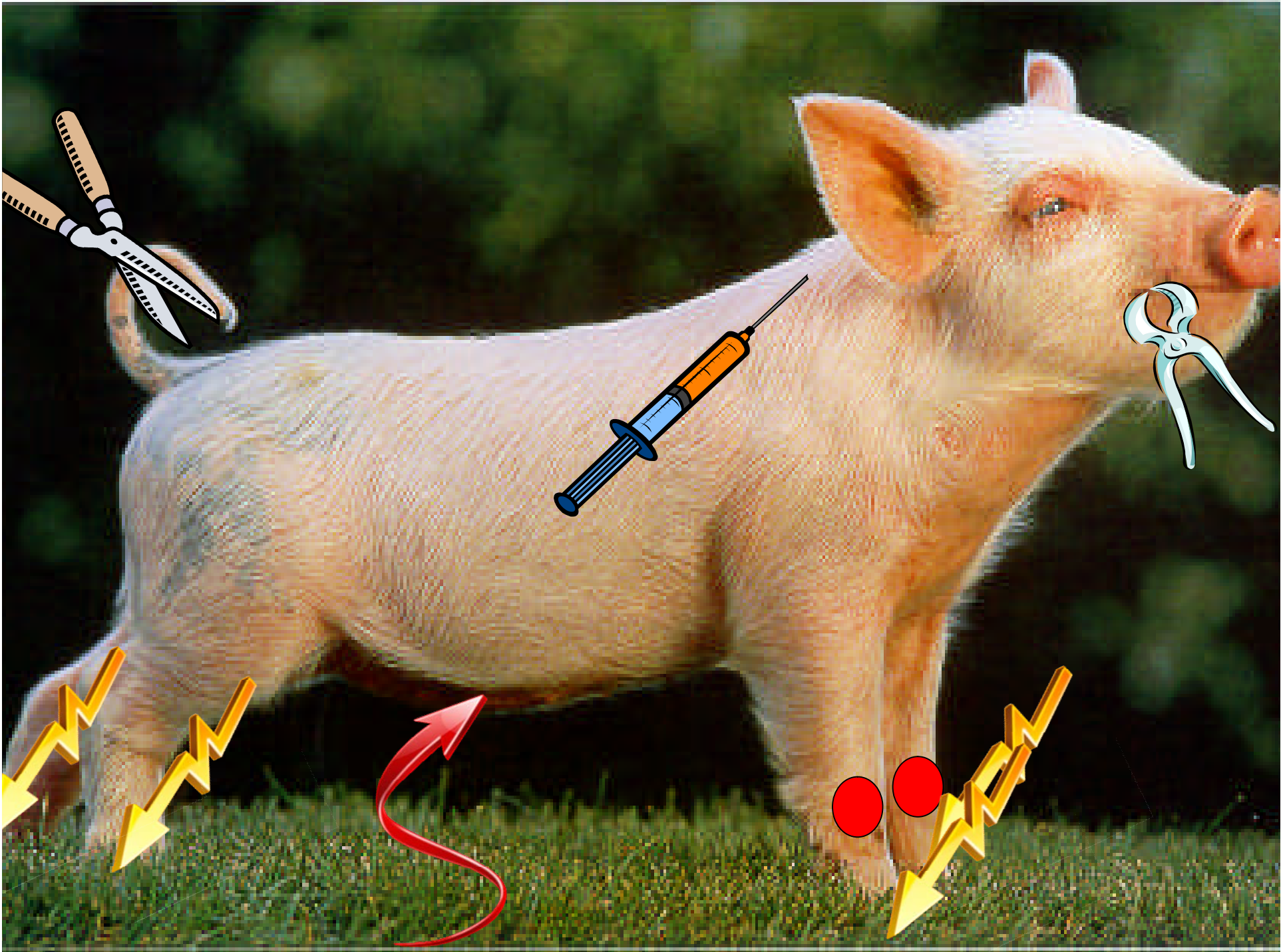




Situations of skin damage

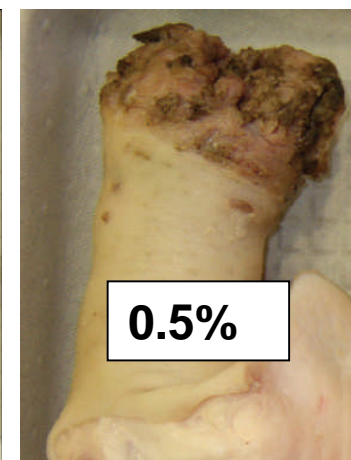
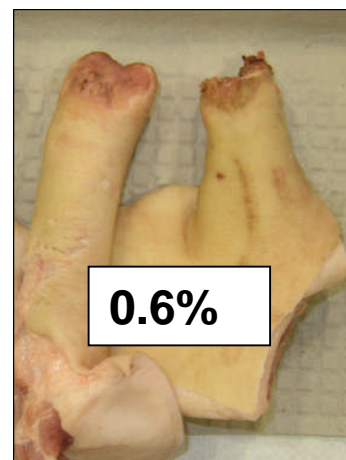
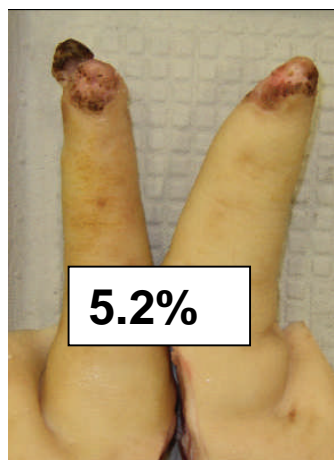
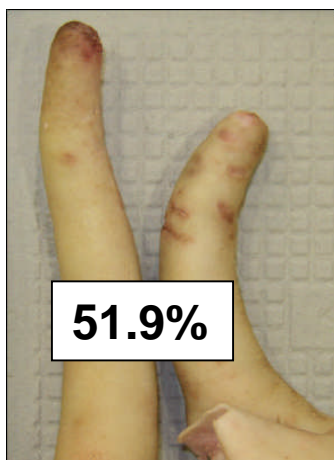
- Injection sites/navel
- Teeth clipping and tail docking
- Injury to the skin or hooves caused by the floor/pen fixtures
- Aggression induced injuries
- Tail / ear biting





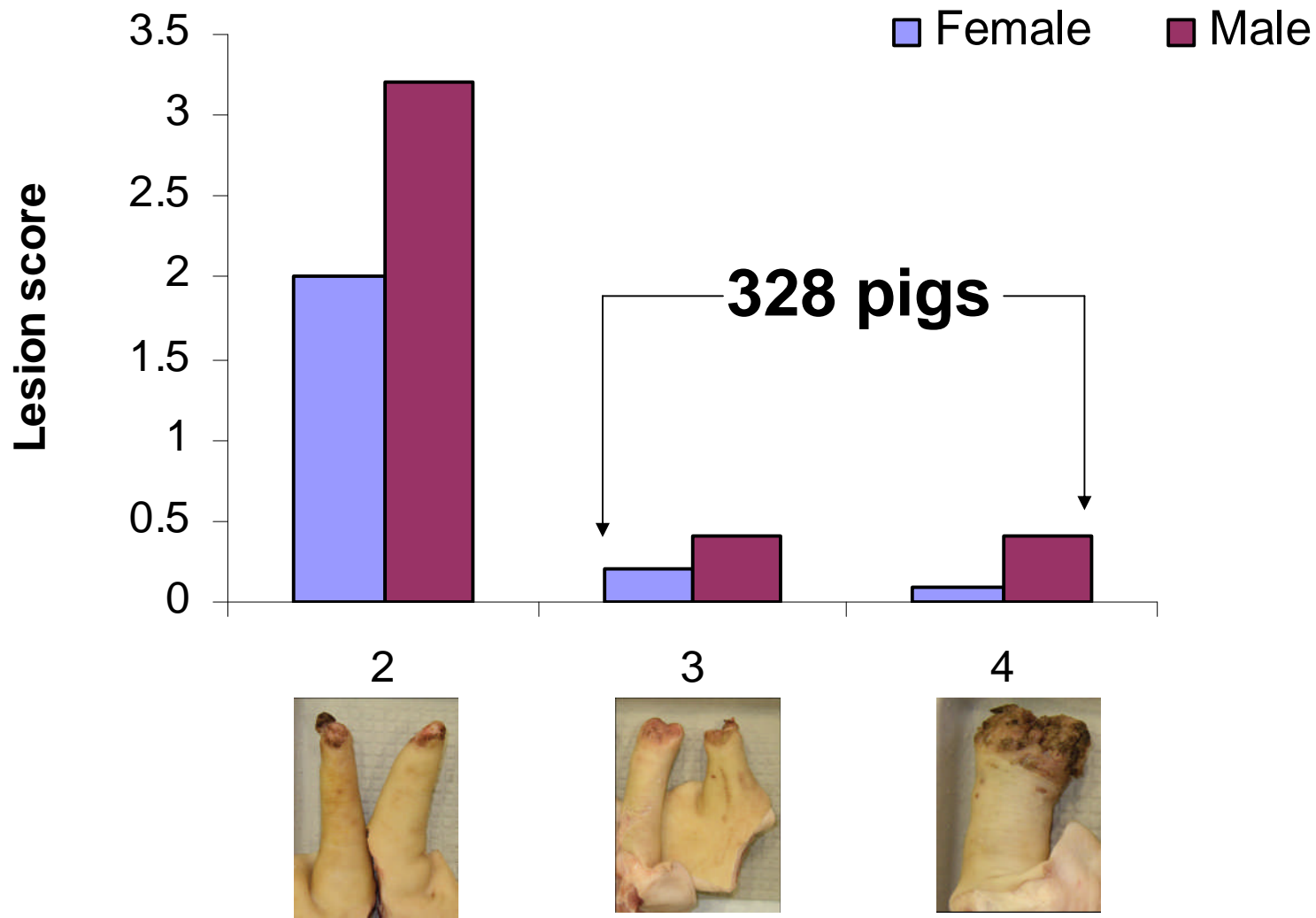
Abattoir survey – Tail data

- Scored the length (long or docked) of the tails and the severity of tail damage (0 to 4)



- 99% of pigs had docked tails

Tail biting results





Tail biting

- ❑ Multifactorial problem that is unpredictable, sporadic and difficult to control
- ❑ Docking does not eliminate tail biting
- ❑ Long tails do not necessarily lead to tail biting but do seem to be a possible risk factor
- ❑ Docking and tail biting are both potential causes of abscesses and carcass condemnation
- ❑ ***Routine docking prohibited under Irish legislation***





Hernias

- Navel infections can mean umbilical cord opening does not close –**Sanitation NB!**
- Pig welfare
 - Abdominal pain and discomfort
 - Intestine can become obstructed and/or hernial sac can rupture
 - Higher mortality rates
- Factory
 - Peritonitis interferes with evisceration ↑Trims
 - Extra handling both alive and during processing=extra labour
 - Adhesions predispose to rupture of the intestines





Producer checklist

- Hygienic practices and well trained staff
- No overstocking
- Minimal re-mixing of pigs
- Good injecting practices (site, needle etc.)
- Prompt, appropriate treatment of obvious damage to the skin
- Housing and husbandry practices are first 'port of call' in addressing health and welfare problems
- Regularly updated and observed Health and Welfare Plan
- Ruthless in making decisions to euthanise sick and casualty animals



Conclusions

- Abscesses make up almost half of all condemnations
 - These represent welfare problems for pigs on farms and are largely preventable
 - Other reasons for condemnation could be reduced by improving management and husbandry practices
 - More ruthless euthanasia policies required on farms
 - Tail docking is a crude remedy for tail biting
- Legislation!!!***
- Condemnation records represent a potentially valuable tool in addressing pig welfare issues



Acknowledgements

- Factories
- Dayane Lemos Teixeira and Constance Calais