

# Pre-slaughter losses of pork, beef and milk at farm level in Sweden

## Methodology:

For calculations we used the national bovine register CDB, WinPig – a Swedish programme for monitoring pig production (covers 43 % of the farrowing phase -30 kg, and 15 % +30 kg to slaughter), Växa Sverige – advisory programme for dairy (77 % of production) and data from over 80 % of Swedish slaughter plants. Meat loss at farm is matched with actual slaughtered weight of the same animal typ/breed/age. Estimate for stillborn/very young calves = 20 kg, piglets 1 kg.

## Food losses at farm 2020 – in pork, beef and dairy – equals:

- 8 % of beef production – 13 000 tonnes slaughtered weight. 15 % of the number of cattle.
- 3 % of pig production – 7 000 tonnes slaughtered weight. 25 % of the number of pigs.
- 0,4 % of milk production – 11 000 tonnes of milk during treatment with antibiotics<sup>1</sup> or withdrawal period.

<sup>1</sup>Note: Swedish food producing animals are treated with the least antibiotic compared to all other EU-countries. ESVAC 2021 report.

*For producers, losses of meat and milk mean both lost income and costs. For beef and pork, the losses at farm level made up almost 6 percent of the production value in 2020.*



## How can losses at farm be reduced?

- Put even more focus and invest more on the health and welfare of the high-performing dairy cow, so that as many dairy cows as possible can be sent to slaughter.
- Invest even more in the welfare and health of young animals to reduce the risk of animals dying at an early age. Improve the stables, management, the supervision as well as the breeding work to reduce the risk of stillbirths and problems during calving/pigging.
- Investigate the possibilities of increased on farm emergency slaughter and on farm slaughter and actors interest both in terms of practical solutions and economically.
- Study the reasons for losses and discuss the loss and resource perspective with producers to better understand their needs.
- Investigate whether animals from herds with low infection pressure in the event of a salmonella outbreak can be sold for slaughter or as livestock without posing any risk for animal health and food safety.
- Study how milk from animals treated with antibiotic is used today, and discuss with producers how such milk should be handled so that it does not harm the calf health or contribute to resistance. Study if it is possible and feasible to make milk from treated cows safe to feed calves.
- Investigate how cadavers, from cattle less than one year and pigs, can be used more resource efficiently to the production of fertilizers.

Table 1.  
Food losses presented in share of number of animals and share of slaughtered weight.

Type	Loss % by number	Loss % by slaughtered weight
Beef cows	0,9 %	1,2 %
Males	0,9 %	0,9 %
Heifers	1 %	1,1 %
Milk cows	3,5 %	3,5 %
Calves	4,9 %	1,3 %
Still born/ dead first week	3,8%	0,3 %
<b>Total loss</b>	<b>14,8 %</b>	<b>8,3 %</b>



*The losses of beef, pork and milk at Swedish farms result in greenhouse gases in about 330 000 tonnes a year. It corresponds to 9 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions from animal husbandry in Sweden. By reducing losses, there is potential to reduce greenhouse emissions from the food sector, or to increase production with the same climate impact.*



Table 2.  
Number of cattle that were slaughtered at farm and consumed by farmers households, number of cattle euthanized or found dead sent to waste by incineration, and number of cattle commercially slaughtered.

Breed	Household slaughter	Euthanized/ found dead	Slaughtered
Swedish red white (milk breed)	3 %	13 %	84 %
Holstein (milk breed)	3 %	17 %	80 %
Hereford	4 %	7 %	89 %
Charolais	4 %	8 %	88 %
Highland cattle	28 %	15 %	57 %
Swedish Mountain cattle	24 %	10 %	56 %

*Almost half of the edible byproducts in 2020 (such as offal, fat, blood, feet and tail) that had potential for human consumption, did not become food. This is mainly due to low demand and lack of export channels. Most of this goes instead to biogas/waste.*



Pre-slaughter losses of pork, beef and milk at farm level in 2020. Report 2022:19.



Food losses at slaughter of pigs and cattle in 2020. Report 2022:18.