

PIG PRODUCTION IN POLAND AND CENTRAL EUROPE

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Introduction

Poland is a country located in Central Europe, with a population of about 40.000000 people. The total number of farmers exceed 2 millions. From them more than 700.000 produce pigs. Poland was the first country in this part of Europe to liberalize in 1989 agriculture sector. Due to this, most of the large government and collective farms have been privatized. The new private farms are smaller compared to their former socialist organizations. Following the political changes the farming business has gone through a very hectic period of transformation. Instead of producing for a fixed price set by the government, pig producers have to operate on a liberalized market. The market changes were not limited to the internal market but also had an effect on international trade. More products from abroad could enter the markets and compete with local products.

Pig production is the most important farming and creates Poland as the largest producer of pigs in Central Europe (Table 1). Total number of pigs produced in Poland is similar to that in all other – nine new members of UE.

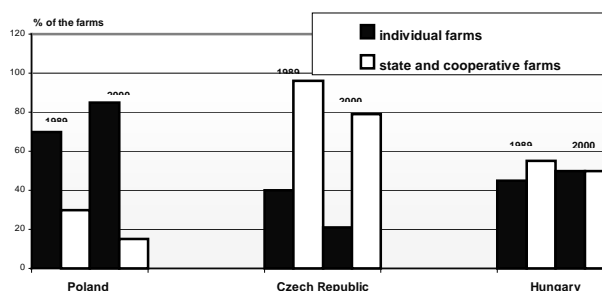
Country	Number of pigs
Bulgaria	1 850 000
Czech Republic	3 286 200
Estonia	340 000
Hungary	4 500 000
Lithuania	1 052 950
<i>Poland</i>	<i>19 605 300</i>
Slovakia	1 553 380
Slovenia	606 300
Romania	5 101 258

Tab.1. Production of pigs in Central Europe in 2003

The main breeds used in Poland are: Landrace, Large white, Duroc, Pietrain and Hampshire.

The structure of pig farming was different in various CEC. For example in Poland just before 1989 the percentage of private farms reached approximately 70%, when in Czech Republic was only 4% such farms and in Hungary 45%. In 2000 percentage of private farms increased in all mentioned countries and reached the level of: 85%; 21% and 59% respectively in Poland, Czech and Hungary. Similar trend were observed in all other CEC.

Fig. 1. Pig producers in selected CEC according to the production sector in 1989 and 2000



Source: ITP

Annual pig meat production reached about 2,5 million tons.

Year	Number of swine slaughtered	Average weight at slaughter	Pork production in 1000 kg
1991	22.339	115	2578
1992	23.576	112	2652
1993	22.827	111	2532
1994	19.870	112	2226
1995	22.694	113	2576
1996	23.571	113	2657
1997	20.990	112	2430
1998	20.800	111	2601
1999	24.427	109	2675
2000	22.658	110	2500
2001	22.000	108	2415
2002	23.600	107	2600
2003	25.500	106	2820

Tab.2. Swine population and pork production in Poland during 1991-2003

Number of pigs produced annually by one farm is very low (approx. 16) in comparison of fatteners produced by average farm in EU (94 pigs)

Country	Number of pigs in herds			
	1-9	10-49	50-199	> 200
Denmark	7.1	18.8	24.0	50.1
Finland	7.1	13.7	42.8	36.4
France	71.5	6.0	5.8	16.7
Spain	84.5	7.0	4.1	4.4
Holland	3.1	5.7	25.5	65.7
Germany	50.1	20.6	15.5	13.8
Portugal	85.2	10.7	2.9	1.2
Sweden	20.1	25.6	25.4	28.9
POLAND	67.4	27.9	4.4	0.3

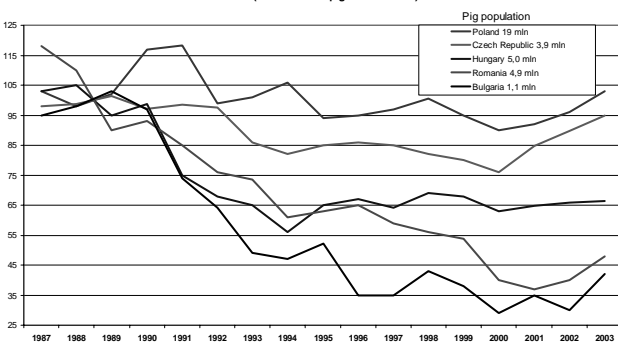
Tab.3. Herd structure in Poland and in certain UE countries in 2000 (%)

The number of sow in Poland circulated around 1.6 million. Annual production of fatteners reached in 2003 - 25 millions.

It should be underlined that many (in numbers not in percentage) farms produce more than 5000 fatteners/per year.

It might be stated that in general pig production in Poland is extensive. Production of piglets amounted in average 14.0/per sow/per year. Weaning period is about 35 days and number of days till slaughter reached between 160-220 days. In majority of farms feed conversion exceeded 3.1 kg/kg body weight. It should be underlined that agriculture production in Poland is not subsidized. Taking into account presented information it is clear that in some cases the cost of production is higher that of the imported product. As a result of this in 2001 many pig producers stopped or reduced their production capacity.

Fig. 2. Dynamic of pig production in selected Central European Countries 1987 - 2003 (Production of pigs in 1998=100)



Source: ITP

Unfortunately, structure of pig farming in Poland is old fashion more than 80% of farms are selling less than 50 fatteners per year. Even more traditional (old fashion) pig production is in Romania, where 5,4 millions pigs is produced by approx 2 mln farms. The size of the pig farm is connected with area of the land related to the farm. Average size of the land in Poland is 7,6 ha and is significantly lower than in others EU countries. The structure of agriculture is related also to the number of people working in this sector. In Poland 27% of employes work in agriculture. It is typical that during period of very low prices small farms survive difficult periods whereas many of medium and large farms are going to bankrupt.

During last 10 years due to new economical situation and cooperation of farmers with foreign companies and investors major steps forward have been made by some, most active producers. In particular due to the use of new genetics, imported feed additives and new technologies of production thousands of pig producers meet international standards in terms of cost of production and quality. Many (in numbers - not in percentage) farmers produce more than 22 fatteners/per sow/per year. Significant influence on progress in efficiency standards plays foreign pig producers which established pig farms in Poland. Among them are farmers from Denmark and USA. It should be stated that currently about 20% of UE pork production takes place in new member states. Among them Poland produce 11,6% of UE pork.

Control of health status of pigs is done by approximately 2000 veterinarians – owners of private animal clinics.

System of postgraduate studies in the field of pig specialists exist in Poland since 1996. During this time about 150 veterinarians received title of The Veterinary Pig Specialist. Such groups of veterinarians offer very professional wide range veterinary service. They offered consultancy not only in the field typical for veterinarians but also in areas connected with management, feeding, organization of production, insemination, etc.

Discussing health status in pig farms in Poland it should be stated that health problems in pig industry are similar to those observed in other European pig producing countries.

Poland is free from classical swine fever (CSF), FMD, SVD and ASF. Classical swine fever causes significant problems in some CEC. For example in 2003 more than 150 outbreaks of CSF were noted in Romania and more than 10 in Bulgaria. Like in other countries the main economical problem are caused by respiratory diseases. Most of the pulmonary problems are created by widespread of PRRS virus. Approximately, 60-70% of medium and large farms are infected with etiological factor of this disease. Application of vaccination program is based on detailed evaluation of type of PRRSV existing in the farm and serological profile of the herd. In general proper introduction of vaccine gives reasonably good effects. The second most popular respiratory disease is Mycoplasmal pneumoniae of swine (MPS). Control of this disease is performed by means of immuno- and chemioprophyly.

Since 3 years the number of cases of new disease is rapidly growing. There are Streptococcosis caused by *Streptococcus suis* type 2 and in some cases by *Streptococcus suis* type 1. The second such disease is Glässer diseases caused by *Haemophilus parasuis*.

Still, some enteric diseases are difficult to control. To these diseases swine dysentery and adenomatosis should be included. The growing problem among suckling piglets is connected with isosporosis.

The main reason of low production of piglets by sows (only 14.0 weaned piglets/per sow/) are "old fashion" approach of majority of farmers to reproduction. Also average veterinarian is not interested in organization of production and reproduction. It might be stated that such methods like: synchronization of oestrus, diagnosis of pregnancy, synchronization of farrowings are applied very seldom.

In summarizing, despite of very positive changes achieved by part of pig producers, more emphasis should be done to improve efficiency of pig production and health control in swine sector in CEC. In Poland important step – connected with international trade of live pigs-is introduction of program of Aujeszky Disease eradication. To do this, as soon as possible, philosophy of producers and approach of large part of veterinarians must be changed. Such changes are necessary for being competitive in common EU market.

It should be noted that during 2 month after 1 of May 2004 (day of accession to EU) prices for pigs in Poland rised about 15-20%.

References

FAO, EUROSTAT, ITP