

Campaign success for PROVIEH:

Milestone on the way to stop tail docking in Germany and Europe

The Ministry for Agriculture of the federal state of North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) has signed an historic agreement with the presidents of the two farmers' associations (WLV and RLV) of this German *laender* to stop routine tail docking on pigs by 2016. PROVIEH applauds this giant step in the right direction for improving pig welfare undertaken by the farmers and the government of NRW.

According to the joint declaration published today, they will follow a three step program due to kick off shortly with a massive information and counselling campaign for farmers. 2015 will be characterized by smaller trials on each farm for correct implementation. 2016 should become the year where all farmers finally stop all tail docking.

Until now, routine tail docking of piglets under the age of seven days has been a common practice in the EU with the exception of Sweden, Finland and Lithuania. The tail docking was carried out in Germany and all other major pig producing countries in the EU as a preventive measure, in spite of a legal ban on routine tail docking in place since Council Directive 91/630/EEC came into force in 1994. Farmers claimed that the risk of tail biting was too high to leave tails undocked.



PROVIEH contested this claim and intensified the fight for the abolishment of tail docking since Switzerland successfully banned this cruel practice in 2008 under farming conditions quite similar to German farms, i.e. fully slatted floors and no more than the minimum legal space allowance per pig. We launched formal complaints against Germany to the Commission for incomplete transposition and implementation of the Council Directive on the protection of pigs in 2009 on the basis of a study and footage provided by our British partner organization Compassion in World Farming (CIWF). CIWF's and our complaints seem to have stimulated the EU-Commission to hold workshops on the protection of pigs in recent years and to initi-



PROVIEH

Verein gegen tierquäleryische
Massentierhaltung e.V.

Sabine Ohm
European Policy Officer

Tel. 0049. 1525. 75 55 317
ohm@provieh.de
www.provieh.de

Head office

Küterstraße 7-9
24103 Kiel
Tel. 0049. 431. 2 48 28-0
Fax 0049. 431. 2 48 28-29
info@provieh.de
www.provieh.de


Office in Brussels

68, Avenue Michel-Ange
B - 1000 Brüssel
Tel. 0032. 2. 739 62 67
Fax 0032. 2. 739 62 79
bruessel@provieh.de
www.provieh.de

Donation account

Kieler Volksbank eG
BLZ 210 900 07
Kto. 54 299 306
BIC GENODEF1KIL
IBAN DE87 2109 0007
0054 2993 06

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ate the drafting of guidelines for correct implementation of the tail docking ban in 2013. But no legal action has been taken so far.

To demonstrate that tail docking can be avoided and that action was overdue, PROVIEH went on to study “success stories” in Switzerland and Germany wherever pigs were kept with intact tails. We pushed for and accompanied many on-farm trials with undocked tails as well as scientific projects. This is a great example of cooperation between the government, farmers and other private sector actors and PROVIEH.

Our actions focused especially on NRW, where according to official statistics 25 percent of all German pigs are kept: 7.1 million at any one time, 14.2 million per year (almost 5% of all pigs in the EU-27!). As NRW piglet production remains under 4 million per year, over 3 million piglets are imported each year, mostly from Denmark and the Netherlands. The joint declaration will therefore reach far beyond NRW into other German *laender* and neighboring countries, causing a domino-effect.

Once the implementation is successful in NRW, other countries will no longer be able to claim that under “modern” conventional farming conditions tail docking cannot be avoided. Cross-compliance cuts and infringement procedures against countries refusing to take the necessary steps to avoid tail docking can be expected at the latest after the successful implementation in NRW in 2016.

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Further information can be found here

Press release NRW (including full text of the joint declaration in German):

http://www.umwelt.nrw.de/ministerium/presse/presse_aktuell/presse140224.php

German online news-article about the joint declaration

<http://www.wochenblatt.com/landwirtschaft/nachrichten/schwanzbeissen-gemeinsame-loesungssuche7651.html>

PROVIEH on tail docking

Campaign report: <http://www.provieh.de/kampagne-fuer-intakte-ringelschwaenze>

PROVIEH breaking the news on the joint declaration (with link to CIWF pig farming briefing 2010 in English) <http://www.provieh.de/kupierverzicht%20bei%20schweinen>

German translation of CIWF’s 2008 EU-study on tail docking & lack of enrichment

http://www.provieh.de/downloads_provieh/ciwf_zustandsbericht_schweinehaltung_eu.pdf