

## **Reducing stress on market pigs**

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New research shows that moving market pigs in groups of four reduces stress on pigs and reduces dead or non-ambulatory pigs at the plant.

The findings were reported by Matt Ritter, a swine technical consultant for Elanco Animal Health, and Nick Berry of Cargill.

The researchers compared the stress effects of moving market weight pigs in groups of four to those moved in groups of eight.

Elanco and Cargill conducted the study to evaluate the effects of moving market weight pigs, approximately 265 pounds, through a 30-inch-wide aisle and measured loading and unloading time, physical signs of stress and transport losses at the plant.

The key findings from this study were that pigs moved in groups of four required less time to load, had lower rates of open-mouth breathing and skin discoloration during loading and unloading, and had lower percentages of dead and non-ambulatory pigs at the plant.

These data confirm that group size during loading has a major impact on transport losses at the plant. Non-ambulatory pigs are increasingly subject to rules and regulations. Reducing dead and non-ambulatory pigs at the packing plant is beneficial for the transporter, the producer and the plant management. Reducing stress on pigs before, during and after transport is good for everyone.

It is essential to identify pre-disposing factors for transport losses in market weight pigs and to develop management strategies to reduce these losses under current U.S. commercial conditions.