

# The Swedish concept

- ✓ **Growth promoters** in feeds are banned
- ✓ **Strict control** on Salmonella contamination in feed and at slaughter house
- ✓ **Sows may** only occasionally be restrained, e.g. to facilitate handling.
- ✓ **Pigs must** have access to bedding material
- ✓ **Pigs should** be able to behave naturally (e.g. nesting at farrowing, rooting)
- ✓ **Houses for pigs** must have windows
- ✓ **Tail docking** is not allowed
- ✓ **Minimum** 4 weeks suckling period
- ✓ **More generous** space allowances than in most other countries (e.g. >6m<sup>2</sup> in the farrowing pen)
- ✓ **Pens** with fully slatted floor must not be used



## Swedish pig production

A few facts on pig production in Sweden

” In many EU countries, 90% of antibiotics are administered to larger or smaller groups of animals. In Sweden, just over 10% is used in this way. **Sweden is 20–30 years ahead of many other countries** when it comes to reducing its use of antibiotics.”

**Christina Greko, antibiotics expert, National Veterinary Institute**

The **Svenskt Kött** (Swedish Meat) origin label indicates that the meat in products comes from animals born, reared, slaughtered and processed in Sweden.



Trends show that more and more Swedish consumers are looking for ingredients with clear origins which represent values to which they can subscribe and with

which they can identify. Surveys show that seven out of ten consumers look for the label Swedish Meat when shopping.

” Swedish farmers have adopted a preventive approach to environment and hygiene for many years now, because they know that healthy animals are profitable animals. ”

**Margareta Åberg, LRF Kött**  
(Federation of Swedish Farmers,  
Meat division)



**Sweden has** a population of 9 million inhabitants, which on average consume more than 24 kg of pork meat per year (corresponds to 37 kg carcass per person and year). A high proportion of this meat is sold to the consumers as fresh meat. Most of the pork is produced in Sweden, but we import 30% of our total pork consumption, mainly from neighbour countries.

Today we produce 2.6 million pigs for slaughter per year. Gained weight from born to slaughter is 680 gr/day. 24 slaughter pigs are produced per saw and year. The majority of these are born and raised on the same farm, or are born on one farm and raised on

a cooperating farm. This means that the pigs in the fattening stables are homogenous from a health point of view.

The remaining pigs are born in specialized piglet producing herds, and between 25 and 30 kg live weight they are transferred (and also mixed with piglets from other herds) to specialized fattening herds.

The Swedish pig producing herds are decreasing in number, but increasing in size. According to the census in 2014, we had a population of approximately 112 000 sows in totally 780 herds. There are approximately 1 100 pig farms in Sweden.

**Did you know:**

In Sweden, we only give antibiotics to animals currently having diseases. Not preventative.

**Did you know:**

About Swedish zero tolerance against salmonella? This means regular samples are being taken at Swedish farms. If salmonella were to be found the animals would be prohibited for slaughter and the farm would have to be decontaminated.

### No growth promoters

On initiative from Swedish farmers, the use of antibiotics as growth promoters was banned in 1986. Antibiotics may only be used for therapeutic purposes, and can only be bought on veterinary prescription. Since the ban of the use of antibiotics as growth promoters, almost all pigs are produced batch-wise. In this “all-in, all-out” system there are good possibilities to clean the pig pens and houses between each batch, and thus hinder the spreading of infectious agents from elder animals to younger ones.

From 1st of January 2016 all male piglets for slaughter are castrated with anaesthesia and analgesia. A very small proportion of the male piglets are “immuno-castrated”.

### Feeds and feeding

Cereals are the main component of Swedish pig feeds. Wheat and triticale are used in increasing quantities instead of barley and oats. Imported soybean meal is the most important protein source, but also home-grown peas and rapeseed meal are used. To improve the protein quality of the feed and reduce nitrogen excretion into the environment, synthetic amino acids (lysine, methionine and threonine) are used.

Dry feeding has been the dominant technique, but liquid feeding is increasingly common in rebuilt and newly-built pig houses. With liquid feeding, many by-products from the food industry are used such as whey, brewer’s yeast and distiller’s waste.

Both sows and growing-fattening pigs are fed according to scale. Sows are fed generously during the lactation period in order to preserve their body mass. Growing pigs are fed on a high scale up to a body weight of 60 kg.

### Housing and management

Nearly all pig production in Sweden is indoors. Outdoor (=organic) pig production is practiced on a very small scale (less than 2%).

Dry sows are kept in groups, mostly on deep straw bedding and are fed individually. Weaned sows kept in groups stimulate each other to show oestrous, which facilitates mating and insemination. Oestrous induction using hormonal treatments is not performed in Sweden. When many sows farrow within a

short period of time it is cost effective to supervise the farrowings. Also, with batch-wise farrowings, the producers have a better opportunity to save weak pigs through cross-fostering or other measures. Piglets must not (according to law) be weaned before 4 weeks of age, and normally they are weaned between 4 and 6 weeks of age.

Pigs raised for slaughter are mainly kept in groups of 8-10 pigs in pens with a solid laying area and slatted floor in the dunging passage. A moderate amount of straw must (according to law) be used as bedding material. Tail docking is not performed in Sweden, but large space allowances and use of straw reduce the risk of tail-biting. The mean live weight at slaughter has steadily increased and is now on average close to 120 kg.



### Sow pools

About 25% of all Swedish piglets are produced within sow pools. In a sow pool the dry sows are inseminated in a “central unit farm”, where they are kept from weaning until 3 weeks before the next farrowing. Then the sows are transported to “satellite herds”, where they are farrowing. At weaning, they are returned to the central unit farm for their next reproduction cycle. The weaned piglets stay in the satellite herds. The satellite herds are subscribing for a specified number of pregnant sows every 4, 8 or 16 weeks, depending on the production concept applied.

### Production monitoring

A PC-based herd monitoring software called PigWin (later version WinPig) is used in many Swedish pig herds. The average production level in these herds is (2013): 10.9 weaned piglets per litter; 2.2 litters per sow and year; 1.2 stillborn piglets per litter; a pre-weaning mortality of 18%, and a mean growth rate between 30 kg and 120 kg live weight of 912 g/day.

### Organizational structure

The slaughter industry of today in Sweden includes only a few actors of good size. In total, 11 slaughter plants slaughter 98% of the pigs produced in Sweden.

#### State support

Today, Swedish pig producers receive some economic support from the state:

- A regional subsidy to production in the northern 60% of the country. However, this part of Sweden accounts for only 3% of our pig production.
- Pig producers applying higher animal wellfair, above the national law, receive a certain payment.
- Compensation of higher costs for castrations performed using anaesthesia, as well as for “immuno-castration”.
- Economic state support is also given in case of outbreaks of certain diseases, such as Salmonella infections.

### Conditions for pig rearing in Sweden

	SVERIGE
<b>Docked tails</b>	Prohibited
<b>Castration:</b> Anaesthesia Analgesia	Required according to law from 1 th of January 2016. Yes
<b>Fixing of sows</b>	Prohibited
<b>Space for sows with piglets</b>	6 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Full slatted floor<sup>1)</sup></b>	Prohibited <sup>2)</sup>
<b>Enrichement materials</b>	Yes, and bedding requirement, e.g. straw
<b>Use of antibiotics</b>	Minimum and not preventive
<b>Antibiotics for growth promotion purposes/hormones</b>	Prohibited
<b>Daylight requirement</b>	Yes

<sup>1)</sup> Full slat floor means that the entire floor is made up of “slats”.

<sup>2)</sup> 2/3 of the floor must be concrete to provide enrichment material.

**Sweden today** is declared free from e.g AD, Foot and Mouth disease, and PRRS. The Swedish Animal Health Service is a non-governmental veterinary organization providing preventive animal health service to pig producers.



**Photo:** Ester Sorri, Svenskt kött, Pirjo Gustafsson, Annika Bergman

**Source:** SLU, LRF, Svenskt Kött

**Would you like to know more about Swedish pig rearing? Please visit [www.lrf.se](http://www.lrf.se)**

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SWEDISH FARMERS**