

QUO VADIS FLEMISH SWINE PRACTITIONER?

Barriers and incentives for the evolution towards an advisory role

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Aims

- 1 **Set the scene** of the current Flemish swine health advisory system
- 2 **Identify the key actors** of the current health advisory system and their role
- 3 **Pinpoint potential integrative solutions** to stimulate the sale of veterinary advice to farmers

Motivation

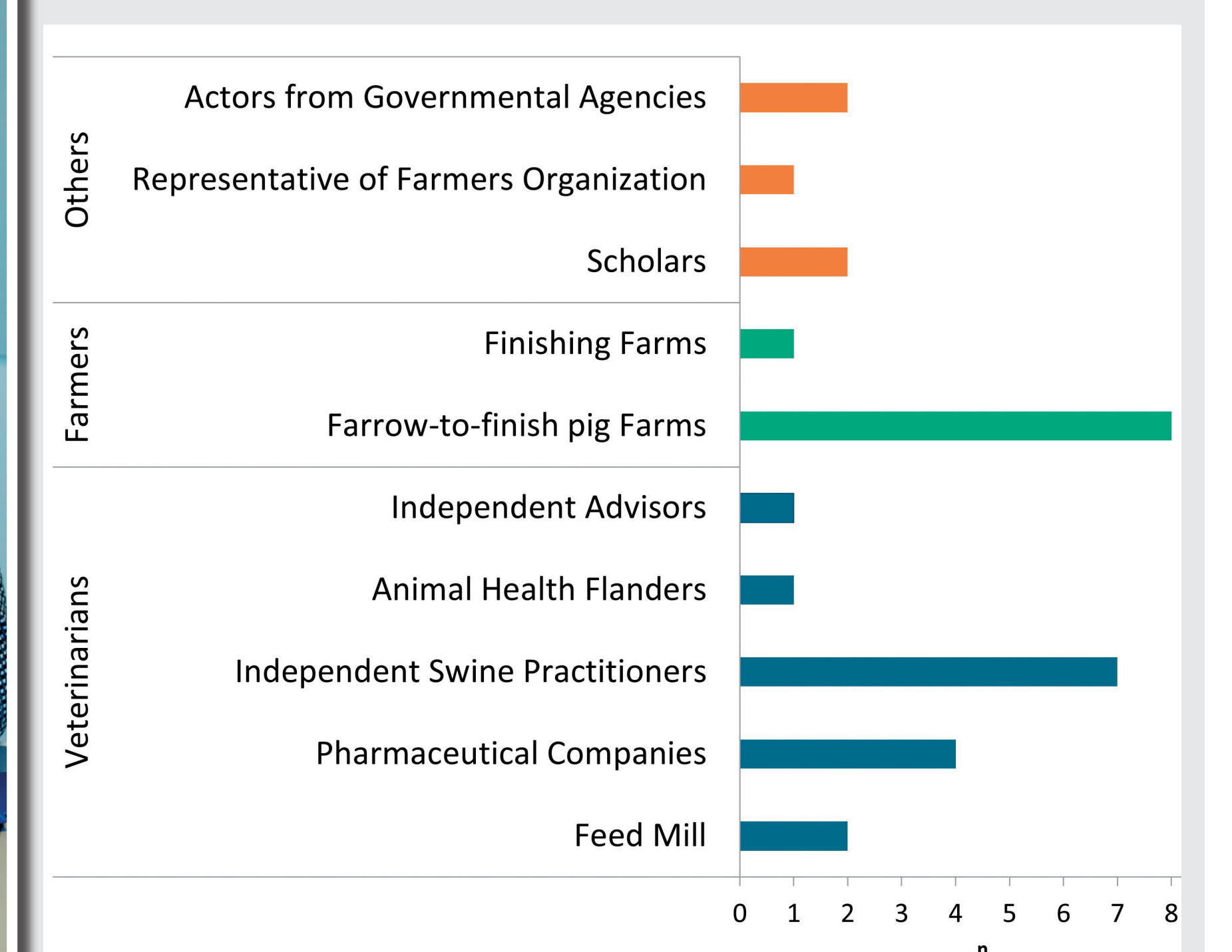
- **Advice** provided by swine veterinarians plays a **key role** to **optimizing** and **improving** the **health** status of pig farms
- **Currently** veterinarians **charge indirectly** advice with the sale of products and/or veterinary acts
- This situation **represents a challenge** which may lead to **sub-optimal pig health**

What we did and how we did it

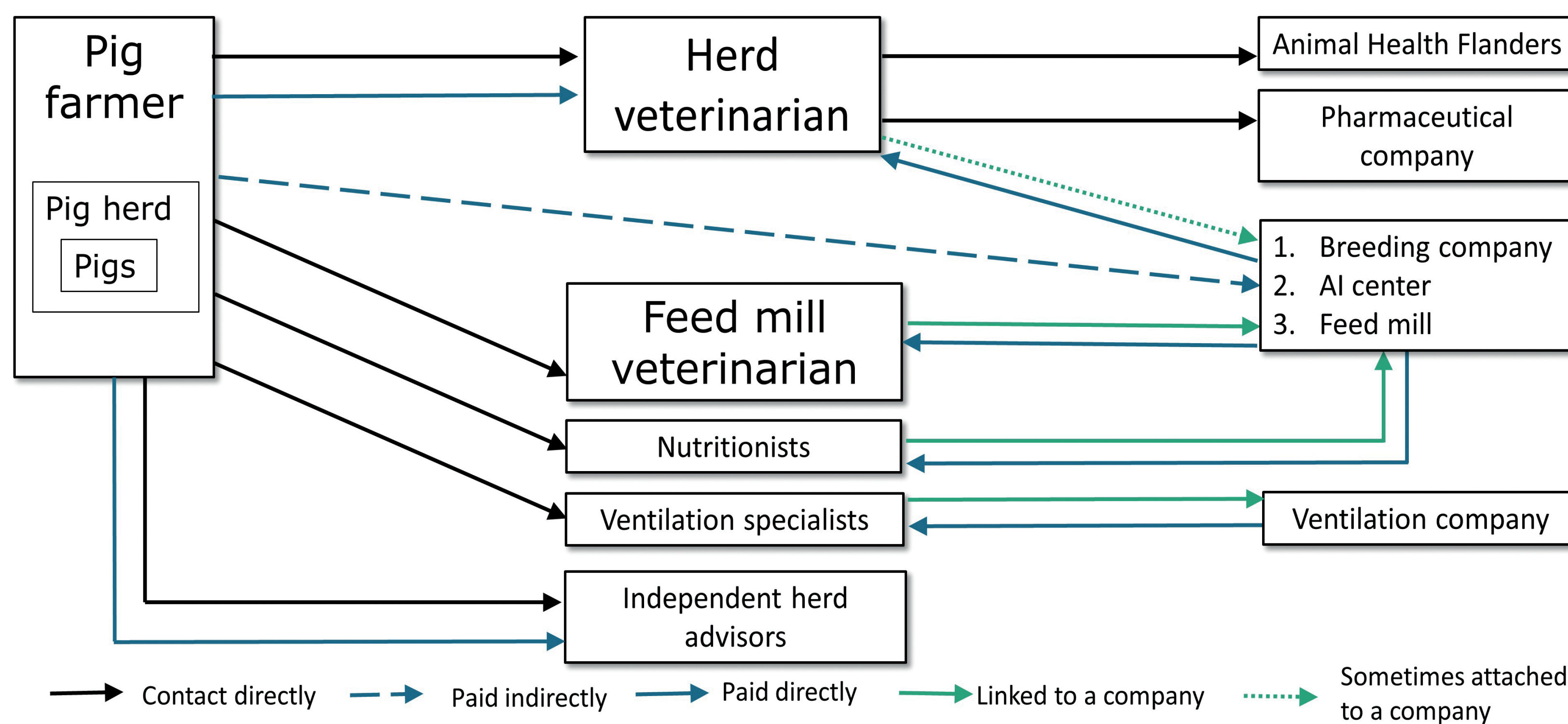
1. **Qualitative open interviews** were performed with **key informants** of the Flemish pig sector (**n=7**)
2. We performed **semi-structured interviews (n=22)** with members of all different actors to investigate **practices, attitudes** and **barriers** that impede changes to the health advisory system
3. We used **thematic analysis** to analyze the interviews



Summary of sort and number of interviewees



Scheme of the present **Swine Health Advisory System** which includes the different **kinds of advisors**, their **linkages** and way of getting paid



Identified barriers for evolution

- Veterinarians regarded farmers as reluctant to pay for advice, while most **farmers** declared to **be willing to pay** for it
- There is abundant **free health advice offered by feed mills**
- There is **not a strong Flemish Veterinary Union**
- A **fierce competition** exists amid veterinarians
- Complying with **current legislation** is time consuming but **not remunerated**
- Veterinarians take a **prescriptive expert role** to support sales of medicines
- There is often a **conflict of interest** when giving treatment's advice

Tasks and income of the veterinarian

- The **herd veterinarian** and the **feed mill veterinarian** have crucial and complementary roles
- Sale of **medication** is the **main source of income** of swine veterinarians
- Most of veterinarians do **not directly invoice advice**
- The **veterinarian is the main advisor** about **veterinary-related** issues
- Most of the **contact** with the farmer occurs at **pre-scheduled visits**

Identified potential solutions

1. To create a **third party organization** to which **farmers** would **pay a fixed amount per sow per year**. Later this organization would pay the veterinarians for their advisory services
2. **Decoupling** of the **dispensation** and **prescription** rights of veterinarians was proposed by most of the farmers interviewed. Whereas most of the **veterinarians** were very **reluctant**

Conclusions

- Our results confirm our problem statement - presently **veterinarians** encounter many **difficulties to sell directly advice** to pig farmers.
- The way in which income is generated by veterinarians is a **reflection** of the **broader institutional** and **social** context as well as **historical factors**.
- Presently, the **enabling environment** does **not favour innovation** of veterinarians' business model towards a remunerated advisory role.

Acknowledgments

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