

# Investigation of information retrieval and bio-security awareness among pig-farmers during a PRRS outbreak in Sweden

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During an outbreak of contagious animal disease farmer awareness is crucial. Their actions will affect further spread of disease and early notification depends on knowledge of symptoms.

**Introduction:** In July 2007 Porcine respiratory reproductive syndrome (**PRRS**) was detected for the first time in Sweden. The authorities decided to aim for **eradication** through slaughter/cull of positive herds followed by cleaning and disinfection of the premises. All farmers received information from the veterinary authorities and the farmers organisation. The outbreak was also frequently mentioned in the media. In total 8 positive herds were detected.

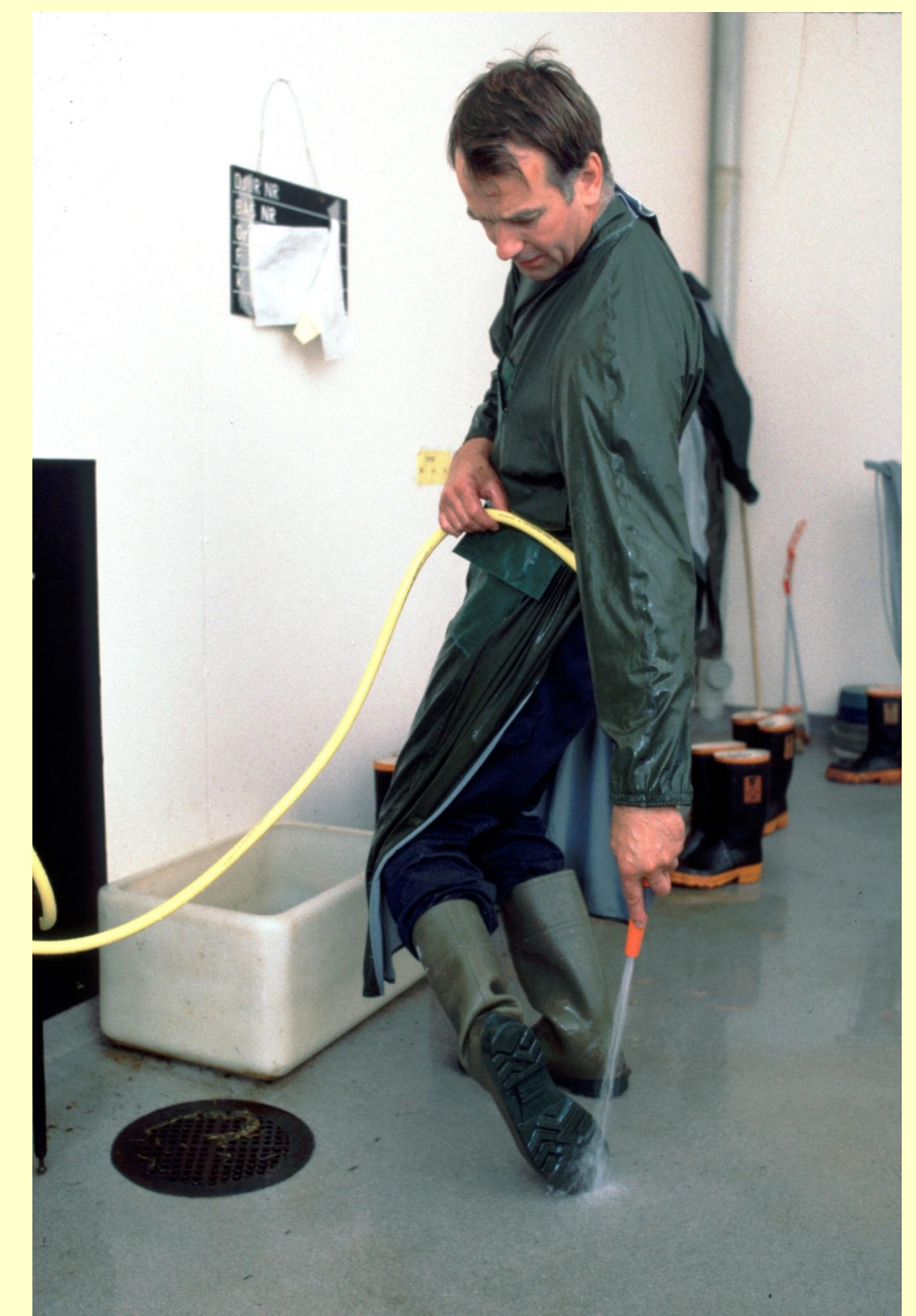
**Aim:** We wanted to investigate if pig-farmers were **aware of the disease** and the outbreak, what were their most reliable **sources of information**, and if the **bio-security routines** were altered due to the outbreak.

**Material and method:** In all, **153** farmers from five different regions in the country (randomly selected for a previous study and having pigs at that time), were sent a questionnaire in January 2008.

**Preliminary results:** The final data collection is ongoing and the results are preliminary. Response rate so far is above 90%. Among responders confirming having pigs during the outbreak (n=126), the results were as shown in the figures and the table.

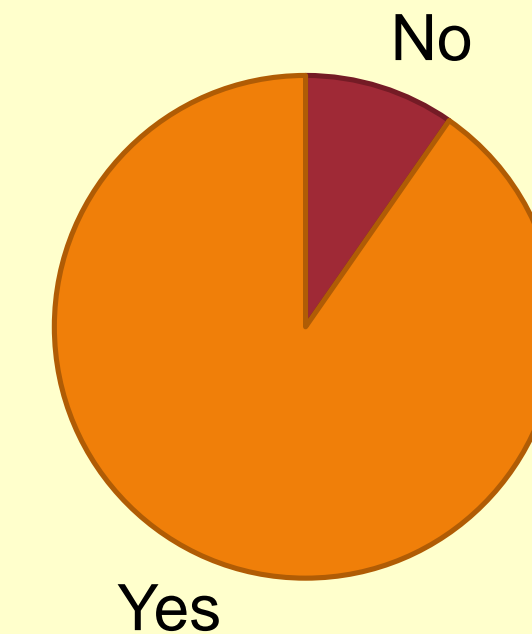


Photo: Bengt Ekberg, SVA

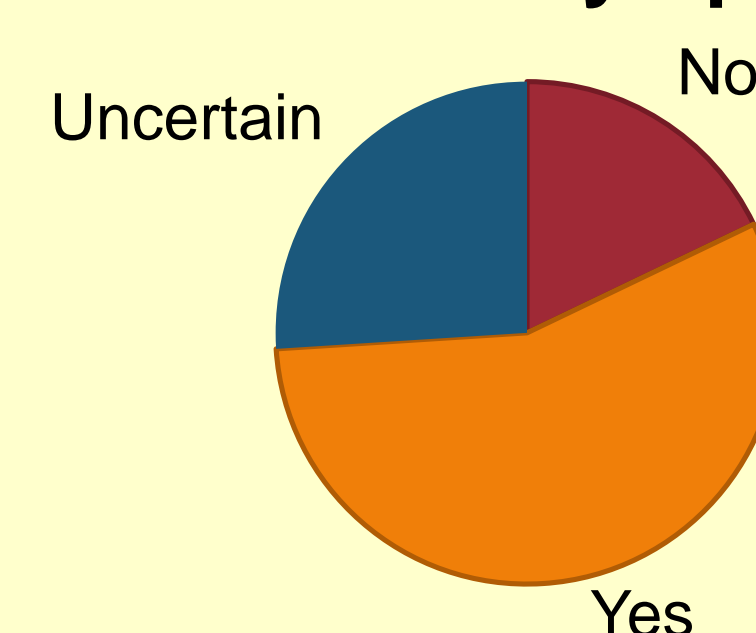


Farmers...

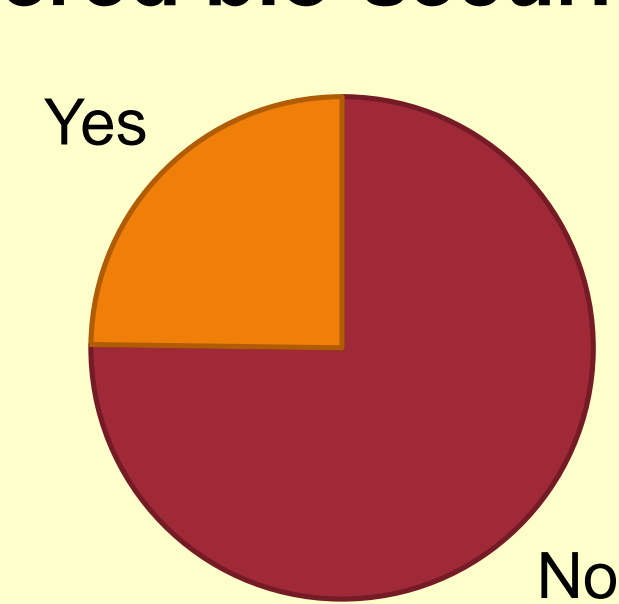
...aware of outbreak



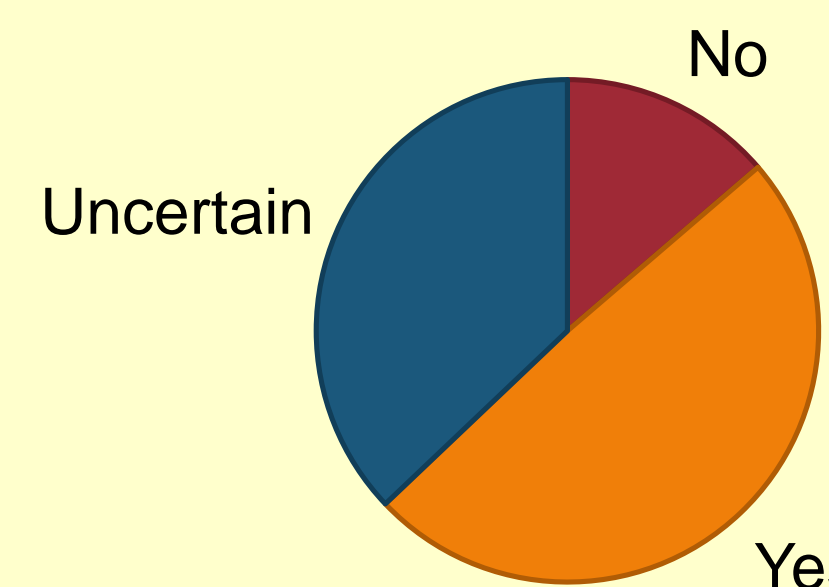
...aware of symptoms



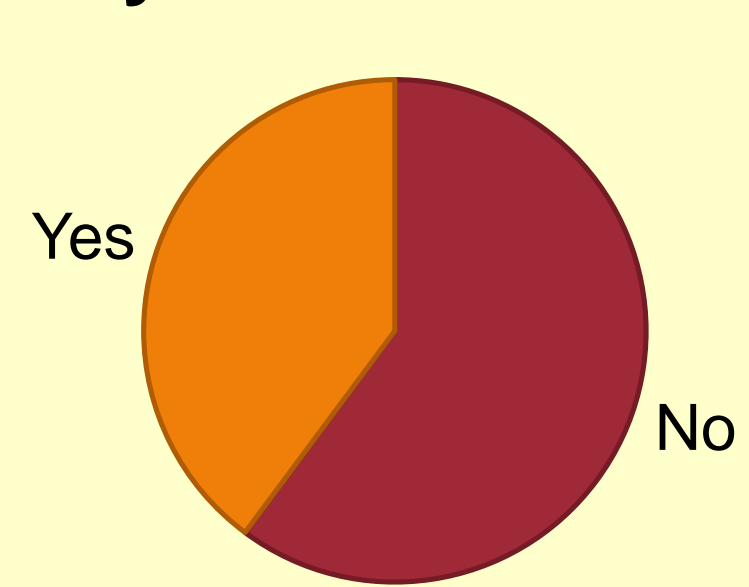
...who altered bio-security routines



...aware of means of spread



...who actively searched for information



**Farmers most important and reliable sources of information during the outbreak\***

The Swedish Animal Health Service	55%
The Swedish Board of Agriculture	34%
Media (newspapers, radio, TV)	27%
Farmers organisations	15%
The National Veterinary Institute	10%
Other sources	9%
Other farmers	6%

\*More than one source could be given by each farmer

**Conclusion:** We found that there was a large variation among farmers as regards their knowledge about the disease, especially among small and medium sized farms. One interesting observation was that 10% of pig-farmers were unaware of the outbreak, despite information sent by mail. Further analysis will be done based on geography and production-type.

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