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**Extract from Rigsrevisionen's report  
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# **The inspection of the welfare of animals during transport**

# 1. Introduction and conclusion

## 1.1. Purpose and conclusion

1. This report concerns the Ministry of Environment and Food's inspection of animal transports and sanctions imposed for infringements of provisions governing the area. The Ministry of Environment and Food has the overall responsibility for the area, and the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration carries out the inspections.

2. The study was initiated at the request of the Danish Public Accounts Committee. The committee wanted a study that examined whether inspections in the area were effective and had been adjusted to address the development in the number of animal transports. The committee's request was founded on a political agreement of 18 December 2018 that was aiming to strengthen inspection of animal transports. The agreement was a response to the increase in the number of infringements detected on inspection and the fact that the frequency of inspection had not been increased to match the increasing number of animal transports.

3. In July 2018, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration published a report on sanctions imposed following inspections of animal transports. The report showed that infringements detected in the inspection of journey logs were inadequately sanctioned, which prompted the minister for environment and food to ask the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration to carry out an analysis of specific measures to improve the inspection of animal transports and target checks at known problem areas.

4. The focus of the study is the inspection of transports of pigs on journeys exceeding eight hours. According to the transport regulations, journeys exceeding eight hours carry the greatest risk of having a negative impact on the welfare of the animals and are therefore under strict regulation. Since 2008, the export of pigs has more than doubled, and the number of long journeys has tripled. In 2018, Denmark exported approx. 15 million pigs, of which approx. 10 million were transported for more than eight hours.

### **Agreement to strengthen inspection of animal transports**

In December 2018, the government entered into an agreement on the transport of animals with a number of political parties. According to the agreement, inspections in the area must be strengthened through, for instance, greater focus on black sheep, expanded authority to impose penalties, more spot checks (loading checks) and enhancement of the quality of the mandatory pre-journey assessment of the animals' fitness for journey. The agreement prescribes and evaluation of these measures in December 2019.

### **Report on inadequate sanctioning**

In July 2018, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration emphasized in a report that particularly the inspection of journey logs had been challenging. Journey logs are submitted to the agency by the transporters following transports of animals lasting more than eight hours. Inspection had been inadequate and infringements detected had not been sanctioned.

**Inspection governed by two regulations**

General provisions in the regulation on public inspection of animal transport (inspection regulations) and the regulation on the protection of animals during transport (transport regulations) stipulate the specific requirements that the Ministry of Environment and Food must meet concerning inspection of animal transport.

5. The purpose of the study is to assess the effectiveness of the Ministry of Environment and Food's inspection of transport of pigs on journeys exceeding eight hours in the period from 2008 to 2018. In this context effective inspection means that 1) the various types of inspections have been performed, 2) the inspections reflect the knowledge derived from previous infringements and developments in the transport of pigs, 3) the inspections are planned based on an assessment of risk, and 4) all previously detected infringements have been sanctioned.



## Main conclusion

**It is Rigsrevisionen's assessment that the Ministry of Environment and Food, in the period from 2008 to 2018, has failed to ensure effective inspection of pigs during transports exceeding eight hours. This is considered unsatisfactory by Rigsrevisionen. The inadequate inspection has entailed unnecessary risk to the welfare of pigs during transport with respect to the risk of injuries or other suffering.**

**The Ministry of Environment and Food has performed the required inspections, but sampling has not been adjusted to address the increasing number of transports of pigs, nor has the planning of the inspections been risk based. This is considered unsatisfactory by Rigsrevisionen.**

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration has performed the two mandatory pre-journey inspections of the pigs, i.e. the inspection of journey logs and the pigs' fitness for journey. However, in 2018 the veterinarians were required to assess the fitness for journey of, on average, approx. 39 % more pigs than in 2008. This fact indicates that the time available to the veterinarians to perform the inspections has been reduced over the period covered by the study.

The number of random inspections has not been adjusted to address the increase in the number of pigs being transported, and the inspections have not been directed at the areas most exposed to risk. In the course of the study period, the Veterinary and Food Administration has not adjusted the number of pre-journey inspections in spite of a significant increase in the number of pigs being transported, and in spite of the fact that the internal auditors of the Ministry of Environment and Food in 2011, seconded by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration in 2016, recommended a re-assessment of the inspection frequency. This means that less than 0.4 % of the transports of pigs were selected for pre-journey inspection in 2018.

Despite the fact that 88 % of the transports of pigs over long distances start from assembly centres where compliance with the regulations is low, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration performed only 25 % of its pre-journey inspections at assembly centres in 2018. The development that has taken place during the period of study indicates that being selected for inspection at farm level in 2018, was 15 times as likely as being selected for inspection at an assembly centre. Moreover, most inspections are performed during the last months of the year. It is Rigsrevisionen's assessment that the practice of inspections makes them less effective in detecting infringements, because the inspections are not carried out where the risk is highest, and because transporters, who infringe the regulations, can plan their transports and thus reduce their risk of detection.

The study finds that the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration has inspected almost all Danish and close to 30 % of all foreign transporters' journey logs, in compliance with agency guidelines. However, the agency still has a backlog of journey logs from 2018 that have yet to be checked. It is Rigsrevisionen's assessment that the inspection is ineffective, when the transporters can continue to transport pigs for an extensive period of time, before they are informed of and sanctioned for their infringement of the regulations. Rigsrevisionen also draws attention to the risk that infringements committed in 2018 are not sanctioned within the limitation period of two years.

**The Ministry of Environment and Food has not applied the full range of sanctions, and the ministry has failed to ensure that transporters, who repeatedly infringe the regulations, are appropriately sanctioned. This is considered unsatisfactory by Rigsrevisionen.**

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration lacks knowledge of past infringements and is therefore not always able to determine whether infringements detected during inspection are recurring and similar in nature and therefore subject to stricter sanctions. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration's inspection guidelines prescribe that, in principle, repeated and uniform infringements committed within a short time frame, should be rigorously sanctioned. The study found that this happens only exceptionally. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration has not suspended any authorisations or prohibited any transports during the period examined. The Veterinary and Food Administration was authorised to prohibit transports in 2016, but guidelines in the area were not developed by the agency until 2019. The agency has referred to the lack of guidelines as one of the reasons why the agency has not imposed any prohibitions.

For the period examined, the study found that the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration had no clear picture of the agency's level of compliance with the provisions of the regulation concerning the obligation to report foreign transporters' infringements to the relevant authorities in their homeland. Nor has the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration any overview of the extent to which the agency acts on reports concerning infringements committed by Danish transporters abroad.

Based on a political agreement to strengthen inspection of animal transports, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration implemented a number of measures in 2019 that increased the number of pre-journey inspections and allowed the veterinarians more time to assess whether the pigs were fit for journey. It is Rigsrevisionen's assessment that the agency earlier, and based on the increase in the number of pigs being transported, should have considered whether the number of inspections performed matched this development.