

## Basic study to record the prevalence of MRSA in pig breeding stocks

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Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) can lead to severe health damage with fatal consequences particularly in the case of hospital patients. In recent years the prevalence of a specific type of MRSA has been described in livestock. The European Union conducted a basic study in all Member States in order to estimate the spread (prevalence) of MRSA in pig breeding stocks. This study was coupled with a survey of the prevalence of *Salmonella* in these pig farms. The surveys were conducted between 1 January and 31 December 2008 on the basis of an EU study design. They recorded at least 80 % of breeding pigs in each Member State and were preferably carried out in farms with at least 50 breeding pigs. Representative pig farms for the different geographical situations were selected in each Member State.

Germany has presented the results of its basic study on the prevalence of MRSA in pig breeding herds. Sampling in the pig farms and data recording were done by the *Länder* authorities. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) coordinated the study, monitored the diagnostics, did the isolate typing and drew up the report.

84 of the 201 stocks were tested positive for Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in the dust samples examined. 93 % of the isolated MRSA belonged to the sequence type ST398 frequently found in livestock. This confirms the results of the studies conducted in cooperation with the *Länder* on the spread of MRSA in the German pig population.

The full version of the BfR Opinion in German is available on [http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/grundlagenstudie\\_zur\\_erhebung\\_der\\_praevalenz\\_von\\_mrsa\\_in\\_zuchtschweinebestaenden\\_vorgelegt.pdf](http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/grundlagenstudie_zur_erhebung_der_praevalenz_von_mrsa_in_zuchtschweinebestaenden_vorgelegt.pdf)