

Food hygiene: Derogation from the official testing requirement for *Trichinella*

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Trichinella larvae are nematodes that predominantly infest the skeletal muscle of wild boars and domestic pigs. Humans can become infected with this parasite following the consumption of raw pork or raw sausage products. The infection (trichinellosis) initially manifests itself in non-specific symptoms such as nausea, abdominal pain and vomiting. As soon as the larvae migrate to the skeletal muscles via the blood and lymph system, the infected person suffers from muscle pain, fever, as well as oedema of the face and eyelids.

In Germany, *Trichinella* is very rarely found in the domestic pig population, therefore the risk of consumers contracting trichinellosis is extremely low. Testing pig carcasses for *Trichinella* larvae (trichina testing) is a legal requirement in the entire EU. A derogation from the testing requirement is possible if the animals originate from farms with officially recognised controlled housing conditions. The term “controlled housing conditions” denotes, amongst other things, a confined type of housing where the animals do not have outdoor access, where controlled feeding systems are installed and where rodent control is implemented.

In the period from 2003 to 2012, approximately 489 million pigs were tested for *Trichinella* in Germany. Of those, only eight animals were *Trichinella*-positive. These pigs were kept in small private holdings and had probably contracted *Trichinella* from wild animals such as wild boars, foxes or raccoon dogs.

In view of these test results, the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is of the opinion that the derogation from the official testing requirement is justifiable for pigs from controlled housing conditions.

The full version of this BfR Information is available in German on <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/lebensmittelhygiene-ausnahmen-von-der-amtlichen-trichinenuntersuchung.pdf>