

Weekly Review: World's Top Pig Vets Updated on Italy's Pork Industry, Global Disease Issues and Biting Insects

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GLOBAL - Organisers of the European Symposium on Porcine Health Management (ESPHM) last week in Italy put together an attractive programme that attracted more than 1,300 delegates from 47 different countries.

At the European Symposium on Porcine Health Management (EPSHM) in Sorrento, Italy, last week, Davide Calderone representing the host nation's association of pig producers and pig meat processors, ASSICA, explained the **key features of the Italian pig industry**.

Pigs are reared to heavy weights and for longer than most other European countries - 170kg and nine months of age - making them ideal for the production of traditional cured meats such as Parma ham and San Daniele ham as well as other deli products for which Italy is renowned.

This heavyweight pig has hams of the size required for these special products. (If you want to find out the minimum weight of a Parma ham, [click here](#).)

Production has risen by almost 30 per cent since 1985 from 930,000 tonnes to 1.2 million tonnes in 2012, according to Mr Calderone. 2013 figures are not yet available but he said the trend has continued in the last year. Over the same period, the production of cured hams that has helped to push up the total volume as this sector has increased its share of the total from 18 per cent in 1985 to 25 per cent in 2012.

Some of the most **challenging issues** in pig health today were addressed at the ESPHM - including antibiotic use, Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) and tail biting - and there were also excellent reviews on Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea and African Swine Fever.

The **Poster Prize** at the Symposium was awarded to Jesus Borobia-Belsue for his report on skin irritation among pigs and farmers as well as carcass downgrading across Northern Ireland caused by midge-bites.

Also in the news last week, McDonald's has announced its '2014 Best of Sustainable Supply' winners in a report highlighting how suppliers achieved significant results by identifying opportunities and applying sustainable solutions in diverse places around the world.

In **Canada**, the province of Manitoba has confirmed a second on-farm case of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea virus in a finisher barn.

The image above was taken from the ESPHM venue, showing Mount Vesuvius in the background and an example of Sorrento's famous lemons in the foreground