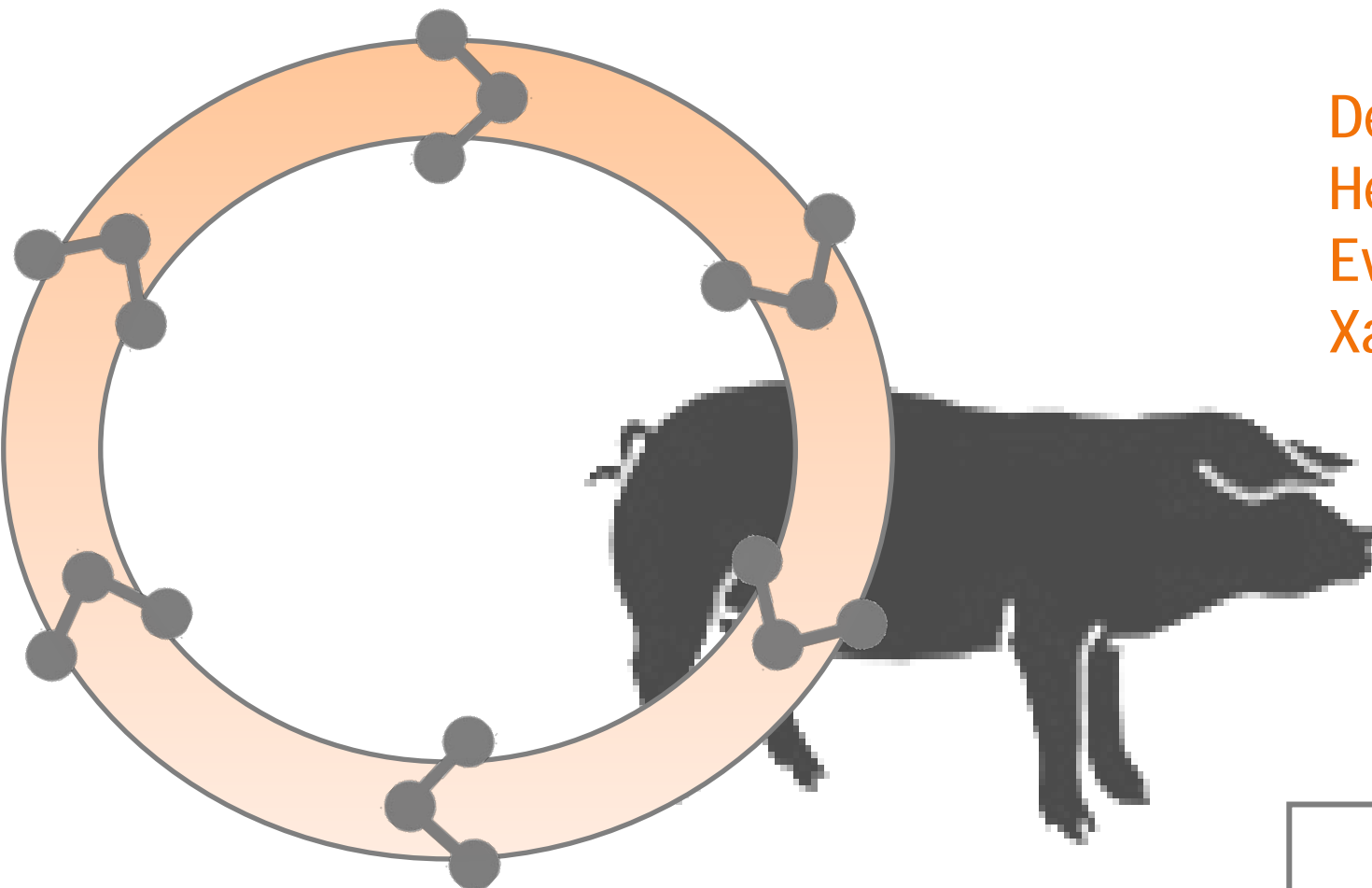


GROUP HOUSING OF SOWS IN EUROPE: LOOKING FOR STRATEGIES TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE

Déborah Temple
Herman Vermeer
Eva Mainau
Xavier Manteca



EAAP
Nantes, 2013

UAB
Universitat Autònoma
de Barcelona

Since the 1960's



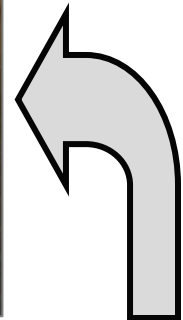
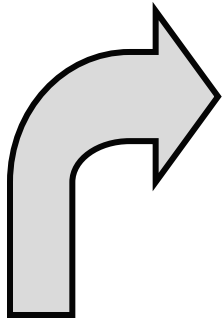
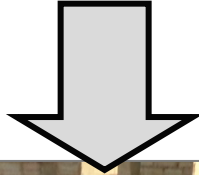
Easy management

Individual monitoring of health

Controlled feed intake

Reduce occurrence of aggressions

CHRONIC HUNGER

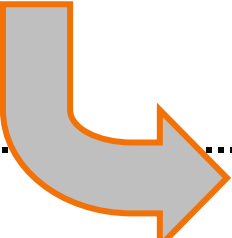
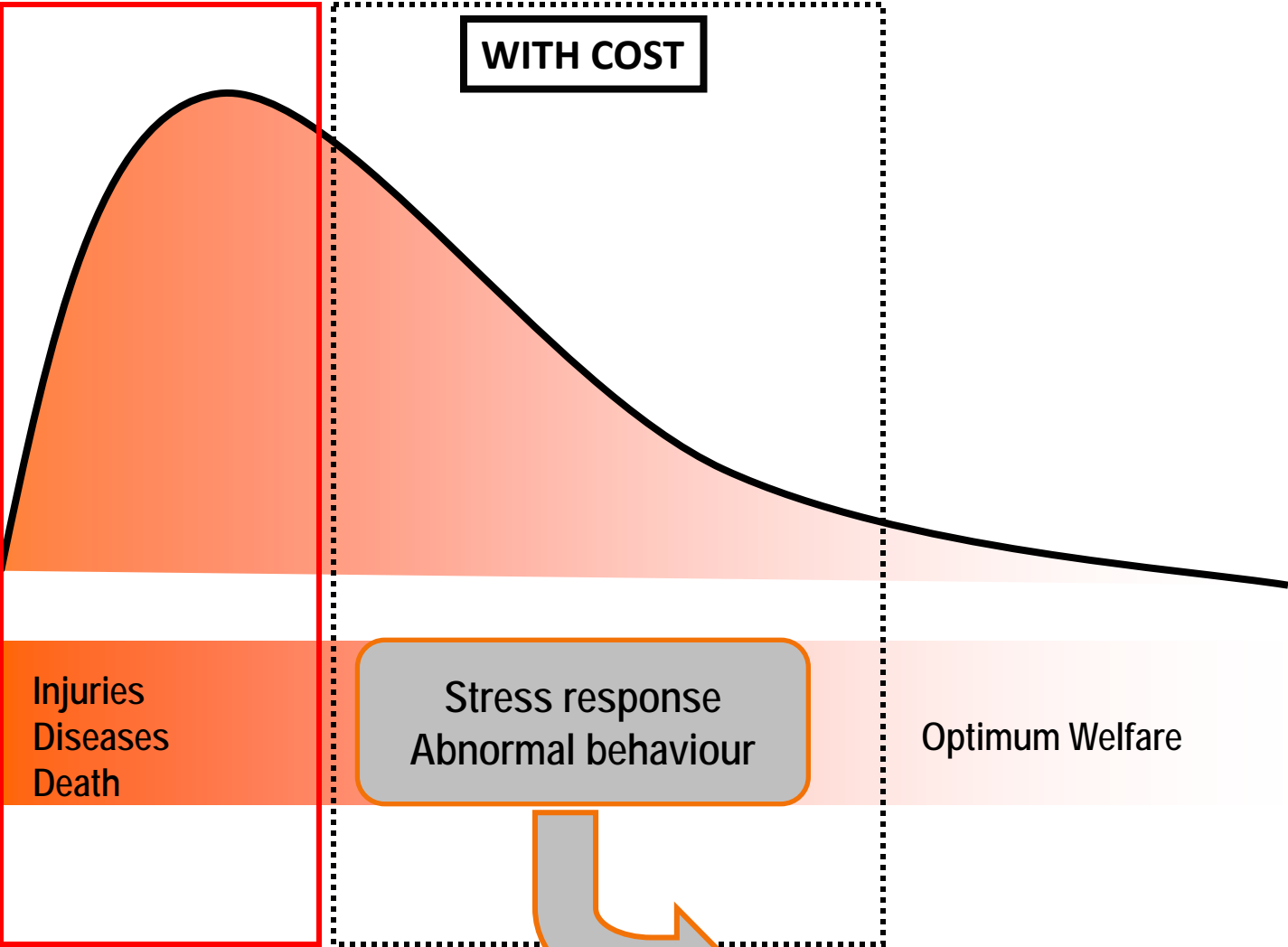


SOCIAL STRESS
(unresolved conflicts)

RESTRICTED MOVEMENT

NO adaptati3n

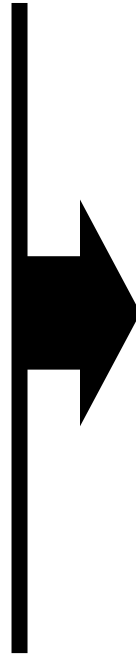
ADAPTATION
possible



stereotypies

FRUSTATION

ATTEMPTS TO ADAPT
TO THE ENVIRONMENT



DISFUNCTION
OF THE CNS



STEREOTYPIES

**“THE PIG
DIRECTIVE”
2008**

DIRECTIVES

**COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2008/120/EC
of 18 December 2008**

laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs

“sows must be kept in groups from four weeks after service to one week before the expected time of farrowing”

Member States have had 12 years to ensure a smooth transition to the new system

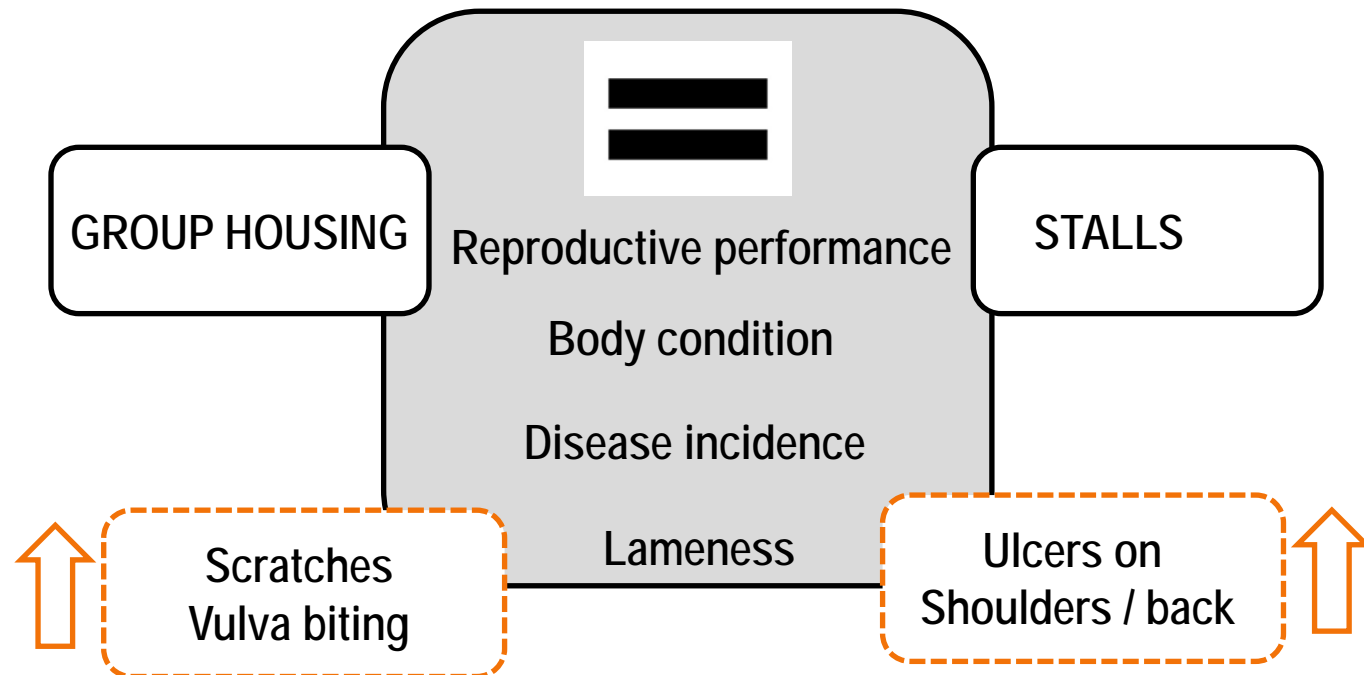
- Proposal from the Commission
- 1994: EU revealing that gestation crates will be banned
- 2003: new facilities with gestation crates are banned
- 2006: tied sows are illegal
- 2013: gestation crates are illegal

SUCCESS OF GROUP HOUSING

● Job satisfaction

Very few farmers are unsatisfied with the group housing system they are using

● Performance



Member States have had 12 years to ensure a smooth transition to the new system

However, so far, several Member States have failed to adequately comply with the EU law

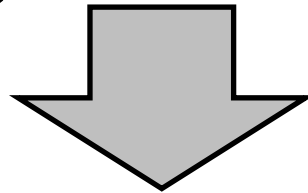
Many farmers started the transition too late and will have difficulties meeting the new legal requirements.

November 2011:

only 47% of pig farms in Spain housed pregnant sows in groups

only 16% of farms with less than 400 sows kept the sows in groups

ESTIMATION



Around 40%-50% of pig farms will:

- go into finishing
- sell out to big companies
- just simply going out of pigs

**The commission
increases pressure
on Member States
to enforce group
housing of sows**



The Commission, via a letter of formal notice, called several Member States to take action to address deficiencies in the implementation of the EU legislation.

Member States have had 12 years to ensure a smooth transition to the new system

However, so far, several Member States have failed to adequately comply with the EU law



WHY ???

Delayed compliance: WHY ???

COST + CONFLICT WITH OTHER LEGISLATIONS

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Delayed compliance: WHY ???

COST + CONFLICT WITH OTHER LEGISLATIONS

- Uncertainty about the future of the farm
- Amortization gestation crate: 8-9 years. Mortgage of the current pig unit and lack of finances.
- More space per sow: 10-15% less animals

Delayed compliance: WHY ???

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Lack of familiarity with options available for group housing

Lack of expertise to manage group-housed sows effectively

Difficulties in interpretation of the regulation



One of the most common group housing system in many EU countries

Close resemblance with the individual gestating stalls



Delayed compliance: WHY ???

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Lack of familiarity with options available for group housing

Lack of expertise to manage group-housed sows effectively

Difficulties in interpretation of the regulation

Screening information to detect any problematic sows



ADAPTATION TO THE SYSTEM: TRAINING OF GILTS

MIXING ANIMALS



COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES



AGGRESSIONS



**Fear
Stress
Health problems**

Delayed compliance: WHY ???

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Lack of familiarity with options available for group housing

Lack of expertise to manage group-housed sows effectively

Difficulties in interpretation of the regulation

"THE PIG
DIRECTIVE"
2008

SPACE &
FLOOR

2.25 m²/ sow including 1.3 m² continuous solid floor



Max of 15% openings for drainage

Groups <6 or >40 need 10% more or less space

ENRICHMENT &
BULKY FOOD

Manipulable material and high-fibre food

MINIMIZE
AGGRESSION

Access to the food - feeding system

- Transition from gilt to sow
- Protection of restricted fed sows
- **Definition of “continuous” solid floor**
- Keeping groups together with variation in AI date
- **Definition of fibrous feed and enrichment**
- **Minimum space behind free access stalls**

*“...at least 0.95 m² per gilt and 1.3m² per sow, must be of **continuous solid floor** of which a maximum of 15% is reserved for drainage openings”*

Some Member States
have specific
interpretations

- The Netherlands:
1.3m² solid floor per sow should be in one surface and not split up in pieces
Maximum 5% openings
- Denmark:
Maximum 10% openings

**The EU maximum
of 15% openings is
close to the
proportion
openings in
standard slatted
floors**

*“...permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, **such as** straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost ...”*



Are those materials equally effective ?

Technical Report prepared for EFSA, 2011

*"An appropriate enrichment material can be defined as a material which stimulates exploratory behaviour **for an extended length of time**, preferably **comparable to the level of occupation provided by straw**."*



1-
1.5%



0.9%



3.6%



1-
1.5%



1-
1.5%



20%

Are those materials equally effective ?

*“...a sufficient quantity of **bulky or high-fibre food** as well as high-energy food.”*

**Ground fibres
in the feed**

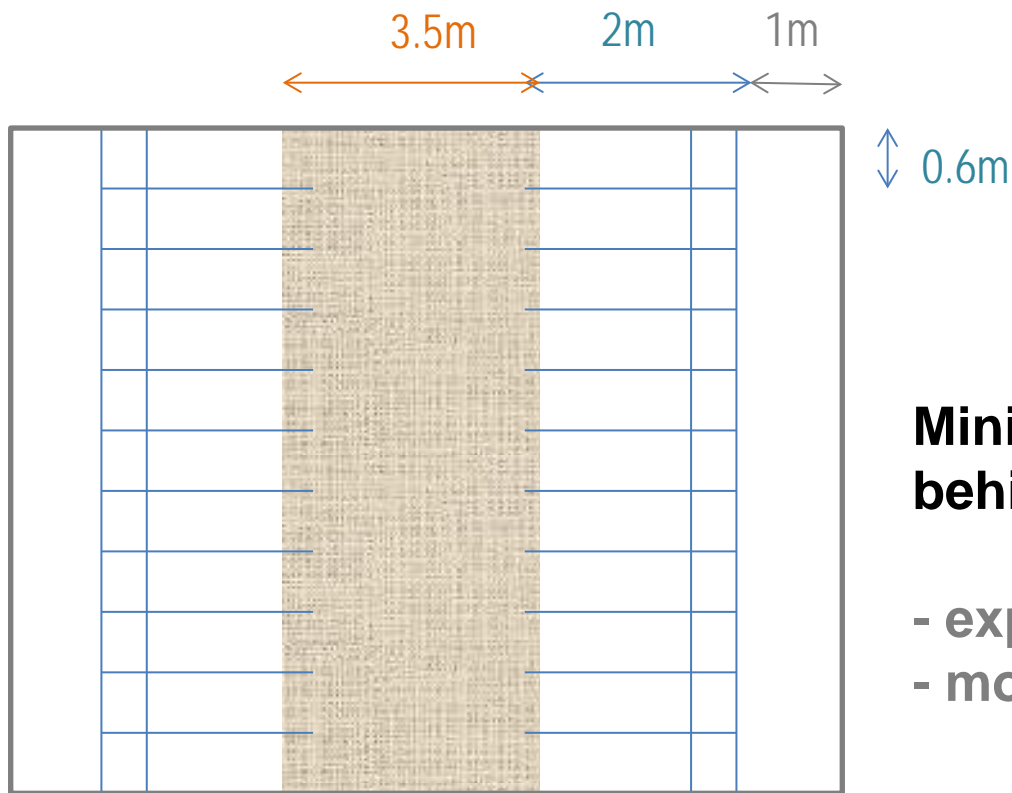
VS



The majority of EU-sows doesn't have any long fibres available

“...the total **unobstructed floor area** available must be at least $1.64\text{m}^2/\text{gilt}$ and $2.25\text{m}^2/\text{sow}$.”

EXAMPLE OF TYPICAL FAS SYSTEM



Minimum width of the area behind the stalls:

- expression of social behaviour
- movement



At least 1.5 times the body length of 2m

Delayed compliance: WHY ???

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE



Lack of familiarity with options available for group housing

Lack of expertise to manage group-housed sows effectively

Difficulties in interpretation of the regulation

How to deal with those difficulties ?

Develop effective and meaningful knowledge transfer strategies

- ➔ **Guidance to authorities and stockpersons**
- ➔ **Consistent information across countries and across people from different backgrounds**

Supporting structure to provide information for a better implementation

EUWeINet 
Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network

COMMUNICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

BRING PEOPLE FROM
DIFFERENT
REGIONS/BACKGROUNDS
TOGETHER

IDENTIFY SPECIFIC
CONFLICTIVE AREAS

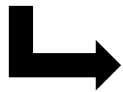
EUWelNet 

Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network

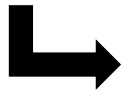
USE DIFFERENT
STRATEGIES TO
TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE

"BROILER DIRECTIVE"

"PIG DIRECTIVE"



Growing pigs: enrichment material and tail docking requirements



Group housing of sows

"KILLING REGULATION"



DEVELOP AND EVALUATE
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
STRATEGIES

TOOLS TESTED TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE



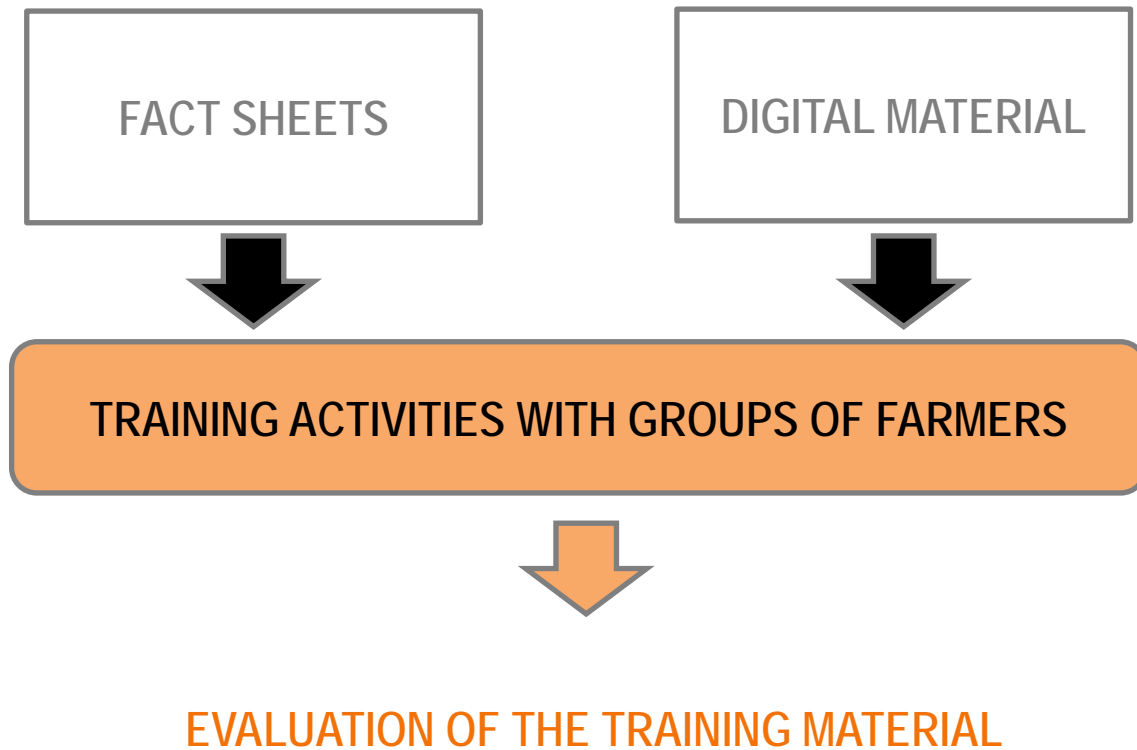
FACT SHEETS

DIGITAL MATERIAL

TRAINING ACTIVITIES WITH GROUPS OF FARMERS

EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING MATERIAL

TOOLS TESTED TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE



TOOLS TESTED TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE

FACT SHEETS



Normal behaviour

Main group housing systems

Managing social behaviour

Training and supervision

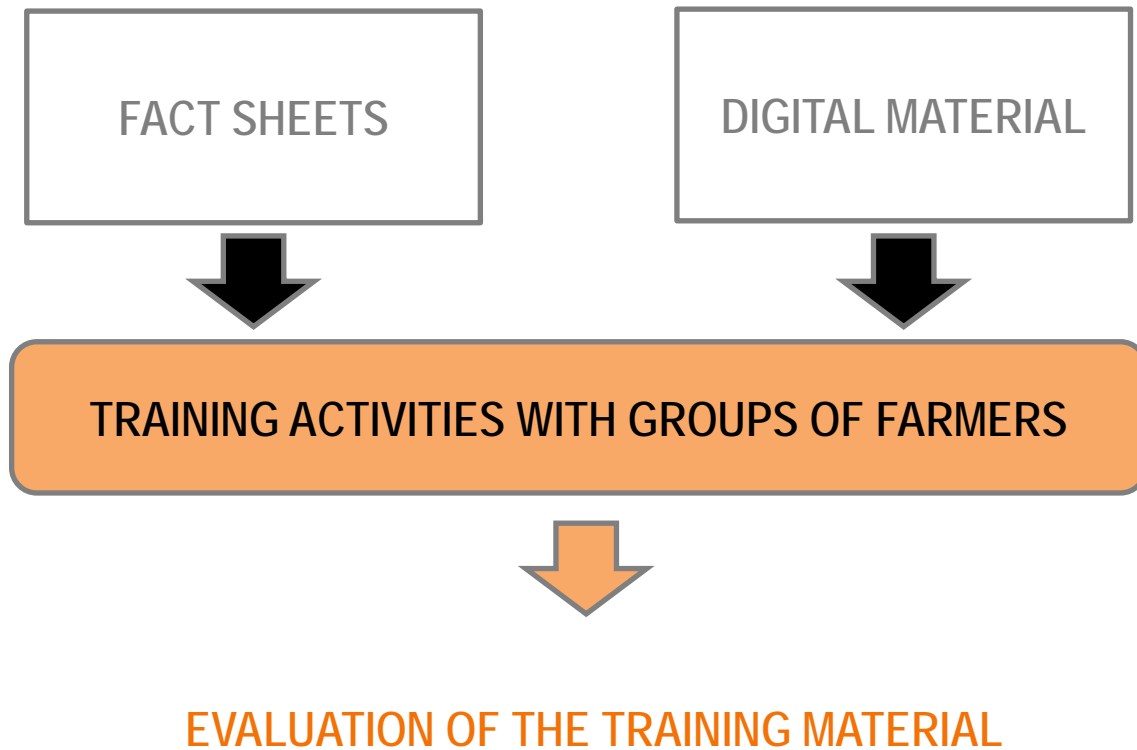
Assessment of compliance



PRODUCERS

COMPETENT AUTHORITIES

TOOLS TESTED TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE



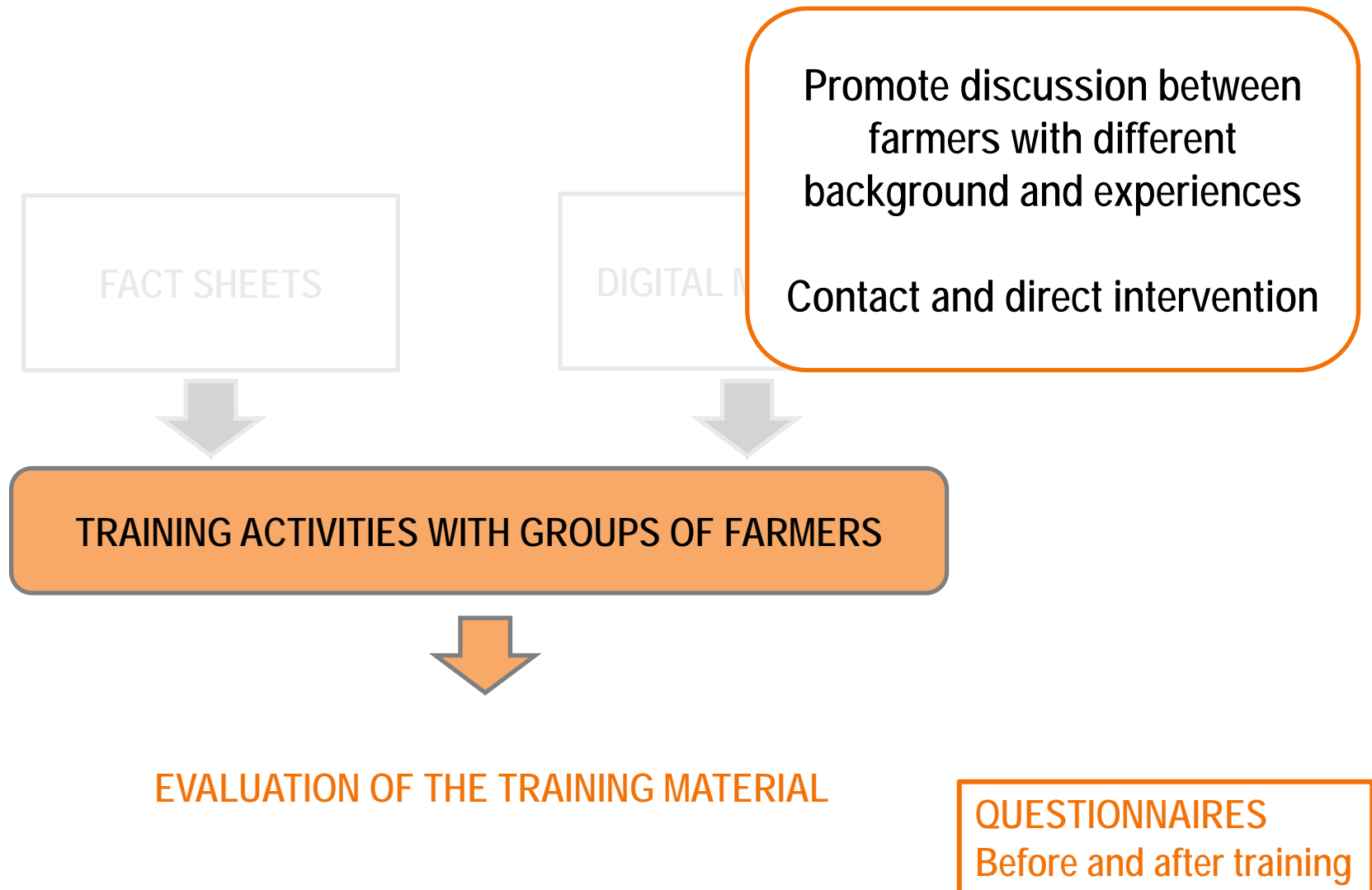
TOOLS TESTED TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE

DIGITAL MATERIAL

POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS

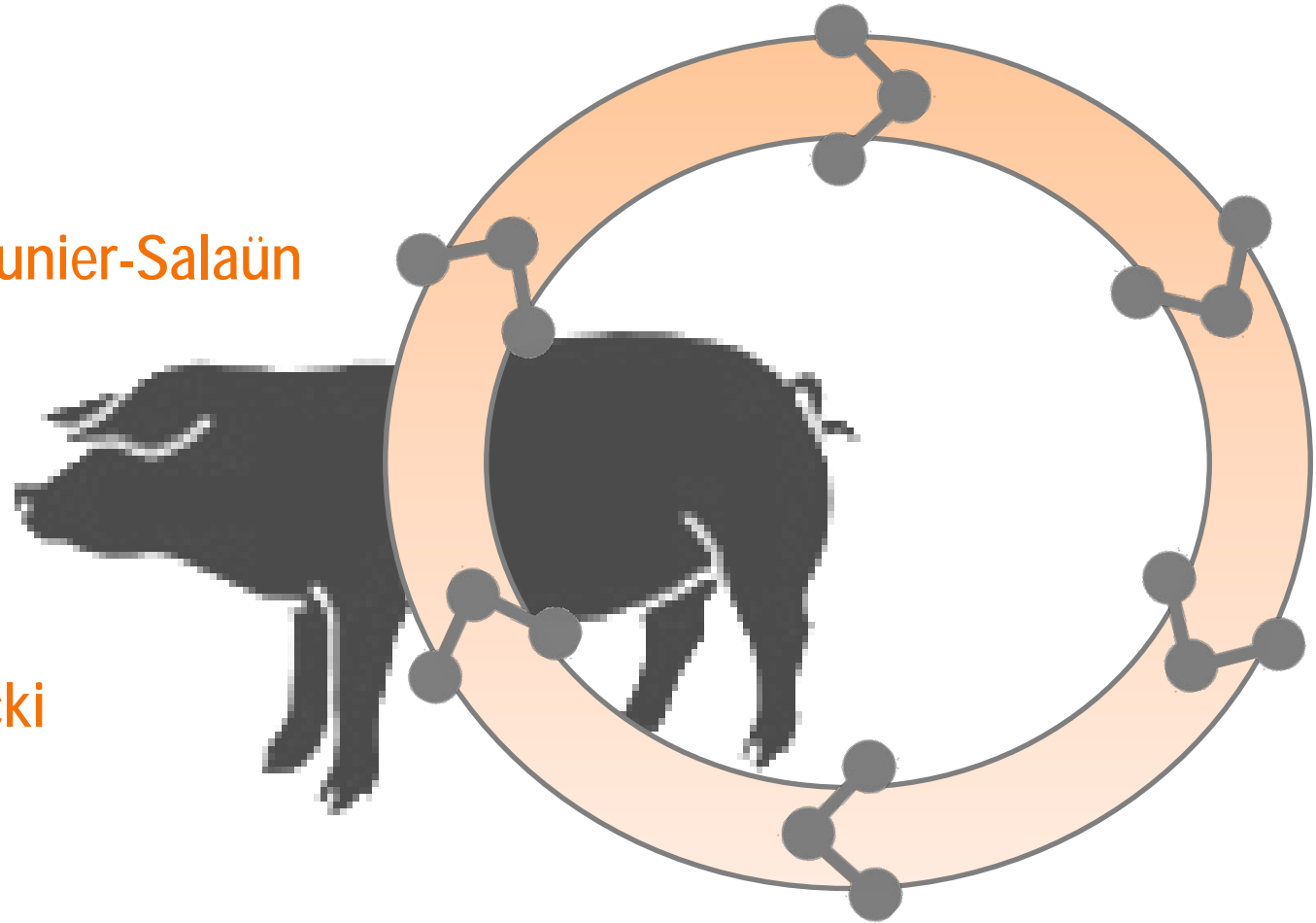
SHORT VIDEOS OF FARMERS

TOOLS TESTED TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE





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Herman Vermeer
Michael Mendl
Claire Weeks
Lisanne Stadig
Frank Tuytens
Jacek Pawel Nowicki



MERCI POUR VOTRE ATTENTION !