



Behaviour & health of entire male pigs in a semi-natural habitat

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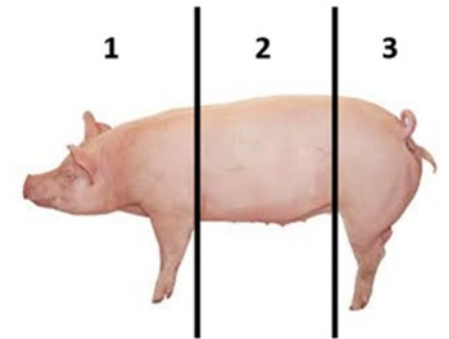
„SchweinErleben“ Project

- 3-year project, different focus topics
- 1.9ha, forest & pasture
- 3 sows, 41 piglets (Swiss Large White)
- After 3 months, reduction to 4 piglets/ sow
- **Exploratory study**, no control group

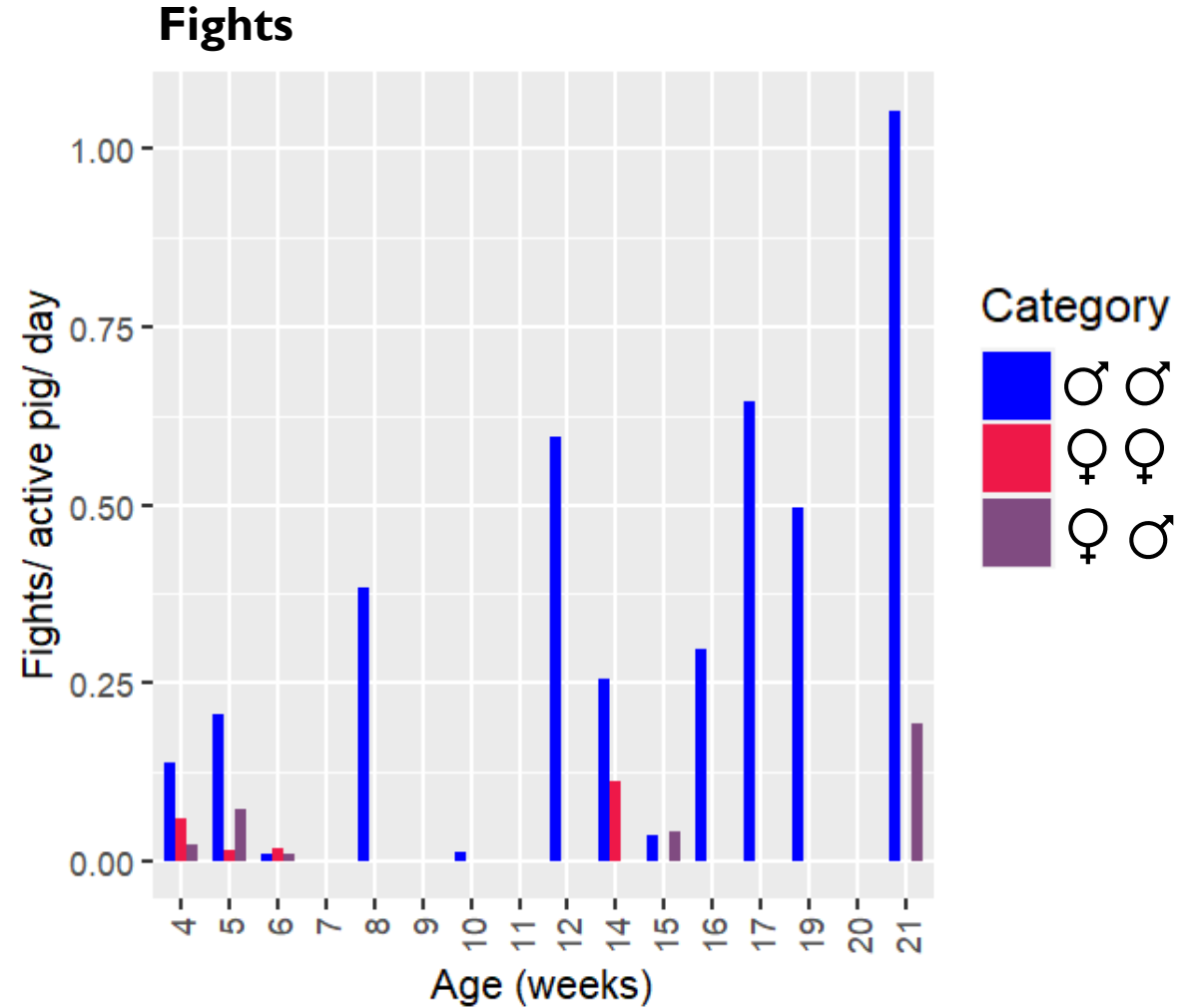
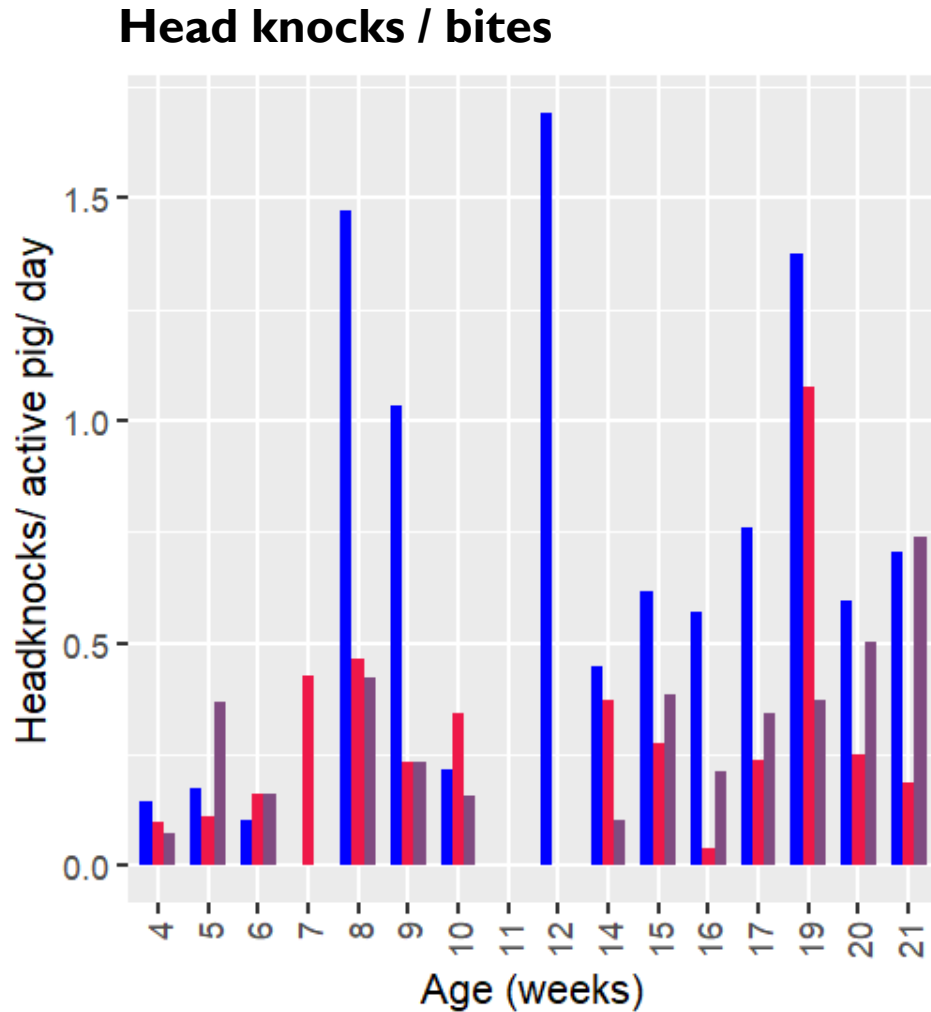


Material & Method

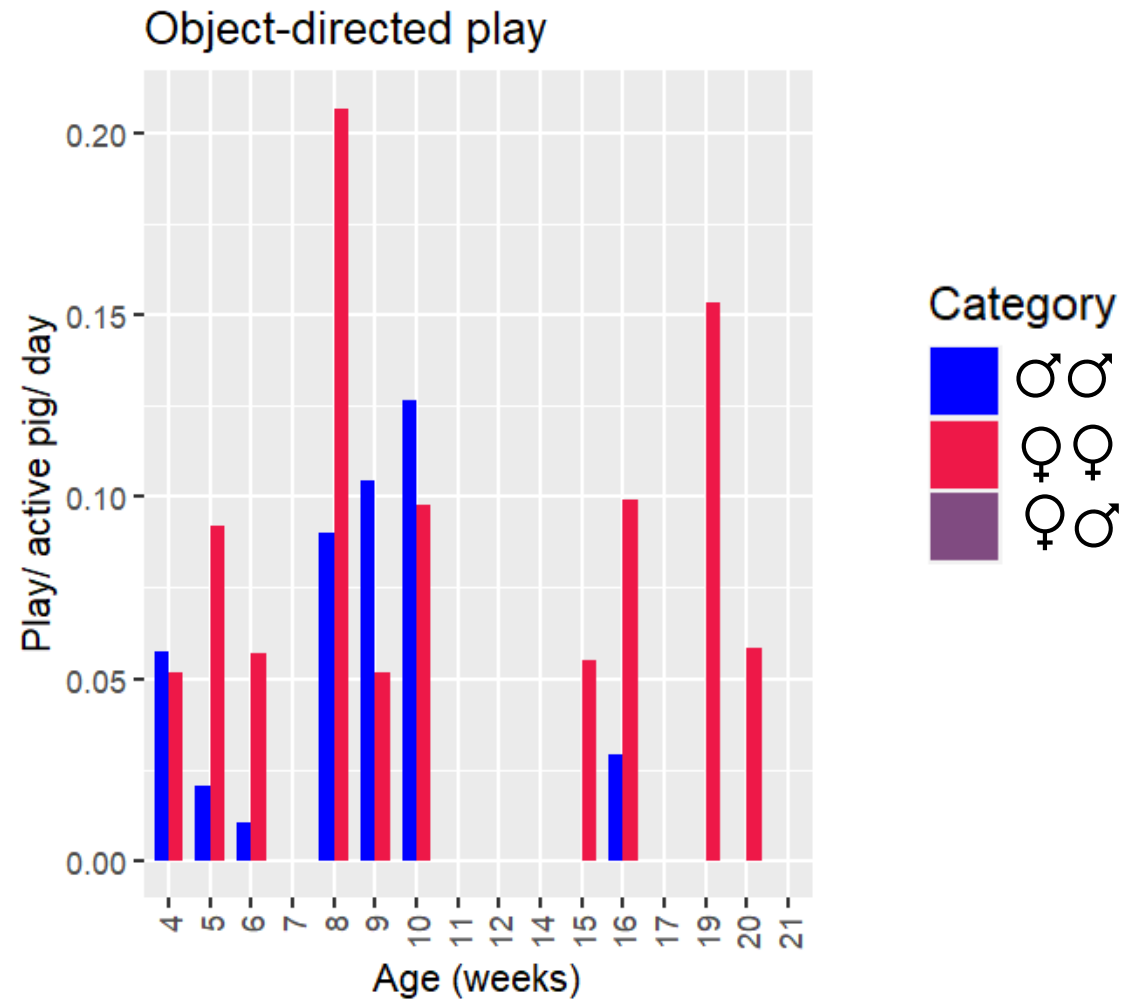
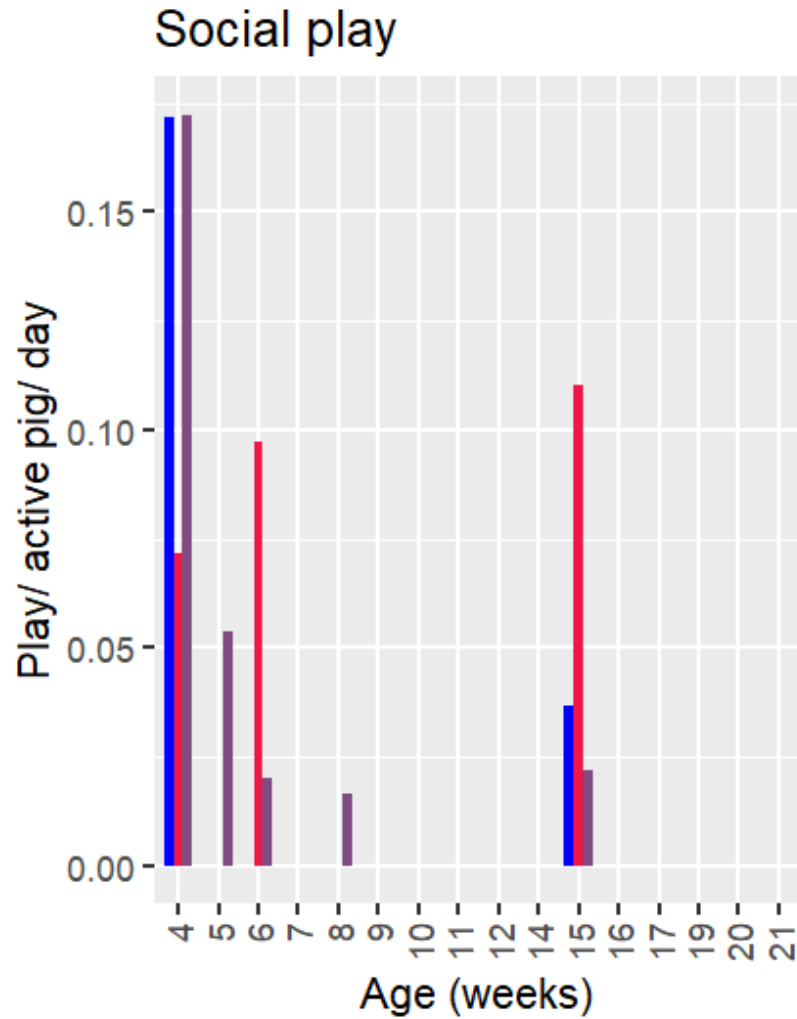
- Weekly observations from one month of age until five months.
- 4h of observation /day (& week)
- 10 min interval of continuous observation
- Lameness & skin lesion assessment at the beginning of the observation
- I. improvac vaccination at 4 month



Agonistic behaviour

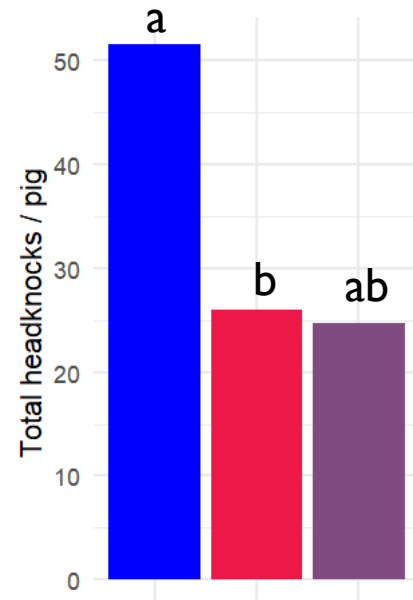


Play behaviour

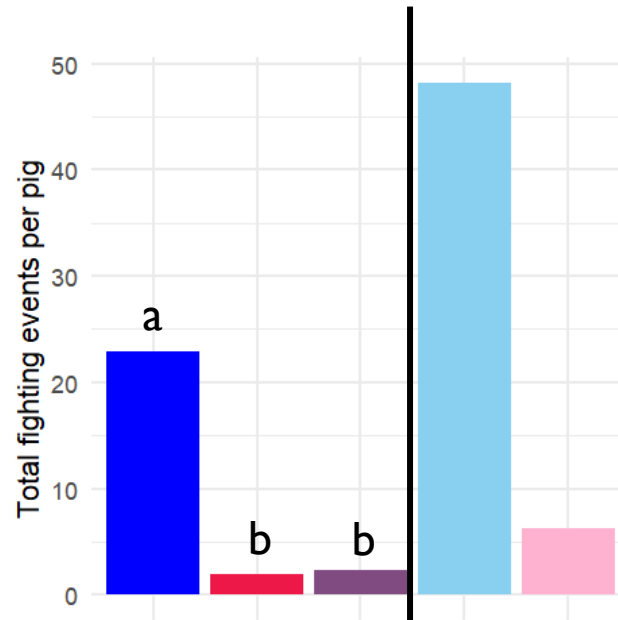


Contribution per sex

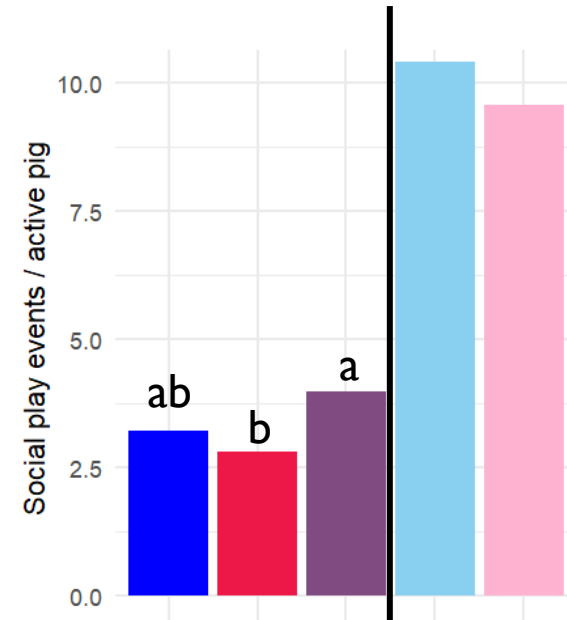
$P < 0.001$
Head knocks / bites



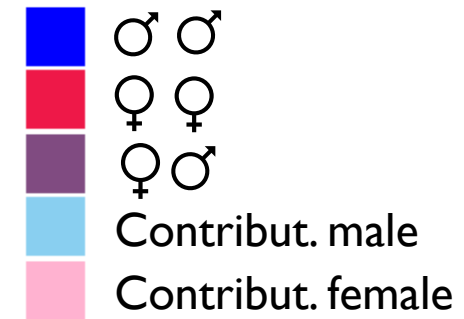
$P < 0.001$
Fights



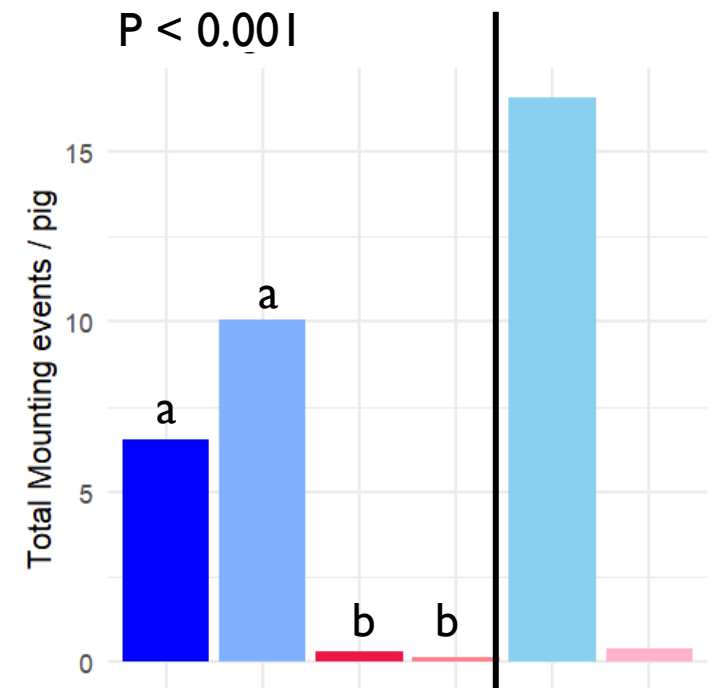
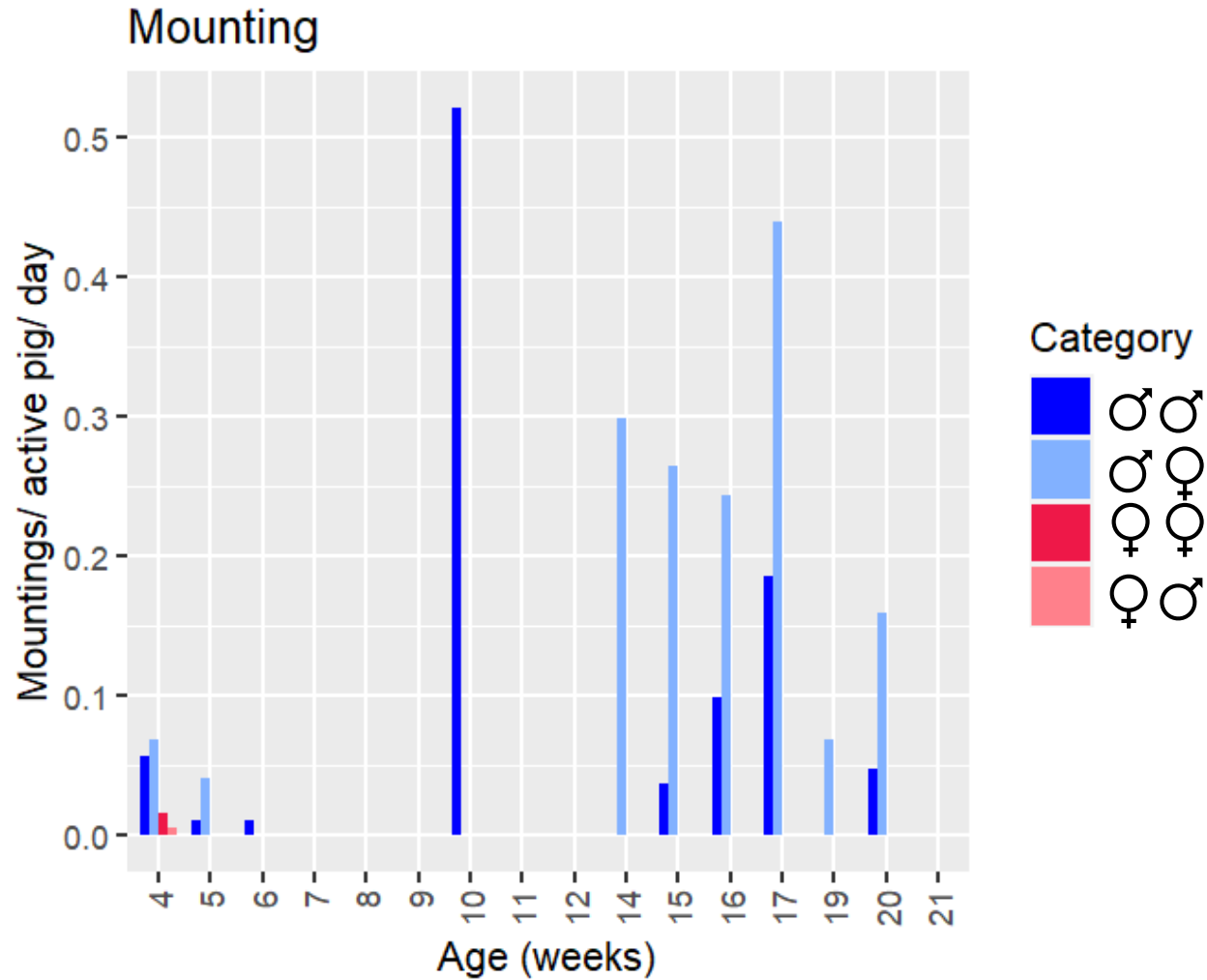
$P = 0.02$
Social play



Categories

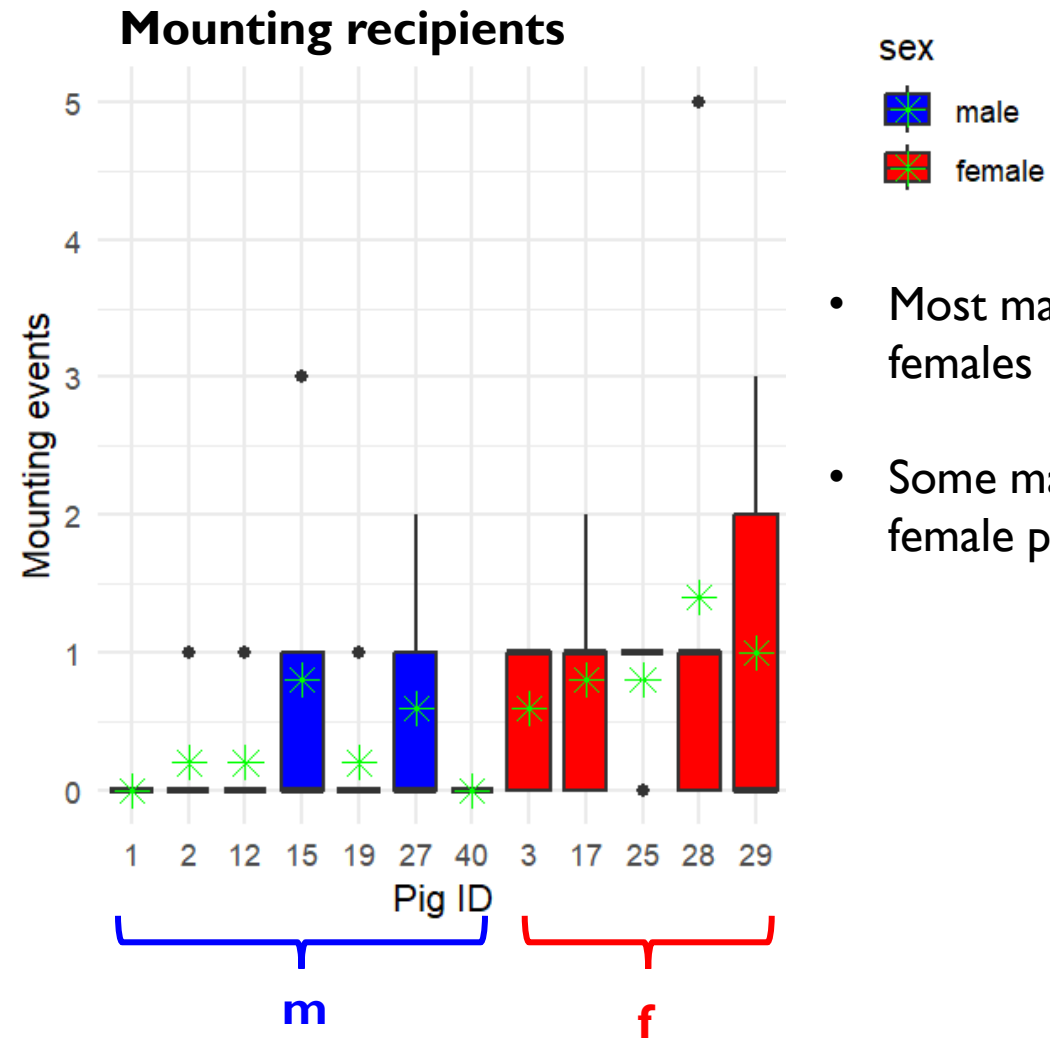
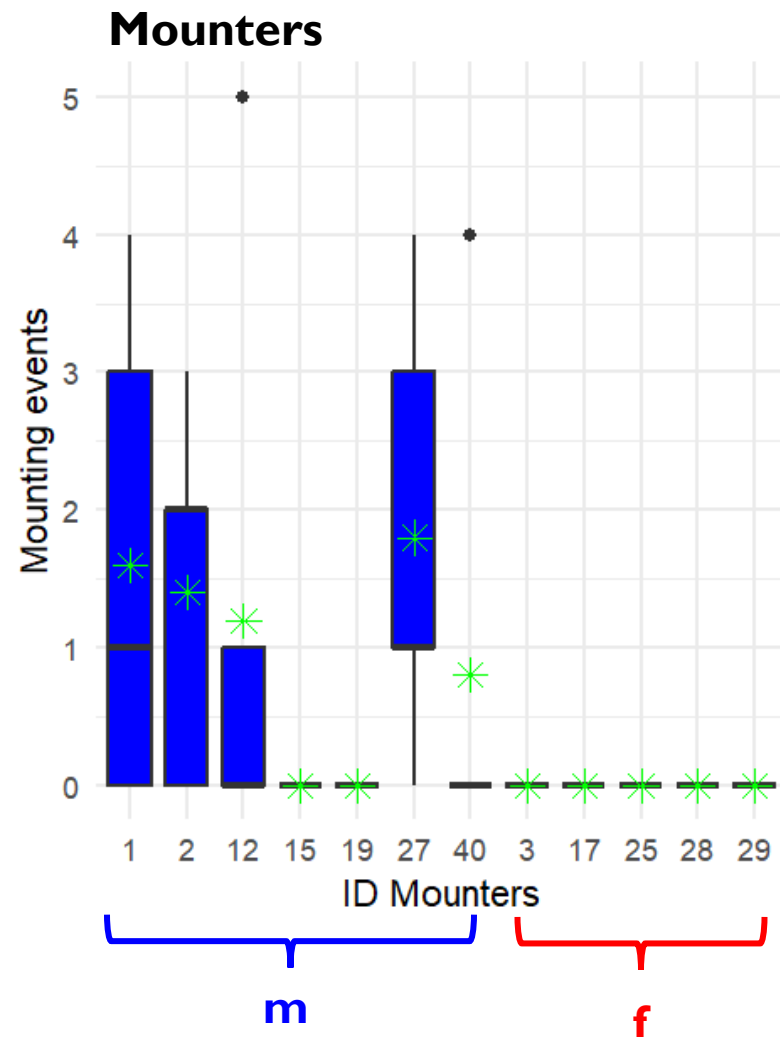


Mounting behaviour

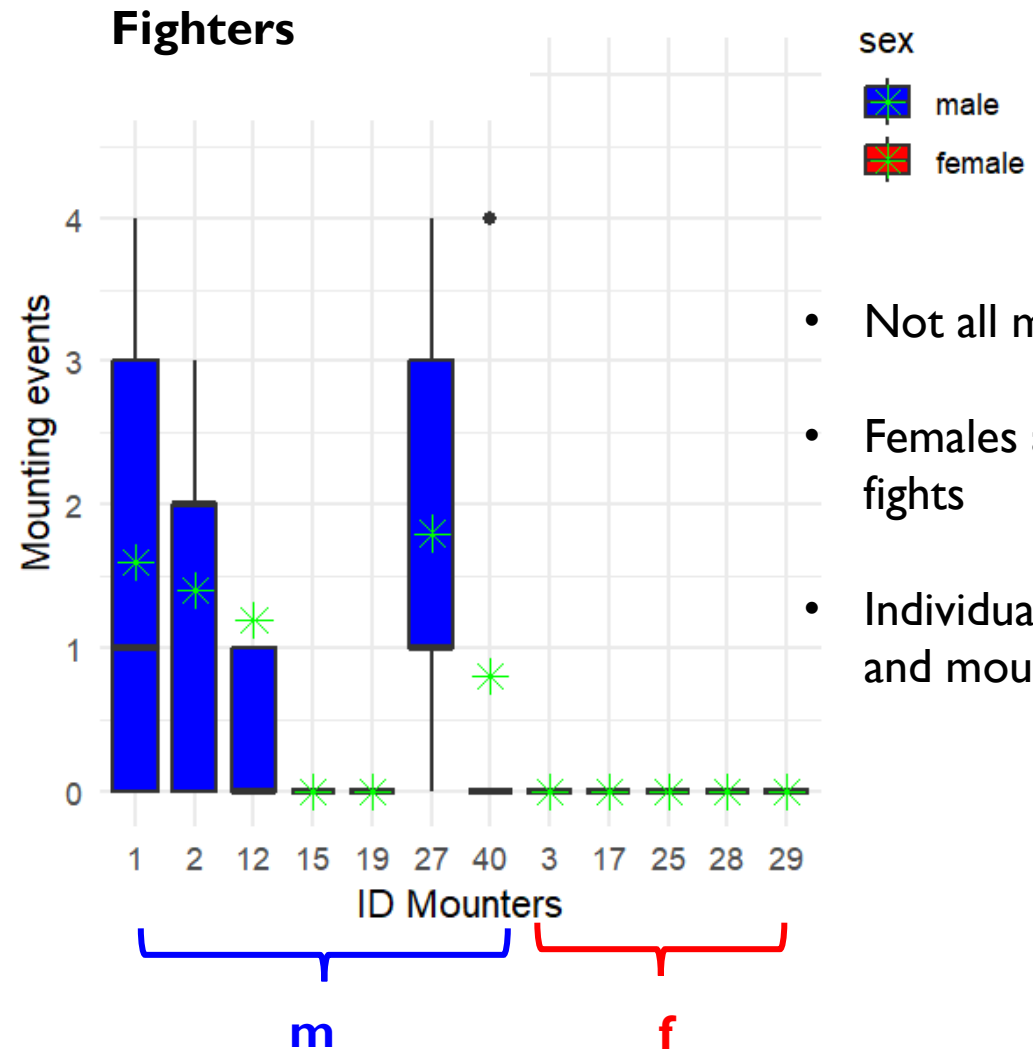
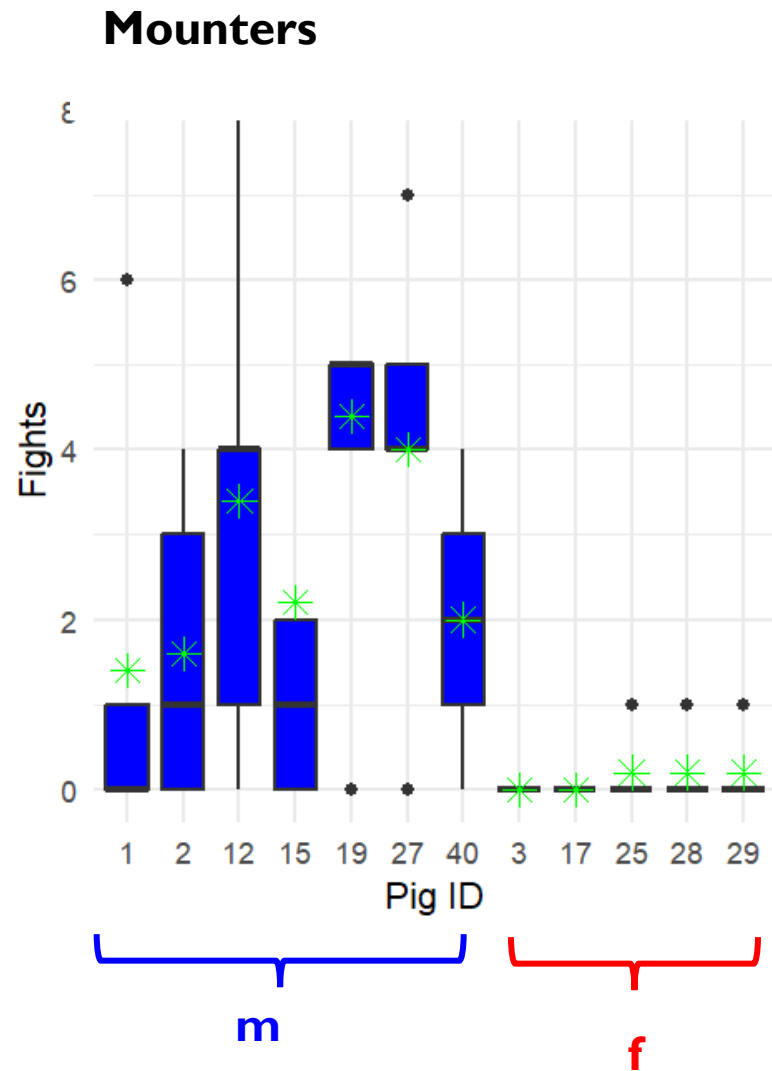


However, mounting duration
mm >>> mf

Individual patterns



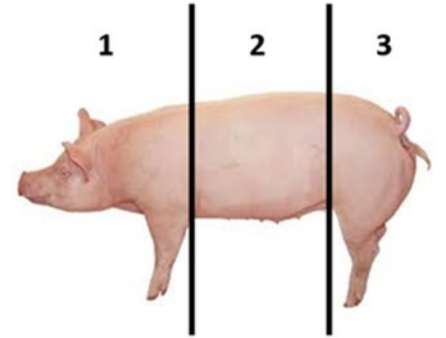
Individual patterns



- Not all males fight
- Females are not involved in fights
- Individual differences in fighting and mounting behaviour.

Health

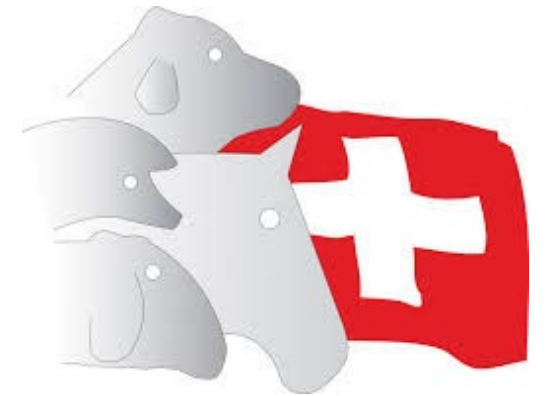
- No penile injuries
- No belly nosing, tail biting or other manipulations
- Skin lesions: low & no difference between m and f ($p = 0.71$)
- 3 males and 3 females were assessed as severely lame at least once



Discussion

- Mounting and agonistic behaviour are consistent with previous findings in common husbandry systems, also with whom they display these behaviours
- Less severe skin lesions potentially due to more space
- Potential effects of 3 months suckling, high-energy feed and genetics on fast weight gain and lameness
- Mixed groups might facilitate play behaviour
- Interesting but probably a rare case: one sow interrupted mounting behaviour repeatedly.

FiBL
Schweiz

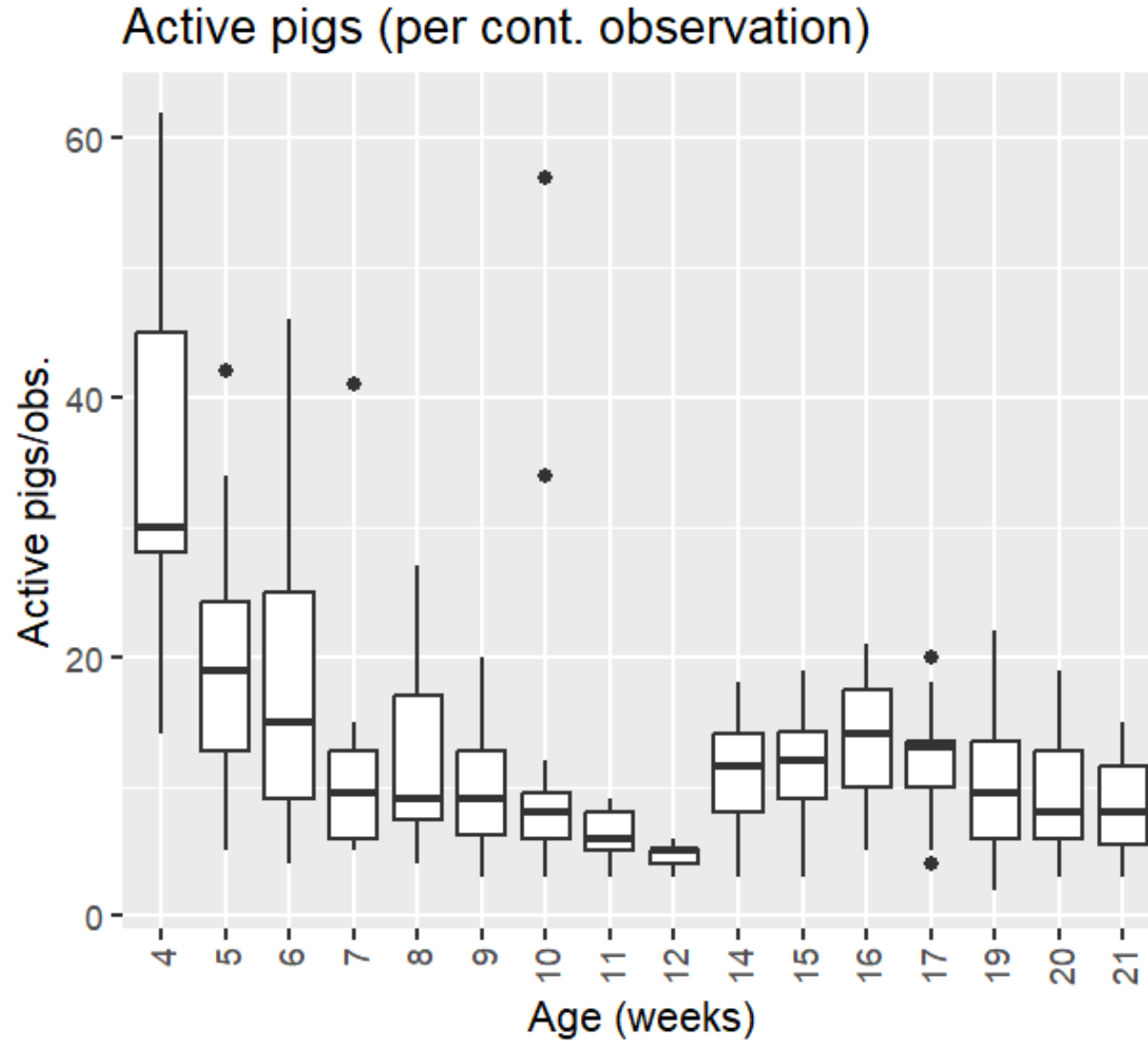


Citizen Science – Help us to observe the pigs!



www.schweinerleben.ch

Active pigs per observation



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