



## **Social and professional profile of truck drivers responsible for the transport of pigs in Brazil**

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The transport is a critical activity during pigs' pre-slaughter management, and the truck drivers are responsible for the quality of driving, the vehicles maintenance, to check the documentation, and to decide the routes, as well as the places and times to stop. Sometimes they are also in charge of preventing debilitated animals to be transported, by deciding the animals that can be loaded or not; besides acting as agents of transferring information and guidance to the producers. However, historically these professionals are considered unskilled and subjected to long working journeys, often with poor access to rest location, water, food and other important resources. The aim of this study was to understand the social and professional profile of drivers involved in transport of pigs in Brazil. We interviewed 41 drivers responsible for pigs transport in three different slaughterhouses in Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul and Mato Grosso do Sul states. Semi-structured interviews were conducted while drivers waited for unloading the animals in the slaughterhouse. Questions about age, education, experience, attendance in training courses, work difficulties, and prospect of life, were included. All respondents were men, and 12% of them were younger than 25 years old, 59% between 25 and 40 years and 29% over 41 years old. About work experience, 17% drove trucks for less than five years, 37% between five and 10 years and 46% for over 10 years. The average time working specifically with transport of pigs was 7.2 years, and 17% of the drivers were doing this work for less than two years, 46% between two to five years and 37% for more than 5 years. About schooling, 37% finished high school, 24% attended concluded the elementary school and only one respondent (2%) went to the university. The vast majority (80%) attended courses on animal welfare and good practices of transport. Furthermore, 90% of drivers did not consider difficult to develop their work and 81% intends keep themselves on the activity for long time. Those who are unsatisfied with the activity, and intending to abandon it, pointed out that long working journeys, night work and the lack of rest infrastructure are the main factors of unsatisfied. The majority (83%) is optimistic, expecting to live a better or much better life, in the five years ahead. These data allow us to conclude that truck drivers, responsible for pigs transport in Brazil, are around middle age and have long experience in pig transport, and most of them migrated from other types of transportation to this activity. In general, they have low education, but attended courses on pig transport. The majority wants to continue be engaged in this work, in spite of some of them complained about the working conditions.

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