Brussels, 19/10/2026

EFFAB statement on balanced pig breeding

On September 30, 2026, the Danish government established a multi-stakeholder Partnership "Grisefirepart", with the aim of reaching a new, long-term strategy for Danish pig production. The European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB), the association representing animal breeding and reproduction organizations and companies in Europe, would like to clarify some of the points included in the Terms of Reference to prevent negative, non-science-based developments within animal breeding.

EFFAB shares the objective of achieving more sustainable animal production based on responsible and balanced breeding strategies that enhance animal welfare and health, reduce resource use and climate impact, and preserve genetic diversity. To this end, breeding companies and breed societies within the association have engaged in balanced breeding as an essential tool to find solutions for people, the planet, and farmed animals. Consequently, responsible breeding plays a crucial role in improving animal welfare[1].

While the Danish Goverment frame the terms of reference of the multistakeholder partnership as a balanced crossroad, we believe it is based on non-factual assumptions when it comes to breeding. This could lead to highly negative impacts on Danish pig production and breeding operators, and it could imply disruptions to the Single Market, if further regulations are introduced on breeding programs.

Modern pig breeding plays an important role in finding genetic contributions that simultaneously deliver on animal health, welfare, and production. Breeding decisions are based on a broad range of traits, including piglet survival, birth weight, maternal abilities, functional teat capacity, robustness, and longevity. This reflects a commitment to achieving sustainable genetic progress while safeguarding animal welfare.

In this context, the trade-off between litter size and piglet survival rates frequently appears on the political agenda. It is often assumed that mortality rates correlate directly with increasing litter size, despite the most recent scientific findings on the matter[2]. In fact, since the early 2000s, balanced breeding programs have been highly successful in increasing litter size while simultaneously improving piglet survival rates. This progress is the direct result of selecting for comprehensive breeding goals that place an explicit emphasis on piglet survival, birth weight, and maternal capacity alongside reproductive performance. Today, major breeding programmes typically include these objectives.

Finally, EFFAB reiterates its openness to engaging with decision-makers, scientific institutions, agri-food stakeholders, and society at large to jointly advance the objectives of a competitive and more sustainable EU animal production sector.

On behalf of EFFAB,



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[1] Code-EFABAR - Responsible and Balanced Breeding
[2] Frontiers | Genetic and phenotypic time trends of litter size, piglet mortality, and birth weight in pigs