

Speech by Dan Jørgensen

- Dear researchers, veterinaries, politicians, stakeholders, NGO's – Dear Participants.
- Welcome to Copenhagen
- Welcome to this international conference on animal welfare for pigs.
- For more than a decade now I have served as an elected official – First as a member of the European Parliament and now as a minister in Denmark. And from my very first day as a politician improving animal welfare has had my highest priority. I have attended countless meetings, seminars and conferences.
- But never before have I attended a conference with so many competent people. I welcome you. I also welcome the politicians

- This conference will be quite unique.
- Unique because we are not going to discuss research findings, only – or politics, only.
- We we try to make the – often missing – link between research findings and politics.
- We are going to bring your expert knowledge into the engine room of policy making.
- It is an important task. All over the world we see an explosive increase in both demand and production of pigs these years.
- OECD data not yet published show that China alone is expected to increase their production of pork by more than 6 billion kilos by 2024.
- Or more than 71 million pigs.
- The production of pigs is big business. Certainly in Denmark. But in many many countries all over the world.

- Pig meat is an important source for protein in a hungry world.
- Pork production creates jobs and growth in the economy.
- But a pig is not a machine.
- Pigs are intelligent creatures. Sentient beings. That we are obliged to treat with respect and compassion.
- Personally I was only a child when I first discovered what a special animal a pig is.
- It was in the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgreen's stories for children about Emil of Lönneberga.
- Emil lived with his family on a farm in Sweden.
- He was a bright boy, but he often got into trouble – even though he always tried to be good.
- Emil wanted a dog, but his parents only had a pig on the farm.

- That is why Emil decided to use the pig as his dog.
- He taught the pig to "sit", to shake hands and roll over. The pig became Emil's best friend.
- Everything went well until one day when Emil and the pig happened to eat a bowl of fermented cherries.
- The two of them got so drunk that the local temperance society turned up to see what was going on.
- If Emil's pig was let into a modern, conventional pig farm, it would probably think to itself that it was drunk again.
- Or rather – it would wish that it were drunk!
- Obviously a lot has happened since the 60-70es . Pig production has become industrialised. And this I primarily a good thing. We should not hope for a return to an agricultural sector like the one depicted in Lindgreen's writings.

- But we do need to address some of the challenges the industrialised and intensive form of modern production faced us with.
- In Denmark alone we produce 20-30 million pigs a year, even though we are only 5.2 million people.
- Denmark is a small country, but when it comes to food production we are a superpower.
- We consider ourselves to have some of the world's highest standards for animal welfare. Nevertheless, every day more than 20,000 piglets die on Danish pig farms;
- 95 per cent of the pigs have their tails docked;
- Half of all sows for slaughter have ulcers [mavesår];
- and almost all male pigs are castrated without an anaesthetic.

- Because of this, we feel that we have a moral obligation to take the lead when it comes to animal welfare.
- Therefore, last year I brought together Danish animal welfare organisations, consumer organisations, veterinary surgeons, the agricultural sector and the business community in order to issue Denmark's first joint declaration on better animal welfare for pigs
- A difficult task. But What had seemed impossible in advance turned out a to be a success.
- We signed a joint declaration in which we have committed ourselves to the following:
 - That the number of dead piglets must be reduced by 6,000.
 - That all sows must be placed under loose-housing conditions over time.
 - That castration must be stopped.

- That the practice of tail-docking must be reduced.
- That the effort against ulcers must be increased.
- That consumers must have more options in the supermarkets.
- That the teaching of animal welfare must be upgraded.
- And that we should also work hard to seek solutions to the problems on an international level.
- Since then, we have worked very hard to find solutions that will enable us to reach our ambitious goals.
- I have adopted a comprehensive action plan:
- With more money, more monitoring, better advisory services, strengthened research and new methods we will translate the declaration into reality.

- Also: We have the most ambitious government plan to boost organic production with political and financial support. This works. We have boosted the sale of organic products to such an extent that in Denmark today we suffer from a shortage of organic pork.
- Still, we have a long way to go before we are satisfied.
- I hope that today and tomorrow we will be able to find new research-based and political solutions.
- Solutions that will ensure a better future for pigs in Denmark, Europe and the rest of the world.
- Solutions which not only look nice on paper, but whose impact can also be felt out there on the pig farms.
- It will not be easy.
- But with experts from all over the world, Ministers from 4 EU Member States, 400 highly

motivated participants, 70 posters and 2 days' intensive collaboration – I believe that we can translate your scientific results into political measures that will make a difference to animals out there on the farms.

- One of the concrete outputs of this conference I hope to be a common position paper signed by my my colleagues from Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany calling for better welfare for pigs.
- A position paper that is to be used to put pressure vis-à-vis the Commission and the other EU Member States to make them assume more responsibility for the millions of pigs in Europe's pig farms.
- The fundamental principle of the of the EU is the vision that we raise standards together – it is not a race to the bottom.
- This applies also to animal welfare.

- But it requires that you help us by providing the scientific basis and realistic solutions.
- We must be armed with realistic solutions if we want to penetrate the thick walls of the Berlaymont building in Bruxelles.
- You are a strong team of ambassadors and through joint efforts I am sure we will find the way forward.
- With these words I wish to welcome you all once more.
- Thank you for contributing to making a difference.
- Thank you for your attention - and good luck with the work.