

From the scientific angle there is no region in Germany with a negligible *Trichinella* risk

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Trichinella, formerly called trichinae, are nematodes that are to be found in the meat of domestic and wild animals like domestic pigs, wild boar, foxes and martens. They can cause serious illnesses in humans. Humans become infected through the consumption of raw or inadequately prepared trichinous meat or products produced from it like raw sausage or raw ham. According to the German Meat Hygiene Act (FIHG) all slaughtered animals must, therefore, be tested for *Trichinella* before they are approved for consumption. In line with a new EU Regulation the Member States may, however, specify regions in which *Trichinella* tests are not necessary in domestic pigs when the *Trichinella* risk for the area concerned has been officially recognised as negligible. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has examined from the scientific angle whether Germany or individual federal *Laender* could qualify for this classification.

The National Reference Laboratory for *Trichinella* is attached to BfR. The Institute examines and conducts research on questions of the diagnosis and epidemiology of trichinosis. This food-borne infection only occurs very rarely in Germany. It is notifiable in the case of animals that are intended for human consumption and when it occurs in humans. BfR publishes the results in its annual trend report. According to this, the notified cases of trichinosis in humans are mostly attributable to so-called “imported diseases” from countries in which these zoonotic agents are still widespread particularly amongst domestic pigs. Over the last forty years there were a few larger outbreaks of trichinosis in Germany. Aside from “imported diseases” these cases exclusively involved pigs that had become infected in free-range farms through eating wild animals carrying *Trichinella*. The fattening pig stocks are all free of *Trichinella*. However, there are reports of *Trichinella* being detected in martens, foxes and wild boar. Hence it cannot be ruled out that domestic pigs could become infected with the parasite on free-range farms. This means they could be a source of infection for consumers. According to BfR no “region with negligible *Trichinella* risks in domestic pigs” should be recognised in Germany. However, from the scientific angle exemptions for fattening pig farms with closed intensive farming could be justifiable.

The full version of the BfR Opinion in German is available on http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/in_deutschland_gibt_es_aus_wissenschaftlicher_sicht_keine_region_mit_einem_vernachlaessigbaren_trichinella_risiko.pdf