Food safety on the farm – a survey of Saskatchewan swine producers for their food safety knowledge and farm management practices.

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Increasing attention is being paid to control of foodborne pathogens at the preharvest level. Important for successfully implementing such control programs is the understanding and commitment of those who will integrate recommended management practices. Saskatchewan swine producers were surveyed to better understand their current knowledge and attitudes towards food safety and to identify areas where further information would be useful to them. A postal questionnaire was mailed out to 265 Saskatchewan swine producers. This study is complementary to the survey administered to swine producers and veterinarians in Ontario and results will be presented within the Saskatchewan context and in comparison to results from the survey of Ontario swine producers. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions, some of which had multiple components. There were two general sections to the questionnaire: 1) attitudes towards and knowledge of food safety microbial hazards and 2) management practices. A response rate was 29.4% (78/265). Most respondents (94%) had managed a swine barn for more than 3 years and 68% owned the barn they were managing. Strict biosecurity was not practiced in all barns. For example, most producers provided clothing for visitors, but only approximately half purchased breeding stock from only one source. Some results suggest that both emerging zoonotic pathogens and those for which there is a history of successful control are less familiar to swine producers than those that fall between those two extremes of recognition. *Salmonella* and *E. coli* were most consistently identified as infecting people (>70%). However, respondents were unsure whether *Toxoplasma* or *Trichinella* could infect people (>80%). Respondents to this survey were supportive of food safety measures and had some familiarity with key foodborne pathogens but opportunities exist for continuing education for swine producers.