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Abstract

Major structural changes in livestock production in developed countries, particularly intensive confinement production and increases in herd and flock sizes, have raised several societal concerns about the future directions and implications of livestock food production, including the safety of meat products. This review of the major parasitic and bacterial foodborne pathogens associated with pork production indicates that pork safety in the United States has improved demonstrably over recent decades. Most notably, changes in swine production methods have been associated with virtual elimination of risk of the foodborne parasites *Taenia solium*, *Trichinella spiralis*, and *Toxoplasma gondii* from pigs reared on modern intensive farms. This represents a substantial public health achievement that has gone largely unheralded. Regulatory changes have led to demonstrably lower prevalence of *Salmonella* on pork carcasses, but control of bacterial foodborne pathogens on farms remains a significant challenge. Available evidence does not support the hypothesis that intensive pork production has increased risk for the major bacterial foodborne pathogens that are common commensals of the pig (*Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria*, and *Yersinia enterocolitica*), or that pigs produced in alternative systems are at reduced risk of colonization with these organisms. However, pigs raised in outdoor systems inherently confront higher risks of exposure to foodborne parasites, particularly *T. gondii*.