

# Prevalence and genomic characteristics of *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* in healthy Swedish pigs

Photo: Bengt Ekberg/SVA



## CONCLUSION

Our study found a surprisingly low prevalence (3%) of *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* among healthy Swedish pigs. Four isolates of six recovered in the study belonged to clade 1.

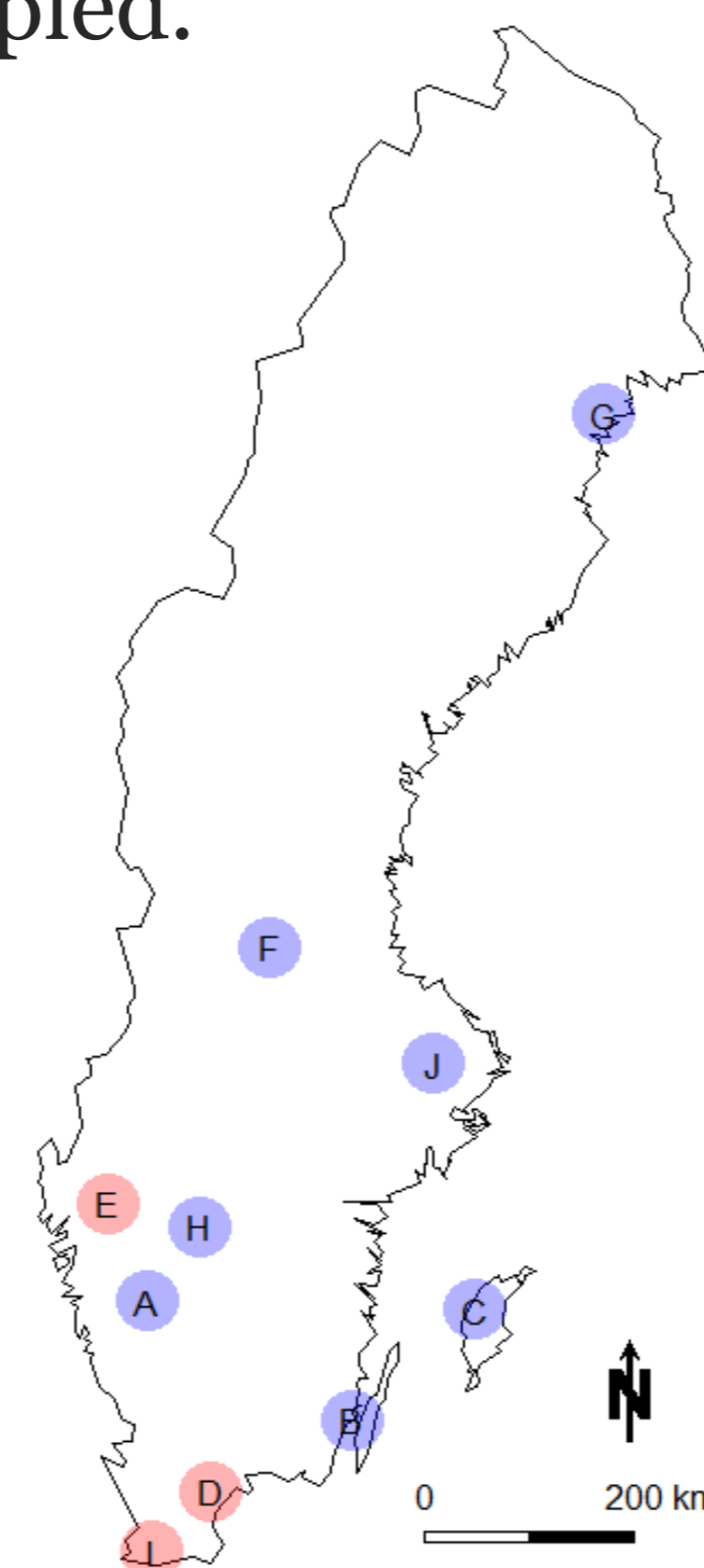
## INTRODUCTION

The gram-positive bacterium *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* (ER) may cause erysipelas in a wide range of animals. ER can persist for long periods in the environment and be carried asymptotically by animals. The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of ER among healthy Swedish pigs and characterize recovered isolates by whole-genome sequencing.

## MATERIAL

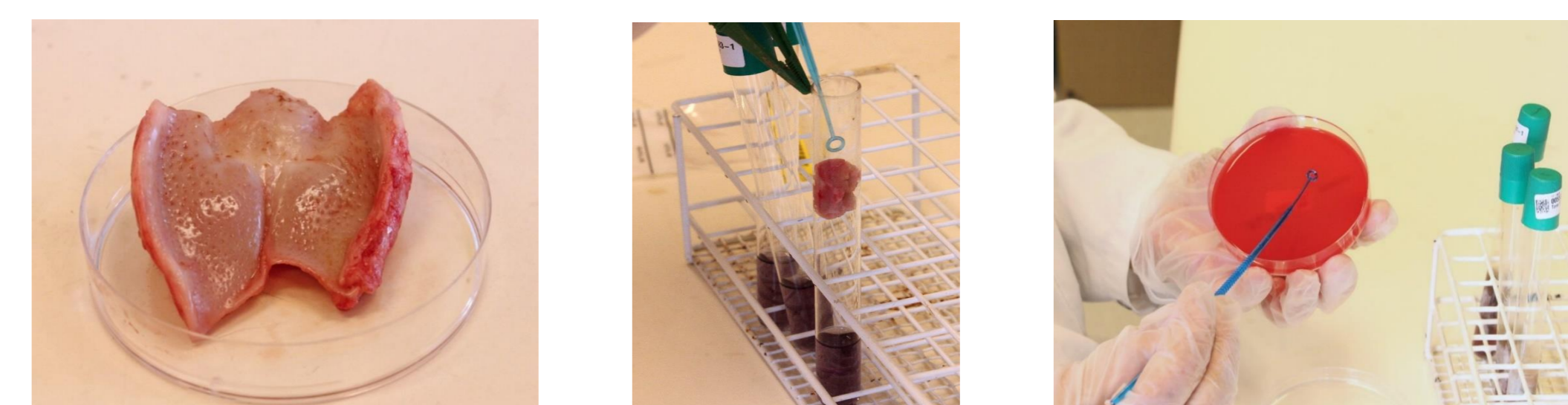
Tonsils were collected from 200 apparently healthy pigs at slaughter from 10 abattoirs in Sweden. Only one pig per herd was sampled.

Abattoir	Tonsils (n)	ER isolates (n)	Positive (%)
A	26	0	0
B	36	0	0
C	6	0	0
D	60	3	5
E	12	2	17
F	6	0	0
G	4	0	0
H	26	0	0
I	20	1	5
J	4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	200	6	3



## METHODS

Samples were cultured using selective media. Growth of ER was confirmed by MALDI-TOF MS.



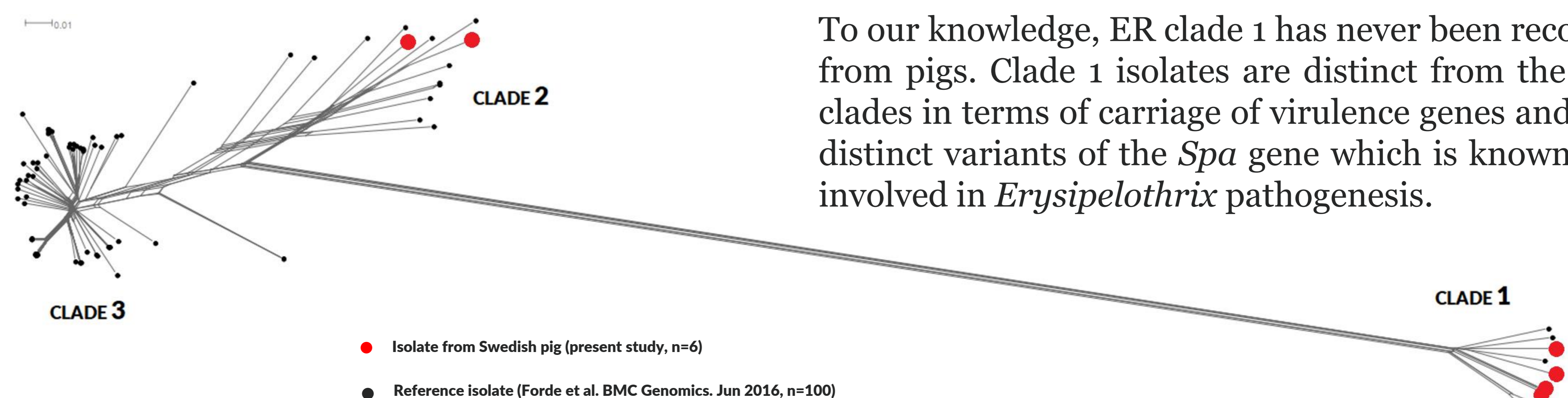
Photos: Annika Karlsson/SVA

All recovered isolates were whole-genome sequenced on an Illumina MiSeq instrument. The isolate sequence data were compared to each other and 100 previously sequenced isolates from various sources using an in-house whole-genome SNP analysis pipeline.

## RESULTS

ER was isolated from six samples collected at three abattoirs, corresponding to a prevalence of 3.0 % (95 % CI 1.2-6.5 %). None of the six recovered isolates were identical by whole-genome SNP analysis and there was no clear link between genotype and geography.

Of the investigated isolates, four belonged to ER clade 1 and the remaining two isolates belonged to clade 2.



## DISCUSSION

The lower prevalence of ER than earlier reported could reflect rearing of pigs indoors and improved biosecurity (age segregated rearing).

To our knowledge, ER clade 1 has never been recovered from pigs. Clade 1 isolates are distinct from the other clades in terms of carriage of virulence genes and carry distinct variants of the *Spa* gene which is known to be involved in *Erysipelothrix* pathogenesis.



mate.zoric@sva.se

www.sva.se

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The presented work was financed via the Animal Health and Welfare ERA-Net (ANIHWA) project. The authors would like to thank the SVA diagnostic laboratories for technical assistance

