

**ZOONOSIS: KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOR OF SMALL PIG PRODUCERS IN
MOSSORÓ, RIO GRANDE DO NORTE**

*(ZOOSES: CONHECIMENTO E CONDUTA DOS PEQUENOS PRODUTORES DE SUÍNOS DE
MOSSORÓ, RIO GRANDE DO NORTE)*

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Special attention should be given regarding the perception and practices related to zoonoses, since the relationship between the environment, animals and humans determines whether there is a favorable trend for their occurrence. This study investigates the knowledge and behavior of small pig farmers when faced with zoonoses in Natal, RN, Brazil. The methodological approach comprised a qualitative and quantitative descriptive study. Data collection was performed during the first half of 2013, through interviews with 17 producers, leading suppliers of pigs to the slaughterhouses of the city, using a structured questionnaire with open and closed questions about knowledge and practices related to zoonoses. An educational guidance project on the subject was undertaken after the interviews. The procedures adopted in this study met the ethics criteria for research on humans, according to Resolution 196/96 of the National Health Council, and the project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Universidade Potiguar, via Platform Brazil, from the Ministry of Health. Among the respondents, 100% did not know the definition of zoonoses and had never participated in any training or educational guidance on the subject. After the term zoonosis was defined, the respondents (52.9%) named cysticercosis or "the disease of the lump in the flesh" as a zoonosis, but knew neither how to prevent it nor how it is transmitted. When other zoonoses such as brucellosis, leptospirosis and toxoplasmosis were cited, none of them (100%) knew how to define them, or whether they could affect the swine. Some (64.7%) respondents associated leptospirosis with rats, others (29.4%) related brucellosis to cattle only and few (5.9%) had already heard of toxoplasmosis. None of them (100%) performed consistent practices for the prevention of zoonoses. The results showed that both small producers and their animals are exposed to the potential risk of zoonoses, and that urgent measures of educational intervention are necessary in this region.

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