

Characterization of Clostridioides difficile strains isolated from manure and digestate in five agricultural biogas plants

Caroline Le Marechal, Cécile Gateau, T. Poëzévara, J. Couturier, S. Rouxel, R. Syed Zaidi, E. Houard, Anne-Marie A.M. Pourcher, M. Denis, Félix Barbut

▶ To cite this version:

Caroline Le Marechal, Cécile Gateau, T. Poëzévara, J. Couturier, S. Rouxel, et al.. Characterization of Clostridioides difficile strains isolated from manure and digestate in five agricultural biogas plants. Anaerobe, 2020, 62, 10.1016/j.anaerobe.2020.102180. hal-02610311

HAL Id: hal-02610311 https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02610311v1

Submitted on 22 Aug2022

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers. L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Version of Record: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1075996420300366 Manuscript_6ed86f423e64ec8f6c2b7942976d01ef

- 1 Characterization of *Clostridioides difficile* strains isolated from manure and digestate
- 2 in five agricultural biogas plants
- 3 Caroline Le Maréchal¹, Cécile Gateau², Typhaine Poezevara¹, Jeanne Couturier²,
- 4 Sandra Rouxel¹, Rabab Zyed-Saidi², Emmanuelle Houard¹, Anne-Marie Pourcher ³,
- 5 Martine Denis¹, Frédéric Barbut^{2, 4}
- ⁶ ¹ ANSES, Ploufragan-Plouzané-Niort Laboratory, Hygiene and Quality of Poultry and
- 7 Pig Products Unit, BP53, F-22440 Ploufragan, France
- ⁸ ² National Reference Laboratory for *Clostridium difficile*, Saint-Antoine Hospital,
- 9 Assistance Publique- Hôpitaux de Paris, 34 rue Crozatier, 75012 Paris, France
- ³ INRAE, OPAALE Research Unit (Optimization of Processes in Agriculture, Agri-
- 11 Food and Environment), CS 64427, F-35044 Rennes, France
- ⁴ UMR INSERM S-1139, Faculté de Pharmacie de Paris, Université de Paris
- ¹³ *caroline.lemarechal@anses.fr Tel: +33 (0)2 96 01 85 33; Fax: +33 (0)2 96 01 62 23

14

15 Highlights

- All the *C. difficile* strains from manure and digestate harbored *tcdA* and *tcdB* genes
- 83.3% of the isolated strains belonged to PCR ribotypes 078 or 126
- All the strains were susceptible to vancomycin and metronidazole

- 21
- 22

23 Abstract

Clostridioides difficile strains were isolated from manure and digestate samples from 24 five biogas plants in France. The objective of this study was to characterize these 25 isolates using PCR ribotyping, wgMLST, a multiplex PCR targeting genes encoding 26 for the main virulence factors, i.e. *tcdA*, *tcdB*, *cdtA* and *cdtB*, and antimicrobial 27 susceptibility assays. The 54 strains characterized were all positive for tcdA and tcdB 28 and 83% (45/54) were positive for the binary toxin genes. PCR ribotypes 126 (59%) 29 and 078 (37%) were predominant, and wgMLST analysis of 18 isolates showed close 30 proximity of strains within a single biogas plant. Samples from the biogas plant 31 supplied with cattle and poultry manure displayed the largest variety in PCR 32 ribotypes. The *in vitro* activities of nine antimicrobial agents were determined. All the 33 strains were susceptible to vancomycin and metronidazole, which are currently 34 considered first-line treatments for *C. difficile* infection in humans. All the strains were 35 resistant to clindamycin. The results of this study show that a high percentage of C. 36 *difficile* strains present in the French biogas plants investigated are toxigenic strains 37 from PCR ribotypes also commonly found in humans. 38

39

Keywords: *Clostridioides difficile*, PCR ribotype 126 and 078, wgMLST, biogas
plant, pig, cattle

43 Introduction

Clostridioides difficile is a Gram-positive, anaerobic, spore-forming bacterium
considered as an emerging pathogen responsible for diarrhea and colitis in both
humans and animals. *C. difficile* infection (CDI) is the major cause of nosocomial
diarrhea in adults, and has been increasingly reported in the community in the past
decade or so [1]. Nowadays, the incidence of community-acquired CDI in some
regions accounts for up to a quarter of all cases [2, 3].

Food, animals and the environment are considered potential reservoirs of *C. difficile* strains [4]. Indeed, animal and food PCR ribotypes (RT) have been correlated with those found in humans. Although the zoonotic status of *C. difficile* is still debated [5], recent data highlight a potential risk of transmission from animals or environmental reservoirs to humans [6]. CDI should therefore be managed through a One Health approach.

It has recently been demonstrated that *C. difficile* can be detected in digestate from 56 agricultural biogas plants (BPs) and is able to survive anaerobic digestion [7, 8]. The 57 conversion of livestock manure into biogas through anaerobic digestion in BPs has 58 become increasingly popular in the past few decades in some European countries. 59 However, the *C. difficile* strains isolated from agricultural BPs have never been 60 characterized up to now. The PCR ribotypes of these strains and their virulence gene 61 contents are unknown, yet this information is of prime importance to be able to 62 evaluate the risks associated with its detection in digestate, which can be spread 63 over fields after its storage or post-digestion and may constitute a reservoir of C. 64 *difficile* strains. 65

- 66 The aim of our study was to characterize *C. difficile* isolates collected from manure
- and raw digestate in five different agricultural BPs so as to determine which kind of *C*.
- 68 *difficile* strains can survive anaerobic digestion.

69 Materials and methods

70 Strain collection

A total of 54 *C. difficile* isolates were collected during a study evaluating the presence 71 of various pathogens in manure and digestate samples from five agricultural BPs [8]. 72 Briefly, 1 g of each sample was 10-fold diluted in Brain Heart Infusion (BHI; 73 BioMérieux, Craponne, France) supplemented with 0.1% taurocholate (Sigma 74 Aldrich, Lyon, France), cefoxitin (8 mg/l) and cycloserine (250 mg/l) (Oxoid, Dardilly, 75 France). Tubes were incubated at 37°C in an anaerobic chamber (A35; Don Whitley 76 77 distributed by BioMérieux, Bruz, France) filled with anaerobic gas (10% H2, 10% CO2, 80% N2). After 7 days of incubation, 10 µl of broth was plated on ChromID C. 78 difficile agar (BioMérieux, Craponne, France). The plates were incubated for 48 hours 79 80 at 37°C in the anaerobic chamber. C. difficile colonies were suspected by their specific black color and/or shape and two colonies from each positive sample were 81 re-isolated on BHI agar. These plates were incubated for 48 hours at 37°C in the 82 anaerobic chamber. The isolates were then stored at -80°C. The strains were 83 identified using PCR as described below. 84

For each BP, three replicate samples of manure and three of digestate were
collected on the same day. Two different colonies were stored from each positive
replicate. Fifty-four strains were collected from the five BPs as depicted in Table 1,
either from manure (25) or from digestate (29).

89 **DNA extraction**

DNA for PCR and PCR ribotyping was extracted from colonies grown on Brucella
 agar (BioMérieux, Craponne, France) after anaerobic incubation for 48 h. After
 centrifuging a suspension of bacterial colony in sterile water, the supernatant was

removed and the bacterial pellet re-suspended with 200 µL of InstaGene[™] matrix
(Bio-Rad®, Marnes-la-Coquette, France). This suspension was incubated at 56°C for
20 min, then 96°C for 8 min. The supernatant containing the bacterial DNA was
recovered after centrifugation and stored at -20°C.

97 Characterization of *C. difficile* and detection of toxin genes

A multiplex PCR according to Barbut et al. [1] was used to detect the PaLoc genes 98 (*tcdA*, *tcdB*, *tcdC*) and CDTLoc genes (*cdtA* and *cdtB*). It also detected the 117 bp 99 fragment (lok) present in non-toxigenic strains and the tpi (triose phosphate 100 isomerase) gene fragment used to identify C. difficile. The amplified products were 101 analyzed after a 1/25 dilution by capillary electrophoresis with an ABI 3500 102 sequencer. Migration profiles were analyzed with the GeneMapper® software 103 104 (Applied Biosystems[®], Foster City, USA) by comparing the size of the fragments (peaks) obtained with the expected sizes for each specific gene fragment. 105

106

107 PCR ribotyping

Capillary gel electrophoresis PCR ribotyping was performed as previously described 108 by Bidet et al. [9]. After DNA amplification, 1 μ L of a 1/200 dilution of each PCR 109 product was mixed with 10.5 µL formamide and 0.5 µL GeneScan LIZ600 (Applied 110 Biosystems®, Foster City, USA) as an internal marker. After 30 s of denaturation at 111 90°C, capillary electrophoresis was performed on an 8-capillary 3500 Genetic 112 Analyzer (Applied Biosystems[®], Foster City, USA). The GeneMapper software 113 (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Villebon-sur-Yvette, France) was used to analyze the 114 banding patterns. PCR ribotypes (RTs) were identified using the webribo software 115 (https://webribo.ages.at/). 116

117 Whole genome sequencing (WGS)

118 WGS was performed on 18 strains (two isolates from manure and two from digestate

for BP1, BP3, BP4 and BP5, and one of each for BP2, based on the PCR-ribotyping

and PCR results). DNA was extracted as described in [10]. Sequencing was

121 performed as per the ICM institute using the NovaSeq 6000 Illumina technology

122 (2x150 paired-end sequencing, Nextera XT DNA Sample Prep Kit, Illumina). Genome

sequences generated as part of this study were deposited in SRA (PRJNA599117).

124 The quality of reads was evaluated using BioNumerics 7.6.3 (Applied Maths NV, Sint-

125 Martens-Latem, Belgium): isolates with an average quality below 30 and estimated

126 coverage below 30 were excluded from subsequent analysis.

127 Whole genome multilocus sequence typing (wgMLST) analyses

The wgMLST scheme used contains 8,745 coding loci, representing a pan-genome of *C. difficile* identified from 259 previously-published genomes. WgMLST analyses were performed using BioNumerics 7.6.3 as described in [11]. Briefly, the genetic relationship between two isolates was assessed by calculating the number of different alleles for wgMLST. We defined two isolates as genetically related or belonging to the same clonal complex (CC) when they had an allelic difference \leq 200 or \leq 20 respectively.

135 Antimicrobial susceptibility

136 Antimicrobial susceptibility to vancomycin (30 µg), metronidazole (4 µg [Sanofi

137 Diagnostics Pasteur, Marnes la Coquette, France]), erythromycin (15 IU),

clindamycin(2 IU), moxifloxaxin (5 μg), chloramphenicol (30 μg), imipenem (10 μg)

and tetracycline (30 IU) was determined by the disk diffusion method on pre-reduced

- 140 Brucella agar plates as described elsewhere [12]. The results were interpreted
- 141 according to the French Society of Microbiology's "Comité de l'Antibiogramme"

142 (2013, available at

- 143 https://resapath.anses.fr/resapath_uploadfiles/files/Documents/2013_CASFM.pdf).
- 144 Strains were considered susceptible if the inhibition diameters for vancomycin (VA),
- 145 metronidazole (MZ), erythromycin (ERY), clindamycin (CM), moxifloxacin (MXF),
- 146 chloramphenicol (C), imipenem (IMI) and tetracycline (TE) were greater than or equal
- to 17mm, 21 mm, 22 mm, 15 mm, 23 mm, 23 mm, 24 mm and 23 mm respectively.

149 **Results**

All the results are fully presented in Table 1.

151 Identification of *C. difficile* and detection of toxin genes

All the strains were positive for *tpi*, thus confirming the identification of *C. difficile*. All also harbored the *tcdA* and *tcdB* genes. Forty-five (83.3%) contained *cdtA* and *cdtB* genes coding for the binary toxin and had a -39 bp deletion in regulator gene *tcdC*. Nine strains (16.7%) harbored only the *cdtA* gene and had no deletion in regulator gene *tcdC*.

157 PCR ribotyping

Among the five BPs investigated, only six different RTs (Fig. 1A) were identified, with a predominance of RT 078 (37%) and 126 (46.3%) in manure and digestate. Other RTs included 005 (7.4%), 003 (3.7%), 014 (3.7%) and 106 (1.8%) (Fig. 1A). Isolates from BP2 that contained bovine and poultry manure had the widest RT diversity (Fig. 1B). On the contrary, there was little variability among the RTs: two RTs in BP1 and BP5 (see Fig. 1B) and only one in BP3 and BP4 (see Fig. 1B).

164 **wgMLST**

The minimum spanning tree of wgMLST typing is shown in Fig. 2. wgMLST analysis revealed that isolates clustered by BP, with fewer than five alleles of difference within a BP except for strains from RT 005 isolated from BP2. wgMLST results confirm results from PCR ribotyping, with little variability within the same BP except for BP2.

169

171 Antimicrobial susceptibility

The antimicrobial susceptibility of *C. difficile* strains was evaluated for nine antibiotics. 172 All the strains were susceptible to vancomycin, metronidazole, imipenem and 173 chloramphenicol. Resistance rates to erythromycin, clindamycin, moxifloxacin, and 174 tetracycline were 85.2%, 98.2%, 24.1%, and 83.3% respectively. Strains from BP1, 175 176 BP2 and BP3 were susceptible to moxifloxacin, whereas all the isolates from BP4 and two out of the ten isolates from BP5 were resistant. Strains from BP3, BP4 and 177 BP5 were resistant to erythromycin and 85.3% were resistant to tetracycline. All but 178 one of the isolates from BP2 were susceptible to erythromycin and all were 179 susceptible to tetracycline. 180

182 **Discussion**

As previously reported [7], C. difficile strains were easily detected and collected from 183 the five agricultural BPs investigated during this study. Manure samples collected 184 from BP2 had a lower positive rate (only one positive sample out of the three 185 analyzed [8]) than the others, but it was still possible to isolate eight strains from this 186 BP (two from manure and six from digestate). Ten isolates were collected from BP5 187 instead of 12 because one isolate from a manure sample and one from a digestate 188 sample were tpi-negative by PCR so were not included in this study. To our 189 knowledge, this study is the first to characterize *C. difficile* strains isolated from 190 agricultural BPs. 191

As already stated in previous studies [13], there is no standard method for the 192 193 detection and isolation of *C. difficile* in animal samples. Our study collected isolates using supplemented BHI followed by isolation on ChromID. Two isolates from the 194 same sample were characterized to evaluate the diversity of strains and profiles that 195 could be encountered within a single sample. Considering together the results 196 presented here from PCR ribotyping, multiplex PCR and antibiotic susceptibility 197 198 assays, it appears that isolates were very similar when pig manure was present, and indeed were similar both in manure and digestate samples. Considering this result, 199 two isolates from manure and two from digestate for BP1, BP3, BP4 and BP5 were 200 201 analyzed using wgMLST. Isolates from BP3, BP4 and BP5 analyzed by wgMLST had 202 fewer than one allelic difference, and those from BP1 fewer than five allelic differences, confirming the very close proximity of strains. This seems to show the 203 204 low impact of anaerobic digestion on a potential selection of strains during the process. Greater diversity in isolated strains was observed in BP2 however, where 205 both cattle and poultry manure was used as input, even for isolates from the same 206

RT analyzed using wgMLST and showing 41 allelic differences (Fig. 2). This
difference in strain variability between pigs, cattle or poultry has already been
described [14]. According to available studies, a single RT is expected on pig farms,
while greater variability is reported on cattle farms and the greatest on poultry and
rabbit farms [14]. This variability could have been missed if only one isolate had been
characterized per matrix or per BP.

Organic co-substrates are used to supply the BPs, [8] but it was not possible to 213 analyze them during the study mainly because of their diversity from one plant to the 214 next and their variability within the same BP, depending what matrices are available. 215 As mentioned above, the characteristics of strains isolated from BPs supplied with 216 pig manure are very similar, suggesting that C. difficile strains isolated from digestate 217 originated from manure. Conclusions are more difficult to draw for BP2 considering 218 that the PCR ribotypes from the manure and digestate are not the same, and that the 219 220 two RT 005 strains isolated from manure or digestate differ by 41 alleles. It is necessary to detect and characterize C. difficile strains in co-substrates or monitor C. 221 *difficile* profiles in manure and digestate over a period of time in order to determine 222 the origin of *C. difficile* strains recovered from digestate. 223

RT 078 and RT 126 were the most common ribotypes identified in manure and 224 digestate from the BPs investigated. This finding is in accordance with studies 225 226 conducted on pigs, as RT 078 is the most reported PCR ribotype in pigs worldwide 227 [13]. Except in BP2, all the manure in this study contained at least pig manure, which may explain this result. RT 126 is part of the ribotype 078 lineage that includes RT 228 229 078, 045, 066, 126 and 127 [15, 16] and is a fluoroquinolone-resistant descendant of RT 078 [17]. It has also been isolated from pigs in previous studies worldwide [18-230 21]. 231

RT 078 is considered to be an emerging cause of community-acquired CDI in various
countries or regions around the world (the Netherlands, England, Scotland, North
America and Europe [22-25]). The zoonotic potential of RT 078 from Sequence Type
11 has been recently demonstrated by genomic analyses, [4] and it is hypothesized
that the food chain and/or the environment are its reservoirs [5]. By detecting this RT
in manure and digestate, our study appears to confirm this hypothesis.

RT 014, identified in BP2, has been previously detected in wastewater effluents and
influents, in human patients, shellfish, and sewage sludge [26]. RT 014 is the third
most prevalent ribotype associated with CDI in Europe [27] and the USA [28]. RT 005
has also been detected in wastewater effluents and RT 106 from shellfish [26]. They
have been associated with CDI in France but to a lesser extent than RT 014 or RT
078/126 [29]. However, an increase in the prevalence of RT 106 in cases of CDI was
observed in the USA between 2011 and 2017 [28].

C. difficile strains are known to be resistant to certain antibiotics, such as guinolones, 245 erythromycin and clindamycin [14]. Resistance to erythromycin has in particular been 246 reported among isolates of PCR ribotype 078 in pigs and cattle [30]. RT 126/078 has 247 248 been reported to be highly resistant to tetracycline, moxifloxacin, clindamycin, and erythromycin [4]. Our results are thus in accordance with previous studies. Only 249 250 strains from BP4 and one isolate from BP5 were resistant to moxifloxacin. 251 Fluoroquinolones represented 0.24% of the tonnage of active ingredients sold in the veterinarian field in 2017 in France [31]. It was not possible to obtain information 252 regarding the antimicrobial treatments of animals whose manure was input into the 253 254 BPs investigated in this study, and no link between rearing practices and antimicrobial resistance could therefore be evaluated. 255

Tetracycline is the most widely-used antimicrobial for the treatment, control, and 256 prevention of infections in animals [32]. Tetracycline represented around 38% of 257 veterinary antimicrobial sales in France in 2017 and is the main antimicrobial used in 258 pig and bovine production [31]. The high level of decreased-susceptibility strains to 259 this antimicrobial (83.3% with an inhibition diameter below 23) in our study is not 260 therefore surprising. The resistance of RT078 and RT126 to tetracycline may also 261 262 play a role in its high prevalence in pigs by providing these strains with a selective advantage in comparison with susceptible strains. 263

The resistances to antimicrobials reported here are similar to those observed in strains involved in human CDI [29]. Fortunately, no resistance to antibiotics such as vancomycin or metronidazole, used to treat human *C. difficile* infections, was detected in the strains isolated from the BPs studied.

268 Conclusion

This study shows that toxigenic *C. difficile* strains resistant to a number of 269 antimicrobials can be isolated from manure and digestate. Such matrices represent a 270 reservoir of *C. difficile* strains whose RTs are similar to those found in patients with 271 CDI. This illustrates the relevance of the One Health approach to this issue and our 272 results show that, in addition to monitoring the strains involved in CDI, C. difficile 273 strains from animal and environmental reservoirs should be monitored to identify 274 circulating strains so as to be able to detect at an early stage any emergence that 275 could impact human health. 276

277

278 Acknowledgments

- The authors are grateful to all the participating farmers.
- 280 We are also very grateful to Edouard Hirchaud and Aurélie Leroux of ANSES's
- Ploufragan Laboratory, GVB Unit, and Amandine Thépault, of ANSES's Ploufragan
- Laboratory, HQPAP Unit for their technical support.

283 **Funding**

- 284 This research received financial support from the French Environment and Energy
- Management Agency (ADEME) (agreement number: 1606C0022 and 1806C0020),
- the departmental Council of Côtes d'Armor (Conseil Départemental des Côtes

287 d'Armor).

289 **References**

F. Barbut, N. Day, S. Bouee, A. Youssouf, L. Grandvoinnet, V. Lalande, et al. [1] 290 Toxigenic *Clostridium difficile* carriage in general practice: results of a laboratory-291 based cohort study. Clinical microbiology and infection : the official publication of the 292 European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases 25 (2019) 588-94. 293 [2] S. Khanna, D.S. Pardi. *Clostridium difficile* infection: new insights into 294 management. Mayo Clin Proc 87 (2012) 1106–17. 295 D.R. Knight, B.J. Elliott, T.T. Chang, T.V. Perkins, T.V. Riley. Diversity and 296 [3] evolution in the genome of *Clostridium difficile*. Clin Microbiol Rev 28 (2015) 721–41. 297 D.R. Knight, B. Kullin, G.O. Androga, F. Barbut, C. Eckert, S. Johnson, et al. [4] 298 Evolutionary and Genomic Insights into *Clostridioides difficile* Sequence Type 11: a 299 Diverse Zoonotic and Antimicrobial-Resistant Lineage of Global One Health 300 Importance. mBio 10 (2019). 301 302 [5] M.P. Hensgens, E.C. Keessen, M.M. Squire, T.V. Riley, M.G. Koene, E. de Boer, et al. *Clostridium difficile* infection in the community: a zoonotic disease? 303 Clinical microbiology and infection : the official publication of the European Society of 304 Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases 18 (2012) 635-45. 305 C.W. Knetsch, T.R. Connor, A. Mutreja, S.M. van Dorp, I.M. Sanders, H.P. [6] 306 Browne, et al. Whole genome sequencing reveals potential spread of *Clostridium* 307

308 *difficile* between humans and farm animals in the Netherlands, 2002 to 2011. Euro

309 surveillance : bulletin europeen sur les maladies transmissibles = European

communicable disease bulletin 19 (2014) 20954.

311 [7] B. Froschle, U. Messelhausser, C. Holler, M. Lebuhn. Fate of *Clostridium*

312 *botulinum* and incidence of pathogenic clostridia in biogas processes. J Appl

313 Microbiol 119 (2015) 936-47.

[8] C. Le Maréchal, C. Druilhe, E. Repérant, E. Boscher, S. Rouxel, S. Le Roux,

et al. Evaluation of the occurrence of sporulating and nonsporulating pathogenic

bacteria in manure and in digestate of five agricultural biogas plants.

317 MicrobiologyOpen 8 (2019) e872.

P. Bidet, F. Barbut, V. Lalande, B. Burghoffer, J.C. Petit. Development of a
 new PCR-ribotyping method for Clostridium difficile based on ribosomal RNA gene

sequencing. FEMS microbiology letters 175 (1999) 261-6.

321 [10] J.H.C. Sim, V. Anikst, A. Lohith, N. Pourmand, N. Banaei. Optimized Protocol

322 for Simple Extraction of High-Quality Genomic DNA from *Clostridium difficile* for

323 Whole-Genome Sequencing. Journal of Clinical Microbiology 53 (2015) 2329.

[11] C. Gateau, S. Deboscker, J. Couturier, T. Vogel, E. Schmitt, J. Muller, et al.

Local outbreak of *Clostridioides difficile* PCR-Ribotype 018 investigated by multi

locus variable number tandem repeat analysis, whole genome multi locus sequence

typing and core genome single nucleotide polymorphism typing. Anaerobe (2019)102087.

329 [12] F. Barbut, B. Gariazzo, L. Bonne, V. Lalande, B. Burghoffer, R. Luiuz, et al.

330 Clinical features of *Clostridium difficile*-associated infections and molecular

331 characterization of strains: results of a retrospective study, 2000-2004. Infection

control and hospital epidemiology 28 (2007) 131-9.

M.G. Koene, D. Mevius, J.A. Wagenaar, C. Harmanus, M.P. Hensgens, A.M.
Meetsma, et al. *Clostridium difficile* in Dutch animals: their presence, characteristics
and similarities with human isolates. Clinical microbiology and infection : the official
publication of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases
18 (2012) 778-84.

- [14] C. Rodriguez Diaz, C. Seyboldt, M. Rupnik. Non-human *C. difficile* Reservoirs
 and Sources: Animals, Food, Environment. Advances in experimental medicine and
 biology 1050 (2018) 227-43.
- 341 [15] C.W. Knetsch, M.P. Hensgens, C. Harmanus, M.W. van der Bijl, P.H.
- 342 Savelkoul, E.J. Kuijper, et al. Genetic markers for *Clostridium difficile* lineages linked
- to hypervirulence. Microbiology 157 (2011) 3113-23.
- 344 [16] R.A. Stabler, L.F. Dawson, E. Valiente, M.D. Cairns, M.J. Martin, E.H.
- Donahue, et al. Macro and micro diversity of *Clostridium difficile* isolates from diverse
 sources and geographical locations. PLoS One 7 (2012) e31559.
- [17] K.E. Dingle, X. Didelot, T.P. Quan, D.W. Eyre, N. Stoesser, C.A. Marwick, et
 al. A Role for Tetracycline Selection in Recent Evolution of Agriculture-Associated *Clostridium difficile* PCR Ribotype 078. mBio 10 (2019).
- 350 [18] Y.C. Wu, J.J. Lee, B.Y. Tsai, Y.F. Liu, C.M. Chen, N. Tien, et al. Potentially
- 351 hypervirulent *Clostridium difficile* PCR ribotype 078 lineage isolates in pigs and
- possible implications for humans in Taiwan. Int J Med Microbiol 306 (2016) 115-22.
- 353 [19] S. Álvarez-Pérez, J.L. Blanco, R.J. Astorga, J. Gómez-Laguna, B. Barrero-
- 354 Domínguez, A. Galán-Relaño, et al. Distribution and tracking of *Clostridium difficile*
- and *Clostridium perfringens* in a free-range pig abattoir and processing plant. Food
- 356 Research International 113 (2018) 456-64.
- 357 [20] A. Schneeberg, H. Neubauer, G. Schmoock, S. Baier, J. Harlizius, H. Nienhoff,
- et al. *Clostridium difficile* Genotypes in Piglet Populations in Germany. Journal of
- 359 Clinical Microbiology 51 (2013) 3796.
- 360 [21] S. Janezic, V. Zidaric, B. Pardon, A. Indra, B. Kokotovic, J.L. Blanco, et al.
- 361 International *Clostridium difficile* animal strain collection and large diversity of animal
- associated strains. BMC Microbiology 14 (2014) 173.

- 363 [22] A. Goorhuis, D. Bakker, J. Corver, S.B. Debast, C. Harmanus, D.W.
- Notermans, et al. Emergence of *Clostridium difficile* infection due to a new
- hypervirulent strain, polymerase chain reaction ribotype 078. Clin Infect Dis 47 (2008)
 1162-70.
- 367 [23] F. Barbut, P. Mastrantonio, M. Delmee, J. Brazier, E. Kuijper, I. Poxton.
- 368 Prospective study of *Clostridium difficile* infections in Europe with phenotypic and
- 369 genotypic characterisation of the isolates. Clinical microbiology and infection : the
- 370 official publication of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious
- 371 Diseases 13 (2007) 1048-57.
- 372 [24] W.N. Fawley, K.A. Davies, T. Morris, P. Parnell, R. Howe, M.H. Wilcox.
- 373 Enhanced surveillance of *Clostridium difficile* infection occurring outside hospital,
- 374 England, 2011 to 2013. Euro surveillance : bulletin europeen sur les maladies
- transmissibles = European communicable disease bulletin 21 (2016).
- 376 [25] M.P. Bauer, D.W. Notermans, B.H. van Benthem, J.S. Brazier, M.H. Wilcox,
- M. Rupnik, et al. *Clostridium difficile* infection in Europe: a hospital-based survey.
- 378 Lancet 377 (2011) 63-73.
- 379 [26] V. Romano, V. Pasquale, L. Lemee, I. El Meouche, M. Pestel-Caron, F.
- 380 Capuano, et al. *Clostridioides difficile* in the environment, food, animals and humans
- in southern Italy: Occurrence and genetic relatedness. Comparative immunology,
- microbiology and infectious diseases 59 (2018) 41-6.
- 383 [27] K.A. Davies, H. Ashwin, C.M. Longshaw, D.A. Burns, G.L. Davis, M.H. Wilcox.
- 384 Diversity of *Clostridium difficile* PCR ribotypes in Europe: results from the European,
- multicentre, prospective, biannual, point-prevalence study of Clostridium difficile
- infection in hospitalised patients with diarrhoea (EUCLID), 2012 and 2013. Euro

surveillance : bulletin europeen sur les maladies transmissibles = European
communicable disease bulletin 21 (2016).

389 [28] I.A. Tickler, A.E. Obradovich, R.V. Goering, F.C. Fang, F.C. Tenover. Changes

in molecular epidemiology and antimicrobial resistance profiles of *Clostridioides*

- 391 (*Clostridium*) *difficile* strains in the United States between 2011-2017. Anaerobe
- 392 (2019).
- 393 [29] Centre National de référence des bactéries anaérobies et du botulisme.
 394 Rapport annuel d'activités 2014. 2015.
- [30] E.C. Keessen, M.P. Hensgens, P. Spigaglia, F. Barbanti, I.M. Sanders, E.J.
- Kuijper, et al. Antimicrobial susceptibility profiles of human and piglet *Clostridium*
- *difficile* PCR-ribotype 078. Antimicrobial resistance and infection control 2 (2013) 14.
- 398 [31] Anses Agence nationale du médicament vétérinaire. Suivi des ventes de
- 399 médicaments vétérinaires contenant des antibiotiques en France en 2017. 2018.
- 400 [32] European Medicines Agency. Sales of veterinary antimicrobial agents in 29
- 401 European countries in 2014. . 2016.

402 Figures:

403 Fig. 1: Distribution of isolates according to PCR ribotypes (RTs). A: Distribution of the

404 54 isolates per RT; B: Distribution of RTs per BP (the percentage of each RT per BP

is indicated) (RT126 in black, RT078 in white, RT005 with hatched lines,

406 RT014/020/077 in dark gray, RT106 in light gray, RT003 with dots)

407 Fig. 2: wgMLST analysis with minimum spanning tree of 18 strains isolated from BP1

to BP5. Each circle represents a single wgMLST, the size of the circle being

409 proportional to the number of isolates included. The numbers between the circles

410 correspond to the number of alleles between the wgMLST types. The shaded areas

represent clusters, grouping the genetically-linked strains. Blue circles encompass

412 strains from the same BP.

Α



В





429 Tables

430 Table 1: PCR ribotypes, toxin gene profiles and antimicrobial susceptibility of *Clostridioides difficile* isolated from manure and

- 431 digestate samples collected from French agricultural biogas plants (BPs).
- 432 Strains in bold were sequenced; BP: Biogas Plant; ERY: Erythromyci; CN: Clindamycin; MOXI: Moxifloxaxin; MZ: Metronidazole;

433 VA: Vancomycin; TE: Tetracyclin; IMP: Imipenem; C: Chloramphenicol; Tox A: Gene encoding for Toxin A; Tox B: Gene encoding

- 434 for Toxin B; LOK: gene encoding for the lok gene, characteristic of non-toxic *C. difficile;* tpi: gene fragment used to identify *C.*
- 435 *difficile;* Binary Tox: cdtA and cdtB genes encoding for the binary toxin; del. tcdC: détection of deletions in *tcdC* gene; +: detected; -:
- 436 not detected
- 437

	Sample		BP	Production			Ant	imicr	obia	I					St	train	gene conte	nt	
Strain reference		Туре			ERY	CN	ΜΟΧΙ	MZ	VA	TE	IMP	с	Tox A	Tox B	LOK	tpi	Binary Tox	del. tcdC	Ribotype
D17MD08	17MD01-01-1	Manure	BP1	Pig	6	6	26	36	30	16	32	27	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD09	17MD01-01-1	Manure	BP1	Pig	6	6	26	36	31	16	31	28	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD11	17MD01-01-2	Manure	BP1	Pig	6	6	26	40	32	16	28	30	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD12	17MD01-01-2	Manure	BP1	Pig	32	16	31	46	34	50	29	36	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	005
D17MD14	17MD01-01-3	Manure	BP1	Pig	6	7	26	32	32	15	27	32	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD15	17MD01-01-3	Manure	BP1	Pig	6	6	26	33	28	15	30	27	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD17	17MD01-01-4	Digestate	BP1	Pig	6	7	29	38	33	16	30	33	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD18	17MD01-01-4	Digestate	BP1	Pig	6	8	28	34	31	16	32	31	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078

D17MD20	17MD01-01-5	Digestate	BP1	Pig	6	6	26	34	31	20	31	31	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD21	17MD01-01-5	Digestate	BP1	Pig	6	6	26	32	31	16	29	30	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD23	17MD01-01-6	Digestate	BP1	Pig	6	7	26	35	32	14	30	30	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD25	17MD01-01-6	Digestate	BP1	Pig	6	7	28	34	31	15	31	32	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD62	17MD01-02-9	Manure	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	28	8	24	32	34	40	30	36	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	005
D17MD64	17MD01-02-9	Manure	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	28	6	25	34	32	44	27	33	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	005
D17MD65	17MD01-02-10	Digestate	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	36	6	23	36	31	50	28	34	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	014
D17MD66	17MD01-02-10	Digestate	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	6	9	26	40	34	25	31	35	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	003
D17MD69	17MD01-02-11	Digestate	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	26	6	23	34	31	44	24	28	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	003
D17MD70	17MD01-02-11	Digestate	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	36	6	27	41	35	56	30	38	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	014
D17MD71	17MD01-02-12	Digestate	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	24	6	24	36	32	40	27	23	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	005
D17MD73	17MD01-02-12	Digestate	BP2	Bovine, Poultry	30	10	30	40	40	60	50	38	+	+	-	+	Truncated	0	106
D17MD99	17MD01-03-13	Manure	BP3	Pig	6	11	29	40	34	20	30	36	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD100	17MD01-03-13	Manure	BP3	Pig	6	7	28	38	35	16	33	34	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD102	17MD01-03-14	Manure	BP3	Pig	6	7	29	34	35	15	30	37	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD103	17MD01-03-14	Manure	BP3	Pig	6	8	31	35	36	15	32	36	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD105	17MD01-03-15	Manure	BP3	Pig	6	8	29	39	34	16	30	35	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD106	17MD01-03-15	Manure	BP3	Pig	6	6	30	38	35	15	32	35	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD108	17MD01-03-16	Digestate	BP3	Pig	6	8	30	39	34	13	30	36	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD109	17MD01-03-16	Digestate	BP3	Pig	6	12	30	44	36	19	33	37	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD111	17MD01-03-17	Digestate	BP3	Pig	6	6	28	36	34	15	31	33	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD112	17MD01-03-17	Digestate	BP3	Pig	6	7	30	34	34	10	34	34	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD114	17MD01-03-18	Digestate	BP3	Pig	6	7	30	38	35	15	29	36	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD115	17MD01-03-18	Digestate	BP3	Pig	6	6	28	42	34	17	33	35	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD125	17MD01-04-19	Manure	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	44	33	18	33	32	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD126	17MD01-04-19	Manure	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	42	32	19	30	34	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD128	17MD01-04-20	Manure	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	42	33	15	30	34	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD129	17MD01-04-20	Manure	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	8	6	43	35	16	31	35	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD131	17MD01-04-21	Manure	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	41	31	14	34	34	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126

D17MD132	17MD01-04-21	Manure	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	35	31	14	26	30	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD134	17MD01-04-22	Digestate	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	40	34	14	30	36	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD135	17MD01-04-22	Digestate	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	10	6	40	35	17	32	36	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD137	17MD01-04-23	Digestate	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	36	32	16	28	31	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD138	17MD01-04-23	Digestate	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	8	6	37	31	16	29	31	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD140	17MD01-04-24	Digestate	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	7	6	37	34	17	33	35	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD141	17MD01-04-24	Digestate	BP4	Pig, Bovine, Poultry	6	6	6	37	31	11	27	27	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD162	17MD01-05-25	Manure	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	28	31	29	17	26	27	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD165	17MD01-05-26	Manure	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	27	30	30	17	27	27	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD166	17MD01-05-26	Manure	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	28	34	31	17	28	31	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD168	17MD01-05-27	Manure	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	28	33	31	16	28	31	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD169	17MD01-05-27	Manure	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	26	32	30	18	26	30	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD171	17MD01-05-28	Digestate	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	26	29	31	19	26	29	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD174	17MD01-05-29	Digestate	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	26	31	31	18	26	28	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD175	17MD01-05-29	Digestate	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	6	39	31	14	28	28	+	+	-	+	+	-39	126
D17MD177	17MD01-05-30	Digestate	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	26	30	28	16	26	27	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078
D17MD178	17MD01-05-30	Digestate	BP5	Pig, Bovine	6	6	27	32	30	19	27	29	+	+	-	+	+	-39	078