



EU Platform on Animal Welfare

2nd Meeting

10 November 2017



Sub-Group 'Animal Transport'

- Focus on enforcement and innovation
- Complementing National Contact Points (NCP) – where Member States share good practices on enforcement
- Composed by Platform members with balanced representation





European
Commission

First EU Animal Welfare Reference Centre

- Scientific and technical support for official controls
- Information, education and training
- Focus on welfare of pigs
- Call for applications launched 13 October 2017
- Application through Competent Authorities
- Application deadline 20 November 2017
- Designated before end of April 2018



EU Animal Welfare Strategy

- 12 outstanding actions in November 2014
- 6 remaining actions in June 2017
- 3 actions completed in November 2017
 - Animal transport guides (pilot project)
 - Study on best practices slaughter
 - Study on welfare of farmed fish (transport and slaughter)





European Commission

Educational materials on reducing the need for tail docking



CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Tail-biting is a multi-factorial problem – there is no solution. Each farmer, where necessary in consultation with a veterinarian, should investigate six fact solutions that work best for his or her farm.

Why should I care?

Tail-biting means lower carcass weight and condemned or trimmed carcasses, resulting in economic losses for pig farmers. The factors listed in the table below affect the health of the animals. Addressing problems will therefore improve antibiotic use and improve production. Tail-biting also compromises the reputation of the pig farming industry.

Where do I start?

Start by monitoring risk factors by keeping records on the six key factors listed in the table below. This will help you identify any biting becomes an issue, and address the underlying cause of any tail-biting. You may wish to start by building a risk report using the [Farm Veterinarians Risk Report](https://www.farmveterinarians.com). You may also carry out a risk audit for example using the SWiTP model (<https://www.flied.com/eng/2018/01/01/swiTP/>).

When things go wrong
Even farms paying careful attention to all key factors will occasionally experience an outbreak of tail-biting. If this happens, follow these three steps:

1. remove the bitter and treat injured pigs,
2. add fresh enrichment material such as rope, fresh wood, branches, straw (consider keeping a supply for emergencies), and
3. check the key factors listed above and introduce improvement measures.

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1 CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING ENRICHMENT MATERIAL

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Straw and hay are popular choices for enrichment

Potential indicators of ineffective enrichment material, which could lead to tail-biting

- Bitten tails and ears
- Skin lesions
- Loss of interest in enrichment materials
- Biting pen fittings or other pigs instead of enrichment materials

What? There are enrichment materials that are systemic, such as long chopped straw, alfalfa and wood shavings. These materials are able to change the material's location, appear odorous, and pigs should be able to root in it. You can use any material that they meet these criteria are height, without interfering with resting or feeding, not easily contaminated with dung. Add additional material as needed.

Why? Pigs have a strong need to explore their environment, sniffing, digging and chewing. If they cannot do this, they may start biting pen fittings or other pigs.

When? The material must be accessible to all pigs at all times and be replaced often enough to be of sustained value.

How much does it cost? Costs will vary according to the country. Feeding pigs with a diet that contains 0.25% of costs in fattening farms, and for

2 CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING THERMAL COMFORT AND AIR QUALITY

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Pigs struggle to regulate their body temperature

Potential indicators of poor thermal conditions, which could lead to tail-biting

- Lack of cleanliness
- Restless/aggressive behaviour
- Huddling
- Sneezing
- Playing with water and mud
- Reduced appetite

What? Maintaining the right thermal conditions is essential for pig health and welfare. Good bedding, good weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare. Pigs must be protected from heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

Why? Pigs have a very limited capacity to regulate their body temperature. They are particularly sensitive to heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

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3 CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING HEALTH AND FITNESS

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Your veterinarian should be a regular visitor to your farm

Potential indicators of poor health

- Bitten or limp tail
- Skin lesions or sores
- Increased restlessness
- Lameness
- Lack of appetite

What? A good health plan and regular visits to a veterinarian are essential for maintaining the overall health of your pigs and your farm.

Why? Good overall health is one of the best ways to ensure your pigs are fit and healthy.

How? Weaning your pigs at a minimum age of 21 and less stressed pigs. They will be less likely to be injured. Pigs should be protected from heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

How much does it cost? Costs are outweighed by the benefits of better production and reduced the use of antibiotics and vaccines. It also reduces the risk of disease. They also experience fewer problems in the

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4 CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING COMPETITION

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Do your pigs have enough space to eat

Potential indicators of a lack of space

- Low body condition scores
- Variability in body size within a pen
- Skin lesions on hindquarters (food competition)
- Skin lesions on forequarters (space competition)

What? You need to ensure sufficient space for each pig. Feeding systems that allow all pigs to eat at the same time are essential. Pigs should be protected from heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

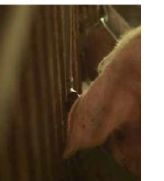
Why? Competition is a stress factor that can lead to tail-biting. Pigs should be protected from heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

How? In addition to ensuring pen size and pig density, you should consider the layout of the pen. Pigs should be protected from heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

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5 CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING DIET

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Water quality should be tested regularly

Potential indicators of an unsuitable diet

- Low body condition score
- Variation in weight
- Poor carcass classification

What? Your pig needs a feed with adequate levels of protein and energy. Pigs should be protected from heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

Why? A correctly balanced feed will keep your pigs healthy and those that have to adapt to a new feed will be less likely to bite.

How? Some farms find that pigs on a liquid diet are less likely to bite than those on a dry diet. Some water-soluble vitamins and minerals are effective in reducing tail-biting. Keep samples from your pens – you may analyse them if tail-biting is

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6 CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING PEN STRUCTURE/CLEANLINESS

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Pigs are naturally very clean animals

Potential indicators of an unsuitable pen structure/lack of cleanliness, which could lead to tail-biting

- Presence of manure on the pigs' bodies
- Increased disease (lameness, dermatitis, respiratory infections)

What? A dirty environment reduces the comfort of a pig and increases levels of odorous gases, stressing the pig and increasing the risk of disease. When pigs are dirty, it is often due to inappropriate behaviour arising from unsuitable conditions on the farm, such as overcrowding, thermal stress or bad ventilation. Pigs also find dirty environment material unattractive, so the resources invested in growing it are wasted.

Why? It is important to have well-defined areas for resting, feeding and dunging, particularly in pens with partially slatted floors. The resting area must be dry and clean, and should be located away from the feeding area. Pigs should be protected from heat stress, which can occur in hot weather, outdoor systems, showers and wallows, ventilation, and clean and dry bedding are all essential for pig health and welfare.

How? In addition to regular cleaning, look for the causes of any dirtiness. Experiment with temperature and ventilation. If any faulty dryers, investigate fittings and pen layout, observe where the pigs defecate and why. This should give an indication of where changes are needed. You may want to consider heated floors in the resting area, cooling systems or a biological air cleaning system, which removes dust, ammonia and odours from the air.

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Optimising these key factors should reduce tail-biting and remove the need for tail-docking.

1. ENRICHMENT MATERIAL

Pigs have a strong need to explore their environment and to search for food (sniffing, biting and chewing). If they cannot do this, they get bored and frustrated.

2. THERMAL COMFORT, AIR QUALITY AND LIGHT

Pigs need a stable environment that is close to their optimum for posture and humidity levels, enough fresh air and with suitable lighting conditions. If pigs are not comfortable, they become frustrated and may begin tail-biting.

3. HEALTH AND FITNESS

Good overall health is one of the best ways to avoid tail-biting. A pig in poor health is a stressed pig.

4. COMPETITION

Pigs prefer to forage, eat and rest simultaneously. There should be enough space and resources for the pigs to meet this behavioural need and thus avoid competition.

5. DIET

Pigs need feed of adequate consistency, as well as the right levels of nutrients, fibre and essential amino acids. They also need a sufficient quantity of fresh, good-quality water.

6. PEN STRUCTURE/CLEANLINESS

Pigs prefer to keep different areas of the pen for different behaviours (resting, feeding, defecating). A dirty environment, especially in the resting area, increases the risk of tail-biting. It also reduces comfort and stresses the pigs.

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Thank you!

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