



Educational materials on reducing the need for tail docking

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANTS, ANIMALS, FOOD AND FEED
SECTION ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

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Health and
Food Safety



Why these materials have been produced?

EU Directive 2008/120 does not allow routine tail-docking and requires to provide to pigs "manipulable material".

Commission Recommendation (EU) 2016/336 introduces a number of parameters pertinent in reducing tail-biting and lists the characteristics of an optimal enrichment material.



Why these materials have been produced?

Despite the provided guidance, a lot remains to be done to help farmers becoming familiar with the legal requirements.

The produced materials are answering this need by presenting the ways of avoiding the tail-docking in an understandable manner.



Materials on reducing the need for tail docking

- 7 thematic leaflets and 2 video testimonials
- Available on-line, printed and on the USB stick
- In 8 languages: DE, DK, EN, ES, FR, IT, NL and PL



European Commission



Factsheets: 1 general + 6 thematic:

1. Enrichment material
2. Thermal comfort, air quality and light
3. Health and fitness
4. Competition
5. Diet
6. Pen structure/cleanliness

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Structure of each fact sheet

- » **Potential indicator of failure**
- » **What?**
- » **Why?**
- » **When?**
- » **How much does it cost?**
- » **How do I know if I am doing it right?**
- » **Are there any disadvantages?**
- » **Did you know?**

CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING ENRICHMENT MATERIAL

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



straw and hay are popular choices for enrichment material

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

- Bitten tails and ears
- Skin lesions
- Loss of interest in enrichment materials
- Over use of pen forriters or other pigs instead of enrichment materials
- Roaring in and manipulating during feeding
- Competition or fighting for use of enrichment materials
- Betsy-riding

What? There are ASB enrichment materials that are comparable with slurry and slatted floor systems, as long chopped straw, alfalfa and hemp roots. For the pig, it is important to be able to change the material's location, appearance and provide either one or variety (at the right time, and pigs should be able to root in it). You UK are positioned ahead of others in the world when it comes to tail-biting. The key point is that you need these criteria to be met. If you are not, you are at risk of tail-biting. Tail-biting is a welfare issue, not a production issue. Add additional materials to at-risk pens.

Why? Pigs have a strong need to explore their environment and look for food. They do this by rooting, sniffing, and chewing. If they cannot do this, they get bored and frustrated, and will start biting pen forriters or pen mates.

When? The materials must be accessible to all pigs at all times. To keep the pigs interested, it must be replenished often enough to be of sustained interest, and it must be kept clean.

How much does it cost? Costs will vary according to the materials selected and local prices. One study in the UK found that the cost of using straw was 0.16% of all costs in breeding units. In other countries, the cost of using straw was 0.25% of all costs in breeding units.

From the Piglet's Progress Report

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

1. ENRICHMENT MATERIAL

Pigs need a strong need to explore their environment and ASB (Autonomous Scented Behaviour) if food (or other ASB) is not available, they get bored and frustrated.

2. THERMAL COMFORT, AND LIGHT AND QUALITY

Pigs need a strong environment that is comfortable, free from stressors, and with suitable conditions. If pigs are not comfortable, they become frustrated and may begin tail-biting.

3. HEALTH AND FITNESS

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

4. COMPETITION

Pigs need to forage, and need space and resources for the pigs to meet their nutritional needs and thus avoid competition.

5. DIET

Pigs need a diet of adequate quality, as well as the right ratio of macerals, fibre and essential amino acids. They also need a quality water.

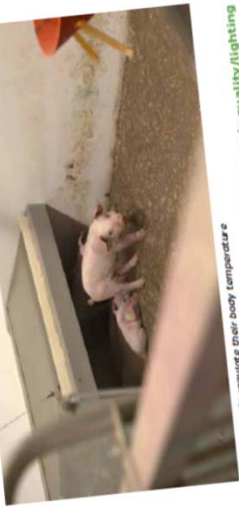
6. PEN STRUCTURE/STRESS

Pigs need to keep different areas of the pen for different behaviours (resting, resting, especially in the afternoon, and resting in the pen that something is stuck in him, reducing contact and stressors the pig-



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

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Pigs struggle to regulate their body temperature

Potential indicators of poor thermal comfort/air quality/lighting conditions, which could lead to tail-biting

- Lack of cohesiveness
- Shivering
- Playing with water and mud
- Reduced appetite
- Pig laying on their sides and/or far apart in the rest area
- Excitement, sneezing or coughing
- Conjunctivitis

What? Maintaining the right temperature and good air quality are extremely important in keeping stress levels low. Different temperatures are an even better or worse for different climates, insulation, good bedding or a heater, air conditioning, air flow, and so on. Warm weather conditions include ground that is too hot for pigs to lie on, and warm showers and water. Pigs must be kept in light with a minimum of 40 lux for minimum 8 hours a day. As continuous lighting can cause stress, a day and night rhythm should be maintained. Very bright lights should be avoided.

Why? Pigs have a very limited capacity to regulate their body temperature, and therefore need a stable environment that is close to their optimal temperature at all times. Pigs need a stable environment with minimal fluctuations. Different temperature zones that cater for different pig needs have been seen better. If pigs are denied this, they become restless or restless and may begin tail-biting.

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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. If they are bored, 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 optimal temperature and has 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 have food and resources for the pig that they are competing with. They need this behavioural need and this avoid competition.

5. DIET

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

6. PEN STRUCTURE/ CLEANLINESS

Pigs prefer to have different areas of the pen for different behaviours. Feeding, defecation, the feeding environment, especially a pig that is resting is wrong. It also is important to ensure the pig has access to clean water and that the pen is clean and stress-free.

CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING

HEALTH AND FITNESS

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Your veterinarian should be a regular visitor to the farm

Potential indicators of poor health that could lead to tail-biting

- Biting or limp tail
- Skin lesions or scabs
- Increased restlessness
- Lack of appetite

Why? A good herd health-plan and regular visits of your veterinarian are important for maintaining the overall health of your pigs and avoiding clinical outbreaks of diseases on your farm.

Why? Good overall health is one of the best ways to avoid tail-biting, and is of course also good for farm business.

Notes? Weaning your pigs at a minimum age of 28 days will produce stronger, more resilient and less stressed pigs. They will be less likely to bite tails, and fewer sick. If this is not possible, weaning should be done in a way that minimises stress. Pigs should be born, reared and fattened in close proximity to their littermates. Pigs should be born, reared and fattened in close proximity to their littermates. Pigs should be born, reared and fattened in close proximity to their littermates.

How much does it cost? Costs are outweighed by the benefits. Improving general health results in better overall health and reduces the need for antibiotics, with intact tails are stronger animals that are less likely to be injured and veterinary or medical treatment, or specialised feed. They also experience fewer problems at weaning.

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

1. ENRICHMENT MATERIAL

Pigs have a strong need to explore their environment. If their bedding is not sufficiently comfortable, they cannot do this, they get bored and frustrated.

2. THERMAL COMFORT, AND LIGHT

Pigs need a stable environment that is close to body temperature. Pigs with suitable light conditions are more comfortable, they become less 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

Competition for food, water and rest space may increase the risk of tail-biting. Pigs in overcrowded pens and thus in a state of high competition.

5. DIET

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

6. PEN STRUCTURE/ CLEANLINESS

Pigs prefer different areas of the pen for different activities: resting, feeding, playing. A dirty environment, especially in the feeding area, is therefore a big stressor. Tail-biting is wrong, it causes discomfort and stress the pigs.

CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING COMPETITION

4

Why are my pigs tail-biting?



Do your pigs have enough space to eat and simultaneously?

- Potential indicators of a lack of space, which could lead to tail-biting**
- Low body condition scores
 - Many pigs in body size within a pen
 - Many pigs in the quarters (food competition)
 - Skin lesions in forequarters (space competition)
 - Fights around feeders
 - Pigs waiting to use feeders
 - Poor distribution of pigs in each area of the pen.

What? You need to ensure sufficient space in each pen to avoid competition for food, drink or water. Feeding systems that allow all pigs to eat simultaneously are recommended for all pigs at all times. Feeding systems that allow all pigs to eat simultaneously are recommended for all pigs at all times. Feeding systems that allow all pigs to eat simultaneously are recommended for all pigs at all times.

How? In addition to ensuring pens and feeders are adequate in size, it is important to keep pens and feeders clean and free of waste. Feeding systems should be maintained in a pen with a similar size to the pen. Feeding systems should be maintained in a pen with a similar size to the pen. Feeding systems should be maintained in a pen with a similar size to the pen.

Why? Competition is a stress factor that can lead to tail-biting. Research has shown that pigs will bite the tails of other pigs if they do not have enough space to avoid competition for food, drink or water. Competition is a stress factor that can lead to tail-biting. Research has shown that pigs will bite the tails of other pigs if they do not have enough space to avoid competition for food, drink or water.

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

1. ENRICHMENT
Pigs have a strong need to explore their environment and to search for food (sniffing, rooting, etc.). If they get bored and frustrated, they may bite tails.

2. THERMAL COMFORT, AIR QUALITY AND LIGHT
Pigs need to have optimum living conditions in terms of temperature, humidity, level of air pollution and with sufficient ventilation. If pigs are frustrated and may bite tails.

3. HEALTH AND FITNESS
Good overall health is one of the most important ways to avoid tail-biting. A pig in poor health is a stressed pig.

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

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

6. PEN STRUCTURE/ CLEANLINESS
Pigs prefer different areas of the pen for different behaviours (e.g. feeding, defecating, resting). The feeding environment, especially the feeding area, should be clean and free of waste. It is also important to ensure that the pen provides sufficient space and resources for the pigs to avoid competition and stress.



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, which could lead to tail-biting

- High incidence of stomach and intestinal disorders
- High incidence of fat or ear necrosis
- Low body condition score
- Fluctuation in weight
- Poor carcass classification

What? Your pig needs a feed with adequate levels of fibre (at least 4%), minerals and essential amino acids (lysine, tryptophan) and vitamin B12. Feed should also be of a high consistency for the type of animal, and of good quality. Feed should be given at sufficient frequencies, and should not be changed abruptly. Plentiful supplies of good-quality fresh water are also important.

Why? A correctly balanced feed will keep your pigs healthy and ensure good gut condition. Pigs with sore guts and those that have to adapt suddenly to new feed become stressed; pigs, as do with some gut ailments, those that have to adapt to new feed become stressed; pigs, as do with some gut ailments, those that have to adapt to new feed become stressed; pigs, as do with some gut ailments, those that have to adapt to new feed become stressed.

How? Some farms feed their pigs on a liquid diet given more evenly and also convert food more efficiently than those that use a CRV diet. Some veterinarians have found that adding salt to feed or providing salt licks are very helpful in addressing tail-biting. Both fibre content and grinding size of feed are very important for intestinal health. Therefore a key factor in reducing tail-biting is to ensure that every feed batch and store them for around two months - You may analyse them if tail-biting occurs.

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

1. ENRICHMENT

Pigs have a strong need to explore their environment, and to have access to 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 optimal temperature range. Draught-free and humidity-free conditions are desirable. 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 and eat and rest simultaneously. Resources for the pigs to meet their behavioural need and thus avoid competition.

5. DIET

Pigs need a feed of adequate consistency, as well as an optimal level of fibre, minerals and essential amino acids. They also need a sufficient quantity of fresh, good-quality water.

6. PEN STRUCTURE/ CLEANLINESS

Pigs need to keep different areas of the pen for different behaviours (resting, feeding, defecation). A dirty resting area, for example, is a stressful environment, and therefore is likely to cause tail-biting. Something is wrong if something is wrong across the pigs, reduces conflict and stressors the pigs.

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CUTTING THE NEED FOR TAIL-DOCKING PEN STRUCTURE/CLEANLINESS

Why are my pigs tail-biting?

6



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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 pig's bodies
- Increased disease (lameness, diarrhoea, respiratory infections).

What? A dirty environment reduces the comfort of a living area and increases levels of noxious gases, stressing pigs and increasing the risk of disease. When pigs are dirty, it is often due to inappropriate behaviour arising from unsuitable conditions on the farm. This includes: the presence of manure or bad ventilation in the resting area; also find dirty enrichment material uninteresting, so the resources invested in providing it are wasted.

Where? It is important to have well-defined areas for resting, feeding and drinking, particularly in pens with newly sited floors. The resting area must be dry and free of manure. Pigs (slaughtered at around 160 kg) require additional space at the trough if they are being restricted feed.

How? In addition to regular cleaning, look for the causes of any dirtiness. Experiment with pens with dispersers and dry enrichment materials. Investigate the layout of pen layout, observe temperature and ventilation, fix any faulty fans. Investigate litter conditions where changes are needed where there is defecation and urination. Floors in the resting areas should have a biological air cleaning system, which removes dust, ammonia and odours from the air.

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Optimising these key factors should reduce the need for tail-docking

1. ENRICHMENT MATERIAL
Pigs have a strong need to explore their environment and search for food (sniffing, rooting, etc.). If they get bored and frustrated, they become frustrated and may begin tail biting.

2. THERMAL COMFORT, QUALITY AND LIGHT
Pigs need a stable environment that is close to body levels, draught-free 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 feed in a stable environment. 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 quality as well as the right consistency, acids, fibre and essential levels of nutrients. They also need a sufficient quantity of fresh, good-quality water.

6. PEN STRUCTURE/CLEANLINESS
Pigs prefer to live in different areas of the pen (resting, behaviour, resting, defecation). A good and resting area is one where a pig that is comfortable and where changes are needed to reduce conflict and stress the pig.

Food Safety



[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/
practice/farm/pigs/tail-docking_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/practice/farm/pigs/tail-docking_en)



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Thank you for your attention!

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