

Lameness



What does lameness indicate?

- Full mobility, healthy legs and feet are requirements for good health.
- When a pig is lame, this is often correlated with a poor health-status.
- When being lame, a pig is unable to use one or more limbs in a normal manner. It can vary in severity from reduced mobility or inability to bear weight, to total recumbency.

Risks for tail biting

A poor health status on farm is associated with a higher risk for the occurrence of tail biting. Poor health might act as a stressor, which might lead to tail biting. Signs of poor health, such as lameness, is therefore an indicator to assess the risk for tail biting.

RISK ASSESSMENT



- ✓ Health status

Legal requirements



Council Directive **98/58/EC** states in the Annex, point 4: "Any animal which appears to be ill or injured must be cared for appropriately without delay and, where an animal does not respond to such care, veterinary advice must be obtained as soon as possible. Where necessary sick or injured animals shall be isolated in suitable accommodation with, where appropriate, dry comfortable bedding." {Annex, point 4}

"The owner or keeper of the animals shall maintain a record of any medicinal treatment given and of the number of mortalities found to each inspection." {Annex, point 5}

"Accommodation and fittings for securing animals shall be constructed and maintained so that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury to the animals." {Annex, point 9}



Council Directive **2008/120/EC** states "Floors must be smooth but not slippery so as to prevent injury to the pigs and so designed, constructed and maintained as not to cause injury or suffering to pigs. They must be suitable for the size and weight of the pigs and, if no litter is provided, form a rigid, even and stable surface." {Annex I, Chapter I, point 5}

Note: Listed requirements are not comprehensive. Moreover, there might be stricter national legislation in place.

Inspection method (recommended)

- The farmer records health status of the herd during his/her daily inspections. It should be recorded as part of the documentation of the farmer's risk assessment in relation to tail docking.
- The official inspector verifies records of the farmer by comparing written/digital documentation with interventions taken by farmer.
- Additionally, the inspector checks for lameness in different age groups and different pens/groups.
- The inspector reports findings to farmer and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation on farm corrective actions are taken.



Assess all pigs on individual level. Make all pigs rise if necessary to observe them up and walking (unless there is an obvious reason why a pig should not be made to rise). Gait scoring should be performed on non-slippery floor. For evaluation on herd level, calculate percentage of pigs being lame.

No or low risk to welfare: No or slight lameness

Normal gait (fluid motion, same stride length, full weight bearing on all four legs),

Or

Slight lameness (stiff gait, shortened stride, increased spinal segment movement).



High risk to welfare: Severe lameness

Minimum weight bearing on the affected limb, quick alternation between weight bearing and no weight bearing of affected limb ("tipping"), no weight bearing on the affected limb.



Example videos of lame and not lame pigs (KTBL Leitfaden*)

*Schrader, L.; Schubert, A.; Rauterberg, S.; Czycholl, I.; Leeb, C.; Ziron, M.; Krieter, J.; Schultheiß, U.; Zapf, R. (2020): Tierschutzindikatoren: Leitfaden für die Praxis – Schwein. KTBL (Association for Technology and Structures in Agriculture), D-64289 Darmstadt, 2nd edition.



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