

Fouling



What does fouling indicate?

- Pigs are known as clean animals in the sense that they keep their lying and dunging areas separate.
- When pigs are dirty through manure/faeces on the body, this is due to inappropriate behaviour arising from unsuitable conditions on the farm, such as overcrowding, pen and/or flooring design, thermal stress or bad ventilation.

Risks for tail biting

Fouling is an indicator to assess the risks for tail biting. When pigs are not comfortable, they become frustrated and may begin tail biting.

RISK ASSESSMENT



In case of fouling, it is often a multifactorial problem, and the following key factors should be checked to introduce improvement measures:

- ✓ Thermal comfort and air quality
- ✓ Competition over resources
- ✓ Pen structure and cleanliness

Rank and fouling

- High ranked pigs that are dirty may indicate that ambient temperature is too high.
- Low ranked pigs that are dirty may indicate that there is not enough space allowance.

Legal requirements



Council Directive **2008/120/EC** states: "The accommodation for pigs must be constructed in such a way as to allow the animals to: have access to a lying area physically and thermally comfortable as well as adequately drained and clean which allows all the animals to lie at the same time, .." {Annex I, Chapter I, point 3}

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

Inspection method (recommended)

- The farmer records fouling in the animal unit 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 in the farm.
- Additionally, the inspector checks pigs of different age groups and from different pens/groups for fouling.
- The inspector reports findings to farmer and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation on farm corrective actions are taken.

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Assessment method



Pigs are scored individually according to the proportion of the body side soiled. Randomly select one body side of the pigs and assess fouling. To assess an animal as being soiled, faeces needs to be on the surface (fresh or dry). Discolorations of the skin or bristles are not scored as fouling.

For evaluation on herd level, calculate percentage of pigs being soiled.

"Clean": 0-30% of body surface is soiled



Soiled: Over 30% of body surface is soiled



Source for the assessment method: KTBL Leitfaden and Welfare Quality® sow protocols



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If you have any questions or
suggestions regarding this factsheet
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