

Suitability of materials



When is enrichment material suitable?

- Providing a sufficient quantity of suitable material is necessary to enable pigs to fulfill their innate need for rooting, sniffing, biting and chewing.
- Key qualities of enrichment materials are: safe, edible, chewable/bitable, investigable, and manipulable.
- For proper provision of enrichment materials, these should be of sustainable interest, accessible, sufficient in quantity, and clean.

Risks for tail biting

The provision of sufficient and adequate enrichment material is an essential starting point in preventing tail biting. When pigs have no access to these materials, they get bored and frustrated, which is a major risk for the start of tail biting.

RISK ASSESSMENT



- ✓ Environmental enrichment

Legal requirements



Council Directive **2008/120/EC**:

"When signs of severe fighting appear the causes shall be immediately investigated and appropriate measures taken, such as providing plentiful straw to the animals, if possible, or other materials for investigation. (...)." {Annex I, Chapter II, point D3}

"(...) pigs must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, (...), which does not compromise the health of the animals." {Annex I, Chapter I, point 4}

Note: Listed requirements are not comprehensive.



Moreover, there might be stricter national legislation in place.

Inspection method - recommended

- During daily inspections, the farmer records which enrichment materials are provided in the animal unit. 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 materials present and interventions taken by farmer in the barn.
- Additionally, the inspector checks the available enrichment material in different pens, for pigs of different age groups.
- The inspector reports findings to farmer and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation on farm corrective actions are taken.

Types of enrichment materials (Commission Staff working document)

Optimal	can be used alone because they possess all the necessary characteristics to meet the pigs' needs
Suboptimal	can be used as an essential component of the pig's enrichment but should be used in combination with other materials
Marginal	should not be used as essential or single component of pig enrichment materials

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MATERIALS OFFERED	PROPERTIES THAT PROMOTE PROPER MANIPULATION BEHAVIOUR				HOW TO PRESENT IT?	
	EDIBLE	CHEWABLE	ROOTABLE	DESTRUCTABLE	PROLONGED INTEREST	ACCESSIBLE*
OPTIMAL can be used alone because they possess all the necessary characteristics to meet the pigs' needs						
Straw, hay, silage as bedding	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
Straw, alfalfa, twice a day on the floor (20 gr/pig/day)	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
SUBOPTIMAL can be used as an essential component of the pig's enrichment but should be used in combination with other material						
Foraging area with straw	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😞
Rack with straw, hay or silage	😊	😊	😐	😊	😊	😐
Compressed straw in cylinder	😊	😞	😊	😊	When adjusted to 1.5-2 cm 😊	😞
Soil on the floor	😐	😐	😊	😊	😊	😊
Wood shavings/sawdust	😐	😐	😊	😞	Sawdust 😊	Sawdust 😊
Shredded paper, cardboard	😐	😊	😊	😊	😊	Cardboard 😐
Soft wood, e.g. by chain, or into a holding tube	😐	😊	😐	😐	😞	😐
Cloth: Hessian sack and natural rope	😐	😊	😐	😊	😊	😐
MARGINAL should not be used as essential or single component of pig enrichment materials						
Salt lick	😐	😞	😞	😞	😊	😞
Chain**	😞	😐	😞	😞	😞	😐
Rubber, soft plastic pipes	😞	😊	😞	😐	😞	😐
Ball	😞	😞	😞	😞	😞	😞

* 😊 = Available for all animals in a pen.

** Pig manipulation is more stimulated with anchor-type chains in a branched-design.

Sources:

Pen enrichment, Dutch brochure <https://edepot.wur.nl/465079>

Enrichment for finishing pigs, EUWelNet <http://edepot.wur.nl/475727>

Staff Working Document by the Commission <http://edepot.wur.nl/475711>



EU Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare *Pigs*

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding this factsheet please contact info.pigs@eurcaw.eu