

Body condition



What does body condition indicate?

- The provision of an adequate and balanced diet is a requirement for a good body condition.
- Lean pigs can result from inadequacies in quality and quantity of food.

Risks for tail biting

Inadequacies in quality and quantity of food is implicated in the occurrence of tail biting. Signs of an insufficient diet such as the body condition is therefore an indicator to assess the risk for tail biting.

RISK ASSESSMENT



✓ Diet

Legal requirements



Directive **98/58/EC** states in the Annex: "Animals must be fed a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species and which is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and satisfy their nutritional needs. No animal shall be provided with food or liquid in a manner, nor shall such food or liquid contain any substance, which may cause unnecessary suffering or injury." {Annex, point 14}

"All animals must have access to feed at intervals appropriate to their physiological needs." {Annex, point 15}

"Feeding and watering equipment must be designed, constructed and placed so that contamination of food and water and the harmful effects of competition between the animals are minimised." {Annex, point 17}



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

Inspection method (recommended)

- The farmer records body condition 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 the body condition of pigs of different age groups and from 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.

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Assessment method



Assess each pig on an individual level. The spine, hip and pin bones of the pigs to be scored are visually inspected, considering how visible the bones are.

For evaluation on herd level, calculate percentage of pigs in poor body condition.

No risk to welfare: Good body condition



High risk to welfare: Poor body condition Animals with visible spine, hip and pin bones are in poor condition.



Source for the assessment method: Welfare Quality®



Co-funded by
the European Union



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If you have any questions or
suggestions regarding this factsheet
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