

## Permanent access to water



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### Why is permanent access to water important?

- In addition to the availability of well formulated feed, an adequate supply of fresh water is an important part of a wholesome diet.
- Insufficient uptake of water may lead to reduced feed intake. When nutritional needs are not met, digestive problems may develop.
- Water requirement depends on a variety of factors, including age, production stage, feeding type, temperature etc.
- Insufficient uptake of water may lead to thirst.

### Risks for tail biting

Stress and frustration caused by insufficient access to good quality water may lead to tail biting. The accessibility and usability of drinking water is therefore an indicator to assess the risk for tail biting.

#### RISK ASSESSMENT



- ✓ Diet
- ✓ Competition over resources

### Legal requirements



Council Directive **98/58/EC**:

"Animals must be fed a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species (...) to maintain them in good health and satisfy their nutritional needs. (...)." {Annex, 14}  
 "All animals must have access to a suitable water supply or be able to satisfy their fluid intake needs by other means." {Annex, 16}

"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, 17}



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

"All pigs over two weeks of age must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of fresh water." {Annex I, Chapter I, point 7}

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

*Pigs prefer open water surfaces; consequently, drinker type can help to ensure sufficient water intake.*



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### Inspection method (recommended)

- Farmer records functioning of drinkers and their cleanliness 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.
- Inspector verifies records of the farmer by comparing written/digital documentation with interventions taken by farmer in the farm.
- Additionally, the inspector checks sufficient access and cleanliness of water points, and tests flow rates, in different pens/groups.
- 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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# Scoring method

Ensure that the pigs have continuous access to fresh water. In each pen/group is observed: Number of drinking places and their functioning, and cleanliness of drinkers.

## Number of drinking places and functioning

Check national legislation for regulation on ratio of drinking places to animals. If no national legislation is in place: queuing and/or fighting of pigs at the water source might indicate that too few drinkers are available or water flows rates are poor.

### Score 0: Not queuing



### Score 1: Queuing



## Cleanliness of drinkers

Check whether the drinkers are clean and hygienic. If there are specific concerns about water quality then this should be analysed.

### Score 0: Clean: drinker places are without faeces and without mould



### Score 1: Dirty



Source scoring method: Based on Welfare Quality©



European Reference Centre  
for Animal Welfare *Pigs*

For any questions or  
concerns regarding this  
factsheet please contact  
the Centre