



## What do body lesions indicate?

- Physical dimensions of sows can be both longer and wider than the space allowed within the bars of the crates.
- Space restriction impairs resting posture as well as lying-down and getting-up movements, leading to body lesions.
- Body lesions including shoulder sores can therefore indicate space restriction of farrowing sows.



“An unobstructed area behind the sow or gilt must be available for the ease of natural or assisted farrowing.”  
{Annex I, Chapter II, point B4}



*Note: There might be stricter national legislation in place.*

## Legal requirements



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

“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 (...) which allows all the animals to lie at the same time; rest and get up normally. (...)” {Annex I, Chapter I, point 3}

## Inspection method (recommended)

- Farmer records body lesions, including shoulder sores during his/her daily inspections.
- Inspector checks veterinary records and farrowing sows for body lesions.
- Inspector reports findings to farmer and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation on farm corrective actions are taken.



The following formula can help to assess the space needed by a sow to lie down and get up (“dynamic space allowance”):

**Length =  $38.4 \times \text{body weight [kg]}^{0.33}$ ; width =  $12.6 \times \text{body weight [kg]}^{0.34}$**

*Baxter, M. R. and Schwaller, C.E. (1983): Space requirements for sows in confinement. In: Baxter, S.H., Baxter, M.R., MacCormack, J.A.C. (eds.): Farm Animal Housing and Welfare. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Bosten, The Hague, Dordrecht, Lancaster, 181-195*

**Comfortable space?** To assess if crates are adequate for a given sow, it is helpful to observe sows lying down and standing up. When the sows have comfortable space for both standing and lying down, crate size can be considered adequate.

# Body lesions

# Scoring method

## Shoulder sores

Sows to be scored must be standing up. Both shoulders are examined for shoulder sores/lesions. The side with the more severe lesion is assessed.

**Score 0: No evidence of a shoulder lesion**



**Score 1: Evidence of an old injury (scar tissue formed), or a recent injury which is healing, or reddening of the area without penetration of the tissue**



**Score 2: An open wound/lesion**



Source scoring method shoulder sores:  
Based on Welfare Quality® protocol

## Other body lesions: vulva lesions

Sows to be scored must be standing up and observed from behind. The vulva is examined for evidence of fresh and older injuries.

**Score 0: No damage to the vulva; or small lesions (less than 2 cm), or scar tissue visible**



**Score 1: Any injury fresh (bleeding) or in the process of healing (scab or crust formed), or a deformed vulva**



Source scoring method vulva lesions:  
Summarized Welfare Quality® protocol



European Reference Centre  
for Animal Welfare Pigs

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