

Indicator factsheet Arrival and lairage management

High pitch vocalisation

Arrival, Handling and moving,
Comfort around resting



What does high pitch vocalisation indicate?

- Pigs may have to be pressurised by the staff to move from the truck, for example when floors are slippery or uneven or ramps are steep, which may cause fear and will be expressed through high pitch vocalisation.
- Rough pre-slaughter handling of pigs (e.g. electric prods, sticks or implements with pointed ends) may lead to high pitch vocalisation due to fear or pain.
- Mixing unfamiliar pigs and competition around limited resources can lead to agonistic interactions resulting in high pitch vocalization.



Legal requirements



Council Regulation (EC) **No 1099/2009**: Requirements associated with handling of pigs pre-slaughter:
{Chapter II, Article 3, Point 2.b, c, d, e, f}: Prevention and protection from injury, suffering and pain.
{Annex III, Point 1.8.a, b, d}: avoidable pain and suffering due to rough handling or pressure apply.

Note: Listed requirements are paraphrasing the literal text of the regulations and are not comprehensive. Moreover, there might be stricter national legislation in place. For a more detailed description on the specific requirements, see the ["Review on arrival and lairage management at pig slaughterhouses"](#).

Inspection method (recommended)

- The official inspector assesses high pitch vocalization during unloading from trucks, handling and moving, and in lairage pens.
- If pigs vocalize high pitch, the inspector evaluates the Business Operators' SOPs concerning monitoring and management.
- In case of infringements, the inspector reports findings to Business Operators and/or Animal Welfare Officers.
- In case of infringements, the inspector verifies the SOPs of the slaughterhouse and corrective actions are carried out to ensure the situation complies with legal requirements in the future.





High pitched vocalisations (squeal, scream) will be assessed at group level. The assessor will be equipped with a beeper that will produce a signal, sound or buzz every 20 s. The sampling is carried out three times per minute during 4 minutes per period (total of 12 min).

Sampling can be carried out as A) one-zero sampling or B) instantaneous sampling:

A) For the one-zero sampling the assessor will listen whether any of the observed pigs has vocalized or not vocalized during those 20 s of focal observations.

B) For the instantaneous sampling at the end of the 20 s interval (at the signal), the assessor records whether any of the pigs is vocalizing at the moment. In case, the assessor notes if a single pig is high pitch vocalizing or several pigs.

Estimate the percentage of events with one-zero vocalizations or with instantaneous vocalizations.

Assessments of high pitch vocalisation at arrival, handling and moving, and in different lairage pens



Scan the QR code to hear high pitch vocalisation



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Scan the QR code to hear non high pitch vocalisation



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Source for the assessment method: Welfare Quality® protocol



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