



## What does panting indicate?

- The sow's thermoneutral zone is around 16-20°C. The upper limit is the temperature at which sows increase respiration rate to lose heat.
- Sows cannot sweat, therefore in addition to finding a cool place to lie, they need to lose heat through panting.



## Legal requirements



Requirements associated with climate and resting comfort:

Council Directive (EC) **No 2008/120**:

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.}: lying areas characteristics due to physically and thermally comfort, cleanliness and space allowance.

Council Directive (EC) **No 98/58/EC**:

{Annex, Point 10}: stall climate characteristics must be kept within limits which are not harmful.

*Note: Listed requirements are paraphrasing the literal text of the regulation 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 "[Group housing and mixing of sows](#)".*



## Inspection method (recommended)

- The farmer records **room temperature** and **panting** during his/her daily inspections.
- The official inspector verifies records of the farmer by comparing written/digital documentation with interventions taken by the farmer.
- Additionally, the inspector checks if sows are panting.
- The inspector reports findings to the farmer and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation on farm corrective actions are taken.

### Room temperature

To check if the basic requirements for the sow's thermal comfort are met, assess the room temperature. The thermoneutral zone is around 16-20°C.



Since panting behaviour is best observed in resting animals, wait 10 minutes to allow animals to settle when first entering the room.

Panting is defined as breathing rapidly in short gasps through the mouth. A respiratory rate of more than 28 breaths per minute in sows is considered as panting. While looking at the flanks, the number of breaths per minute is counted.



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Scan the QR code to watch a video of a pig showing panting behaviour.

It is breathing in short gasps, i.e. high frequency, shallow breathing, with mouth open.

Source for the assessment method: Welfare Quality® protocol



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