




What do vulva lesions indicate?

- Hungry sows may bite other sows to gain access to food.
- In individual feeding stalls, dominant sows will bite eating sows from behind to get access to the food.
- In the waiting area of an Electronic Sow Feeder, dominant sows may bite waiting sows to get access to the entrance.
- Thus, vulva lesions indicate a failure to protect feeding and waiting sows from other hungry animals. 

Legal requirements

Council Directive (EC) **No 2008/120**: Requirements associated with competition for resources:

{Article 3, Point 6.}: ensuring that each individual obtains sufficient food through feeding system, even when competitors for the food are present.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 6.}: feeding once a day at least and simultaneously access to food, when not fed ad libitum or by an automatic system.

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)

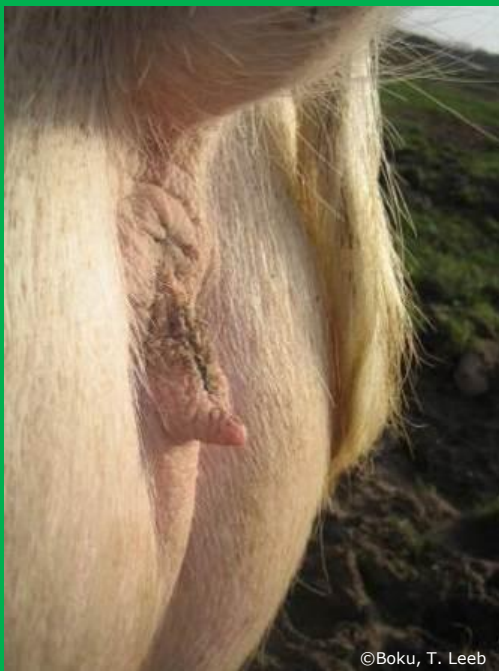
- The farmer records **vulva lesions** during his/her daily inspections.
- The official inspector verifies records of the farmer by comparing written/digital documentation with interventions taken by the farmer.
- Additionally, the inspector checks sows in different groups for vulva lesions.
- The inspector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



All animals to be scored must be standing up and scored individually.

Observed from behind, the vulva is examined for evidence of fresh injuries (detectable because of the presence of blood or red lesions) and older injuries (scar tissue and/or deformed vulva).

No or low risk to welfare: No damage to the vulva, or small lesions (less than 2 cm), or scar tissue visible.



High risk to welfare: Injury larger than 2 cm visible, but in the process of healing (scab or crust formed), or a deformed vulva or any injury larger than 2 cm that is bleeding.



Source for the assessment method: Welfare Quality® protocol



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suggestions regarding this factsheet
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