

Physiological weaknesses



What do physiological weaknesses indicate?

- Physiological weaknesses are not caused by injury or disease.
- It can be observed by several signs, as e.g., emaciation, pale skin, or age of piglets and gestation stage of sows.
- Pigs with physiological weaknesses are unfit for transport.



Legal requirements



Council Regulation (EC) **1/2005**: Requirements associated with physiological weaknesses:

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 1.}: only fit animals shall be transported.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 2.c}: conditions for transportation of pregnant animals.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 2.d}: conditions for transportation of new-born mammals.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 2.e}: conditions for transportation of pigs less than three weeks.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 5.}: use of sedatives.

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 "[Fitness for Transport](#)".

Inspection method (recommended)

- In case the planned journey is less than 8h, farmer and livestock driver have to assess fitness for transport before and during loading.
- In case the journey is more than 8 h, an official inspector has to be present at loading to assess fitness for transport of pigs.
- In either case, pigs will be assessed for signs of **physiological weaknesses**.
- The inspector reports findings to the farmer and/or livestock driver, and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation during loading and transport corrective actions are taken to ensure the situation complies with legal requirements in the future.




Animal-based indicators

So far evidence-based animal-based indicators are missing to assess physiological weaknesses. Some characteristics of **unfit animals** in terms of physiological weaknesses can be recognised visually, whereas others, such as genetically determined stress susceptibility is more difficult or impossible to verify by visual inspection. Other examples are age of piglets and stage of gestation of sows, which can be assessed by farm records.

See the table on the next page for signs of physiological weaknesses.



In the following table, signs of physiological weaknesses are listed, which inspectors should focus on when checking the fitness for transport.

	Indicator and description	Assessment
 <p>©FLI, S. Rauterberg</p>	<p>Anaemia and emaciation:</p> <p>Pigs having pale skins and breathing quickly (anaemia: low red cell count in blood, low hemoglobin levels) or having a very low body condition (emaciation).</p>	<p>Visually</p>
 <p>©FLI, J. Helmerichs</p>	<p>Gestation stage of sows:</p> <p>Pregnant females for whom 90% or more of the expected gestation period has already passed.</p> <p>Females who have given birth in the previous week.</p>	<p>Farm records</p>
 <p>©FLI, A. Schubert</p>	<p>Age of piglets:</p> <p>New-born mammals in which the navel has not completely healed.</p> <p>Pigs less than three weeks, unless they are transported less than 100 km.</p>	<p>Visually</p> <p>Farm records</p>



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