



What do shoulder sores indicate?

- 'Shoulder sores' is the popular term used to describe decubital shoulder ulcers in sows.
- Shoulder sores occur in particular in sows housed in farrowing crates.
- They are caused by pressure inflicted by the flooring and can be observed in the weeks after farrowing.
- The lesions vary from superficial to deep ulcers involving subcutaneous layers or even bone tissue.
- Open shoulder sores are a clinical sign of sows being unfit for transport.



{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 4.}: separation, veterinary treatment and/or killing of animals falling ill or being injured during transport.

{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](#)".

Legal requirements



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

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

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 2.b}: unfit animals present severe open wounds, or prolapse.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.a}: no additional suffering for slightly injured or ill animals.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.b}: transportation as part of a research programme.

{Annex I, Chapter I, Point 3.c}: transportation under veterinary supervision for treatment or diagnosis.

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 inspector additionally has to be present at loading to assess fitness for transport of pigs.
- In any case, pigs will be assessed for **shoulder sores**.
- 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.

Make sure that all sows to be scored are standing up. Stand less than 1 meter away from the observed sow. To assess shoulder sores both shoulders should be visually examined.

The assessor must consider the potential of the wounds to cause pain and blood loss during transport and possible aggravation. To make a decision she or he will have to consider:

- Whether the wound is large, extensive or/and severe
- Whether the wounds are multiple
- Whether the wound is healed or not

In case the wound is serious, open or bleeding, the animal is unfit for transport.

Score

Fit for transport?

Score 0

No evidence of a shoulder lesion



YES

Score 1

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



YES,

But there should not be a risk for aggravation or major haemorrhage

Score 2

An open wound/lesion



NO

Adapted from Welfare Quality® Protocol and Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Pigs



EU Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare *Pigs*

For any questions or suggestions regarding this factsheet please contact info.pigs@eurcaw.eu