

decision-making process, and to facilitate harmonization between member states, the subgroup suggests a common recommendation for a threshold of tail biting damage (in docked pigs) to guide producers towards making the ethical and legally required decision to move towards rearing pigs with intact tails. A separate threshold to assess the success of rearing (non-docked) pigs without tail biting damage is further recommended to guide producers in their process towards totally stopping tail docking.

To achieve an informed recommendation the subgroup proposes an expert consultation to assess and compare the pain caused by docking and tail biting, as well their consequences for the overall health and welfare of pigs in a commercial setting. The main benefit of preventing tail biting to avoid routine docking of tails is that to achieve this situation also results in an improvement in overall welfare status. However, it cannot be ignored that both tail docking and tail biting cause acute and chronic pain, and that there is currently no fully effective, feasible way of alleviating this pain on-farm.

For assessing the threshold, slaughterhouse data and on-farm data can complement each other.

4. Regarding practical animal welfare indicators in slaughterhouse

The proposal above for recording standardised welfare indicators of intact tails and tail biting injuries in slaughterhouses should be further developed. The subgroup recommends that the Commission services consider how this could be achieved, for example EURCAW could be responsible for the pilot studies related to the implementation of this scoring system of tail damage. They could also support the EU food safety risk assessment authority EFSA in an expert elicitation related to setting common thresholds.

The subgroup recommends the commission services to consider updating existing legislation or applying new requirements such as Art 21 (8) of Regulation 2017/625. This would be needed in order to direct Member States to apply practical animal welfare indicators in slaughterhouse to improve the performance of official controls. In addition costs and other aspects of implementing such scoring methods would need to be assessed and further considered.