

Training guide EURCAW-Pigs: suggestions for national training in EU Member States

EURCAW-Pigs provides a training course example as a sort of standard for each of the eight welfare focus topics in our Work Programme 2021-2022. The diversity of the different EU Member states (MS) on how training is organized in general has to be taken into account: Hence, 'standards' for training will not fit all national needs, but need to be adjusted to the different contexts in the MS.

Subject: Alternatives sow stalls from weaning until 4 weeks after service

Introduction

A widespread practice - which is also in accordance with current EU legislation - is to house sows in stalls from weaning and until approximately 4 weeks after service.

Stall housing and service management are conducted to provide protectable working environment for humans, to avoid sow being injured due to agonistic and sexual interactions, and to ensure embryo implantation after insemination. However, dry and early pregnant sows have the same behavioural needs (e.g. foraging, comfortable lying etc) as sows in other pregnancy stages that are free ranged, but are restricted to fulfil these needs due to crating. New EU regulations focus on 'ending the cage age' for what reason alternatives sow stalls are needed - including the period from weaning until 4 weeks after service which this training guide has in focus.

This training program will focus on alternative group housing and management strategies. The program can be regarded as an 'add-on' to the existing training program "[Group housing and mixing of sows](#)" as most of that programs' points are just as relevant for the service period.

Learning goals

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the relevant national and EU-legislation.
- Knowledge about the behavioural and physiological aspects of the weaning, oestrus and embryo implantation part of the service period - and how stall and group housing effects these aspects.
- Knowledge about alternative group housing systems and management strategies for improvement of animal welfare in the service period.

Programme and suggested training material for a training course

Programme	Link to knowledge, ideas for materials you can use in the course
<p>9:00-9:30 Welcome</p> <p>Participants present themselves.</p> <p>Presentation of learning goals by course leader</p> <p>9:30-10:30 Welfare challenges as experienced by the participants</p> <p>Group discussions and course coordinator facilitated plenum follow up on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) existing housing, 2) management systems as well as 3) animal welfare challenges in the service period as experienced by the participants. 	
<p>10:30-11:00 Coffee break</p>	
<p>11.00-12.30 Legislation, housing and management systems in the service period</p> <p>Presentations by course coordinator and/or invited speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing EU and national legislation • EU focus on ‘end of cage-age’ • Physiological and behavioural aspects for periods considered as particularly critical from weaning until four weeks after service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early and abrupt weaning ○ Oestrus (4-7 weeks after weaning) ○ Embryo implantation (1-19 weeks after insemination.) (extracts from EURCAW-review) <p><i>Clarifying questions and discussion.</i></p>	<p>Link to “Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs” - <i>Article 3</i></p> <p>Link to EURCAW-Pigs “Review on alternatives to stalls for sows after weaning and in early pregnancy”</p> <p>Link to EURCAW-Pigs dossier “Group housing and mixing of sows”, including reviews and indicator factsheets</p> <p>Link to EURCAW-pigs website</p>
<p>12:30-14:00 Lunch</p>	

<p>14:00-15:30 Alternatives to stall housing</p> <p>Group discussions and ranking of examples of group-housings for dry and early pregnant sows (extracts from EURCAW-Pigs review and potential own examples) as regards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space allowance • Flooring • Environmental enrichment • Reproductive management <p><i>Plenum presentations and discussions</i></p>	<p>Link to EURCAW-Pigs “Review on alternatives to stalls for sows after weaning and in early pregnancy”</p>
<p>15:30-15:45 Coffee break</p>	
<p>15:45-16:30 Take-home-messages and ‘good bye’</p> <p>Participants 2-by-2 discuss take-home messages and present these in plenum.</p> <p>Course wrap up and evaluation</p>	