

## Pig fouling



### What does fouling indicate?

- Pigs are known as clean animals in the sense that they keep their lying and dunging areas separate.
- Pigs use wallowing for evaporative cooling at high temperatures
- When pigs are dirty through manure/faeces on the body, this is due to inappropriate behaviour arising from unsuitable conditions on the farm, such as thermal stress, bad ventilation, overcrowding or pen and/or flooring design.
- In pens with partly solid floor or bedding in the lying area heat stress will already occur at lower temperatures

### Legal requirements



Council Directive **2008/120/EC**: General conditions {Annex I, Chapter I, Article 3}: The lying area must physically and thermally be comfortable

Directive **98/58/EC** Annex: Buildings and accommodation {Article 10}: Temperature, relative air humidity [...] must be kept within limits which are not harmful to the animals

*Note: Listed requirements are not comprehensive. Moreover, there might be stricter national legislation in place.*

### Fouling as adaptation and indicator

Fouling is an indicator for heat stress. When pigs are not within their thermoneutral zone (TNZ), they will look for cooler place and become dirty.

However, fouling is often a multifactorial problem, and the following key factors should be checked to introduce improvement measures:

- ✓ Thermal comfort and air quality
- ✓ Competition over resources
- ✓ Pen/floor structure and cleanliness (slots, slope)

#### Rank and fouling

- High ranked pigs that are dirty may indicate that ambient temperature is too high.
- Low ranked pigs that are dirty may indicate that there is a lack of space.

### Inspection method (recommended)

- The farmer records fouling in the animal unit during daily inspections, with emphasis on the heavier pigs and pigs with a high feed intake. Records should be made available on request of the official inspector.
- The inspector checks pigs of different age groups and from different pens/groups for fouling.
- The onspector reports findings to farmer and in case of discrepancies between legal requirements and situation on farm corrective actions are taken.

*The method is valid for indoor kept pigs only and not when having access to pasture with the possibility of wallowing.*



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## Assessment method



Pigs are assessed individually according to the proportion of the body side soiled. Randomly select one body side of the pigs and assess fouling. To assess an animal as being soiled, faeces needs to be on the surface (fresh or dry). Discolorations of the skin or bristles are not scored as fouling.

For evaluation at farm level: calculate percentage of pigs being soiled.

**"Clean": 0-30% of body surface is soiled**



**Soiled: Over 30% of body surface is soiled**



Source for the assessment method: KTBL Leitfaden and Welfare Quality® sow protocols



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