

10-point plan for handling of tail biting

Tail biting is a multifactorial problem, and often several causes trigger the problem. The causes are often found in the pigs' immediate environment.

Prevention:

1. Avoid overcrowding.
2. Keep a log of the problem. Note season and climate changes, changes in diets and disease problems.
3. Design the pen according to the needs of the pigs in terms of dunging, activity, laying areas and sufficient feeding/drinking points.
4. Maintain an optimum climate in the pens, including appropriate temperature and good air quality. Avoid draughts.
5. Provide access to plenty of resources for the pigs including feed, water, rooting and enrichment materials.
6. Minimise mixing of pigs.
7. Consider other causes such as static electricity, leakage current, or inappropriate levels of noise in the facility.

Acute treatment:

8. Isolate the tail-biting pig and move it to a separate pen. Often, the pigs that bite tails are the small and restless pigs.
9. Move tail-bitten pigs to a hospital pen and treat them. Destroy pigs with paralysed hindquarters immediately. Destroy pigs that after three days in the hospital pen are still not improving, suffer from arthritis or other diseases.
10. Supply sufficient rooting and enrichment materials for a period of time to keep the pigs occupied.



Correct temperature and humidity in the facility? Check the management of the ventilation system.

Remember:
Desired temperature in facility +
desired humidity = / < 90



Increase the supply of rooting and enrichment materials or provide a different type during outbreaks of tail biting.



Check the output of water valves with a watch and a measuring cup.

Output:

Weaners: 0.5-0.8 L/min.

Finishers: 0,8-1,2 L/min.

For more information: Guidelines on tail biting in Danish are available at www.infosvin.dk - Fact sheets: "tail bites - Suitable for transport or not" are available at www.infosvin.dk