

Tail bites – why is it important at the moment?

New rules have been made, to reduce tail docking of piglets.

All tail bites, if they need treatment or not, has to be registered, either by a picture or in a document.

To avoid tail bite, and side effects such as bad legs or too deep infections in the tail, we have to look for early signs, such as hanging tails. If we take action by that time, tail bite can be prevented up to a week before they occur.

Also, every farm needs to make a risk assessment, checking:

- Access to toys: how interesting is the material? Straw is best, but if signs of tail bite occurs, they will need a new and interesting material. How many pigs have access to the toys? Central in the pen is better than in corners, where only few pigs can reach it.
- Food and water: check availability and quality. Regulate feed automates and ensure adequate trough space and water pressure.
- Climate: not too cold, not too warm – follow the guidelines, but do not forget to look at the pigs!
- Space: too little space makes the pigs frustrated, because it limits their motion, and make feed and water harder to reach.
- Disease: pain causes frustration. Disease makes the pigs grow slower, and it can be tough for these pigs to fight for food and water with bigger pigs.