

## Lack of compliance with the Pigs Directive continues: Urgent need for change

Since 2003, it has been a legal requirement to provide pigs with enrichment materials. The same legislation also prohibits routine tail-docking (Council Directive 2008/120/EC, consolidating earlier legislation).

For some years reports by the European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office and animal welfare organisations have revealed a failure by many Member States to properly enforce this legislation. This is unacceptable given that it is eleven years since this legislation came into force. Yet as shown in this document, publications and websites produced by the pig sector show that many pigs continue to be kept without effective manipulable materials and that many farmers continue to tail dock without, as required by the Directive, first trying to prevent tail biting by changing inadequate environmental conditions and management systems.

The requirements of Council Directive 2008/120/EC include:

- pigs must be given enrichment materials, specifically that they 'must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such...' (Paragraph 4 of Chapter I of Annex I).
- Prohibition on routine tail-docking. The Directive provides that: 'Before carrying out [tail-docking], other measures shall be taken to prevent tail biting ..., taking into account environment and stocking densities. For this reason inadequate environmental conditions or management systems must be changed' (Paragraph 8 of Chapter I of Annex I).

Farmers may use a material other than one of those specified in paragraph 4 but, if they do, the material provided must be as effective as those listed in fulfilling the objective of the legislation which is that pigs must be able to engage in 'proper investigation and manipulation activities'. Enrichment materials should be complex, changeable and destructible (EFSA, 2007 a). Objects such as chains, chewing sticks and balls are not effective enrichment materials (EFSA, 2007 b).

In 2009, the European Commission stated that: 'Since indestructible objects such as chains or tyres are not sufficient to provide for the manipulatory need of pigs, they may be used as supplement to destructible and rooting materials but not as a substitute for them' (European Commission, 2009).

Scientific research helps to identify the factors that constitute 'inadequate environmental conditions or management systems' as it highlights the factors that are most likely to cause tail biting. EFSA has concluded that 'the largest risk for being tail bitten is the lack of appropriate enrichment' (EFSA, 2007 b).



Small piglets on slats without visible enrichment. From Spanish Ministry of Agriculture website, accessed 27.06.14. [www.magrama.gob.es/es/ministerio/servicios/informacion/plataforma-de-conocimiento-para-el-medio-rural-y-pesquero/observatorio-de-tecnologias-probadas/sistemas-produt-animal/ganado-porcino.aspx#para4](http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/ministerio/servicios/informacion/plataforma-de-conocimiento-para-el-medio-rural-y-pesquero/observatorio-de-tecnologias-probadas/sistemas-produt-animal/ganado-porcino.aspx#para4)

EFSA adds that the principal causal factors of tail biting are 'the absence of straw, the presence of slatted floors and a barren environment. Absence of straw or a particulate, rootable substrate is an important hazard for tail biting' (EFSA, 2007 b).

The Directive does not prohibit all tail docking. It does, however, provide that before a farmer can lawfully tail dock he must genuinely have first tried to prevent tail biting by changing 'inadequate environmental conditions or management systems'.

If pigs are kept in barren conditions with no effective enrichment materials, the farmer has failed to change 'inadequate environmental conditions'.

A 2011 Technical Report prepared for the European Food Safety Authority concluded that lack of enrichment is a 'main reason' for tail biting and tail biting 'may be treated with enhanced enrichment (e.g. ample long straw provided fresh twice daily) throughout the pig's life.'

The Report also states that 'an intact curly tail may well be the single most important animal-based welfare indicator for weaned, growing and finishing pigs ... In addition, it stands for high-quality management and respect for the integrity of the pig' (Spoolder et al, 2011).

## FRANCE



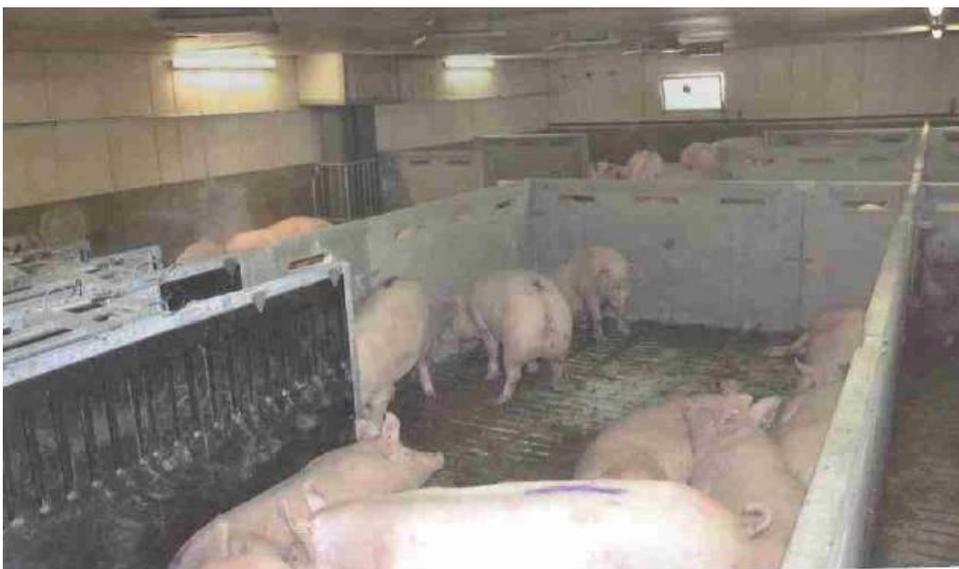
Tail docked young pigs in barren and dirty pen. *PORC magazine*, May 2014, p34. EFSA states that the principal causal factors of tail biting are 'the absence of straw, the presence of slatted floors and a barren environment. Absence of straw or a particulate, rootable substrate is an important hazard for tail biting' (EFSA, 2007 b).



Tail docked pigs in barren pens. *PORC magazine*, October 2013, p33



Tail docked pigs in pen without enrichment. *Pig Progress* (featuring French farm), June 2014, p18-19

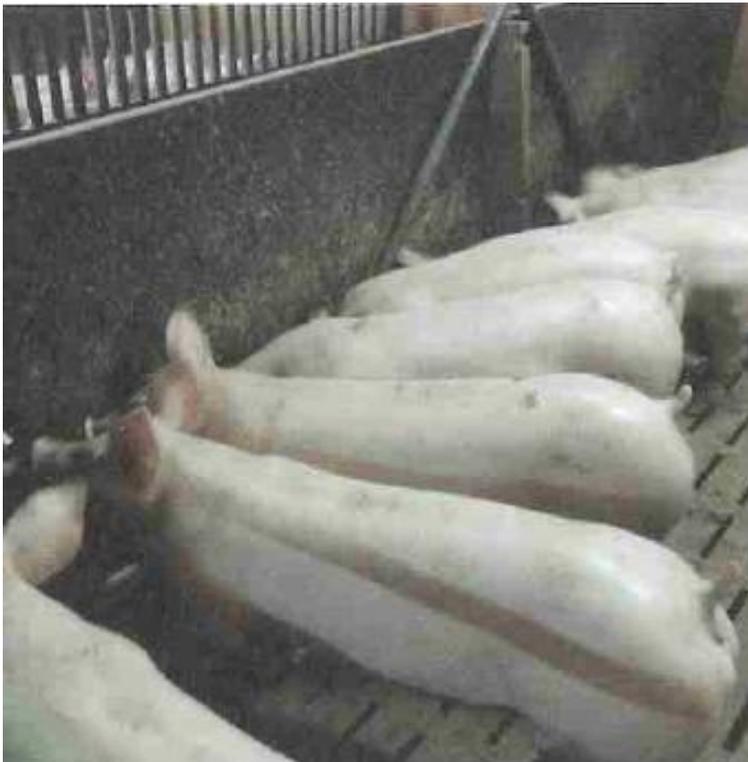


Tail docked sows in barren conditions. *PORC magazine*, February 2014, p38



Tail docked pigs in barren pen. *PORC magazine*, December 2013, p34

France



Heavily tail docked pigs in barren housing. *Porc magazine*, June 2013, p64



Tail docked young pigs. *Chambre d'agriculture de Bretagne* publication. November 2013, p32



Pigs on barren slats. They have a number of scratches from fighting or biting. *Chambre d'agriculture de Bretagne* publication. November 2013, cover page



Tail docked pigs in barren pens. *PORC magazine*, September 2013, p46



Tail docked young pigs. There is an attempt at enrichment, but a single piece of wood on a chain shared by 14 animals does not enable pigs to engage in 'proper investigation and manipulation activities' and so does not meet the Directive's requirement. *PORC magazine*, September 2013, p95



Tail docked pigs in barren pens. *PORC magazine*, June 2013, p58 and p61

## IRELAND



Barren conditions and pig with bite marks. Source: 'Pig contract rearing - the farmer's perspective'. *Irish Farmers Journal*, 19.6.2014. [www.farmersjournal.ie/pig-contract-rearing-the-farmers-perspective-159240/](http://www.farmersjournal.ie/pig-contract-rearing-the-farmers-perspective-159240/)



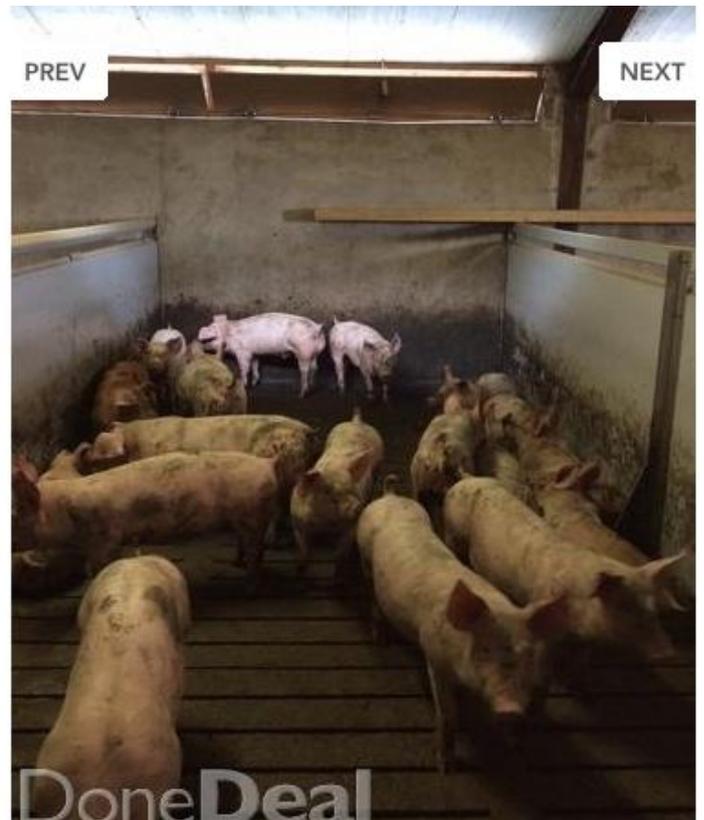
Barren pens. Source: 'Piggy bank – investing in the future of the Irish pig industry'. *Irish Farmers Journal*, 27,2,14. [www.farmersjournal.ie/piggy-bank-investing-in-the-future-of-the-irish-pig-industry-155063/](http://www.farmersjournal.ie/piggy-bank-investing-in-the-future-of-the-irish-pig-industry-155063/)

Ireland



Barren pens and tail docked pigs. Source: 'Piggy bank – investing in the future of the Irish pig industry'. *Irish Farmers Journal*, 27,2,14. [www.farmersjournal.ie/piggy-bank-investing-in-the-future-of-the-irish-pig-industry-155063/](http://www.farmersjournal.ie/piggy-bank-investing-in-the-future-of-the-irish-pig-industry-155063/)

The images below are from the website 'Done deal' advertising pigs for sale. They show barren, dirty conditions with tail docked pigs. These images are from May and June 2014.





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## ITALY



Tail docked pigs in barren pens. *Rivista di Suinicoltura*, Feb 2013



Tail docked pigs in barren conditions. From article about pig farmers' protest, 04.12.13  
[www.ilsole24ore.com/art/impresa-e-territori/2013-12-04/la-filiera-suinicola-dop-rischio-default-diecimila-allevatori-piazza-reggio-emilia-121414.shtml?uuid=ABC5Vph](http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/impresa-e-territori/2013-12-04/la-filiera-suinicola-dop-rischio-default-diecimila-allevatori-piazza-reggio-emilia-121414.shtml?uuid=ABC5Vph)

Italy



Tail docked pigs in completely barren environment. From programme advertising pig production conference on 16.04.14

dedicata alla suinicoltura  
ata da UNAPROS e CRPA



Tail docked pigs with no enrichment in the pen. Image is from an advertisement from a feed company on [www.ebay.it](http://www.ebay.it), accessed 27.06.2014. <http://annunci.ebay.it/annunci/altri-animati/udine-annunci-fagagna/vendita-suini/53233294>

Italy



Barren conditions, tail docked piglets. From advertisement by pig production company on [www.ebay.it](http://www.ebay.it), accessed 27.06.2014. <http://annunci.ebay.it/annunci/altri-animale/caltanissetta-annunci-caltanissetta/suini-maiali-da-selezione/62643231>



These piglets have been given a football as an attempt at enrichment. However, objects such as chains, chewing sticks and balls are not effective enrichment materials (EFSA, 2007 b). They do not enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, as required by the Directive. The fact that the pigs are heavily tail docked may demonstrate that the football alone is insufficient enrichment for young and curious piglets. *Rivista di Suinicoltura*, Feb 2013

## NETHERLANDS



Above and left: Fattening pigs, tail docked and without enrichment. [www.boerderij.nl](http://www.boerderij.nl), 03.03.14

[www.boerderij.nl/Varkenshouderij/Foto-Video/2014/3/Opfokstal-met-luchtconditionering-1467888W/](http://www.boerderij.nl/Varkenshouderij/Foto-Video/2014/3/Opfokstal-met-luchtconditionering-1467888W/)



Tail docked sows in barren conditions. 06/12/13.

[www.boerderij.nl/Varkenshouderij/Foto-Video/2013/12/Zeugenstal-met-warmteterugwinning-uit-luchtwater-1420758W/](http://www.boerderij.nl/Varkenshouderij/Foto-Video/2013/12/Zeugenstal-met-warmteterugwinning-uit-luchtwater-1420758W/)

Netherlands



Above: Tail docked pigs in barren pens. [www.boerderij.nl](http://www.boerderij.nl), 31.01.2014

Below, image no.s 1 and 2: Tail docked pigs in barren pens. [www.boerderij.nl](http://www.boerderij.nl), 09.01.2014.



Left: Tail docked pigs and barren conditions. 16.04.13. [www.boerderij.nl/Varkenshouderij/Foto-Video/2013/4/Aanloopperikelen-te-boven-1231219W/](http://www.boerderij.nl/Varkenshouderij/Foto-Video/2013/4/Aanloopperikelen-te-boven-1231219W/),

## POLAND

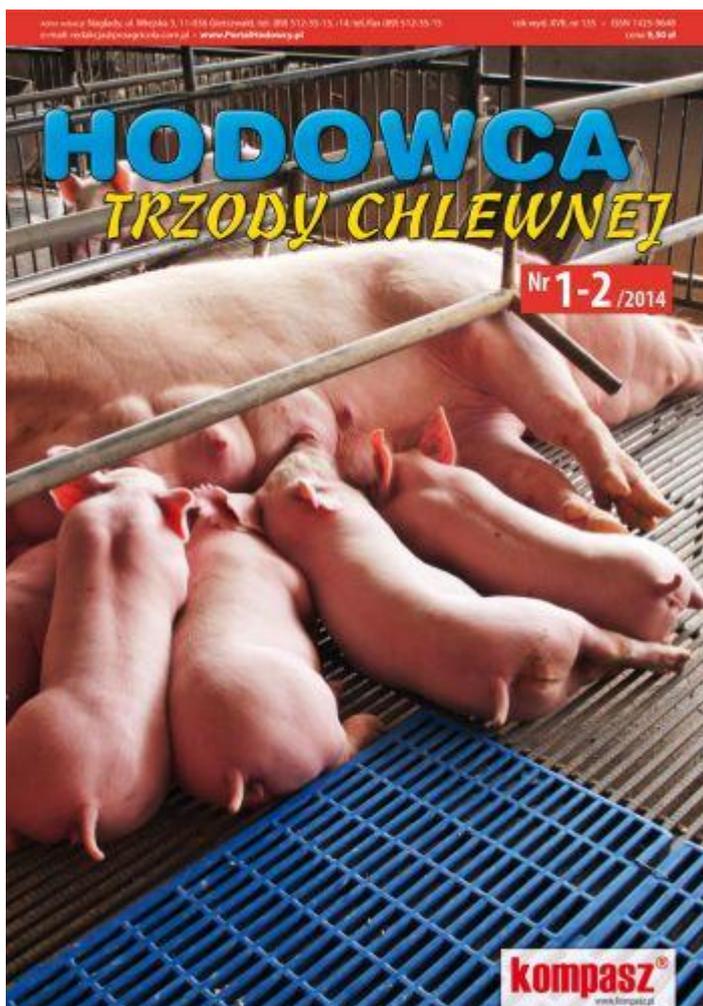


Tail docked pigs in barren and rather dirty conditions. Source: 'Fight with flies - tilting against windmills?' [www.farmer.pl](http://www.farmer.pl), 07.05.2014. [www.farmer.pl/produkcja-zwierzeca/trzoda-chlewna/walka-z-muchami-walka-z-wiatrakami,50771.html](http://www.farmer.pl/produkcja-zwierzeca/trzoda-chlewna/walka-z-muchami-walka-z-wiatrakami,50771.html)



Tail docked pigs. *Top Pigs*, 08.05.2014. <http://www.topagrar.pl/articles/top-swinie/stabilizacja-cen/>

Poland



Sow and tail-docked piglets in barren conditions.

*Hodowca trzody chlewnej (Pig Breeder)*, front cover. 1-2, 2014



Sow and tail docked piglets in barren conditions. From article on chemical castration. [www.farmer.pl](http://www.farmer.pl), 01.04.2014. [www.farmer.pl/produkcja-zwierzecz/trzoda-chlewna/kastracja-chemiczna-alternatywa-czy-przymus,50102.html](http://www.farmer.pl/produkcja-zwierzecz/trzoda-chlewna/kastracja-chemiczna-alternatywa-czy-przymus,50102.html)

Poland



Sow and tail docked piglets in barren and dirty conditions. Source: 'The simplest is sometimes the best'. [www.farmer.pl](http://www.farmer.pl), 15.04.2014. [www.farmer.pl/produkcja-zwierzeca/trzoda-chlewna/najprostsze-czasem-znaczy-najlepsze,50374.html](http://www.farmer.pl/produkcja-zwierzeca/trzoda-chlewna/najprostsze-czasem-znaczy-najlepsze,50374.html)



No enrichment. Tails not visible. Source: [www.portalspozywczy.pl](http://www.portalspozywczy.pl). 03.4.2014 [www.portalspozywczy.pl/en/meat-and-poultry/russia-introduces-embargo-on-polish-pork-products,14475.html](http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/en/meat-and-poultry/russia-introduces-embargo-on-polish-pork-products,14475.html)

## SPAIN



Tail docked and in barren conditions.

'Sant Marti farm, a farm with 20 years of history and example of transformation in search of efficiency'. [www.revista.com](http://www.revista.com), 16.03.2014

<http://revistaavances.com/granja-sant-marti-una-granja-con-20-anos-de-historia-y-ejemplo-de-transformacion-en-busca-de-la-eficiencia/>



Tail docked pigs in barren pen. 'Spain's Pig Farmers Raise Stink Over Subsidy Cuts', *Wall Street Journal*, 18.04.2014

Spain



Heavily tail docked piglet. From article on respiratory illness. *Albóitar* no. 174, 2014, p10



Tail docked young pigs. No enrichment visible. From article on veterinary medicine and the law. *Albóitar* no. 172, 2014



Tail docked pigs in barren conditions. From article on disease, accessed 27.06.14.  
<http://razasporcinas.com/la-enfermedad-de-los-edemas-en-lechones-destetados-y-cerdos-adultos/>



Very heavily tail docked sows without environmental enrichment. From article on genetics, accessed 27.06.2014. <http://razasporcinas.com/base-animal-cerdos-y-cerdas-de-las-explotaciones-porcinas-intensivas/>



Tail docked young pigs. Source: article on design of pig breeding units, accessed 27.06.14. There is what looks like a chain hanging down but EFSA has stressed that indestructible objects such as chains or tyres are not sufficient to provide for the manipulatory need of pigs. The European Commission has stated that they may be used as a supplement to destructible and rooting materials but not as a substitute for them (European Commission, 2009). <http://razasporcinas.com/instalaciones-para-cria-de-cerdos-diseno-y-planificacion-de-granjas-porcinas/>

UK



From webpage 'Company profile' of UK pig production company APMC. The piglets have been very heavily tail-docked.



The photo showed tail docked finishing pigs in barren and dirty conditions, although the housing was said to be 'recently refurbished'. Photo published April 2014.



Young tail-docked piglets. *Pig Progress*, no 1, 27.01.14, p21. There is possibly a chain hanging down the wall but EFSA has stressed that indestructible objects such as chains or tyres are not sufficient to provide for the manipulatory need of pigs.

**CENSORED**

**PHOTO CENSORED BY UK PIG INDUSTRY WHO DO NOT WANT US TO SHOW THAT A PROPORTION OF UK PIG FARMERS DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE LAW. SOLICITORS ACTING FOR THE OWNERS OF PIG WORLD WROTE TO US DEMANDING THAT WE WITHDRAW THE PICTURE.**

The image showed tail docked piglets in barren and dirty housing. EFSA states that the principal causal factors of tail biting are 'the absence of straw, the presence of slatted floors and a barren environment. Absence of straw or a particulate, rootable substrate is an important hazard for tail biting' (EFSA, 2007 b). Photo published March 2014.

**CENSORED**

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Photo showed no visible attempt at enrichment and pigs were tail docked. Photo published March 2014.

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Photo showed new-born piglets who had been heavily tail docked. Photo published April 2014.

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Photo showed tail docked piglets in barren conditions. Photo published September 2013.

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Photo showed tail docked piglets in fattening unit. There appeared to be chains (or something similar) in the unit but these do not constitute sufficient enrichment on their own. Photo published April 2014.



Farmers Weekly 'Farmer of the Year', 2013. Photos from Farmers Weekly website.

A minimal attempt at enrichment with a block of wood on a chain. In our view adding a piece of wood to a chain does not convert it into a material that enables 'proper investigation and manipulation activities'. We recognise that wood is one of the materials referred to in the Directive. However, from the photographs it appears that a very large number of pigs have to share the one piece of wood. This does not comply with the Directive's requirement that pigs must have access to 'a sufficient quantity' of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities. The pigs are heavily tail docked.

# CENSORED

**PHOTO CENSORED BY UK PIG INDUSTRY WHO DO NOT WANT US TO SHOW THAT A PROPORTION OF UK PIG FARMERS DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE LAW. SOLICITORS ACTING FOR THE OWNERS OF PIG WORLD WROTE TO US DEMANDING THAT WE WITHDRAW THE PICTURE.**

The photo showed upgraded housing which was completely barren, despite the Directive's requirement for 'permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such...' (Directive 2008/120/EC, Paragraph 4 of Chapter I of Annex I). The pigs were also tail docked, although routine tail docking is prohibited by the Directive, which provides that: 'Before carrying out [tail docking], other measures shall be taken to prevent tail biting ..., taking into account environment and stocking densities. For this reason inadequate environmental conditions or management systems must be changed' (Paragraph 8 of Chapter I of Annex I). The photo was published in March 2014.

## References

EFSA, 2007 a. Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission on Animal health and welfare in fattening pigs in relation to housing and husbandry. *The EFSA Journal* 564, 1-14

EFSA, 2007 b. Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from Commission on the risks associated with tail biting in pigs and possible means to reduce the need for tail docking considering the different housing and husbandry systems. *The EFSA Journal* 611, 1-13

European Commission, 2009. Answer to a written question – welfare of pigs - E-5360/09EN

Spoolder H, Bracke M, Mueller-Graf C, Edwards S, 2011. Technical report submitted to EFSA. Report 2: Preparatory work for the future development of animal based measures for assessing the welfare of weaned, growing and fattening pigs including aspects related to space allowance, floor types, tail biting and need for tail docking.

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