

WORK PLAN TO REDUCE ROUTINE TAIL-DOCKING OF PIGS IN MEMBER STATES

Tail-biting in pigs is considered an abnormal behaviour due to pigs feeling stressed or discomfort. In cases where it appears, pigs can be tail-docked. But as this practice is in itself painful for the pigs and it does not remove the causes that trigger biting, farmers should take other measures to prevent tail-biting before carrying out this procedure. Pigs should not be routinely docked.

Objective

To improve the application of Council Directives 2008/120/EC and 98/58/EC in a two year period, in particular:

- to improve pig farm management measures and supply of enrichment materials, and
- to reduce routine tail-docking of pigs.

The plan includes all Member States but will focus on main EU pig producing countries and commercial farms.

Key points

- Main relevant stakeholders: activities (e.g. questionnaires, visits, information materials, meetings) will engage competent authorities, industry and private veterinarians.
- Creation of a multidisciplinary change team: it will focus on improving processes at farm level. Members with relevant practical expertise, credibility and direct involvement in the processes will help Member States in assessing risks and improve farm management conditions.
- Targeted Commission audits: to main pig producing Member States in order to assess implementation of Directive 2008/120/EC, 98/58/EC using the Commission Recommendation and the Commission Staff Working Document as audit standard.
- Request of action plans to Member States: progress will be measured with indicators.
- Three stages: to test effectiveness and progress.
- High level involvement: Chief Veterinary Officers will get reports on progress.

Milestones

May – Nov 2017	Commission targeted audits
Jun – Dec 2017	Creation of TAILS- a team of experts to assist in pig farm management
October 2017	1st assessment of implementation
November 2017	National authorities to present "state of play" and any initiatives to implement Recommendation
January 2018	Member State Action Plans to improve implementation of Directives 2008/120/EC and 98/58/EC
July 2018	2nd assessment of implementation
Nov 18- Feb 19	Visits and reports- TAILS group
December 2018	Discussion in the Council
January-June 2019	Commission audits on MS Action Plans
July 2019	Presentation outcome of project