



# Analysis of tail biting episodes in a commercial swine farm

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## BACKGROUND & OBJETIVES

Tail biting is a redirected behavior that usually happens in intensive pig farms causing economic losses. The origin of this conduct is multifactorial, but it is considered an indicator of lack of welfare in farms. Tail biting between pigs occurs because of an accumulation of risk factors, such as lack of Ambiental enrichment materials, bad environment, frustration or rivalry. The aim of this project was to evaluate the presence of tail biting conducts in an intensive farm. Also its possible causes and solutions and recommendations

## METHODOLOGY

The study was made in an intensive farm in Segovia. This farm hosts 2500 pigs during periods of 3 months. The pigs come as **feeders** (20kg) and leave for slaughter as **finishers** (<100kg). The study is based on a survey that contained questions about the main **risk factors** which are related to tail biting (enrichment materials, light, temperature and air comfort, welfare, rivalry, feed strategy and distribution and hygiene of the barns), all the information was filled by the owner of the farm.

## RESULTS



### TAIL BITING INCIDENCE



UE

1-5%



Studied Farm

1-2%

The incidence of the studied farm is higher in **summer**



### PROBLEMS FOUND DURIN RISK ASSESMENT

There is 15 pigs per barn

Distribution and hygiene of the barns

Nutrition

Rivalry

Not enough drinkers and feeders

Ambiental enrichment materials

Lack of enrichment materials

Temperature, air and light comfort

Welfare and health

Incapability to develop exploration conducts

High temperatures



### TEMPERATURE IRREGULARITIES

The range of comfort temperature for pigs is

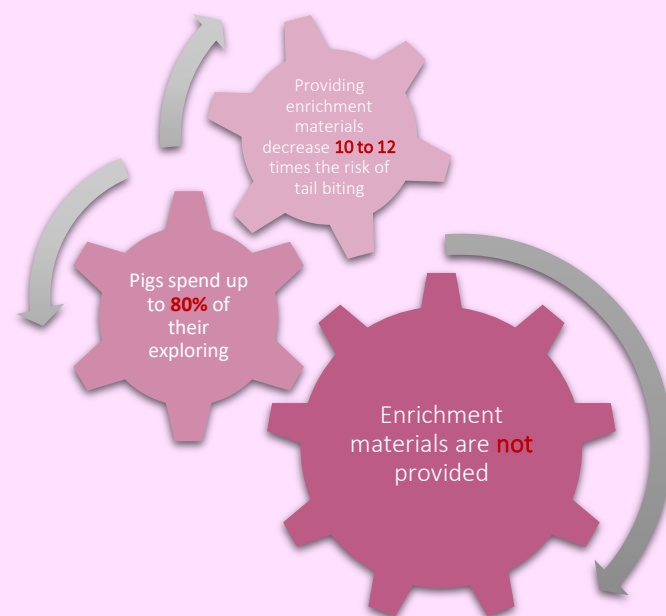
18-20°C

During summer, the temperature of the farm reaches

25°C



### WELFARE DISCOMFORT



### CAUSES OF RIVALRY

1 nipple drinker per barn

Only **1/3** of the batch can eat or drink at the **same time**

**7cm** of hog feeder per animal

1 hog feeder per barn

**22cm** of hog feeder per animal is what the UE recommends

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study shows evidence of some issues related to the risk factors that affect tail biting. The main issue is the lack of control of the high temperatures during summer season. The animal density of this farm is high, and it doesn't follow the recommendations made by **Directive 2008/120/EC**, about the size of the hog feeders and drinkers, causing a rivalry between animals. Another main issue is the lack of addition of enrichment materials, heavily recommended by experts and mentioned in the **real decree 1132/2002**.

### Recommendations:

- Improve the shed isolation
- Add more feeders and drinkers per barn
- Use enrichment materials