

© 2016 Universities Federation for Animal Welfare
The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead,
Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK
www.ufaw.org.uk

Animal Welfare 2016, 25: 499-509
ISSN 0962-7286
doi: 10.7120/09627286.25.4.499

Standardising the assessment of environmental enrichment and tail-docking legal requirements for finishing pigs in Europe

B Hothersall[†], L Whistance[†], H Zedlacher[‡], B Algers[§], E Andersson[§], M Bracke[#], V Courboulay[†],
P Ferrari^{*}, C Leeb[†], S Mullan^{*†}, J Nowicki[¶], M-C Meunier-Salaün^{||}, T Schwarz[¶], L Stadig² and D Main[†]

[†] School of Veterinary Science, University of Bristol, UK

[‡] Department of Sustainable Agricultural Systems, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Austria

[§] Department of Animal Environment and Health, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Sweden

[#] Wageningen Livestock Research, Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Netherlands

[†] IFIP Institut du Porc, France

^{*} Centro Ricerche Produzioni Animali, Italy

[¶] Department of Swine and Small Ruminants Breeding, University of Agriculture in Krakow, Poland

^{||} Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), France

² Animal Sciences Unit, Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO), Belgium

* Contact for correspondence and requests for reprints: Siobhan.Mullan@bristol.ac.uk

Abstract

An online training package providing a concise synthesis of the scientific data underpinning EU legislation on enrichment and tail-docking of pigs was produced in seven languages, with the aim of improving consistency of professional judgements regarding legislation compliance on farms. In total, 158 participants who were official inspectors, certification scheme assessors and advisors from 16 EU countries completed an initial test and an online training package. Control group participants completed a second identical test before, and Training group participants after, viewing the training. In Section 1 of the test participants rated the importance of modifying environmental enrichment defined in nine scenarios from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important). Training significantly increased participants' overall perception of the need for change. Participants then rated nine risk factors for tail-biting from 1 (no risk) to 10 (high risk). After training scores were better correlated with risk rankings already described by scientists. Scenarios relating to tail-docking and management were then described. Training significantly increased the proportion of respondents correctly identifying that a farm without tail lesions should stop tail-docking. Finally, participants rated the importance of modifying enrichment in three further scenarios. Training increased ratings in all three. The pattern of results indicated that participants' roles influenced scores but overall the training improved: i) recognition of enrichments that, by virtue of their type or use by pigs, may be insufficient to achieve legislation compliance; ii) knowledge on risk factors for tail-biting; and iii) recognition of when routine tail-docking was occurring.

Keywords: animal welfare, enrichment, inspector, legislation, pig, tail-docking