

Curly tails: the Dutch approach

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LIVESTOCK RESEARCH
WAGENINGEN UR

CAWA

Wageningen Centre for Animal Welfare and Adaptation

Tail of the future

- When

- How



The Dutch approach

- Working group Curly tails 2012-2013
- Pig farmers organizations
- Breeding company
- Feeding company
- Animal protection society
- Veterinary society
- Meat company
- Government
- Researchers



Declaration of Dalfsen



Road map towards curly tails

- Closing the gap between science and practice
- Relieving anxiety and scepticism of farmers



Road map

PIC Sterksel of Wageningen UR

1. Demonstration Project
'Yes we can!'

2. Safety net:
Effective curative measures

3. Network of pro-active farmers

Pig farmers (tail docked pigs)



Design demonstration project

- Not designed as a scientific experiment!
- Every 6 weeks 12 litters undocked piglets (117 in total)
- Varying circumstances:
 - Continuous enrichment or twice a day
 - Different types of enrichment
 - Fully or partly slatted flooring (weaned piglets)
 - Increased number of feeding spaces
- Coaching caretakers about pig needs and behaviour, and early signs of tail biting



Data collection

- Tail scores at 4 times
 - Posture
 - Bite marks, wounds
 - Blood, crusts
- Registration of bite wounds and status of risk factors
- Video registration (incl. sound)
- Effect of curative measures
- Costs of materials and labour

- Experiences of caretakers!!



Evaluation



Findings during a year



- Bite marks already in the farrowing unit
- Practical problems with some materials
 - Dirty pens
 - Clogged manure system
- Inspection of the animals and providing/replacing enrichment is time consuming
- Climate is an important risk factor
- Separate housing for biters and victims is crucial

- Biting problems still occur with an occasional outbreak

Findings during a year

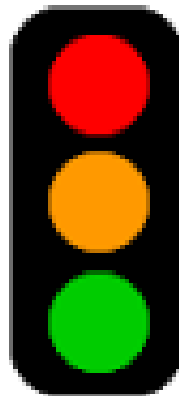
Exchange between caretakers and researchers

- shared insights
- new approaches



Findings during a year

- Administration of roughage has become a routine
- Ideas have been developed for more efficiency in labour
- A traffic light system has enhanced proper care
- A lot of pigs left with intact tails!



Development safety net

- There is no golden standard
- Small measures are not enough!
- Identification of an (obsessive) biter is essential
- Separation room for animals is necessary



Network of farmers

- Different types of farmers (12 in total)
- Aim: decreasing existing tail biting problems and working towards long(er) tails
- Fear: communication of success, with political consequences, negative reactions of colleagues
- Implementing checklists and gathering uniform data
- Learning to recognize early signs of problems



In conclusion

- Closing the gap between science and practice
 - communication
 - demonstration
- Every farm is different:
 - farm specific approach
- Developing protocols and safety net
 - (international!) knowledge and experience



In conclusion

Expand step by step, taking calculated risks

