

# Identifying early signs of tail biting



When these warning signs are spotted during daily checks, early action can help prevent tail biting.

Pigs chewing on other pigs	
Daily checks	What to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chewing other pigs</li><li>• Chewed ears</li><li>• Mouthing other pigs but not necessarily injuring them</li><li>• Biting/fighting other pigs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add additional enrichment</li><li>• Spray mark the pig doing the chewing to identify it as one to watch</li></ul>



Agitated or restless pigs	
Daily checks	What to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Restless or agitated</li><li>• Noisy pen</li><li>• Individual (a possible tail biter) avoided by others/active when others are resting</li><li>• Sick pigs often targeted for biting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check for causes, eg<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Stop draughts</li><li>– Adjust feeders and drinkers</li><li>– Identify health issues</li></ul></li><li>• Identify restless pigs to watch by spray marking</li></ul>



Tails	
Daily checks	What to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tucked under</li><li>• Hanging down or limp</li><li>• Bruising</li><li>• Guarded when at feeders</li><li>• Lesions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If guarding, check whether feeders and drinkers:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Are working correctly</li><li>– Are adequately spaced and have appropriate flow rates</li><li>– Need to be repositioned or increased in number</li></ul></li></ul>



Lesions	
Daily checks	What to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many marked pigs in pen</li><li>• Scratches/scrapes</li><li>• Signs of fighting</li><li>• Crusty ear tips</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add additional enrichment</li><li>• Remove and treat pigs with lesions</li></ul>



If you spot any of these signs, make sure to act to prevent further issues.

Make sure to regularly record:

- Any changes made to the environment
- What you have observed during daily checks
- Changes you have made if there are signs of tail biting

Find more information about early warning signs of tail biting and tips to manage the risk on the AHDB Tail Biting WebHAT [webhat.ahdb.org.uk](http://webhat.ahdb.org.uk)

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