



SKOV International

PIG EDITION

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EU legislation on pigs – Group-housed gestant sows in the EU from 2013



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On 1 January 2013, a number of regulations on animal welfare will come into force. An important requirement will be that gestant sows must be group-housed, cf. an EU directive.

Facts

EU operates with two levels of legislation in the form of EU directives and EU regulations.

An EU directive commits the member countries to incorporating the EU Commission's decisions into national legislation within fixed time limits. National legislation may therefore contain requirements that do not apply in other countries and thus contribute to creating unequal competitive conditions for producers in the individual countries.

EU regulations apply directly and immediately in their entirety to all member countries and thus differ from EU directives. This means that EU regulations help to even out competitive differences between EU countries.

In its national legislation on gestant sows, Denmark has chosen to incorporate a stringent, detailed interpretation of EU directives as well as to legislate nationally in various areas that are not included in EU directives (see table 1).

Requirements regarding	EU	DK
Spraying	No requirement	Requirement
Floor design, % solid floor	No requirement	Requirement
Recovery pens	No requirement	Requirement
Litter	No requirement	Requirement
Pen dimensions	Requirement	Requirement exceeds EU requirement
Free floorage	Requirement	Requirement exceeds EU requirement
Rooting and occupational materials	Requirement	Requirement exceeds EU requirement

Stringent producer requirements incite high productivity levels

The restrictive Danish legislation has formed the basis for Danish pig producers and their suppliers of technological equipment for many years.

Danish pig producers have therefore always had to focus on productivity in order to be able to succeed in the global competition since several of the legal requirements mentioned above directly influence the costs of establishing housing facilities as well as current production costs.

The result is that productivity levels in the best Danish sow units are impressive. More than 30 weaned piglets per year sow are not unusual. Danish pig producers are now seriously talking about the next milestone which is 35 weaned piglets per year sow.

Stringent producer requirements define the task of suppliers of housing technology

Achieving high productivity levels not only requires excellent management but also house designs and ventilation and climate control equipment that enable the animals to perform optimally.

This has been the specification of requirements for Danish companies that supply pig production solutions and therefore also a driving force in SKOV's development of state-of-the-art ventilation systems based on the needs of the animals.

Within the next few years, Denmark is expected to adopt legislation requiring loose-housed farrowing sows so that traditional farrowing pens will be phased out over a number of years. This challenge adds an additional aspect to the current legislation since all studies show that it is difficult to maintain the same productivity levels in loose-housed lactating sows as in traditionally housed lactating sows.

SKOV participates in a development project with Aarhus University focusing on the development of an intelligent farrowing pen that will make it possible for more new-born pigs to survive in pens with loose-housed lactating sows.



Climate for Growth