

## H17a – Teeth clipping and grinding

### Correct handling of piglets improves survival rates.

Routine teeth clipping or grinding is not allowed and is a last resort if you observe wounds on sows' udder or piglets' heads. It is illegal to clip the teeth!

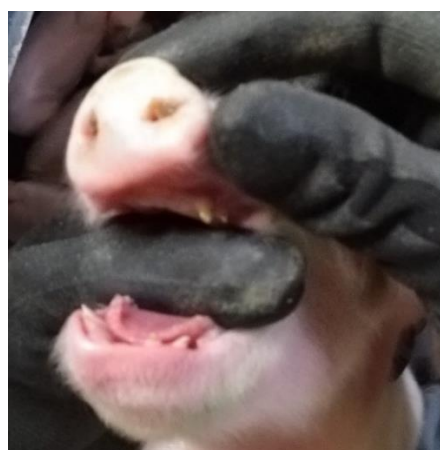
#### Requirements for documentation:

- Piglet canine teeth may be ground within the first 4 days of life, provided there is evidence of injury to the sow's udder or litter mates' heads, incl. ears, which can be attributed to sharp teeth.
- Only people with proper training and experience are allowed to perform the procedure using appropriate tools and under hygienic conditions
- Pigs are born with 8 sharp teeth that are polished during teeth grinding
- Use a device suitable for teeth grinding
- Take hold of the piglet's neck with your thumb and use your index finger, and if necessary insert your middle finger to keep the mouth open (photo 1). You can also cradle firmly the piglet against your body, take hold with your index finger and use your thumb to open the mouth (photo 2). Pigs with a high birth weight may be difficult to hold like this. Instead, place the pig on its back on your thigh. This will make it opens its mouth automatically.
- Place the grinder over 2 teeth at the same time and grind briefly (1 second) applying light pressure on the grinder
- Check that the teeth are ground correctly (photo 3). If you feel sharp points, repeat the process. If the white dental pulp is visible (photo 4), you have ground too much
- If black holes are visible for a few days, the teeth are ground too much and this will increase the risk of infection
- It is illegal to clip canine teeth.

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1. Hold the piglet like this



2. Teeth before grinding



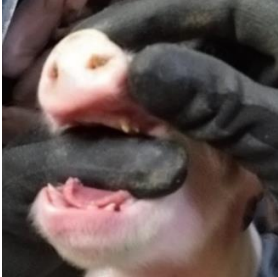
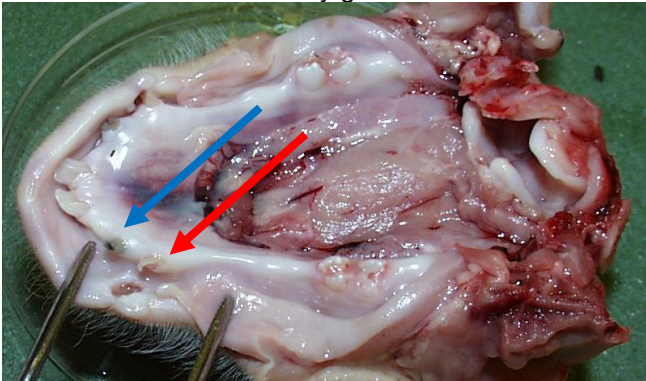
3. Teeth after correctly performed grinding



4. The teeth are ground too much

(photos: Charlotte Mark Salomonsen)

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	<p>Mammals can have up to 44 teeth. Humans only have 32 teeth. Pigs have grown all 44 teeth when they are 2 years old and the last molars develop. Piglets are born with 8 sharp teeth which they use, for instance when they fight for a teat. The canine teeth and the front part of the front teeth are present at birth in the upper and lower parts of the jaw. The two front teeth in the middle grow out at birth or in the weeks that follow.</p>	
	<p>Injuries to the head or ears in the first days of suckling may be an entry for bacteria. Wounds on the sow's udder may be caused by multiple factors such as low milk yield or fighting among piglets that were older than 2 days upon mixing. Wounds on the sow's udder after 5 weeks of lactation may be due to a stagnation in milk yield while the pigs' appetite continues to grow. Tooth grinding may be considered in case of exudative epidermitis in the herd. This usually only affects piglets born of gilts and is due to inadequate immunisation. Consult your advisors for possible solutions.</p>	
	<p>Use a teeth grinder.</p>	
	<p>Grind 8 teeth in total. There are two teeth in either side in both the upper and lower parts of the jaw. Here, the teeth in the upper jaw are ground too deep; the black pulpa cavity is visible in all 4 teeth. Only grind briefly (approx. 1 second) applying light pressure on the grinder. Check evenness of clipping by rubbing finger over clipped surface; make sure no sharp points of teeth are left. If the white of the pulpa is visible, you have ground too much. This can be difficult to see on small white tooth surfaces, so remember to check after a few days. The white pulpa will turn black if you have ground too much. If you grind too much, bacteria may cause dental abscesses, meningitis or blood poisoning.</p>	
	<p>Canine teeth must be evenly ground.</p>  <p>Incorrect: Uneven grinding by the <b>red arrow</b>, where the tooth is still sharp whereby the grinding is ineffective. On the front tooth, <b>blue arrow</b> black pulpa is visible, ie. the tooth is ground too deep.</p>	
	