

PITHING

A pithing rod is a flexible, massive plastic wire measuring min. 2 m in length and approx. 6 mm in diameter. Pithing kills the pig when the rod physically lacerates the brain and the spinal cord.

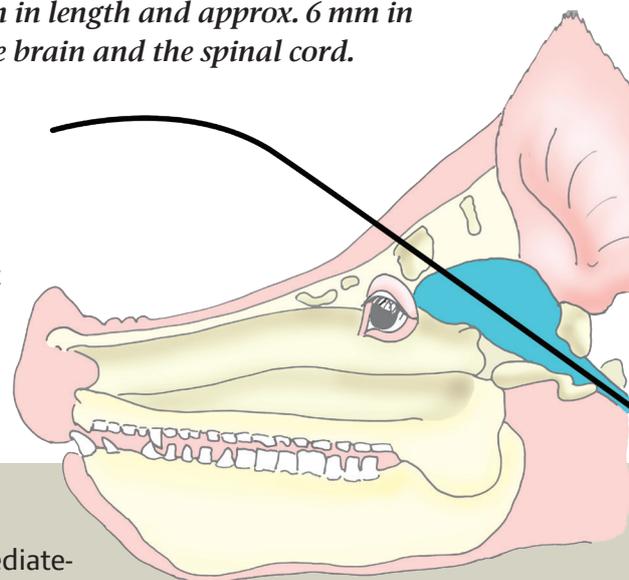
PROS OF PITHING

- Rapid and effective death
- Less to clean afterwards and environmentally friendly as subsequent exsanguination is not necessary
- The procedure is safe for the staff as no sharp tools are required

HOW TO PERFORM PITHING:

Stun the pig with a captive bolt gun according the instructions. Immediately after, euthanize the pig using the pithing rod.

- When euthanizing the pig, stand either behind the head of the pig or in front of its head
- Insert the rod through the perforation made by the captive bolt gun and thrust the rod towards the tail through the brain and spinal cord as far as possible. The pig will gradually stop twitching once the neural tissue is lacerated.
- In the cranial cavity, on either side of the spinal cord, there is a cavity/'dead-end' in which the rod may get stuck wherefore it may be necessary to slide the rod back and forth a few times.
- In pigs weighing 30 kg, the rod is inserted minimum 20 cm through the spinal cord, while in sows it may be inserted minimum 1-1.5 m through the spinal cord.
- Once corneal reflex and rhythmic breathing/heart beat cease, the pig is dead. Have your veterinarian to show you how to confirm the death of a pig.



The pithing rod is inserted through the perforation made by the captive bolt gun, through the brain and the spinal cord. Laceration of the brain and spinal cord leads to a rapid death.

SAFETY

If more than one person participates in the procedure, you must agree on *who performs which tasks* before you start.

After stunning with a captive bolt gun, muscle contraction and twitching (reflexes) may occur until the central nervous tissue has been lacerated by the rod. It is therefore crucial that you *position yourself correctly* and that you *do not block any escape routes* during stunning and euthanasia.

For animal welfare reasons, it is important that you *have a knife ready for exsanguination in case pithing cannot be completed*.

LEGISLATION

Pig producers must be able to explain the procedures applying to the use of a captive bolt and pithing if this is the method used. Upon inspection, pig producers must be able to present a functional captive bolt and pithing rod.