

# R&D Snapshot

## Assessment of Pain Induced by Tail Docking in Piglets, and Strategies to Reduce this Pain

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### **Purpose:**

- To determine the level and duration of pain induced by pain docking and the most appropriate action to reduce pain.

### **Take home messages:**

- Tail docking causes an acute pain response and clipping is more unpleasant than cauterisation
- Tail docking should be performed within the first two days after birth.
- Piglet discomfort was visible for up to 60 minutes post-docking but was negligible 24 hours post-docking
- Prior application of anaesthetic cream helped to reduce the pain
- Prior administration of oral meloxicam had little effect on the pain
- The tail docking procedure did not affect the piglets' growth rates compared to piglets whose tails had not been docked.

### **Additional information:**

- Contact Pat Mitchell at [pat.mitchell@australianpork.com.au](mailto:pat.mitchell@australianpork.com.au) or 03 5488 2306 for additional information.

