

The South African Pork Producers Organisation

Code for the Welfare of Pigs

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PREAMBLE

This code of practice is a statement of intent by the South African Pork Producers' Organisation with the assistance of the Pig Veterinary Society.

It is intended to be code of conduct in husbandry practices on a pig farm and not to supersede or contradict current welfare legislation concerning care and handling of pigs.

Furthermore, the adoption of SAPPO's Recommended Biosecurity measures is strongly encouraged to reduce the risk of diseases entering a farm which would cause unnecessary suffering.

INTRODUCTION

This code is based on the knowledge and technology available at the time of publication. The code is a dynamic document which will be reviewed on a regular basis. It does not replace the need for common sense and experience in the husbandry of animals

The code is based on the five freedoms of Webster, namely:

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and distress

STOCKMANSHIP, HUSBANDRY AND HEALTH CARE

Stock workers and owners must be appropriately trained to handle pigs and perform routine procedures in a manner which is hygienic and causes minimum discomfort.

- Pigs must be moved in a calm organised manner. The use of electric prodders or any other objects that could cause injury or distress to pigs is strictly forbidden.
- Pigs may not be lifted by an ear, tail or fore-limb unless their weight is supported. Suckling pigs may be gently lifted by a back-leg, post weaning pigs may not be lifted by a back-leg alone.
- All pigs must be inspected daily for signs of illness, injury, bullying, vices and distress
- Sick or bullied pigs must be given appropriate veterinary attention
- Adequate light must be provide to be able to see pigs at any time

Elective procedures:

The following may be performed by trained and competent stockmen

1. Castration of male pigs may be performed up to the age of 7 days. Any piglet over 7 days old may not be castrated except by a veterinarian with the use of an anaesthetic.

2. Tail docking may be performed up to 7 days of age and no more than half the length of the tail may be removed.
3. Tooth clipping is not approved as a routine and may only be done where damage to sows udder and/or siblings occurs within 7 days of birth.

All surgical interventions performed on the farm should be protected against infection by: -

- a) *using clean & disinfected instruments,*
 - b) *cleaning the skin of the scrotum or tail or wound, and*
 - c) *spraying or painting the wound with an anti-bacterial spray or solution.*
4. Intramuscular or subcutaneous injections may be done by trained personnel.
 5. Marking of pigs with tattoos, ear tags or slap marks is allowed. Slap marking may only be done with an instrument specifically designed to slap mark pigs. Personnel must be trained in the art of slap marking especially not to use excessive force so as to avoid bruising pigs.
 6. Ear notching by trained personnel is allowed up to 7 days of age.
 7. Semen collection and artificial insemination may be done by trained personnel.
 8. For pregnancy testing and the measurement of back fat in live pigs, only non-invasive and painless methods such as the use of ultrasonic equipment are permissible.
 9. Superficial wound treatment, claw trimming and injury care may be done.
 10. The breaking, sawing or cutting of boars' teeth/tusks is not allowed except if performed by a veterinarian with appropriate anaesthesia.

Euthanasia:

- Euthanasia must be performed on pigs that are suffering unduly and whose chance of full recovery from disease or injury is unlikely.
- Responsible personnel should be trained to euthanase pigs by effectively stunning (rendered unconscious) pigs without undue distress or pain.
- All animals stunned must be bled out immediately (within 60 seconds) using a sharp suitable knife to ensure death without recovery to a state of consciousness.

The following table indicates the approved methods of stunning pigs: -

	Suckling pigs	Weaner (>7.5kg)	Grower (>28kg) and Mature pigs
CO2	Yes	Yes	Yes, not practical
Free projectile	No	Yes	Yes
Penetrating Captive Bolt	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anaesthetic overdose	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blunt force	Yes	No	No

HOUSING

Housing must be designed so as:

- Provide well ventilated environments with appropriate comfortable temperatures at all times

Accommodation for sick or bullied pigs:

- Isolation facilities must be provided for sick/bullied pigs

1. Sow housing during gestation (pregnancy)

- Sows may be housed in individual stalls from weaning to service.
- Sows may be housed in individual stalls for a maximum of the first eight weeks of gestation.
- Sow stalls must be constructed so that
 - They are free of any objects /projections which could cause injury to the sow
 - When standing the sow's back must not touch the top bars of the crate, nor should her sides be in contact simultaneously with both sides of the crate
- Sows must be housed in groups or in individual pens, as from the 1st January 2020 for a minimum of the last eight weeks prior to being moved to farrowing accommodation.
- Sows may only be moved to farrowing accommodation a maximum of 7 days prior to due date.
- As from publication of this standard any new pig buildings must provide the minimum group housing or individual pens for a period of 8 weeks in the second half of gestation. (New buildings are deemed to be pig buildings for which building permission including EIA permits had not been granted prior to publication of the code)
- Tethers are not to be used
- Sows in stalls must be inspected daily for disease, lameness or any other problems and treated promptly and appropriately.
- Sows in stalls must have easy access to water at all times and must receive food according to her body condition at appropriate intervals.
- Water systems such as nipples must be checked daily to be in working order
- Individually penned sows must be able to turn around comfortably and be able to fully stretch out when lying down.
- Group housed sows must have a minimum space of 2.25 m² per sow
- Individual pens must be long and wide enough to allow a sow to lie fully stretched out; and wide enough to allow a sow to turn around easily.
- Group housed pregnant gilts must have at least 1.5 m² per gilt
- There must be enough feeding space or feed must be spread in such a manner that all sows have access to feed. If automatic sow feeders are used, regular inspection is necessary to make sure that all sows get the opportunity to enter the feeding station. Stock person must also observe for vulva biting.

- Sows in groups must be inspected daily for bullying, body condition, lameness and any other disease. Sows that are bullied or unable to defend themselves must be removed from the group.

2. Sow housing during farrowing & lactation

- Sows may be housed in a crate within a farrowing pen so as to reduce risk of crushing piglets during farrowing and lactation.
- All farrowing & lactation accommodation must provide protection for the piglets from crushing by sows.
- A safe creep area with bedding and provision for warmth for piglets must be provided in the farrowing pens with solid floors
- Heating devices must be placed in such a manner that piglets cannot be harmed or touch any heating devices.
- Sows must be able to lie down without any restriction to her limbs.
- When standing the sow's back must not touch the top bars of the crate, nor should her sides be in contact simultaneously with both sides of the crate.
- Sows may only be moved to farrowing accommodation a maximum of 7 days prior to due date.
- Sows may not be confined in farrowing crates for longer than her lactation length and a maximum of six weeks after farrowing.

3. Boar housing

- Boars may be kept on their own or in small compatible groups until mature. A boar may be kept with a group of breeding gilts or dry sows, provided bullying does not occur.
- Individual accommodation for adult boars should have a floor area of not less than 7,5 m², with the shortest side not less than 2,5 m. The pen divisions should not be less than 1,5 m high, and gates must be secure. If used for living purposes and service purposes, the floor area should not be less than 9m²

4. Weaner and Grower housing

- Provision for appropriate partitioning to separate different categories/sizes of pigs, or to divide large numbers into smaller groups to avoid crushing, fighting or bullying.

The following minimum space requirements must be adhered to:

Description (Size of pig)	Space (m ² /pig) Partly or fully slatted
< 35 kg	0.35
<70 kg	0.60
<100 kg	0.80
> 100 kg	@ 130kg /m ²

- NB: where no slats are provided, the open drainage/dunging area may not be included in the calculated area to determine whether space is adequate.

Explanatory note

- When slats are used pigs can use that area for resting whereas when solid floors are used the dunging area is not available for resting.

OUTDOOR SYSTEMS

Outdoor pigs must be provided with: -

- Enclosures should be well-drained with no persistent muddiness other than in wallows.
- Shelters (including farrowing arks) must be provided which provide shelter from the sun, draughts and must provide adequate insulation from harsh temperatures or inclement weather.
- Bedding must be provided in farrowing facilities and they must be constructed to prevent crushing of piglets
- Feeding and watering facilities must be provided to ensure adequate access for all animals in the enclosure. Feeding and watering facilities must also be designed to ensure they remain hygienic at all times. Pigs must have access to clean potable water at all times and nutritional food must be provided daily.
- Effective fencing to confine and control pigs and adequate handling /isolation facilities for dealing with pigs undergoing routine procedures or which are sick or injured must be provided

LOADING AND TRANSPORT OF PIGS

(To be read in conjunction with the Transport Code)

- Loading ramps and platforms shall match vehicle height and loading gate. Inclines should not exceed 20°.
- Loading facilities shall ensure that pigs cannot fall between vehicle and loading ramp.
- Loading and unloading must be done with minimum force. Under no circumstances may prodders of any type be used. Equipment such as pig boards and plastic bags can be used.

- Whenever possible pigs must be transported during the cooler parts of the day
- Vehicles shall make provision for:
 - Shading on the top deck with at least 80% shade cloth or better
 - Partitioning to prevent crushing
 - No objects / protrusions that can cause injury
 - Grids: to prevent sliding and injury
 - Sides high enough to prevent pigs jumping off the vehicles
- Pigs per unit of floor space

Average live weight (kg /pig)	Space (m ² /pig)	Space > 3,5 hr trip (m ² /pig)
50	0.22	0.25
75	0.29	0.34
85	0.31	0.36
95	0.34	0.39
105	0.36	0.41
125	0.42	0.48
150	0.48	0.55
175	0.55	0.63
200	0.61	0.70

- Smooth ride with limited stoppage. Vehicle should only be stopped on level surface
- Owners/managers must at all times have pre-arranged contingency plans for emergencies such as breakdowns