



RSPCA Australia Standard  
**Pigs**

November 2018

**RSPCA** 

RSPCA AUSTRALIA STANDARD

# **PIGS**

NOVEMBER 2018

*RSPCA Australia Standards – Pigs*  
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# OVERVIEW

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## Introduction

The RSPCA established RSPCA Certified as part of its efforts to continuously improve the lives of Australia's farmed animals. RSPCA Certified is a not-for-profit program that works by:

- establishing animal welfare standards that go beyond regulatory requirements
- enabling differentiation and marketing of products from RSPCA Certified farms
- offering consumers a higher animal welfare alternative.

The *RSPCA Australia Standards - Pigs* (from here on referred to as “the Standards”) outline production practices and animal welfare requirements that aim to meet the animal's behavioural and physiological needs and are designed to assist the pig industry to continually improve and demonstrate good animal welfare outcomes.

These Standards take into consideration RSPCA Australia policy, available scientific research, current legislation applied in Australia, codes of practice, government standards and guidelines for animal welfare, veterinary, technical and producer advice, and current industry good practice.

## Principles underpinning the RSPCA Australia Standards

The Standards are underpinned by the principles of the ‘Five Freedoms’:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst: by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- Freedom from discomfort: by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease: by prevention, rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- Freedom to express normal behaviour: by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from fear and distress: by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

In addition, the program aims to provide enhanced animal welfare by presenting the animal with opportunities to experience positive, rather than neutral or negative welfare states. Covering both behavioural and physiological needs, these principles provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of pig welfare.

RSPCA Certified requires that those responsible for the care of pigs provide:

- caring and responsible planning and management
- skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious stockpersonship
- appropriate environmental design and management
- considerate handling and transport
- humane slaughter.

## Eligibility

These Standards apply to pigs (including breeding pigs) kept for meat production in eligible systems in Australia. Systems eligible under RSPCA Certified must meet the specifications of the Standards.

Enterprises not eligible to be RSPCA Certified include those systems where sows are confined to gestation stalls and/or farrowing crates for any period of time.

Products that are eligible for approval under RSPCA Certified must be derived from pigs reared, housed, transported and slaughtered in accordance with these Standards. This also

applies to sourced breeding pigs (gilts, sows and/or boars) that must have spent at least their entire breeding life on an RSPCA Certified site before being eligible for RSPCA Certified product.

Eligible systems may operate in parallel with non-eligible systems; however, appropriate separation and traceability arrangements must be in place to ensure that pigs and pork products associated with RSPCA Certified are clearly identified.

Licensees are responsible for ensuring that the farming system, in addition to meeting the Standards, also meets the pork labelling (production descriptor) requirements of the industry and/or retailer as well as all relevant legislative labelling requirements.

RSPCA Australia has the discretion to determine the suitability or eligibility of the system as applicable within the context of the program.

## Application

The documentation that supports RSPCA Certified consists of:

- *Operations Manual* - which details the operation of the program or both Certified Producers and Licensees, including the application process and the Assessment procedures.
- *Standards and glossary* (specific to each species) - which provide the requirements for the rearing, handling, transport and/or slaughter of the species.
- *Traceability policy* - which outlines chain of custody requirements for the program.
- *Information notes* (specific to each species) - which provide information about a range of aspects relating to species-specific standards and to the production process generally.

## Requirements of RSPCA Certified

It is a requirement of participants in the program that:

1. *The RSPCA Australia Standards - Pigs* are complied with.
2. The requirements in the relevant state or territory legislation applicable to the farming enterprise are complied with, including but not limited to animal welfare, animal health, water and land use, environmental impact management and monitoring, effluent management, biosecurity, transportation, processing, food safety and product labelling. RSPCA Australia has the discretion to request proof of compliance with regulatory requirements through the provision of documentation from the relevant local council, state/territory government, quality assurance program or other appropriate body.
3. The following documents are to be completed and reviewed on an annual basis and made available to RSPCA Certified at any time (including during an assessment):
  - *Animal Care Statement* - specifying general management and standard operating procedures
  - *Veterinary Health Plan* - specifying animal health management procedures.Existing quality assurance manuals for other programs or accreditation schemes and/or existing standard operating procedures, and records to support production activities may be utilised to meet the requirements of these Standards, provided the specific provisions in these Standards are demonstrated. Equivalence is determined by RSPCA Australia.
4. Each enterprise nominate a designated person (or persons) who has:
  - responsibility for the operation of the enterprise.
  - responsibility for overseeing the management and application of the requirements of the program.

The owner of the pigs raised under RSPCA Certified has the final responsibility for ensuring the welfare of the animals and on-going compliance with these Standards.

## GLOSSARY

**NOTE:** The glossary defines words/phrases highlighted in bold within a standards clause and which form part of the requirement(s) of the relevant clause.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>abattoir</b>                     | A facility where animals are slaughtered for the purpose of food for human consumption.  |
| <b>AI pen</b>                       | A confined area used for the purpose of holding a gilt/sow for artificial insemination (AI). An AI pen allows the gilt/sow to stand up, lie down and, turn around unhindered. An AI pen has a soft-standing surface that is comfortable for pigs to stand on, prevents slipping and falling, and avoids foot or leg issues.  |
| <b>antimicrobial</b>                | An agent that kills or stops the growth of microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. Antimicrobials may be used therapeutically for treatment of a diagnosed disease or injury, or they may be used to prevent the occurrence or spread of disease. Ionophores and non-ionophores are classed as antibacterial agents and are therefore a subcategory of antimicrobials. Ionophores are not used in human medicine and this category includes ionophore coccidiostats which are substances intended to kill or inhibit protozoa. |
| <b>artificial insemination (AI)</b> | The process of manually injecting boar semen into the cervix of a gilt or sow in oestrus using a spirette or catheter.   |
| <b>beta-adrenergic agonists</b>     | A compound used to increase muscle mass and break down fat in finisher pigs. Ractopamine hydrochloride is included in this category.   |
| <b>boar</b>                         | A male pig intended for breeding purposes.   |
| <b>body condition</b>               | An indication of the pig's overall muscularity and measured on a scale from 0 to 5 where 0 is emaciated and 5 is grossly fat appearance. A pig in good body condition has ribs, backbone, hip bones and pin bones that are barely visible or barely felt with firm pressure.   |
| <b>breeder mortality</b>            | The number of breeding pigs (separated into gilt, sow and boar) that die (or are euthanased) expressed as a percentage of the total number of gilts, sows and boars in the herd, over a given period.  |
| <b>breeding pig</b>                 | A gilt, sow or boar that is intended for, or is/was used for, the purpose of mating and production of offspring.   |
| <b>class</b>                        | The classification of pigs according to sex, age, or life stage, e.g. weaner, grower, sow, lactating sow, boar, etc.   |
| <b>cold stress</b>                  | A condition in which a pig is unable to maintain core body temperature within the normal range (38.5-39°C) during periods of cold ambient temperature resulting in core body temperature falling below the normal range. Signs of cold stress include huddling, shivering, bluish extremities, and erect hair.   |
| <b>competent</b>                    | Having the necessary knowledge, experience, skill and ability to undertake a task successfully.  |
| <b>corneal reflex</b>               | Blinking in response to touching the pig's eye.  |
| <b>creep area</b>                   | An area adjacent to the farrowing accommodation that is not accessible to the sow and which provides thermal comfort for suckling piglets.   |
| <b>cross-fostering</b>              | The transfer of piglets between sows to match the number of piglets to the sow's ability to nurse them.  |
| <b>cull sow/boar</b>                | A sow, gilt, or boar that is removed from the herd and transported to an abattoir because it is no longer fit for purpose.   |

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| <b>electronic feeding station</b>   | A feeding system that requires pigs to eat one after the other from the same feeder and allows a daily allotment of feed to be given automatically to an individual pig.  |
| <b>environmental enrichment</b>     | Improvement of the environment of the pig, which increases their behavioural opportunities (i.e. exploring, rooting and foraging) and the opportunity to experience positive affective states. For pigs to maintain interest in environmental enrichment that is in the form of manipulable materials and/or objects, these must be destructible, edible, chewable, kept clean and be changed on a regular basis. Acceptable environmental enrichment materials/objects include but are not limited to straw in racks; coconuts, cabbages, and carrots; suspended block of wood; long chain or plastic ball (in combination with an edible/destructible object); natural fibre rope; and enrichment blocks. |
| <b>euthanasia/<br/>euthanased</b>   | Humanely ending the life of an animal when it is in the interest of the animal's welfare and using a technique that avoids further pain, suffering or distress.   |
| <b>extreme weather</b>              | Severe weather - including heavy and/or prolonged rain, hail, snow, wind, or extremely high or low temperatures - that may affect the welfare of the exposed pig.   |
| <b>farrowing accommodation</b>      | A sheltered enclosure intended for the pregnant gilt/sow to give birth to her piglets and which is of sufficient size to allow the individual gilt/sow to lie down in a fully outstretched position (lateral recumbency), turn around easily, and access areas for resting, dunging, feeding and watering. Farrowing accommodation may include farrowing huts or arks.  |
| <b>farrowing crate</b>              | A narrow enclosure intended for the pregnant gilt/sow to give birth to her piglets and which provides space for piglets to suckle from the sow. A farrowing crate allows the gilt/sow to stand up and lie down but prevents her from turning around.  |
| <b>fit for the intended journey</b> | A pig that satisfies all the criteria for loading and transport: strong enough to undertake the journey, can walk normally and bear weight on all legs, is not emaciated or visibly dehydrated, is not suffering from visible distress or injury, is not in a condition that could cause it increased pain or distress during transport, is not blind in both eyes, and is not in late pregnancy.   |
| <b>flight zone</b>                  | The area around an animal that, if encroached upon by a potential threat, will trigger escape behaviour. This is the distance a pig will let a person approach before moving away.  |
| <b>foster sow</b>                   | A sow that is required to wean another litter of piglets after her own piglets have been weaned or removed.   |
| <b>frontal position</b>             | A point slightly above the midway point on an imaginary line joining each eye.  |
| <b>gilt</b>                         | A female pig intended for breeding that has not yet farrowed.   |
| <b>group stunning</b>               | Gas stunning system where pigs are driven towards and are able to enter the gas stunning unit as a group, with pigs able to walk side by side in a raceway and into the gas stunning unit rather than singly or via single-file races.  |
| <b>growing pig (or grower)</b>      | A pig that weighs over 30kg and/or is over 10 weeks of age. For the purpose of these standards, growers include porker, finisher and baconer pigs.  |
| <b>heat stress</b>                  | A condition in which a pig is unable to maintain core body temperature within the normal range (38.5-39°C) during periods of hot ambient temperature resulting in core body temperature exceeding the normal range. Signs of heat stress include loss of appetite, increased respiration rate, and excessive drinking.  |

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| <b>herd</b>  | The total collection of pigs present at a particular farm site.   |
| <b>hospital pen</b>                                    | An enclosed and identifiable outdoor area or area within a shed or shelter in which a pig or group of pigs are held for treatment.  |
| <b>immunological castration (or immuno-castration)</b> | Involves the administration of a vaccine that delays the onset of puberty by stimulating the pig's natural immune system to produce antibodies that inhibit testes function.  |
| <b>in situ</b>   | Located in its original place and position.   |
| <b>injury</b>  | A wound or other damage (including bruising) to the pig including to the tail, shoulder, vulva, ear, flank, foot, leg or bones.   |
| <b>journey</b>   | The loading, transport and unloading of pigs for a period of time commencing when the first pig is loaded onto a transport vehicle until the last pig is unloaded at their destination.   |
| <b>lairage</b>   | Pens or yards that are directly attached to the abattoir and used for the purpose of holding pigs just prior to slaughter. The lairage area does not include outdoor areas, yards or other areas that may hold pigs for a period longer than 24 hours.  |
| <b>lameness</b>  | Impaired movement or abnormal gait in pigs usually caused by bone, foot, tendon, joint, or muscle issues and/or pain. Signs of lameness include pigs that are standing but not bearing full weight on the affected limb, walking with a shortened stride with minimum weight-bearing on the affected limb, and severely lame with no weight-bearing on the affected limb.   |
| <b>Licensee</b>  | An entity that has entered into a Trademark Licence Agreement with RSPCA Australia and is permitted to use the RSPCA Certified logo on product sourced from RSPCA Certified Producers.  |
| <b>loading pen</b>                                     | An enclosed covered area or shed in which pigs are held prior to transport and which does not necessarily provide access to an outdoor area.  |
| <b>locomotion disorder</b>                             | Impaired movement or abnormal gait in pigs that may include lameness as well as neurological disorders.   |
| <b>lying area</b>                                      | Floor area based on the space allowance formula $0.047 \times \text{liveweight}^{0.67} \text{ m}^2/\text{pig}$ which allows sufficient lying/sleeping space for a pig to lie down in a fully outstretched position (lateral recumbency).  |
| <b>major reportable event</b>                          | A circumstance that has an adverse impact on the welfare of the pigs. A major reportable event includes sustained at or above-trigger mortality rate(s) or unusual/unexpected incidences of high mortality; injury or disease including those resulting from endemic and/or exotic disease outbreaks; natural events; predator incursions; infrastructure or equipment failure; feed supply and/or formulation issues; swill feeding; transportation; pig handling; or other circumstance deemed reportable by company/producer standard operating procedures. In the case of a suspected exotic animal disease or swill feeding, the relevant state/territory government department must also be notified. |
| <b>material suitable for nest building</b>             | Edible, fibrous matter of sufficient length to touch each side of the pig's mouth when held in the mouth.   |
| <b>mating stall</b>                                    | A crate used for the purpose of holding a gilt/sow for artificial insemination. A mating stall allows the gilt/sow to stand up and lie down but prevents her from turning around.   |
| <b>outdoor area</b>                                    | An uncovered, outside enclosure with a soft-standing surface that is comfortable for pigs to stand on, prevents slipping and falling, and avoids foot or leg issues. Pigs within an outdoor area have, by choice, continuous access to a shed or shelter.   |
| <b>pen</b>   | An enclosed area within a shed or shelter in which pigs are held.   |

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| <b>pre-weaning mortality</b>           | The number of piglets born alive that die before weaning, expressed as a percentage.   |
| <b>post-weaning mortality</b>          | The number of weaners and growers that die expressed as a percentage of the total number of pigs weaned, over a given period.  |
| <b>pulp chamber</b>                    | The innervated part of the boar's tusks which may extend beyond the gum line.  |
| <b>service pen</b>                     | A confined area used for the purpose of natural mating of a gilt/sow with a boar.  |
| <b>sexual maturity (in boars)</b>      | The age at which a boar is first seen to be mounting with an erection and at the time is able to produce enough sperm to impregnate a gilt/sow.  |
| <b>shed</b>                            | A housing structure consisting of at least four walls and a roof that provides all pigs with protection from cold, heat, wind, and rain.   |
| <b>shelter</b>                         | A housing structure (may also be referred to as an 'ark' or 'hut') consisting of at least three walls and a roof that provides all pigs with partial protection from cold, heat, wind, and rain.   |
| <b>site</b>                            | The location at which one or more facilities for breeding and/or rearing or slaughtering of pigs are situated.   |
| <b>skin conditions</b>                 | Problems affecting the pig's skin including disease-related skin conditions and sunburn.   |
| <b>sow</b>                             | A female pig intended for breeding that has farrowed at least once.  |
| <b>split suckling</b>                  | The practice of temporarily separating heavier piglets from the sow within the first day of birth, while leaving lighter piglets in the litter to suckle with less competition at the udder.   |
| <b>split weaning</b>                   | The practice of removing heavier piglets from the sow at weaning, while leaving lighter piglets in the litter to suckle for an additional number of days.  |
| <b>sticking/stuck</b>                  | The severing of carotid arteries and jugular veins, or the blood vessels from which they arise, while the pig is still unconscious and in a manner that ensures the pig remains unconscious until death ensues from loss of blood. Also referred to as bleeding out.   |
| <b>stocking density</b>                | Indoor space allowance calculated on the basis of estimated pig live weight and the usable area available for pigs not including the area taken up by feeding, watering or other equipment, or creep area.   |
| <b>stocking density (outdoor area)</b> | Outdoor space allowance calculated on the basis of the total outdoor area currently available to the pigs (not including the area taken up by feeding, watering or other equipment that prevents access by pigs to the area underneath) and the number of pigs currently distributed across that area in a reasonably even manner. |
| <b>stun/stunning</b>                   | A procedure (or the act of carrying out a procedure) that renders the pig unconscious and insensible to pain.  |
| <b>suckling piglet</b>                 | A piglet that has not been weaned.   |
| <b>temporal position</b>               | A point slightly to the front of and below the pig's ear.  |
| <b>transporter</b>                     | The company responsible for a livestock transport vehicle and its driver.  |
| <b>trigger level</b>                   | A predetermined threshold (e.g. mortality rate) which sets in motion a course of actions to investigate and address the cause of a breach of that threshold.   |

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| <b>usable area</b>       | Floor area within the shed or shelter that is accessible to pigs standing with normal posture. Usable area does not include any floor area that is occupied by feeding, watering and/or other equipment that prevents access by pigs to the floor area underneath. |
| <b>veterinary advice</b> | Recommendation(s) provided by a registered veterinarian with expertise in pig health.  |
| <b>wallow</b>            | A depression in the soil that contains shallow water or mud and which is large enough to allow a pig to lie or roll and coat their body surface with mud.  |
| <b>weaner pig</b>        | A pig that no longer suckles the sow and weighs up to approximately 30kg and/or is under 10 weeks of age.  |
| <b>weaning</b>           | The removal of suckling piglets from the sow. A piglet is considered 'weaned' when milk is no longer provided.   |
| <b>working boar</b>      | A male pig that has reached sexual maturity and is being actively used for natural or artificial mating.   |

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# THE STANDARDS

**NOTE:** Words/phrases highlighted in bold within a standards clause form part of the requirement(s) of the relevant clause and are defined in the glossary.

## 1 Staff training and animal management procedures

### Training and competency (on farm, during transport, at abattoir)

- 1.01 Persons responsible for the management and/or handling of pigs must be appropriately trained and **competent** in their required tasks, including:
- a) handling and movement of pigs
  - b) observation of pigs and identification of normal and abnormal pig behaviour
  - c) maintaining the housing environment
  - d) management, husbandry and care of different ages/classes of pigs
  - e) treatment of **injury**, disease or distress
  - f) **euthanasia** of pigs
  - g) slaughter of pigs
  - h) accurate record keeping.
- 1.02 Staff induction/training programs and standard operating procedures must include the requirements of these Standards.
- 1.03 Records of staff training and **competency** assessments must be maintained and be provided to RSPCA Certified upon request.
- 1.04 Staff must be available to respond promptly to problems that arise.
- 1.05 Instances of animal neglect, cruelty or other breaches of animal welfare legislation must be promptly reported to the relevant regulatory authority and RSPCA Certified.

### Internal assessment

- 1.06 Company owned and/or contractor sites must:
- a) have internal assessment systems in place to ensure on-going compliance with these Standards
  - b) maintain records of completed internal assessments
  - c) provide records of completed internal assessments to RSPCA Certified upon request.

### Animal Care Statement

- 1.07 An Animal Care Statement must be drawn up and complied with.
- 1.08 The Animal Care Statement must specify general management and standard operating procedures as relevant to the pig production facility and the different ages/classes of pig, including, but not limited to:
- a) sourcing of pigs
  - b) feeding and watering
  - c) environment and housing (including **environmental enrichment**)
  - d) **outdoor area** management
  - e) maintaining **stocking density** and managing group size
  - f) husbandry and management procedures (including **immunological castration** as relevant)

- g) pig handling
- h) pig observation
- i) pig transport (including measures to avoid **heat stress** and **cold stress**)
- j) slaughter
- k) procedures for managing **major reportable events**
- l) procedures for reporting breaches of animal welfare legislation.

1.09 The Animal Care Statement must be reviewed on an annual basis.

1.10 The current Animal Care Statement must be provided to RSPCA Certified upon request.

### **Records**

1.11 For each **herd** of pigs, the number of pigs supplied to **Licensee** (in live weight kg and in pig numbers) must be recorded.

1.12 All facility records, pig records and other documentation required to be kept and maintained must be:

- a) available on **site** at the time of an assessment (applicable to facility and pig records only)
- b) provided to RSPCA Certified upon request
- c) retained for at least 1 year (applicable to pig records only).

## 2 Health

### Veterinary Health Plan

- 2.01 A Veterinary Health Plan must be drawn up and complied with.
- 2.02 The Veterinary Health Plan must specify pig health management and monitoring procedures including but not limited to:
- biosecurity (including quarantine, cleaning and sanitation procedures)
  - routine health monitoring procedure (including identification and treatment of weak, ill or injured pigs)
  - vaccination schedule and procedure
  - use of veterinary medicines (including **antimicrobials**)
  - hormone and/or other additive use
  - euthanasia** (including emergency mass **euthanasia**)
  - physical **injury** (including **lameness**, shoulder lesions, ear/flank bite marks, vulva lesions, tail lesions)
  - identification and treatment of disease
  - internal and external parasites
  - mortalities and **trigger levels** and classification of cause of death (includes stillbirths and mummified piglets)
  - pest animal control procedures.
- 2.03 The Veterinary Health Plan must be reviewed on an annual basis and authorised by the designated veterinarian.
- 2.04 The current Veterinary Health Plan must be provided to RSPCA Certified upon request.

### Health monitoring

- 2.05 Quarantine and biosecurity procedures must be in place to minimise the risk of introducing and spreading disease among pigs.
- 2.06 **Hospital pens** or areas to isolate pigs for special treatment and attention must:
- be available and identifiable as such
  - allow pigs to see and/or hear other pigs.
- 2.07 Pigs that have been identified as diseased or injured must be treated or **euthanased** promptly.
- 2.08 Where the cause of ill health or disease and the appropriate treatment is unable to be identified:
- veterinary advice** must be sought promptly
  - veterinary advice** must be followed accordingly.
- 2.09 Dead pigs must be removed promptly and disposed of in a safe and hygienic manner.
- 2.10 Any **major reportable event** must be reported to RSPCA Certified within 24 hours of observation.

### Vaccination

- 2.11 The Veterinary Health Plan must incorporate a vaccination program to protect pigs from diseases for which an effective vaccine is available and which may represent a risk to the pigs at a particular **site** as determined by **veterinary advice**.

### Medicines

- 2.12 **Antimicrobials** must only be administered under **veterinary advice**.
- 2.13 Any **antimicrobial** classified either by the Australian Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance as being of 'high' or 'medium' importance for human medicine or by the World Health Organization as 'critically important', 'highly important' or 'important' for human medicine is not permitted for use in pigs, unless **veterinary advice** indicates that the only effective treatment option is an **antimicrobial** from these categories.
- 2.14 Where **antimicrobials** are used, an **Antimicrobial Stewardship Plan** must:
- be drawn up and complied with
  - specify current type, quantity and nature (therapeutic or preventative) of **antimicrobial** use per class of pig
  - consider available evidence of **antimicrobial** resistance in the Australian pig herd
  - specify a year-on-year strategy which considers the reduction, refinement and/or replacement of preventative **antimicrobial** use per class of pig
  - specify husbandry and/or management strategies to manage disease risk during any planned reduction, refinement and/or replacement of **antimicrobials**
  - be reviewed on an annual basis in order to inform the following year's strategy
  - be authorised by the designated veterinarian
  - be provided to RSPCA Certified as part of the Veterinary Health Plan.

### Additives

- 2.15 The use of **beta-adrenergic agonists** is not permitted.

### Records

- 2.16 Individual pig, **herd**, and/or litter health records as relevant must be kept and contain details of the following:
- vaccinations
  - treatments or medicines administered (including **antimicrobials** for both therapeutic and preventative use)
  - diseases
  - injuries
  - dates of veterinarian visits, notes of any problems identified and action taken.
- 2.17 **Herd** health records must contain details of the following:
- stillbirths and mummified piglets as percentage of total piglets born (include actual and **trigger level**)
  - pre-weaning mortality** separated into deaths and  **euthanased** (include actual and **trigger level**)
  - post-weaning mortality** separated into deaths and  **euthanased** (include actual and **trigger level**)
  - breeder mortality** separated into deaths and  **euthanased** (include actual and **trigger level**)
  - cull sows/boars** and reason for culling expressed as a percentage, over a given period.

### 3. Sourcing of pigs

- 3.01 Breeding animals destined for RSPCA Certified farms must be sourced from farming systems where breeding **gilts** and **sows** are housed in groups at least until farrowing.
- 3.02 A record specifying the name of the breeding company from which breeding animals are sourced must be kept.
- 3.03 Date and time of breeding animal departure from their property of origin and arrival at their destination must be recorded.
- 3.04 Where animals sourced for breeding have been subjected to tail docking and/or teeth clipping, RSPCA Certified must be notified.
- 3.05 Where **weaner pigs** are brought onto a **growing pig site** from another source, this source property must also be compliant with the *RSPCA Australia Standards - Pigs* and approved by RSPCA Certified.
- 3.06 Pigs sourced from another property must be quarantined for the minimum period required to protect the health of the existing **herd**.

## 4 Feed and water

- 4.01 Pigs must have continuous access to clean, drinkable water.
- 4.02 Feed and water must be available in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the pig's requirements.
- 4.03 Feeding and watering equipment design, position and height must allow pigs to access feed and water using normal posture.
- 4.04 Feeding and watering systems and equipment must be operating effectively to ensure the pigs' daily requirements for feed and water are met.
- 4.05 Feed and water distribution must ensure that a uniform supply is available to all pigs.

### Feeding methods

- 4.06 Feed must be dispensed and distributed in a way that:
  - a) encourages pigs to feed
  - b) reduces or avoids aggressive encounters
  - c) minimises waste.
- 4.07 Where increased aggression is evident at feeding, any problems identified and action taken must be recorded.
- 4.08 Where feeding systems (other than **electronic feeding stations**) have a hind gate that shuts behind the feeding pig, the gate must open when the pig chooses to back out, unless for the minimum time required to immediately carry out a husbandry or management procedure.

## 5 Environment and housing

- 5.01 All pigs must have continuous access to a **shed** or **shelter** that provides protection from cold, heat, wind and rain.
- 5.02 Floors, surfaces, fittings, equipment and other facilities in and around the **shed** or **shelter** must be designed, constructed and maintained to:
- minimise the risk of **heat stress** and **cold stress**
  - minimise the risk of **injury** or disease
  - be free from rough edges and sharp protrusions
  - minimise noise
  - facilitate cleaning.
- 5.03 Laneways and races must be designed to facilitate the movement of pigs without **injury** or distress.
- 5.04 Where infrastructure or objects could cause or are observed to cause **injury** to pigs, prompt action must be taken to address the situation.
- 5.05 Where present, alarms and controls for ventilation, heating and cooling systems must
- be fully operational
  - be maintained as required
  - have date of checks, any problems identified and action taken recorded
  - have staff available to respond to alarms promptly.
- 5.06 Where pigs are housed within a fully enclosed **shed**, smoke alarms must
- be fully operational and maintained as required
  - have date of checks, any problems identified and action taken recorded
  - have staff available to respond to alarms promptly.
- 5.07 A maintenance program must be in place to ensure that:
- facility defects are identified
  - prompt action is taken to ensure their return to full operation.
- 5.08 A record of facility maintenance and repairs must be maintained.
- 5.09 Procedures must be in place to manage the facility environment and provide feed and water to pigs in the event of fire, flood, drought, feed supply and/or formulation issues, equipment failure and other breakdown or **major reportable event** that may impact on pig welfare.
- 5.10 Facilities (including feed and bedding storage areas) must be constructed and maintained to limit the entry of pathogens, pests, and animals that could cause distress or transmit diseases to pigs.
- 5.11 Pest animal control programs must:
- use the most humane effective techniques that are applicable to the situation
  - achieve the program aims
  - reduce the risk of impact on non-target species.

### Ventilation

- 5.12 **Shed** ventilation must provide adequate air exchange for the age and number of pigs.

5.13 Ammonia levels must be managed so as not to exceed 10ppm at pig head height.

5.14 Dust levels at pig head height must be managed to avoid negative impacts on pig welfare.

### Lighting

5.15 Pigs (with the exception of unweaned piglets) must be provided with either:

- a) natural light and dark periods as determined by the local diurnal cycle or
- b) artificial lighting for a minimum period of 8 hours per day with a minimum period of 6 hours continuous darkness (with all lights off) to be provided at night, in every 24-hour period.

5.16 Light intensity measured at pig head height across indoor areas must ensure that no area of the facility (with the exception of **creep areas** and facilities where pigs have continuous access to an **outdoor area**) is lit at less than 100 lux for at least 8 hours per day during daylight hours.

### Flooring

5.17 **Shed, shelter** and **pen** flooring must be designed, constructed and maintained to:

- a) provide adequate support for the whole of the pig's foot
- b) avoid damage to pigs' feet
- c) avoid entrapment of pigs' feet
- d) minimise **injury**, including **lameness**
- e) prevent accumulation of water and faeces.

5.18 Floors in all indoor areas, **pens**, loading ramps and major traffic areas must have non-slip surfaces.

5.19 Pigs must have continuous access to a dry **lying area** that is:

- a) solid underfoot
- b) not perforated or slatted
- c) separate to the dunging area
- d) covered in bedding material.

### Bedding

5.20 **Sheds, shelters** and **pens** must have good quality bedding.

5.21 Bedding material must be maintained to allow all pigs to lie down in a dry **lying area** in a fully outstretched position at the same time.

5.22 Bedding for all pigs, except farrowing pigs and **suckling piglets**, must be maintained to a minimum average depth of:

- a) 100mm for **weaner pigs** up to 10 weeks of age
- b) 200mm for pigs over 10 weeks of age.

5.23 Bedding for **farrowing accommodation** in **outdoor areas** must be maintained to a minimum average depth of:

- a) 200mm prior to farrowing
- b) 100mm post farrowing to **weaning**.

- 5.24 Bedding for **farrowing accommodation** in facilities where **gilts/sows** do not have continuous access to an **outdoor area** must:
- cover the **lying area**
  - be maintained to a minimum average depth of 50mm.

### **Farrowing accommodation**

- 5.25 **Farrowing accommodation** must be of sufficient size to allow the individual **gilt/sow** to lie down in a fully outstretched position, turn around easily, and access separate areas for resting, dunging, feeding and watering.
- 5.26 At least 48 hours prior to farrowing and while in the **farrowing accommodation**, each **gilt or sow** must be provided with at least 2kg of long straw or other **material suitable for nest building** in sufficient quantities to enable nest-building behaviour.
- 5.27 **Farrowing accommodation** must be managed to:
- reduce risk of crushing or smothering of piglets by the **sow**
  - provide thermal comfort to piglets.
- 5.28 **Farrowing accommodation** in facilities where **gilts/sows** do not have continuous access to an **outdoor area** must provide **suckling piglets** with a separate **creep area**:
- not accessible to the **sow**
  - of sufficient size to allow all piglets to lie down in a fully outstretched position at the same time.
- 5.29 **Farrowing accommodation** must be constructed and situated to minimise aggressive encounters between **gilts/sows**.
- 5.30 **Farrowing accommodation** that can restrict the **sow's** movement or **farrowing crates** are not permitted.

### **Environmental enrichment**

- 5.31 Pigs that do not have continuous access to an **outdoor area** must have continuous access to **environmental enrichment** materials and/or objects that allow pigs to express rooting, foraging and chewing behaviours.
- 5.32 **Environmental enrichment** must be:
- provided in sufficient quantity
  - evenly distributed throughout the facility
  - easy for pigs to access.
- 5.33 **Environmental enrichment** must be maintained, replaced or changed as necessary to ensure pigs maintain interest in the materials and/or objects.

## 6 Outdoor area

RSPCA standards do not require that pigs have access to an outdoor area, however, where the product label indicates that pigs have had access to an outdoor area, the following standards must be met.

- 6.01 Pigs must be given continuous access to the **outdoor area** from at least 2 weeks of age, unless:
- a) under **veterinary advice** for treatment of **injury** or disease
  - b) when temporarily confined for mating
  - c) **extreme weather** requires pigs to be temporarily kept indoors
  - d) within 24 hours of off-farm transport
  - e) from **weaning** up to 7 days post **weaning** to allow pigs to adjust to their new environment.
- 6.02 Where continuous access to the **outdoor area** is temporarily denied, the date, duration and reason for confinement must be recorded.
- 6.03 The **outdoor area** must be actively managed and maintained to:
- a) encourage pigs to access all areas
  - b) control disease and parasites
  - c) avoid **injury** or mortality
  - d) avoid accumulation of water (except for the purpose of **wallows**)
  - e) minimise the risk of fire.
- 6.04 **Breeding pigs** must be provided with **wallows**.
- 6.05 Where provided, **wallows** must be maintained so that they do not dry out or become overly muddy causing pigs to become entrapped.
- 6.06 Fences must be constructed and maintained to keep pigs (with the exception of unweaned piglets) within their designated **outdoor area**.

## 7 Stocking density

### Stocking density – Where pigs do not have continuous access to an outdoor area

- 7.01 For dry **gilts/sows**, a minimum **usable area** of 3.5m<sup>2</sup> and within which a minimum **lying area** of:
- 1.6m<sup>2</sup> for **gilts/sows** weighing up to 200kg
  - 1.9m<sup>2</sup> for **sows** weighing up to 250kg
  - 2.2m<sup>2</sup> for **sows** weighing up to 300kg
  - 2.4m<sup>2</sup> for **sows** weighing over 300kg.
- 7.02 For farrowing or lactating **sows**, a minimum **usable area** of 5.6m<sup>2</sup> per animal must be provided.
- 7.03 For **boars**, a minimum **lying area** of 2.2m<sup>2</sup> within a minimum **usable area** of:
- 10.5m<sup>2</sup> per **boar** for **boars** housed individually
  - 7.5m<sup>2</sup> per **boar** for **boars** housed in pairs or groups.
- 7.04 For **weaner/growing pigs**, a minimum **lying area** per pig based on estimated pig liveweight of (see Table 1):

Table 1: Minimum **lying area** per pig for **weaner/growing pigs**:

| Pig liveweight (kg) | Lying area per pig (m <sup>2</sup> ) | Pig liveweight (kg) | Lying area per pig (m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 10                  | 0.22                                 | 50                  | 0.65                                 |
| 15                  | 0.29                                 | 60                  | 0.73                                 |
| 20                  | 0.35                                 | 70                  | 0.81                                 |
| 25                  | 0.41                                 | 80                  | 0.89                                 |
| 30                  | 0.46                                 | 90                  | 0.96                                 |
| 35                  | 0.51                                 | 100                 | 1.03                                 |
| 40                  | 0.57                                 | 110                 | 1.10                                 |
| 45                  | 0.60                                 | 120                 | 1.16                                 |

### Stocking density – Where pigs have continuous access to an outdoor area

The RSPCA Australia Standards does not require that pigs have access to an outdoor area, however, where the product label indicates that pigs have had access to an outdoor area, the following standards must be met.

- 7.05 For **gilts, sows, and boars** (unless for **working boars** not in service), outdoor **stocking density** must not exceed an average of 30 **breeding pigs/ha**.
- 7.06 For **weaner/growing pigs** and individually-housed **working boars** not in service, a minimum **outdoor area** at least 1.5 times the size of the total internal **usable area** of the **shed/shelter** is required.
- 7.07 Up to 30 June 2021, total minimum **lying areas** for **shelters** must meet the following requirements:
- for **gilts/sows**, a minimum **lying area** of 1.5m<sup>2</sup> per **gilt/sow**
  - for farrowing and lactating **sows**, a minimum **lying area** of 4.3m<sup>2</sup> per **gilt/sow**
  - for **boars**, a minimum **lying area** of 1.5m<sup>2</sup> per **boar**.

7.08 From 1 July 2021, total minimum **lying areas** for **shelters** must meet the following requirements:

- a) for **gilts/sows**, a minimum **lying area** of 1.6m<sup>2</sup> per **gilt/sow**
- b) for farrowing and lactating **sows**, a minimum **lying area** of 4.3m<sup>2</sup> per **gilt/sow**
- c) for individually-housed **working boars** not in service, a minimum **lying area** of 2.2m<sup>2</sup> within a minimum **usable area** of 10.5m<sup>2</sup>
- d) for pair or group-housed **working boars** not in service, a minimum **lying area** of 2.2m<sup>2</sup> within a minimum **usable area** of 7.5m<sup>2</sup> per **boar**
- e) for **boars** kept with **gilts/sows**, a minimum **lying area** of 2.2m<sup>2</sup> per **boar**.

7.09 For **weaner/growing pigs**, total minimum **lying areas** for **sheds/shelters** based on minimum **lying area** per pig as determined by estimated pig liveweight of (see Table 2):

Table 2: Minimum **lying area** per pig for **weaner/growing pigs**:

| Pig liveweight (kg) | Lying area per pig (m <sup>2</sup> ) | Pig liveweight (kg) | Lying area per pig (m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 10                  | 0.22                                 | 50                  | 0.65                                 |
| 15                  | 0.29                                 | 60                  | 0.73                                 |
| 20                  | 0.35                                 | 70                  | 0.81                                 |
| 25                  | 0.41                                 | 80                  | 0.89                                 |
| 30                  | 0.46                                 | 90                  | 0.96                                 |
| 35                  | 0.51                                 | 100                 | 1.03                                 |
| 40                  | 0.56                                 | 110                 | 1.10                                 |
| 45                  | 0.60                                 | 120                 | 1.16                                 |

### Review of stocking density

7.10 Upon occurrence of disease, **injury** (including tail biting), aggression, other indicators of poor welfare, or where there is difficulty managing **shed**/environmental conditions, **stocking density** must be reviewed and, if necessary, **usable area** per pig increased to ensure the welfare of the pigs and to allow sufficient space:

- a) for separate feeding, drinking and dunging areas
- b) for resting, exercise, exploration, social and other behaviours
- c) to minimise aggressive encounters.

### Records

7.11 The following records must be maintained for each enclosure housing pigs:

- a) size of **shelter/shed/pen** as relevant
- b) **class/age/weight** of pig in each **shelter/shed/pen**
- c) number of pigs in each **shelter/shed/pen**

and, where an **outdoor area** is provided, for each **shed/shelter**:

- d) size of **outdoor area** available to pigs.

## 8 Animal husbandry and management

### Pig observation

- 8.01 Pigs' appearance, vocalisations and behaviour must be observed at least once daily, including:
- feeding and drinking
  - active, responsive, calm behaviour, low noise level
  - absence of abnormal behaviour, signs of aggressive behaviour
  - positive or neutral response to stockperson
  - use of **environmental enrichment**
  - signs of disease, **injury** or distress
  - body condition, skin condition**, absence of manure on the body
  - foot problems, **lameness** or other **locomotion disorders**
  - signs of pain and/or discomfort (including in **sows** following mating, **artificial insemination** or farrowing)
- 8.02 Where a problem that may affect pig welfare is identified during pig observations:
- prompt action must be taken to remedy the problem
  - nature of the problem must be recorded
  - nature of the corrective action must be recorded
  - date the problem was identified must be recorded
  - date action taken must be recorded.
- 8.03 Pig observations must be increased during farrowing and lactation and during periods of adverse environmental conditions and/or other welfare/health concerns.

### Husbandry procedures

- 8.04 The following husbandry procedures are not permitted:
- physical (surgical) castration
  - nose ringing
  - tail docking
  - teeth clipping.
- 8.05 Where tusk trimming is required, it must:
- not expose the **pulp chamber**
  - be conducted using embryotomy wire
  - be conducted to leave at least 2cm of tusk above the gum line
  - be conducted using sedation.

### Pig identification

- 8.06 Up to 31 December 2019, where ear notching is required, it must only be carried out:
- to identify potential breeding **gilts**
  - on piglets <7 days of age
  - using ear notching equipment that is clean.
- 8.07 From 1 January 2020, ear notching is not permitted.
- 8.08 Where ear tagging is required:
- the tagging equipment must be clean
  - the tag must be aimed at the centre of the pig's ear between the ridges of cartilage and away from veins

- c) the tag must move freely once placed
- d) a replacement tag must, where possible, be placed in an existing hole.

8.09 Where tattoo branding is required:

- a) the tattoo equipment must be clean
- b) the tattoo equipment must have all needles intact.

### **Group housing**

8.10 Pigs must be group housed, with the exception of farrowing **sows**, **boars**, and any pigs temporarily isolated for insemination or veterinary reasons.

8.11 Group size must ensure pigs have sufficient space:

- a) for separate feeding, drinking and dunging areas
- b) for resting, exercise, exploration, and social behaviour
- c) to all lie down in a fully outstretched position at the same time
- d) to minimise aggressive encounters.

### **Management of piglets**

8.12 Where **cross-fostering** of piglets is required:

- a) it must only occur for the health or welfare of the piglets and/or **sow**
- b) in a manner that ensures the ongoing health and welfare of the piglets and **sow**.

8.13 Where used, a **foster sow** is only permitted to wean:

- a) one other litter immediately after her own piglets have been weaned or
- b) a maximum of two consecutive litters if her own piglets were removed from her within 48 hours of farrowing.

8.14 Where **split suckling** is practiced, larger piglets must not be removed from the **sow** for more than two hours at a time.

8.15 Where piglets are weaned (or **split weaning** is practiced), they must be at least 21 days of age, unless under **veterinary advice** for the health or welfare of the piglets and/or **sow**.

### **Management of weaner/growing pigs**

8.16 Once stable groups have been formed, the mixing of unfamiliar pigs must be minimised.

### **Breeding management**

8.17 **Gilts** must be a minimum of 30 weeks of age prior to mating.

8.18 Where **service pens** are used, all matings must be supervised.

8.19 Where used, **service pens** must have a minimum **usable area** of 10.5m<sup>2</sup>.

8.20 Where used, **artificial insemination (AI) pens** must not confine the **gilt/sow** for a period longer than 24 hours post insemination.

8.21 Where used, **mating stalls** must only confine the **gilt/sow** for the minimum time period required to carry out the **artificial insemination** procedure.

- 8.22 **Gilts/sows** must be observed in the days immediately following mating or **artificial insemination** for signs of aggression.
- 8.23 In facilities where **gilts/sows** do not have continuous access to an outdoor area, **gilts/sows** must not be moved to farrowing accommodation any more than 5 days prior to the due date.
- 8.24 **Gilts/sows** must not be induced to farrow unless under **veterinary advice** for the health or welfare of the piglets and/or **gilt/sow**.
- 8.25 Where **gilts/sows** are induced to farrow, this must be recorded.
- 8.26 In facilities where **gilts/sows** do not have continuous access to an **outdoor area**, **sows** must be removed from the **farrowing accommodation** as soon as possible following **weaning**.

#### **Gilt/sow group management**

- 8.27 **Gilt/sow** groups must be actively managed to reduce aggression.

#### **Boar management**

- 8.28 **Boars** must be raised in groups at least until **sexual maturity** is reached.
- 8.29 For the first few services, young **working boars** must not be exposed to large and/or aggressive **sows**.
- 8.30 **Working boars** must be housed in familiar pairs or groups, unless aggression occurs.
- 8.31 **Working boars** in facilities where **boars** do not have continuous access to an **outdoor area** must:
- a) at least have nose to nose contact with other pigs
  - b) be provided with the opportunity to mate (natural or artificial) or exercise outside the **pen** at least once per week.

#### **Other management or husbandry procedures**

- 8.32 Routine management or husbandry procedures that directly impact animal welfare and are not specified in these Standards must not be performed unless prior approval has been obtained from RSPCA Australia.

## 9 Animal handling (on farm, during transport, at abattoir)

- 9.01 Pigs must be handled in a manner that avoids pain, suffering or distress.
- 9.02 Pigs must be handled calmly and quietly and with an awareness of the animal's natural **flight zone**.
- 9.03 Pigs must not be:
- lifted by the tail, head, ears, neck, or skin
  - thrown or dropped
  - hit or kicked
  - dragged.
- 9.04 Pigs (with the exception of **suckling piglets** and **weaners** up to 15kg) must:
- not be lifted off the ground by one or more legs
  - be lifted off the ground by supporting the pig's full body weight.
- 9.05 **Suckling piglets** and **weaners** up to 15kg lifted by a leg or legs, must:
- be picked up by the hind leg(s)
  - not be snatched or swung
  - be supported under the chest if held for more than 15 seconds
  - be placed front feet first.
- 9.06 Dogs, electric goads, or other harmful implements must not be used on pigs.
- 9.07 Where handling aids are required to move pigs, these must only consist of flappers, backing boards, rattlers and other gentle handling aids.

## 10 Euthanasia (on farm, during transport, at abattoir)

- 10.01 Pigs must be **euthanased** in a manner that avoids pain, suffering or distress.
- 10.02 Pigs that are sick, injured, and/or unable to walk ('downer pigs'), and will not recover must be **euthanased** promptly *in situ*.
- 10.03 The permitted methods for **euthanasia** of individual pigs are:
- for all pigs: intravenous administration of a single lethal dose of a euthanasia solution containing barbiturates
  - for all pigs: penetrating captive bolt in the **frontal position** of sufficient calibre and bolt length to kill the pig immediately on the first attempt
  - for **weaner pigs** up to 30kg: non-penetrating captive bolt in the **frontal position** of sufficient calibre to instantly **stun** the pig, followed immediately by bleeding out while still unconscious to cause death
  - for all pigs: firearm in the **temporal** or **frontal position** of sufficient calibre to kill the pig immediately on the first attempt
  - for **suckling piglets** only: manually applied blunt force trauma to the head of sufficient force to kill the piglet immediately on the first attempt.
- 10.04 Where necessary, a restraint device must be used to prevent movement in smaller pigs and piglets during **euthanasia**.
- 10.05 The **euthanasia** device must be designed, manufactured, maintained and operated to ensure humane and effective **stunning** and/or killing.
- 10.06 Pigs must be checked promptly to ensure they are dead, evidenced by all of the following signs: a limp carcass, no rhythmic breathing, no vocalisation, absence of spontaneous eye blinking and **corneal** reflex, relaxed jaw and limp tongue.
- 10.07 Where the **euthanasia** method has not resulted in immediate loss of consciousness and subsequent death:
- the method must be immediately repeated or another permitted method must be immediately applied
  - equipment and/or method which resulted in failure must be checked and adjusted to correct any fault.
- 10.08 **Euthanasia** methods not specified in these Standards must not be performed without prior approval from RSPCA Australia.

## 11. Loading, transport and unloading

**NOTE:** This section applies to all pig loading, transport and unloading including that from the property of birth, to a growing facility or an abattoir.

- 11.01 Only **transporters** that have been assessed by RSPCA Certified and shown to comply with these loading and transport standards may be used to transport RSPCA Certified pigs.
- 11.02 **Transporters** must provide information relevant to these standards promptly to RSPCA Certified upon request.
- 11.03 **Transporters** must have emergency arrangements in place that include out of hours contacts and standard procedures for protecting pig welfare in the case of vehicle breakdowns, unexpected delays, accidents, and other circumstances that may affect the welfare of the pigs during the **journey**.
- 11.04 Persons involved in the handling, loading, transport and unloading of pigs must:
- meet on-farm biosecurity procedures
  - be aware of and be able to implement emergency arrangements.
- 11.05 Pigs must not be transported to/from a saleyard or other collection point not specifically permitted under these Standards.
- 11.06 The following **classes** of pig must not be transported:
- gilts/sows** more than 80 days pregnant
  - lactating **sows** with piglets.
- 11.07 An assessment of pigs must be made to confirm that they are **fit for the intended journey**:
- by the consignor, before assembly for transport and
  - by the driver of the transport vehicle, at loading.
- 11.08 Any pig rejected from transport as not **fit for the intended journey** must be promptly treated or immediately **euthanased**.
- 11.09 Where **growing pigs** and **breeding pigs** are transported, they must:
- not be off feed for more than 20 hours
  - not be off water for more than 20 hours.
- 11.10 Where **weaner pigs** >6 weeks old are transported, they must:
- not be off feed for more than 20 hours
  - not be off water for more than 12 hours
- 11.11 Where **weaner pigs** ≤6 weeks old are transported:
- they must not be off feed for more than 12 hours
  - they must not be off water for more than 8 hours
  - the floor of the transport vehicle must be completely and evenly covered with dry, clean bedding to a minimum average depth of 10cm
  - the transport vehicle must provide protection from cold, heat, wind, and rain.
- 11.12 A **journey** must be completed within the maximum time off water specified in these Standards for the **class** of pig being transported.
- 11.13 Access roads and loading areas on farm and at the destination must be well-maintained to provide a level and compacted surface for the transport vehicle.

- 11.14 Where pigs are moved from their **shed, shelter** or **pen** to a **loading pen** prior to transport:
- stocking density in the **loading pen** must at least meet the minimum **lying area** requirement per pig within the **shed** or **shelter** for that **class** of pig unless loading commences within 4 hours of the first pig entering the **loading pen** in which case stocking density in the **loading pen** must at least allow all pigs to lie down on their sternums ( $0.019 \times \text{liveweight}^{0.67} \text{ m}^2/\text{pig}$ ) at the same time (see Table 3)
  - pigs must not spend more than 24 hours prior to commencement of loading in the **loading pen**.
- 11.15 Mixing of unfamiliar pigs and/or pigs of differing sizes must be minimised at all stages of assembly, loading and unloading.
- 11.16 Where mixing is unavoidable, precautions must be taken to minimise aggression.
- 11.17 RSPCA Certified pigs destined for slaughter must:
- be identified as such prior to leaving the **site**
  - remain identifiable during transport, at **lairage**, and during and after slaughter.

### Loading/unloading

- 11.18 Pigs must have access to water until immediately before loading commences.
- 11.19 Ramps, races, laneways and holding areas must be designed, constructed and maintained to facilitate movement of pigs, including:
- minimising right-angle bends
  - avoiding sharp protrusions and sharp edges
  - providing non-slip flooring
  - minimising noise
  - allowing pigs to walk side by side.
- 11.20 Ramps for loading and unloading pigs must be:
- of a slope no greater than 20 degrees
  - securely fixed to the ground to prevent movement
  - securely fixed or aligned with the transport vehicle to avoid gaps
  - fitted with solid ramp walls to prevent pigs escaping or their legs protruding.
- 11.21 Action must be taken to avoid **heat stress** or **cold stress** to pigs at loading/unloading, during transport and while the vehicle is stationary.
- 11.22 Once loaded, pigs must be transported directly to their destination without off-loading and re-loading.

### Transport

- 11.23 The transport vehicle must be designed, constructed and maintained to:
- prevent sharp protrusions and sharp edges
  - provide non-slip flooring
  - minimise noise
  - be fit for the purpose of transporting pigs.
- 11.24 Pigs must have sufficient headroom in the transport vehicle to travel in a natural standing position without touching overhead structures.
- 11.25 Transport vehicles must provide sufficient floor space to allow all pigs to lie down on their sternums ( $0.019 \times \text{liveweight}^{0.67} \text{ m}^2/\text{pig}$ ) at the same time (see Table 3).

Table 3: Maximum stocking density on transport vehicle based on 12.5 x 2.4m deck

| Average weight | m <sup>2</sup> /pig | Number of pigs per deck | Pigs per 3m pen |  | Average weight | m <sup>2</sup> /pig | Number of pigs per deck | Pigs per 3m pen |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 10             | 0.09                | 333                     | 80              |  | 150            | 0.55                | 54                      | 13              |
| 20             | 0.14                | 214                     | 51              |  | 160            | 0.57                | 52                      | 12              |
| 30             | 0.19                | 157                     | 37              |  | 170            | 0.59                | 50                      | 12              |
| 40             | 0.22                | 136                     | 32              |  | 180            | 0.62                | 48                      | 11              |
| 50             | 0.26                | 115                     | 27              |  | 190            | 0.64                | 46                      | 11              |
| 60             | 0.30                | 100                     | 24              |  | 200            | 0.66                | 45                      | 10              |
| 70             | 0.33                | 90                      | 21              |  | 220            | 0.70                | 42                      | 10              |
| 80             | 0.36                | 83                      | 20              |  | 240            | 0.75                | 40                      | 9               |
| 90             | 0.39                | 76                      | 18              |  | 250            | 0.77                | 39                      | 9               |
| 100            | 0.42                | 71                      | 17              |  | 260            | 0.79                | 38                      | 9               |
| 110            | 0.44                | 68                      | 16              |  | 280            | 0.83                | 36                      | 8               |
| 120            | 0.47                | 63                      | 15              |  | 300            | 0.87                | 34                      | 8               |
| 130            | 0.50                | 60                      | 14              |  | 350            | 0.96                | 31                      | 7               |
| 140            | 0.52                | 57                      | 13              |  | 400            | 1.05                | 28                      | 6               |

11.26 Pigs must be observed for **injury** or distress:

- on the transport vehicle immediately before departure
- within the first hour of the **journey**
- at least every 3 hours following the first hour of the **journey**, or at each driver rest stop, whichever comes first
- at each driver or vehicle change-over stop.

11.27 Pigs must be observed for travel sickness.

11.28 If travel sickness is likely or has previously been observed in pigs, the removal of feed prior to loading must be managed accordingly.

11.29 Where transport mortalities and morbidities occur:

- these must be promptly reported to the consignor with any problems identified
- action must be taken by the consigner to address problems identified.

## Records

11.30 A record of loading and transport must be maintained, including:

- time that feed and water were withdrawn
- time that loading commenced and concluded
- number and **class** of pigs loaded
- time of departure from farm
- time of arrival at destination
- time unloading commenced and concluded
- transport mortalities
- any problems identified (including during pig observations) and action taken.

## 12. Slaughter

- 12.01 Only **abattoirs** that have been assessed by RSPCA Certified and shown to comply with these slaughter standards may be used to slaughter RSPCA Certified pigs.
- 12.02 **Abattoirs** must provide information relevant to these standards promptly to RSPCA Certified upon request.
- 12.03 The **abattoir** must nominate a designated person (or persons) who is:
- responsible for the oversight of animal welfare at the facility
  - responsible for ensuring that animal welfare monitoring and assessment is part of the **abattoir** quality assurance system
  - on **site** when pigs are being unloaded, handled and slaughtered
  - knowledgeable in all facets of pig handling and slaughter
  - responsible for monitoring adherence to these Standards
  - responsible for ensuring that breaches of animal welfare legislation are reported to the relevant regulator.
- 12.04 A Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system must be installed and operational in the slaughter facility to allow a clear view and recording of live animal processes, including:
- at unloading
  - in **lairage**
  - at **stunning** (including the raceway approaching the stunner)
  - upon entering a gas stunning system (as relevant)
  - at **sticking**.
- 12.05 Procedures for the use and review of CCTV footage must be in place and include at least the following:
- regular reviewing by authorised staff to ensure these Standards are maintained
  - availability for viewing (both stored and real-time footage) by RSPCA Certified
  - storage of footage for a minimum of 30 days.
- 12.06 **Stunning** and slaughter equipment must be:
- designed, manufactured, maintained and operated to ensure humane and effective restraint, **stunning** and killing
  - checked at least daily to ensure it is operating effectively.
- 12.07 A back-up **stunning** and slaughter method must be immediately available should the system fail.
- 12.08 Procedures must be in place to manage equipment failure and other breakdowns that may impact pig welfare.
- 12.09 Measures must be in place to avoid disturbance or distress to pigs including from activity on the slaughter floor and in the processing area.
- 12.10 Methods of **stunning** and/or killing not specified in these Standards must not be performed without prior approval from RSPCA Australia.

### Lairage

- 12.11 Upon arrival at the **abattoir**, pigs must be immediately placed in a **lairage** area and rested for a minimum of 2 hours prior to slaughter.

12.12 The **lairage** area must:

- a) be covered to provide **shelter** and shade
- b) be fitted with cooling systems
- c) be appropriately lit to inspect pigs
- d) provide non-slip flooring
- e) be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid **injury** to pigs and
- f) ensure segregation of RSPCA Certified pigs from other pigs.

12.13 The **lairage** area must provide **pens**:

- a) of sufficient size or number to avoid mixing of unfamiliar pigs
- b) of sufficient size or number to reduce aggression among pigs
- c) of sufficient size to allow all pigs to lie down at the same time.

12.14 Pigs in **lairage** must be provided with clean, drinkable water at all times.

12.15 Pigs must be observed for pain, **injury** or disease as they walk off the truck and while in the **lairage** area.

12.16 Where a problem is identified during pig observations:

- a) prompt action must be taken to remedy the problem
- b) nature of the problem must be recorded
- c) nature of the corrective action must be recorded
- d) date and time the problem was identified must be recorded.

12.17 Dead pigs must be removed promptly and disposed of in a safe and hygienic manner.

12.18 Where pigs in **lairage** are unable to be slaughtered within 20 hours of their last feed they must be provided with palatable feed in a manner that aims to minimise aggression.

12.19 A record of **lairage** must be maintained, including:

- a) segregation of RSPCA Certified pigs
- b) slaughter schedule (including start of slaughter)
- c) **lairage** mortalities
- d) feed provision where required.

## Infrastructure

12.20 Races and laneways, the restraint device and **stunning** unit must be designed, constructed and maintained to:

- a) minimise right-angle bends
- b) prevent sharp protrusions and sharp edges
- c) avoid shadows, obstructions, moving objects and other distractions that may cause pigs to balk
- d) provide non-slip flooring
- e) minimise noise
- f) allow pigs to walk side by side unless just prior to restraint for **stunning**.

12.21 Where used, ramps must be of a slope no greater than 20 degrees.

12.22 Raceways leading up to the restraint device or stunning unit must have a means of removal of pigs if required.

12.23 Raceways leading up to the restraint device and the point of **stunning** must be well lit to encourage pigs to move forward.

## Stunning

12.24 Pigs must be **stunned** prior to slaughter using one of the following methods:

- a) electrical **stunning**/killing
- b) gas **stunning**.

12.25 Following **stunning**, each pig must be checked to ensure they are unconscious, evidenced by collapse of the animal, head and tongue hanging straight and limp, no rhythmic breathing, no **corneal reflex** and no natural blinking.

12.26 Where the **stun** has not been effective:

- a) the animal must be re-**stunned** or **euthanased** immediately
- b) corrective action must be implemented immediately, including equipment checks and adjustment.

## Penetrative captive-bolt stunning/killing

12.27 Use of penetrative captive-bolt **stunning** is only permitted as a back-up **stunning** method or in an emergency.

12.28 The penetrative captive bolt must be of sufficient capacity to kill the pig immediately on the first attempt.

12.29 The penetrative captive bolt must be placed in the **frontal position**.

## Electrical stunning/killing

12.30 Equipment and procedures for electrical **stunning** must ensure each pig is immediately rendered unconscious without receiving pre-**stun** shocks.

12.31 The correct voltage, current and application time must be delivered by the electrical **stunning**/killing device to ensure that every pig is **stunned**/killed.

12.32 The voltage and current indicators must always be visible to the operator of the electrical **stunning**/killing device.

12.33 Electrodes must be kept clean.

12.34 Batch **stunning**, where more than one pig is **stunned** before being bled out, is not permitted.

## Gas stunning/killing

12.35 From 1 January 2020, where pigs are **stunned** using carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), only **group-stunning** systems will be permitted.

12.36 Pigs must be able to stand comfortably within the gas stunning unit, without being on top of each other.

12.37 The average CO<sub>2</sub> concentration for the batch in the stunning unit must be at least 90% at the point of maximum gas concentration.

12.38 Pigs in the gas stunning unit must be conveyed to the point of maximum gas concentration within 30 seconds.

12.39 Pigs must remain in the gas at the point of maximum gas concentration for long enough to ensure they are unconscious at bleed-out and remain unconscious until death occurs.

## SLAUGHTER

- 12.40 The gas stunning unit must have alarms to monitor and alert staff to changes in gas level below 85% at the point of maximum gas concentration.
- 12.41 If the CO<sub>2</sub> level at the point of maximum concentration falls below 85%, pigs must not enter the gas stunning unit.
- 12.42 Staff must be available at all times to adjust gas concentration immediately when required.

### Bleeding out

- 12.43 Stunned pigs must be **stuck** to bleed out without regaining consciousness.
- 12.44 Where 100% **stunning** efficacy is not achieved (i.e. pig is conscious or regaining consciousness at bleed out and requires a re-stun):
- the pig must be re-**stunned** and bled out immediately
  - operations must cease immediately
  - no animals must be admitted to the stunning area
  - operating procedures must be reviewed to ensure effective **stunning** at recommencement of operations.

### Animal-based welfare assessment

- 12.45 The **abattoir** must have an internal animal-based welfare assessment system in place that:
- establishes and records **trigger levels** associated with the welfare outcomes in these Standards
  - ensures corrective action is taken when a **trigger level** is reached
  - ensures the nature of the corrective action is recorded
  - ensures a record is maintained of date/time corrective action was taken.
- 12.46 A sample of at least 50 individual RSPCA Certified pigs (or all pigs if daily total is <50) must be observed from **lairage** through to **stunning** for the following welfare outcomes:
- % of animals falling at unloading
  - % of animals falling in plant (from **lairage** through to **stunning**)
  - % of animals vocalising during handling (include: in the lead up to the **stunning** device and upon entering the restrainer)
  - % of animals vocalising during electrical **stunning**, if used
  - % of animals effectively **stunned** on first attempt (include as relevant: accurate wand placement, gas **stunning** unit not overloaded)
  - % of animals regaining consciousness at bleed out.
- 12.47 For the animal-based welfare assessment of 50 individual RSPCA Certified pigs:
- the frequency of sampling requires prior approval from RSPCA Certified
  - the **class** of pigs included in the sample must be recorded.

### Traceability

- 12.48 RSPCA Certified pigs must be identifiable from pigs from other sources at all times at **lairage** and during and after slaughter.
- 12.49 All carcasses (and product) from RSPCA Certified pigs must be checked for source identification and clearly marked as RSPCA Certified before leaving the **abattoir** floor.
- 12.50 Supporting documentation and evidence of physical separation of RSPCA Certified pig carcasses (and product) from other pig carcasses (and pork products) must be demonstrated.

END OF STANDARDS



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