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**RSPCA welfare  
standards for**

**pigs**

July 2008



Certification Mark

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# Introduction

The *RSPCA Welfare standards for pigs* are used to provide the only RSPCA-approved scheme for the rearing, handling, transport and slaughter of pigs. They take account of legislation, government welfare codes, scientific research, veterinary advice, recommendations of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) and the practical experience of the farming industry.

The standards are based upon the 'Five Freedoms' as defined by FAWC (hence the name 'Freedom Food' - see page iv). Although these 'freedoms' define ideal states, they provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of animal welfare on farm, in transit and at the place of slaughter, as well as representing an important element of farm assurance requirements.

- ▶ 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 or 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 care which avoid mental suffering.

These freedoms will be better provided for if those who have care of livestock practise:

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

## Guide to the use of the RSPCA welfare standards

- (i) At the head of each section the broad objectives of the welfare standards are described.
- (ii) The numbered requirements are the standards, all of which must be complied with.
- (iii) Boxed sections (indicated by ⓘ) give additional advice or may highlight areas where the standards will be reviewed in the future.
- (iv) It is assumed that all relevant legislation regarding farm animal husbandry and welfare on-farm, during transport, and at the abattoir, will be fully implemented in addition to the RSPCA welfare standards.
- (v) **Farmers are required by law to have a thorough knowledge of the 'Defra Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Pigs'.**

## Freedom Food Ltd

Freedom Food is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RSPCA, formed to implement these standards. Upon satisfactory inspection farmers, hauliers, slaughterers, processors and retailers may subscribe to the scheme and use the Freedom Food trademark. All participants are regularly assessed by Freedom Food Ltd. A charge is levied to cover inspection, administration and marketing costs. Participants are also randomly monitored by members of the RSPCA Farm Animals Department, free of charge.

It is the intention of Freedom Food Ltd to establish sister, franchise organisations in other countries working to the RSPCA welfare standards and therefore, in time, establish a common and consistent message for consumers around the world.

Freedom Food Ltd is non-profit making. Any surplus income will be used to fund research into farm animal welfare.

# Food and water

Livestock must have freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and promote a positive state of well-being. Feed and water must be distributed in such a way that livestock can eat and drink without undue competition.

## Food

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- FW 1.1 Pigs must be fed a wholesome diet which:
- is appropriate to their species
  - is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health
  - satisfies their nutritional needs.
- FW 1.2 Pigs must have access to food each day, except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon.
- FW 1.3 Producers must have an agreement with their feed compounder that they will supply information about constituents of compound feeds and feed supplements to the Freedom Food Assessor or RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer on request.
- FW 1.4 \* Where producers mix their own feed, a specification note or feed plan detailing the constituents of the feed must be made available to the Freedom Food Assessor or RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer on request.
- FW 1.5 \* No feedstuffs containing mammalian and avian derived protein are permitted, with the exception of milk and milk products.
- FW 1.6 As a general rule, no sow must, at any time, have a body condition score less than 2 and they must have a score of at least 3 by the 70<sup>th</sup> day of pregnancy.
- FW 1.7 Efforts must be made to avoid sudden changes in the type and quantity of food.
- FW 1.8 \* Foraging substrate must:
- be provided to all pigs
  - be topped up regularly (at least every 3 days), or feed pellets must be broadcast over the entire pen area at intervals of no greater than 1 week.
- FW 1.9 \* Pigs must be fed in ways that minimise bullying.
- FW 1.10 For ration feeding pigs in a trough, there must be enough feeding space (i.e. 1.1 times shoulder width) for all pigs to feed simultaneously.

- \* ** For sows, the use of electronic sow feeders (ESFs) can help to prevent bullying by offering protection during feeding. Studies also indicate that the use of ESFs can reduce aggression. However, care should be taken when using the equipment to ensure that procedures are in place in the event of a breakdown and/or loss of ear tag.**

**If a floor feeding system is adopted, the risk of bullying is greater and it is essential that feed is scattered over a wide area, to reduce the potential for bullying.**

## Food and water

FW 1.11 For ad lib feeding there must be a maximum of:

- a) 6 pigs per feed place – when using a dry feeder with no full head barriers between each feeding place
- b) 10 pigs per feed place – where there are full head barriers
- c) 14 pigs per feed place – where there is the opportunity to mix water with the feed (wet and dry feeders).

**i** A feed place is described as space required by a single pig whilst eating.

FW 1.12 If wet feeding of sows indoors is employed, head and shoulder barriers must be erected between each feeding place.

**i** Trial work on some circular reward-type feeders and practical experience of their use has indicated that providing 1 free-standing feeder for a maximum of 60 pigs works well in practice, and thus this figure is recommended (as a maximum) as guidance for Freedom Food producers using these types of feeder. However, when the feeder is not free-standing (e.g. if it is split by a dividing wall), or if meal is fed (as opposed to pellets), then it is recommended that the number of animals per feeder should be reduced to a maximum of 50.

FW 1.13 Where pigs are not fed on the ground floor, the feeders must be managed hygienically at all times.

FW 1.14 To prevent the introduction and potential spread of disease, procedures must be in place to prevent the contamination of stored animal feeds.

\* **i** Procedures to satisfy FW 1.14 may include the use of lids on feed storage bins and food hoppers.

FW 1.15 No piglets can be weaned from the sow before 28 days of age. The only exceptions are listed below:

- a) Under veterinary direction because the health or welfare of the sow or piglets would otherwise be adversely affected.
- b) The weaned piglets are to be moved into specialised housing which is completely emptied, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before the introduction of a new group, and which is separated from sow accommodation. In such cases, piglets may be weaned up to 7 days earlier (minimum of 21 days of age for any piglet) in order to maintain integrity of the batch management process and facilitate disease control.

**i** The earlier the weaning age of the piglets, the greater the chance of them suffering from welfare problems; therefore, a more careful system is required with respect to management and nutrition of the piglets.

FW 1.16 Medicated feedstuffs must be clearly identified and labelled as such.

## Water

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FW 2.1 All pigs must have continuous access to an adequate supply of clean, fresh drinking water each day, except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon.

FW 2.2 One drinking place must be provided per 10 pigs.

\*  **A drinking place is defined as space required by a single pig whilst drinking. Drinking places should be spaced sufficiently to allow all places to be occupied at once without interference from pigs at the other drinking places.**

\*  **As a guide, a 'minibowl' or La Buvette-type drinker are both considered to be equivalent to a nipple drinker i.e. one drinking place.**

FW 2.3 \* Where water is provided in troughs, the following space allowances must be provided:

<b>Weight of pig (kg)</b>	<b>Maximum no. of pigs per m of trough</b>
< 25	100
25 to 40	84
> 40	67

\*  **Troughs should be designed, constructed and maintained to ensure an even distribution of clean water within the trough. The water should fill the full length of the trough that is used in the calculation of the required trough length for the number of pigs present.**

FW 2.4 Where wet and dry feeders are used (i.e. both the feeder and drinker are within a single pig place), an additional drinker must be supplied in the pen.

FW 2.5 Water troughs, bowls and nipples must be:

- a) kept thoroughly clean
- b) managed in a way that ensures they are capable of dispensing water at all times.

## Food and water

FW 2.6 Drinkers must have flow rates of sufficient levels to meet the needs of each class of pig.

\*  **Where used, nipple drinkers should provide the following flow rates:**

<b>Class of pig</b>	<b>Flow rate (ml/min)</b>
Newly weaned	300
Up to 20kg	500 to 1000
20kg to 40kg	1000 to 1500
Finishing pigs up to 100kg	1000 to 1500
Sows and gilts – pre-service and in-pig	2000
Sows and gilts – in lactation	2000
Boars	2000

FW 2.7 Provision must be made to ensure an emergency supply of suitable drinking water in case normal supplies fail, e.g. due to freezing, drought, etc.

# Environment

The environment in which livestock are kept must take into account their welfare needs and be designed to protect them from physical and thermal discomfort, fear and distress, and allow them to perform their natural behaviour.

- E 1.1 Where management systems, designs or layout of facilities not covered in the RSPCA Welfare standards are being employed or considered, these must be referred to, and discussed with, the RSPCA Farm Animals Department before they can be considered for Freedom Food certification.

## Buildings

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- E 2.1 For all accommodation, the key points relating to welfare must be recorded on the farm site plan, and amended as necessary.
- E 2.2 \* If practical, records relating to E 2.1 must be readily available to all relevant staff for each building.
- E 2.3 \* Records relating to E 2.1 must include:
- a) total area
  - b) number of pigs in relation to age, weight, feeding and drinking, and bedding space.
- E 2.4 \* In both indoor and outdoor systems, there must be no features of the environment likely to cause injury or distress to the animal.

** Injury is defined as damage severe enough for the formation of granular scar tissue and to an extent significantly greater than would be caused by accidental bumps and scratches.**

- E 2.5 Except where preservatives with an insecticidal role are used, pigs must not come into contact with toxic fumes or surfaces, for example from paints, wood preservatives or disinfectants.
- E 2.6 All electrical installations at mains voltage must be:
- a) inaccessible to pigs
  - b) well insulated
  - c) safeguarded from rodents
  - d) properly earthed
  - \* e) tested at least once a year or each time the building is subjected to pressure washing, by a qualified or competent person.

\* ** Electrical installations have to be tested every 3 years as part of the Periodic Inspection Report, in order to meet legal requirements relating to electrical safety. However, at least once a year, the 'trip switch' should be tested to ensure it is in correct working order.**

- E 2.7 Internal surfaces of housing and pens must be made of materials that can be readily cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaced when necessary.

## Thermal environment and ventilation

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- E 3.1 \* Efforts must be made to ensure that the thermal environment is not so hot or so cold as to significantly affect production or cause distress.

\* **i** For guidance, recommended temperatures for various groups of pigs, at pig height, are:

<b>Pregnant sow in group</b>	15 to 20°C
<b>Lactating sow</b>	15 to 20°C
<b>Suckling pig first 72 hours</b>	25 to 28°C
<b>Suckling pig after 72 hours</b>	20 to 22°C
<b>Weaner first stage</b>	28°C in week one, reducing by 2°C per week
<b>Weaner second stage</b>	20 to 22°C
<b>Finisher</b>	15 to 18°C

**Note: Over-heating of sows pre-farrowing can pre-dispose them to mastitis and agalactia.**

**Note: The appropriate temperature will also depend on other factors such as air quality, relative humidity and system of production. The behaviour of the pigs should always be used as the ultimate indicator of whether the temperature is appropriate.**

- E 3.2 Effective ventilation of buildings to avoid high humidity, condensation and draughts must be ensured.

**i** Properly designed ventilation will permit the free circulation of air above pig height and avoid draughts at pig level. Effective ventilation is necessary, as pigs can be susceptible to respiratory diseases.

- E 3.3 Provisions must be made to ensure that, when pigs are housed, aerial contaminants do not reach a level at which they are noticeably unpleasant to a human observer.

**i** Inhalable dust should not exceed 10mg/m<sup>3</sup> and ammonia levels should not exceed 25ppm.

- E 3.4 Provisions must be made to protect pigs from heat stress.

**i** To achieve E 3.4, extra space may be required to allow pigs to lie apart in hot conditions, together with systems of ventilation or water misting.

- E 3.5 Where stock-keepers have access to a copy of the Defra (formerly MAFF) booklet, '*Heat Stress in Pigs: Solving the Problem*' (PB1316, 1993), they must:

- be familiar with its content
- adopt its recommendations where appropriate.

## Lying area/floors

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- E 4.1 \* Pigs kept indoors must be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area (see E 5.1):
- of solid construction (i.e. not perforated)
  - bedded to a sufficient extent to avoid discomfort
  - either sloped to provide drainage or bedded to a sufficient extent to provide a dry lying area.
- E 4.2 In service pens, the whole floor area must be kept dry or sufficient bedding provided to give an adequate grip during service.

## Space allowances

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- E 5.1 The minimum space allowances for growing pigs are as follows:

Live weight (kg)	Bedded lying area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
10	0.10	0.15
20	0.15	0.225
30	0.20	0.30
40	0.26	0.40
50	0.31	0.47
60	0.36	0.55
70	0.41	0.61
80	0.45	0.675
90	0.475	0.715
100	0.50	0.75
110	0.53	0.80

- E 5.2 Growing/finishing pigs in groups in straw yards must be provided with at least the following space allowances:

Weight (kg)	Total minimum space (m <sup>2</sup> ) required if mucked out at least monthly.	Total minimum space (m <sup>2</sup> ) required if bedding topped up regularly but not mucked out.
Weaners to 35	0.45	0.5
36 – 50	1.17	1.3
51 – 75	1.35	1.5
76 – 95	1.50	1.67
96 – 110	1.54	1.72

\*  A straw yard is a deep litter system that is mucked out less frequently than once a week.

\*  Space allowances in E 5.2 may be adjusted fractionally (maximum of 10% change) in the case of unusually large (above 100 pigs) group sizes.

- E 5.2.1 \* Where space allowances in E 5.2 are adjusted fractionally (maximum of 10% change), producers must be able to demonstrate that management procedures are in place to achieve such a change without pig welfare being adversely affected.

## Environment

E 5.2.2 \* For both indoor and outdoor production:

- a) sows must be given a minimum total floor space of 3.5m<sup>2</sup>/sow for mature adults, and 2.5m<sup>2</sup>/gilt for first and second parity animals
- b) the lying area must be a minimum of 1.5m<sup>2</sup>/sow for mature adults, and 1m<sup>2</sup>/gilt for first and second parity animals.

\*  **The total floor space given in E 5.2.2 may be fractionally altered by exception.**

E 5.2.3 \* Where space allowances in E 5.2.2 are adjusted fractionally, producers must be able to demonstrate that management procedures are in place to achieve such a change without pig welfare being adversely affected.

E 5.3 Adult boar pens must:

- a) be of such dimensions so as to enable animals to turn round easily and lie fully stretched
- b) have a total minimum lying area of 7.5m<sup>2</sup>.

E 5.4 Service pens must be at least 10.5m<sup>2</sup> in area, in order to be large enough to allow courtship and mating.

E 5.5 \* All pigs must be free to turn round without difficulty at all times (with the exception of E 6.2).

\*  **At present the RSPCA Welfare Standards for Pigs do not contain any specific requirements for the size of farrowing huts/arcs on outdoor breeding units beyond that laid down in E 5.2.2 and E 5.5. However, when selecting arcs, producers should be aware of the different size requirements of gilts and sows (including height requirements), and the importance of ensuring that the ventilation and insulation provided is appropriate. The RSPCA will review the need for more guidance on this issue in the future.**

E 5.6 Pigs must not be closely confined except in the following circumstances, and even then only for the shortest period of time necessary:

- a) for the duration of any examination, routine test, blood sampling, treatment or operation carried out for veterinary purposes
- b) while they are being fed on any particular occasion
- c) for the purpose of marking, washing or weighing
- d) while accommodation is being cleaned
- e) during the procedure of artificial insemination
- f) while they are awaiting loading for transportation.

E 5.7 Pigs must be kept in stable groups with as little mixing as possible, but subdivision is permitted as pigs grow.

E 5.8 Particular care must be taken to prevent bullying amongst sows and gilts kept in groups.

 **When sows and gilts are kept indoors aggression can present a severe problem, particularly if unfamiliar animals are mixed.**

## Environment

- E 5.9 If pigs have fought to the extent that injury has resulted:
- a plan must be devised and implemented to change environmental and/or management factors in order to prevent injury
  - the plan must be written in the VHP (see H 1.1).

\* **i** Environmental enrichment, reducing stocking density or changing the feeding regime may help to reduce fighting and consequent injury. Research also indicates that pen shape can affect aggression, with post mixing aggression being lower in square and rectangular pens than in circular pens. For pregnant sows, factors related to competition for food are considered to be of major importance for the level of aggression.

## Farrowing systems

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- E 6.1 \* In all farrowing systems, sows must be settled into clean, comfortable farrowing quarters before the piglets are due to be born.
- E 6.2 \* In all farrowing systems, farrowing accommodation must allow sows to turn around easily from 5 days after farrowing.
- E 6.3 \* In all farrowing systems clean, dry straw which is well shaken up or other suitable bedding must:
- be provided
  - be evenly distributed, for the sows' comfort.
- E 6.3.1 \* Prior to farrowing, materials must be provided in sufficient quantities, and be of a type, which allows sows to carry out their natural nesting behaviours.

\* **i** Sawdust or sand will not satisfy E 6.3.1

- E 6.4 Sows must not be placed in farrowing crates more than 5 days before the expected farrowing date.
- E 6.5 The space available to sows within farrowing crates must be long enough to allow the sows to lie in a fully outstretched comfortable position, which will depend on the weight of the sow.

**i** For guidance, the minimum crate length which needs to be available to the sow to allow her to adopt a comfortable posture is:

Sow weight (kg)	Length (mm)
150	1,552
200	1,707
250	1,837
300	1,951
350 or more	2,300

- E 6.6 Any crossbar at the top of a crate must be a minimum of 150mm above the back of a sow when standing in the normal posture.

## Environment

- E 6.7 \* In indoor systems, where part of the farrowing pen is slatted, this must not represent more than 25% of the entire floor area of the pen, i.e. at least 75% of the farrowing pen floor must be solid.
- E 6.8 \* For both indoor and outdoor systems, farrowing quarters must be designed to offer some form of protection for piglets from crushing.

\*  **Research suggests that access to appropriate quantities of nesting material (see E 6.3.1) can reduce crushing from sows rolling on the piglets.**

**In indoor loose farrowing systems, support features such as mushroom/ball shaped flexible plastic installations in the floor, and horizontal or bowed rails, can provide piglets with an escape zone, thus helping to reduce crushing of the piglets by the sow.**

- E 6.9 For indoor production, a temperature suitable for piglets must be maintained by provision of supplementary heating.

## Environmental enrichment

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- E 7.1 Pigs must, at all times, have access to straw or other suitable media such as wood chips or sawdust in sufficient quantities to allow and encourage proper expression of rooting, pawing, mouthing and chewing behaviours.
- E 7.2 Where pigs develop stereotyped behaviour, or abnormal behaviours that injure other pigs, e.g. tail, flank, ear or vulva biting, they must immediately be given additional stimuli to encourage foraging.
- E 7.3 When incidents of stereotyped behaviour occur, the stock-keeper must seek ways of avoiding/eliminating the problem.
- E 7.4 Each incident of stereotyped behaviour must be recorded, together with the preventative action taken.
- E 7.5 If abnormal behaviours develop repeatedly in any particular pen a programme of modification and enrichment must be:
- agreed with the veterinary surgeon and the RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer
  - implemented promptly
  - \* pursued and re-amended until the problem is overcome.

 **Avoidance/reduction of stereotypic or abnormal behaviour may be aided by topping up foraging substrate daily, by scattering feed pellets not less than twice weekly, or by otherwise sustaining foraging behaviour in order to channel the animals' motivations away from abnormal behaviour.**

## Lighting

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- E 8.1 In all pig housing, adequate lighting, whether fixed or portable, must be available to enable them to be thoroughly inspected at any time.
- E 8.2 In each period of 24 hours, housed pigs must have access to an area that provides:
- a) a period of at least 8 hours continuous light with a minimum intensity of 50 lux, except that this may be lowered to correspond with the duration of the natural daylight period at the time if this is shorter
  - b) a period of continuous darkness of at least 6 hours, except that this may be lowered to correspond with the duration of the natural darkness period at the time if this is shorter.

**i** 50 lux is bright enough to allow a person of normal eyesight to read standard newspaper without difficulty.

- E 8.3 \* Records must be kept of lighting regimes.

## Outdoor production

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- E 9.1 Producers must demonstrate that due regard has been given to the soil and site suitability prior to occupying a site.

**i** Ways to achieve E 9.1 might include consulting soil scientists, agronomists, experienced pig veterinarians and/or soil/geological data.

- E 9.2 A follow-on site/location must be identifiable.
- E 9.3 The stocking density for outdoor production must not exceed 25 to 30 adult animals per hectare (10 to 12 per acre).
- E 9.3.1 In relation to E 9.3, lower stocking densities must be employed if site conditions deem this necessary.

**i** Stocking density should allow pigs sufficient space for exercise, exploration and social behaviour, and maintenance of satisfactory conditions underfoot.

- E 9.4 Sites must not be used for farrowing paddocks for more than 2 years.
- E 9.4.1 Land used for farrowing paddocks must not be used again for farrowing sows for at least 6 months.
- E 9.5 After each cycle:
- a) farrowing accommodation must be moved to fresh ground
  - b) remaining bedding must be burnt or removed from the site.

## Environment

E 9.6 In outdoor systems, all pigs must have access to a covered shelter which:

- a) is windproof and waterproof
- b) provides sufficient space to allow all pigs to lie down comfortably at the same time (see E 5.2.2)

**i** In some situations, for example newly mixed groups of dry sows/gilts, it may be necessary to provide more than one shelter to ensure that no pigs are forced to lie outside (e.g. due to reluctance to join the main group in one shelter).

E 9.7 \* For outdoor production during summer conditions, facilities must be provided to minimise the risk of sunburn and heat stress.

**i** Ways in which sunburn and heat stress can be managed include:

- i) provision of well-managed mud wallows
- ii) provision of cool, spacious, well-ventilated shaded areas which have sufficient space to allow all pigs to lie down simultaneously and to lie apart from each other if they wish to
- iii) provision of showers/sprinklers, although these only cool the animals and do not offer protection from the sun.

E 9.8 When electric fencing is used, outdoor pigs must be introduced to it for a minimum of 48 hours in a purpose-built training enclosure.

# Management

A high degree of caring and responsible management and stockmanship is vital to ensure good animal welfare. Managers and stock-keepers must be thoroughly trained, skilled and competent in animal husbandry and welfare, and have a good working knowledge of their system and the livestock under their care.

- M 1.0 \* All records and other documentation that the *RSPCA Welfare Standards for Pigs* require the producer to keep and maintain, must be made available to the Freedom Food Assessor and RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer.

## Managers

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- M 1.1 Personnel with responsibility for the management of approved establishments must be named and recorded.
- M 1.2 Managers must ensure that all stock-keepers:
- have access to a copy of the current version of the '*RSPCA Welfare Standards for Pigs*'
  - are familiar with its content
  - understand and apply its content.
- M 1.3 Managers must:
- develop and implement a suitable training programme for stock-keepers with regular updates and opportunities for continuing professional development and keep records of such training within the VHP (see H 1.1)
  - ensure that the VHP is implemented and regularly updated, and that the required data is recorded appropriately
  - maintain records of production data and use of medication – these records must include documentation on all incoming and outgoing stock on the farm as well as types and quantities of medicines used. It is a legal requirement to record all medicines that are administered.
  - develop and implement a transport plan to Freedom Food approved abattoirs which includes a method of identification of animals (see H 1.23.3) and minimises waiting time for the pigs
  - ensure that all staff are aware of water sources for use by the fire brigade, and access to them is available at all times.
- M 1.4 Managers must develop and implement plans and precautions to cope with emergencies such as fire, flood or interruption of supplies, and provide an emergency action board sited in a prominent position, which must include:
- the procedures to be followed by those discovering such an emergency
  - the location of water sources for use by the fire brigade
  - a map grid reference and postcode for the location of the unit.
- M 1.5 \* Should an emergency require the removal of livestock to unregistered premises, Freedom Food Ltd and the RSPCA Farm Animals Department must be informed immediately.

## Stock-keepers

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- M 2.1 Stock-keepers must understand the times and circumstances in which pigs are prone to welfare problems on their own unit.
- M 2.2 Stock-keepers must be able to demonstrate their competence in recognising and dealing with problems relating to M 2.1.
- M 2.3 Prior to being given responsibility for the welfare of livestock, stock-keepers must be given appropriate training for their specific area of responsibility.
- M 2.4 All stock-keepers must be able to:
- a) recognise signs of normal behaviour, abnormal behaviour and fear
  - b) recognise signs of common diseases and understand their prevention and control, and know when to seek veterinary help.
- M 2.5 \* Stock-keepers must have appropriate knowledge and understanding, specific to their area of work.

- \* **i** **Examples of specific areas of knowledge include:**
- a) **body condition scoring in accordance with the Defra (formerly MAFF) booklet ‘*Condition Scoring of Pigs*’ (See Appendix 4)**
  - b) **the normal gait of a pig, and foot care and treatment**
  - c) **farrowing and the care of the newborn piglet**
  - d) **humane methods of handling and loading, as detailed in the section on handling.**

- M 2.6 \* Stock-keepers must have knowledge of, and be able to demonstrate, competence in handling animals in a positive and compassionate manner.
- M 2.7 \* Stock-keepers must have knowledge of, and be able to demonstrate, their proficiency in procedures that have the potential to cause suffering e.g. injections.

## Handling

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- M 3.1 \* Interactions between pigs and stock keepers must be positive and considerate.
- M 3.2 Pigs must be handled quietly and firmly, with care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress.
- M 3.3 Pigs must not be pulled or dragged by the tail, ears, limbs or any other part of the body.
- M 3.4 \* The presence and use of electric goads on any Freedom Food accredited unit is prohibited.

## Identification

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- M 4.1 Where it is necessary to mark pigs for permanent identification there must not be any method used other than:
- a) ear tagging
  - b) slap marking
  - c) tattooing
  - \* d) ear notching of piglets, only as an alternative to ear tagging.
- M 4.1.1 Operations relating to M 4.1 must be carried out by a trained, competent stock-keeper, using properly maintained instruments.
- M 4.1.2 \* Only one ear may be notched and there must not be more than one notch made in the ear.
- M 4.1.3 \* Slapmarking must only be used to identify pigs with their herdmark.

\*  **It is accepted that there may be exceptional circumstances, such as farm trials, where a small number of animals may be slapmarked with additional information in order to aid identification.**

- M 4.2 \* Justification for slapmarking for farm trial purposes or similar, as outlined in M 4.1.3, must be given to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department in writing.

## Equipment

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- M 5.1 When equipment is installed which affects animal welfare, stock-keepers must be able to:
- a) demonstrate an ability to operate the equipment
  - b) demonstrate the ability to carry out routine maintenance
  - c) recognise common signs of malfunction
  - d) demonstrate knowledge of action to be carried out in event of a failure.
- M 5.2 Stock-keepers must inspect the equipment, including the automatic equipment, upon which pigs depend at least twice daily to check that there is no defect in it.
- M 5.3 Where a defect is found (whether on inspection or at any other time):
- a) the defect shall be rectified immediately, or
  - b) if this is impracticable, such measures must immediately be taken and shall be maintained until the defect is rectified, as are required to safeguard the pigs from suffering unnecessary pain or distress as a result of the defect.
- M 5.4 Where the automatic equipment includes a ventilation system, the system must contain:
- a) an alarm which will give adequate warning of the failure of that system to function properly
  - b) an alarm which will operate even if the principal electricity supply to it has failed
  - c) additional equipment or means of ventilation (whether automatic or not) which, in the event of such a failure of the ventilation system, will provide adequate ventilation so as to prevent the livestock from suffering unnecessary distress as a result of the failure.

## Inspection

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- M 6.1 Stock-keepers must inspect their livestock at least twice daily.
- M 6.2 Following inspections, stock-keepers must:
- a) record observations
  - b) record any action taken.
- M 6.3 Any welfare problems seen during an inspection by the stock-keepers must be dealt with appropriately and without delay.

**i** Welfare problems of sufficient severity that they should have been noticed on previous inspections and dealt with, shall be taken by the Freedom Food Assessor or RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer as evidence of negligence of duties by the stock-keeper.

## Pests and predators

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- M 7.1 \* A written pest control policy must be in place (see Appendix 2).

\* **i** The RSPCA is opposed to the use of poisons that cause animal suffering.

The RSPCA is concerned about the welfare of all animals that have the capacity to suffer, and therefore consideration and use of alternatives to baiting as a method of pest control is strongly encouraged.

- M 7.2 When developing and implementing farm pest and predator control plans, physical exclusion methods, and the removal of elements in the vicinity of livestock that might encourage the presence of pests and predators (see information box below), must be included.

\* **i** Methods of physical exclusion and discouragement of pests and predators include:

- construction/maintenance of fencing appropriate for excluding the pests/predators in question
- removal of shelter/cover (e.g. weeds, heaps of rubble, broken equipment, etc) in the area surrounding livestock buildings
- removal/protection of obvious food sources
- maintenance/proofing of buildings against pests and predators
- maintenance of drains

## \* Trial work

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- M 8.1 \* All Freedom Food units undertaking trial work must:
- a) ensure that they are still able to meet all relevant RSPCA welfare standards.
  - b) contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department if in any doubt as to whether or not they conform.

## Management

- M 8.2 \* Trial work that involves procedures with the potential to cause unnecessary pain, discomfort or distress must not be carried out.
- M 8.3 \* Trial work that involves an invasive procedure must not be carried out.
- M 8.4 \* The taking of blood samples is not permitted except where this is used as a diagnostic tool for the benefit of the individual pig or for monitoring of the disease status of the pigs on the unit.
- M 8.5 \* If there is any doubt as to whether procedures relating to M 8.3 are 'invasive' or have the potential to cause unnecessary pain, discomfort or distress, the RSPCA Farm Animals Department must be contacted.

### \* Sourcing of livestock

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- M 9.1 \* All pigs presented for slaughter must have spent their entire lives on Freedom Food accredited farms.

- \*  **Producers are encouraged, where possible, to send all cull sows and boars to Freedom Food approved abattoirs using Freedom Food approved hauliers.**

### \* Preparation for transport

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- M 10.1 Pigs must have access to water up to the point of transport.
- M 10.2 Restrict-fed pigs must not be given a meal for at least 4 hours prior to loading onto the vehicle, but fasting must not exceed 18 hours for any pigs prior to slaughter.

-  **Pre-transport fasting is recommended to prevent vomiting during transit.**



Livestock must be protected from pain, injury and disease. The environment in which livestock are housed must be conducive to good health. All producers must develop a health plan in consultation with their veterinary surgeon.

## Health planning

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- H 1.1 All pig units must have a written Veterinary Health Plan (VHP), drawn up and regularly updated in conjunction with the attending veterinary surgeon.

**i** These are examples of some of the parameters that can be recorded to provide an indication as to the success of the management system in delivering good health and welfare:

**Fertility parameters, neonatal mortality, difficult births, abortions, mastitis indicators, metabolic diseases, production parameters, deaths, injuries, incidence and type of lameness, infectious diseases, culling rates and reasons, nutrition plan, medicine use and reason.**

- H 1.2 Records must be kept in association with the VHP (see H 1.1).

- H 1.3 \* All pig units must receive regular veterinary visits, at least quarterly, resulting in a farm specific report.

\* **i** The quarterly veterinary visits should be conducted as near as is practical to 3-monthly intervals. Larger, more complex or specialist units may require more frequent visits.

\* **i** The VHP (see H 1.1) forms a vitally important part of the RSPCA welfare standards with regard to maintaining health and welfare of livestock on farm.

**Guidance notes for producers and veterinary surgeons are available from the RSPCA. Should your veterinary surgeon require assistance with the formulation of your VHP, please talk to an RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer, or contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.**

- H 1.4 All sudden deaths, disease outbreaks and pigs humanely killed as unfit, must:

- be recorded
- be reported to the veterinary surgeon
- be investigated appropriately
- have the outcome and action recorded.

- H 1.5 Herd performance data must be continuously monitored for signs of disease or production disorders.

## Health

- H 1.6 If any herd performance parameters fall below the tolerance limits identified in the VHP (see H 1.1):
- the veterinary surgeon must be informed
  - the VHP must be revised to try to remedy the problem.

**i** In addition to reviewing the environment, management and veterinary care of pigs when health and welfare problems arise, consideration should be given as to whether genetics may be a contributory factor, and hence whether changes in the unit's/company's policy on genetics in the herd would be beneficial. Producers are encouraged to provide feedback on this issue to breeding companies.

- H 1.7 Replacement animals brought in from other sources must be quarantined and/or appropriately treated in accordance with the VHP (see H 1.1) before integration.

- H 1.8 Any injured, ailing or distressed pig must:
- be segregated if necessary
  - be treated without delay
  - if necessary, veterinary advice must be sought when needed
  - if necessary, such animals must be humanely killed.

\* **i** An ailing or distressed pig may need to be segregated if remaining with other animals may lead to additional welfare problems e.g. if the pig is unable to compete for food.

- H 1.9 \* All units must have a suitable number of segregation pens to ensure coverage for the number of pigs on the unit.

- H 1.10 \* Segregation pens must:
- be emptied between occupancies, cleaned and disinfected according to the cleaning plan (see Appendix 1)
  - be appropriately sited according to reasons for segregation.

- H 1.10.1\* Urine and dung from segregation pens must:
- not come into contact with other animals
  - be disposed of in a way that ensures that the risk of exposure to other animals is minimised.

- H 1.11 Pens must be constructed to facilitate:
- effective cleaning and disinfection of surfaces
  - possible removal of a carcass from the box.

- H 1.12 Stock-keepers must:
- have access to a copy of the Pig Veterinary Society booklet '*The Casualty Pig*' (ISSN 0956-0939, revised 2001)
  - be familiar with its content
  - adopt its recommendations where appropriate.

- H 1.13 All practical measures must be taken to prevent or control external and internal parasitic infestations.

## Health

- H 1.14 Close attention must be given to the condition of the feet, which must be regularly inspected for signs of abnormal wear, excessive growth or infection.
- H 1.15 Where stock-keepers have access to a copy of the Defra (formerly MAFF) booklet '*Lameness in Pigs*' (PB 1148, 1992), they must:
- be familiar with its content
  - adopt its recommendations where appropriate.
- H 1.16 Written procedures must be in place, and must be followed at all times, for the safe disposal of pharmaceutical waste, needles and other sharps.
- H 1.17 Procedures relating to H 1.16 must be in strict accordance with the relevant waste disposal regulations.

 For example, sharps may be disposed of in a separate 'sharps' disposal box, which may then be taken to a local veterinary surgery for disposal.

- H 1.18 \* Medicines must be clearly labelled, used and stored in accordance with the label instructions, or under the directions of the attending veterinary surgeon.
- H 1.19 Medicines must be kept in a secure, lockable store that is safe from animals, children and birds.
- H 1.20 The medicine store must be separate from food producing areas.
- H 1.21 \* A nominated person must:
- be responsible for the control and management of the medicine store
  - keep appropriate records for stock control purposes.
- H 1.22 Any medicines used must be licensed for use in the UK, and applied in accordance with UK and EU legislation.

- \*  It is recommended that producers obtain, read and, where appropriate, apply the advice contained within the latest version of:
- the '*Guidelines on responsible use of antimicrobials in pig production*', issued by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) alliance (RUMA, Acorn House, 25 Mardley Hill, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 0TT; [www.ruma.org.uk](http://www.ruma.org.uk))
  - the '*Code of practice on the responsible use of animal medicines on the farm*', issued by the Veterinary Medicine Directorate
  - '*Veterinary Medicines: safe use by farmers and other handlers*', issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

- H 1.23 Potentially injurious husbandry procedures must not be carried out, with the exception of:
- those done for therapeutic reasons by a veterinary surgeon
  - those outlined in H 1.23.1 to H 1.23.4, under the circumstances specified and according to the standards laid down.

- H 1.23.1 The removal of the points of needle teeth of newborn pigs must not be carried out routinely. Requests for permission to undertake this procedure, together with reasons, must be submitted in writing to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department, who will consider the information and, if necessary, may visit the unit. If the procedure is permitted, the points of needle teeth of newborn pigs may only be removed as early as possible within the first 48 hours of life, or in the case of weak or sick piglets, within 3 days of birth. The procedure must leave an intact smooth surface to the teeth.

**i** Research indicates that tooth grinding leads to less damage to the mouth and teeth of piglets than teeth clipping. Grinding is also the method recommended by the EU Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare in its report on the welfare of pigs. The use of teeth grinding as an alternative to clipping is therefore strongly encouraged, but only if carried out by those who are appropriately trained and competent. The RSPCA is currently investigating this method further with a view to gathering information on all aspects of its use. This will be subject to on-going review with consideration being given to allowing only teeth grinding within the standards in the future.

- H 1.23.2 Nose rings are not permitted except in exceptional circumstances. Requests for permission to nose ring, together with welfare-related reasons, must be submitted in writing to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department who will consider the information, type of ring permitted etc, and may visit the unit.

In cases where nose ringing is permitted, the following stipulations must be applied:

- a) only animals of at least 100kg weight may be ringed
- b) animals must only be ringed once
- \* c) if the ring falls out it must not be replaced
- d) those carrying out the ringing must have received specific veterinary instruction on the most appropriate method.

**i** Recent research into methods that might facilitate avoidance of nose-ringing has indicated that general pasture damage by unringed sows can be slowed/reduced by providing sows with bulky feeds to improve satiety and by encouraging them to direct their rooting behaviour towards a sacrifice area in the paddock in which they might find food such as root crops. Producers should consider employing methods of this kind when aiming to overcome the need to nose-ring. More information on the research can be obtained from the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.

- H 1.23.3 Ear tagging, slapmarking and tattooing and, in some circumstances, ear notching (see M 4.1 to M 4.2), are permissible.

- H 1.23.4 Tail docking is not permitted except in exceptional circumstances, and even then, only the minimum amount of tail necessary may be removed. Requests for permission to tail dock must be submitted in writing to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department by the producer in conjunction with the unit's veterinary surgeon. This must include the reasons for the request being made, an indication of the severity (numbers involved, frequency of outbreaks) of tail biting on the unit, the proposed method of docking (including equipment to be used) and information on other action taken to alleviate the problem through means other than docking. An indication of the proportion of tail to be removed, and reasons for this, must also be given. (Note: it would normally be expected that unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, no more than half the tail would be removed.) The RSPCA will consider the information presented and may visit the unit. In addition, if biting occurs:
- a) immediate action must be taken to alleviate the problem through means other than docking, including consideration of the issues outlined in the information box below
  - b) the VHP (see H 1.1) must also be modified at this time to identify action intended to alleviate tail, flank or ear biting
  - c) these actions must be regularly reviewed with the intention of eliminating the need to continue tail docking.
- H 1.23.5 Producers must be able to demonstrate the actions they have taken with respect H 1.23.4 to Freedom Food Assessors and RSPCA Farm Livestock Officers.

**i** **Tail docking is against the principles of the RSPCA welfare standards. However, at the present time it is accepted that in a few exceptional cases it may be necessary to reduce the pain and suffering caused by a serious tail biting problem on an individual unit. Recent on-farm investigation of the risk factors associated with outbreaks of tail biting has indicated that the following areas are of particular importance, and should be considered on all units experiencing tail biting problems:**

- i) use of straw – frequent (preferably daily) addition of fresh clean straw can reduce tail biting**
- ii) feed space – increasing available feeding space can reduce tail biting**
- iii) space allowance – reducing stocking densities can help to reduce the risk of tail biting**
- iv) stock-keepers – reducing the number of pens that each stock-keeper has to look after can help to reduce problems caused by tail biting**
- v) genetic make-up – the genetics of the pigs on a unit can affect the likelihood of tail biting occurring**
- vi) disease – a disease outbreak can increase the risk of tail biting occurring, so extra vigilance is required at such times.**

- H 1.23.6 The trimming of tusks in boars may be undertaken by the attending veterinary surgeon, or other competent person, in order to ensure the safeguarding of other animals and stock-keepers from injury.
- H 1.23.7 All of the practices referred to in H 1.23.1 to H 1.23.6 must only be performed:
- a) in a way that minimises suffering
  - b) by trained and competent stock-keepers
  - \* c) using separate, hygienic, appropriately sharp and well-maintained equipment appropriate to the procedure in question.
- H 1.23.8 Equipment must be appropriately sanitised between each use or, in the case of tail docking or tooth clipping, between each litter.

## Health

- H 1.24 Where tail docking and/or nose ringing are undertaken, the need for such must be reviewed quarterly by the management and the veterinary surgeon, and the outcome recorded.

**i** **Cauterisation equipment (gas or electric) which minimises bleeding is an acceptable alternative to the use of conventional cutting tools where justifiable tail docking is carried out.**

- H 1.26 Castration of pigs is not permitted.

- H 1.27 \* For all producers who send finishing pigs for slaughter:

- a) where a health monitoring scheme, such as the BPEX Pig Health Monitoring Scheme, is in operation and a producer's abattoir is a participating member, the producer must also join the scheme
- b) where there is the opportunity for abattoirs to join a health monitoring scheme, such as the BPEX Pig Health Monitoring Scheme, and the producer's abattoir is not a participating member, the producer must inform the RSPCA Farm Animals Department in writing.

- \* **i** **As well as highlighting any current herd health problems, which should be tackled immediately by the producer in conjunction with the herd veterinary surgeon, the information obtained from the assessment may help to identify any sub-clinical problems that may be occurring on the unit. In such cases, it is strongly recommended that the producer, in conjunction with the herd veterinary surgeon, utilise such information as part of the VHP (see H 1.1).**

## Casualty animals

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- H 2.1 Each farm must have provisions for the humane killing, without delay, of casualty pigs.

- H 2.1.1 Casualty killing must be carried out by either:

- a) a named, trained, competent member of staff, or
- b) a licensed slaughterman, or
- c) a veterinary surgeon.

- H 2.2 With regard to a casualty animal, if there is any doubt as to how to proceed, the veterinary surgeon must be called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane killing is required to prevent suffering.

- H 2.3 If an animal is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, then the animal must be promptly humanely killed.

- H 2.4 On-farm killing of casualty pigs must be carried out in accordance with the Pig Veterinary Society document, *'The Casualty Pig'* (see H 1.12).

**i** **It is not illegal to slaughter an animal to prevent further severe suffering if a method of humane slaughter is available on the premises and there is someone competent to undertake the procedure. However, for non-emergency casualty slaughter, a slaughterman's licence is required if a captive bolt pistol is used.**

- H 2.5 All carcasses must be disposed of strictly according to current legislation.

- H 2.6 A record must be kept of how and where all such carcasses are disposed of.

# Transport

Animal transport systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort. The transport and handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in transport must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

## Livestock markets

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- T 1.1 Pigs must not be presented for sale at livestock markets.

** Pigs presented for sale at livestock markets will automatically lose their Freedom Food status.**

## Casualty animals

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- T 2.1 A sick or injured animal must not be transported unless it is being taken for veterinary treatment or it is being taken to the nearest available place for humane slaughter, and then only if the said animal is suitable for loading, travelling and unloading.
- T 2.2 Hauliers must:
- have access to a copy of the Pig Veterinary Society booklet *'The Casualty Pig'* (ISSN 0956-0939, revised 2001)
  - be familiar with its contents
  - adopt its recommendations.
- T 2.2.1 Where hauliers have access to a copy of the Defra booklet *'Guidance on the Transport of Casualty Farm Animals'* (PB 1381, 1998), they must:
- be familiar with its contents
  - adopt its recommendations.

## Training

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- T 3.1 Personnel in charge of pig transporters must:
- have completed an approved training course, preferably validated
  - be able to demonstrate their competence in handling pigs when loading, unloading and while in transit.

** Drivers need to be aware of the effect of their driving style on the welfare of livestock onboard vehicles. In particular, they should make every effort to corner smoothly and pull away/stop as gently as possible.**

- T 3.1.1 Managers of livestock hauliers must utilise the Humane Slaughter Association's training video *'The Road Ahead – livestock welfare in transit'* as part of their staff training programme.

## Transport

- T 3.2 Animal handlers must be trained to:
- understand the likely stress factors pigs may be subject to
  - appreciate how pigs react towards other pigs
  - appreciate how pigs react towards people
  - appreciate how pigs react to strange noises, sights, sounds and smells.
- T 3.3 Pigs have the following behaviour characteristics which must be taken into account when they are being moved:
- they have good all round vision but do not see well at a distance, and in certain breeds the ears will further restrict their vision
  - they are less inclined than other species to follow one another
  - pigs have a very good sense of smell
  - pigs have good hearing.

## Handling/loading/unloading

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**i Boards, gates and other benign handling aids can be used in order to encourage pigs to move.**

- T 4.1 \* The presence and use of electric goads on any Freedom Food accredited unit or vehicle is prohibited.
- T 4.2 Pigs must not be moved or loaded unless:
- the way forward is clear
  - there is adequate space available for them to move into.
- T 4.3 \* Where loading and unloading facilities provide a ramp, the incline/decline must be no more than 20% (11 degrees).
- T 4.4 Both loading ramps and tail boards must have some means of preventing the pigs from falling off or slipping.

\* **i Covering the loading ramp and tail board with litter/straw may help to prevent slipping in some cases.**

- T 4.5 All tail boards must be fitted with foot battens.

**i If a loading ramp is to be modified or newly installed, a reverse ramp should be considered.**

**When a reverse ramp is installed, it is the vehicle that negotiates the incline until the tail gate is level with the ground and animals walk straight into or out of the vehicle on the level or slight gradient.**

## Transport

- T 4.6 All handling systems must be designed and operated so as to:
- a) not impede the movement of the pigs
  - b) reduce the incidence of noise.

\*  **Where reverse ramps are not installed, particular regard should be given to minimising the angle of the ramp, and the potential for pigs to fall or slip.**

## Transport

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- T 5.1 Pigs must be slaughtered as close as possible to the point of rearing.
- T 5.2 Finishing pigs must be housed and managed to minimise mixing for transportation by remaining in their on-farm social groups (established at least 1 week prior to transport).
- T 5.3 Where mixing is unavoidable precautions must be taken to minimise aggression.
- T 5.4 The timing of transport must be planned between slaughterhouse, haulier and producer, to minimise travelling and waiting time for the pigs.
- T 5.5 \* Any interruption causing a delay of half an hour or more to the scheduled arrival time must be notified to the receiving abattoir or farm.
- T 5.6 \* Pigs must be unloaded immediately at the slaughterhouse or farm.
- T 5.7 Pigs must not be transported for more than 8 hours – the time being calculated from first animal loaded to last unloaded.
- T 5.8 \* The floors of all vehicles must be solid and covered with sufficient bedding in order to provide comfort and reduce the likelihood of injury.
- T 5.9 All deaths and serious or widespread injuries must be recorded and reported to:
- a) the driver
  - b) the haulier
  - c) the slaughterhouse manager
  - d) the farm manager
- before the next consignment from the same source is collected.
- T 5.9.1 \* Adequate lighting, whether natural or artificial, must be available to enable pigs to be thoroughly inspected at any time.
- T 5.9.2 \* The interior of any vehicle, including the floor, all internal surfaces to which pigs have access, loading ramps, tail boards and side rails must be designed, constructed, maintained and regularly inspected to ensure that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury or distress to the animal.
- T 5.9.3 \* Appropriate air quality and quantity must be maintained on vehicles.

## Transport

T 5.9.4 \* Ventilation must be capable of being adjusted, according to weather and travel conditions.

\*  **Where possible, the vehicle should be kept moving in order to facilitate airflow/ventilation.**

T 5.9.5 \* Vehicles used for road transport must be fitted with a light-coloured roof that is adequately insulated and ensures effective protection from the weather.

T 5.10 An on-farm record must be maintained of all incidents during transit.

T 5.11 All incidents in transit must be investigated and the results of the investigation recorded.

T 5.12 Where causes of incidents in transit have been identified, prompt action must be taken to prevent further deaths and suffering occurring.

T 5.13 Levels of transit mortality (in animals from any single source) above 0.1% in any 3-month period must be the subject of veterinary investigation.

T 5.14 All transporters must have a livestock capacity document on board at all times, giving:  
a) data on the size of the transporter  
b) the calculated carrying capacity for different livestock species under different climatic conditions.

T 5.15 \* All hauliers must have a written standard operating and emergency procedure to implement during transportation (see Appendix 4 for example).

## Transport space allowance

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T 6.1 Pigs of average weight 100kg must be transported at approximately 235 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (+/- 10%) to ensure pig safety and comfort.

 **For lighter pigs, the following space requirements are recommended:**

<b>Weight of pig (kg)</b>	<b>Stocking rate (kg/m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Space allowance (m<sup>2</sup> per pig)</b>
7	137	0.05
30	169	0.18

**although more space should be given during hot weather conditions.**

# Slaughter

All slaughter/killing systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort. The pre-slaughter handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in the slaughter must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

S 1.0 \* All pigs presented for slaughter must have spent their entire lives on Freedom Food accredited farms.

\*  **Producers are encouraged, where possible, to send all cull sows and boars to Freedom Food approved abattoirs using Freedom Food approved hauliers.**

## Management and training

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S 1.1 Managers must develop and implement an animal welfare policy, which must include written procedures with regard to maintaining animal welfare in the abattoir, including the responsibilities and duties of staff for emergencies such as escaped, trapped or injured livestock.

S 1.2 The animal welfare policy must be regularly reviewed and updated.

S 1.3 Managers must appoint at least one trained Animal Welfare Officer (AWO), who is responsible for the implementation of the animal welfare policy.

S 1.3.1 \* All AWOs must have attended the Bristol University Animal Welfare Officer training programme, or other recognised, named, validated course on animal welfare at abattoirs.

S 1.4 Managers, in conjunction with the AWO, must:

- a) develop and implement a training programme for all staff handling and slaughtering animals
- b) ensure that staff are properly trained to carry out their duties and competent to perform them.

 **Where possible this training should be validated.**

S 1.5 The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) has developed a training programme (Humane Slaughter – Taking Responsibility) for use in abattoirs. Managers must obtain a copy of this and utilise it as part of the staff training programme.

S 1.5.1 Slaughterhouse managers/AWOs must:

- a) obtain a copy of the Humane Slaughter Association's '*Best Practice Guidelines for the Welfare of Pigs in Abattoirs*' (2004)
- b) be familiar with its content
- c) ensure that the recommendations are applied where appropriate.

S 1.6 An AWO must:

- a) be present on the site at all times whilst slaughter is being carried out
- b) make frequent and thorough checks throughout the day to ensure that animals are being effectively stunned and are insensible throughout the slaughter operation.

## Slaughter

- S 1.7 Where it is found that animals are not being effectively stunned, the slaughter line must be stopped and immediate remedial action taken.
- S 1.8 The managers, AWOs and all slaughter staff must:
- have access to a copy of the current Defra codes of practice relating to slaughter
  - be familiar with their contents.
- S 1.9 The AWO must ensure that animal welfare during the slaughter process is not compromised by operator fatigue.
- S 1.10 In order to reduce the likelihood of operator fatigue, managers must ensure that rotation of staff is practised as necessary, and recorded, as a Standard Operating Procedure.

## Casualty animals

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- S 2.1 Pigs who are not able to walk must be killed without delay, except in exceptional circumstances where a delay can be justified (see information box below), to ensure avoidance of suffering, and without moving them i.e. the animals must be killed on the vehicle, in the lairage pen, or wherever they are situated, using emergency slaughter equipment and procedures.

**i** Delay in killing a pig unable to walk can only be justified in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when the welfare of other pigs would otherwise be adversely affected.

- S 2.2 Casualty animals must be killed in accordance with methods outlined in S 6.1 or, alternatively, injection of an overdose of a drug with anaesthetic properties which causes immediate loss of consciousness and then death, to be administered by a veterinary surgeon, may be used.

## Lairage

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- S 3.1 Pigs must have access to water up to the point of transport.
- S 3.2 Restrict-fed pigs must not be given a meal for at least 4 hours prior to loading onto the vehicle, but fasting must not exceed 18 hours for any pigs prior to slaughter.

**i** Pre-transport fasting is recommended to prevent vomiting during transit.

- S 3.3 Slaughterhouse managers must take steps to ascertain when animals last had access to food.
- S 3.4 Slaughterhouse managers must ensure that the premises are constructed and maintained so as to prevent any injury being caused to animals confined there.

## Slaughter

- S 3.5 The slaughterhouse must provide a lairage facility which:
- is constructed so as to provide shelter from direct sunlight and adverse weather conditions
  - provides animals with a dry lying area (see S 3.6 below)
  - is of adequate size and construction for the number of animals confined there (see S 3.6 below)
  - provides adequate draught-free ventilation
  - is thermally comfortable for the pigs (i.e. the pigs are neither overheated nor chilled)
  - is properly lit to permit animals to be inspected
  - has drainage facilities for faeces and urine
  - is able to be thoroughly cleaned between batches of animals
  - has isolation pens in which sick or injured animals can be isolated and, if necessary, humanely killed, and such pens must be located close to the unloading area and within easy access of the stunning area
  - provides easy access to adequate water, which must be available at all times, and to food, if necessary.

**i** If misting or spraying of pigs is undertaken, due consideration should be given to the temperature and the possibility of the pigs becoming too cold. Evidence suggests that spraying of pigs when the air temperature is below 5°C can lead to chilling of the animals and should therefore normally be avoided, unless the pigs are clearly overheated and require cooling.

- S 3.6 Staff in charge of a lairage must ensure that animals confined in a lairage have the following space allowances:

Live weight (kg)	Lying area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
10	0.10	0.15
20	0.15	0.225
30	0.20	0.30
40	0.26	0.40
50	0.31	0.47
60	0.36	0.55
70	0.41	0.61
80	0.45	0.675
90	0.475	0.715
100	0.50	0.75
110	0.53	0.80

- S 3.7 Pigs which, because of their sex, age or origin, are likely to be aggressive must be separated from each other at lairage and must stay in on-farm groups (or sub-divided).
- S 3.8 Pigs in lairage pens must not be exposed to bright artificial light or direct sunlight except during antemortem inspection, which must be carried out in a minimum of 220 lux illumination.

**i** A number of abattoirs have installed Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) monitors within the pre-slaughter handling and slaughter areas. This can be a very effective way of enabling those responsible for animal welfare within the abattoir to monitor whether welfare standards are being maintained at each stage – pre-slaughter, and during both stunning and sticking. The installation of CCTV systems is, therefore, very strongly recommended by the RSPCA.

## Slaughter

### Pre-slaughter handling

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- S 4.1 Pigs must be handled calmly, quietly and firmly, with care to avoid unnecessary excitement or distress.
- S 4.2 Race design and construction must encourage pigs to move forward, with:
- a) as few right angled bends as possible
  - b) no projections and obstructions in the races and passageways
  - c) appropriate lighting.
- S 4.3 Flooring must be non-slip in races and passageways.
- S 4.4 \* The presence and use of electric goads in any Freedom Food accredited abattoir is prohibited.
- S 4.5 Pigs must not be moved unless the way forward is clear, and there is adequate space available for them to move into.

### Slaughter equipment

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- S 5.1 The equipment used for the stunning and killing of animals, including the stunning pen and/or restraint devices, must be designed, manufactured and maintained to ensure rapid and effective stunning or killing.

**i** Current legislation requires that any electrical equipment used for stunning an animal in the slaughterhouse is fitted with a failsafe device that will prevent it from delivering current below that which it has been set to deliver, in order to ensure an effective stun. However, to date, it has not proved possible to develop an effective device of this kind. At present, therefore, the difficulty of achieving full compliance with this legislative requirement is appreciated.

- S 5.2 All slaughter equipment must be thoroughly and appropriately cleaned after use.
- S 5.3 Slaughter equipment must be checked at least once daily by an AWO to ensure it is in working order and in a good state of repair.
- S 5.4 A record of the check on slaughter equipment must be made.
- S 5.5 Reserve equipment for the stunning and killing of animals must be kept at the place of slaughter for use in an emergency.
- S 5.6 Reserve equipment must be checked at least once weekly by an AWO to ensure it is in working order and a good state of repair.
- S 5.7 A record must be made of the check on reserve equipment.

## Slaughter/killing methods

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S 6.1 Pigs must only be slaughtered/killed using one of the following methods, which must render pigs instantaneously insensible and insensitive to pain:

- electrocution

or

- free bullet
- captive bolt
- electronarcosis

- \* • exposure to carbon dioxide until death ensues followed by bleeding.



**Captive bolt stunning is not 100% effective in mature sows or boars, and thus is not generally an appropriate method of stunning these animals and should normally only be used as a back up method of stunning in an emergency.**

S 6.1.1 In the case of electronarcosis, the minimum current level during stunning must be:

- a) no less than 1.3amp
- b) attained within 1 second
- c) maintained for at least 3 seconds.

S 6.1.2 In the case of electrocution, the minimum current level during each stage (i.e. electrodes spanning the brain, and when spanning the brain and heart) must be:

- a) no less than 1.3amp
- b) attained within 1 second
- c) maintained for at least 3 seconds.

S 6.1.3 In the case of electronarcosis/electrocution:

- a) it must be ensured that electrical stunning equipment is delivering the appropriate current
- b) the current must be checked at the start of the killing process for each batch of animals using a tester which can simulate the resistance offered by the pig and can check the current and amperage output at the tongs
- c) the outcome of each check referred to in b) must be recorded.

S 6.2 If killing is carried out by a veterinary surgeon, this must be done by any method deemed appropriate by them.

## Stunning

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S 7.1 Pigs must be stunned prior to slaughter by means of a stunning system that renders them instantaneously unconscious and insensitive to pain and maintains that state until the point of death.

S 7.1.1 The effectiveness of stunning, in terms of ensuring immediate unconsciousness in all animals which remains until death, must be monitored at the start of slaughter and at least every 2 hours after that, and the outcome recorded.

## Slaughter

- S 7.1.2 At least 10 animals must be checked on each occasion when assessing the effectiveness of stunning (see S 7.1.1).
- S 7.1.3 The records of checks on the effectiveness of stunning must include:
- the name of the person undertaking the checks
  - the number of pigs checked each time
  - the frequency of checks
  - the number of non-compliant pigs
  - the action taken to correct ineffective stunning.
- S 7.2 Pigs must only be stunned when they can be stuck immediately afterwards with a stun-stick interval of no more than 15 seconds.

- i** a) **Signs of effective captive bolt stunning:**
- animal collapses
  - no rhythmic breathing
  - fixed, fully dilated pupil
  - no corneal reflex (i.e. no blink reaction when the surface of the eyeball is lightly touched)
  - relaxed jaw
  - tongue hanging out
- b) **Signs of effective head-only electrical stunning:**
- Tonic phase**
    - animal collapses and becomes rigid
    - no rhythmic breathing
    - head is raised
    - forelegs extended and hind legs flexed into the body
  - Clonic phase**
    - gradual relaxation of muscles
    - paddling or involuntary kicking (can be severe)
    - downward movement of eyeballs
    - urination and/or defecation
- Deviation from the signs outlined in a) or b) above may be an indication that the stun has been ineffective or that animals are beginning to recover from the stun.**

- S 7.2.1 If there is any indication that a stun has not been completely effective, or that animals are displaying signs of recovery from a stun, re-stunning must take place immediately.
- S 7.3 Techniques that lower the resistance of the pig to electrical current must be used.

- i** **Resistance to current flow may vary, depending on the condition of the electrodes, the site of contact with the pig's head, and how tightly the electrodes are pressed onto the head. The efficiency of current flow can be improved by regular decarbonising and cleaning of electrodes (when dry) with a wire brush.**

## Sticking

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S 8.1 Pigs must be stuck using a sharp knife that is a minimum of 5" (12cm) long.

S 8.2 A chest stick (thoracic bleeding) must always be used.

**i A chest stick (i.e. thoracic bleeding method) is the best method for ensuring rapid, profuse and complete blood loss.**

S 8.3 The knife must be inserted in the midline of the neck at the depression in front of the breastbone and the skin raised with the knife point using light pressure and a lifting movement.

S 8.4 When penetration has been made, the knife handle must be lowered so that the blade is in a near vertical position, and pushed upward to sever the major blood vessels.

S 8.5 Both carotid arteries or the major blood vessels near the heart from which they arise must always be severed during sticking.

S 8.6 Blood loss from the pig must be rapid, profuse and sufficient to ensure the animal is dead.

S 8.7 After incision of the blood vessels, there must be no further dressing procedure on the animal for at least 20 seconds, and in any case until all brainstem reflexes have ceased.

S 8.8 Where one person is responsible for the stunning, shackling, hoisting and bleeding of pigs, they must complete all these operations on each individual pig in turn.

### \* Gas killing

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S 9.1 \* Daily checks must always be undertaken to ensure that prior to the commencement of the process there is a sufficient supply of gas to kill all pigs to be received.

S 9.2 \* Gas monitoring/sensing devices must be calibrated daily according to manufacturer's advice and using certified calibration gases, to ensure that the correct concentrations are maintained at all times.

S 9.3 \* A verifiable record of calibration must be made available during inspection.

S 9.4 \* Pigs must not be loaded into the crates unless and until the crates can immediately be lowered into the gas.

\* **i In group systems, whilst it should be routine practice not to load pigs into the crate until they can immediately be lowered into the gas, it is accepted that pigs may, on occasion, be held in the crate for a short period of time prior to being lowered. The removal of pigs and subsequent re-loading may be more detrimental to welfare than allowing them to remain in the crate for a short period of time.**

S 9.5 \* Adequate lighting, appropriate for the system, must be provided in the conveying mechanism and the chamber to allow pigs to see other pigs and their surroundings and to encourage the movement of pigs into the chamber.

## Slaughter

- S 9.6 \* The gas chamber must be fitted with devices which:
- maintain the required concentration by volume of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the gas mixture in the chamber
  - measure the concentration by volume of CO<sub>2</sub> in the gas mixture at the point of maximum exposure
  - when the chamber is in operation, continuously display the concentration by volume of CO<sub>2</sub> as a percentage of the gas mixture at the point of maximum concentration in the chamber
  - give clearly visible and audible warning signals if the concentration by volume of CO<sub>2</sub> falls below 85%.
- S 9.7 \* In systems where crates stop in increasing concentrations of gas prior to reaching the maximum concentration of CO<sub>2</sub>, the maximum concentration must be measured at floor level within the crate.
- S 9.8\* In systems where pigs are lowered immediately into the maximum concentration of CO<sub>2</sub>, the concentration of gas must be measured at the height in the chamber equivalent to pig nose height.
- S 9.9 \* Upon activation of the alarm, pigs must not be allowed to enter the chamber until the defect has been identified and rectified, and CO<sub>2</sub> concentration has returned to at least the minimum permitted concentration.
- S 9.10 \* The manager of the slaughterhouse shall ensure that every person engaged in the stunning/killing is properly instructed as to:
- the method of operation of the chamber
  - the procedures for any necessary flushing of the chamber with atmospheric air
  - the procedures for any necessary evacuation of pigs from the chamber.
- S 9.11 \* There must be a means of visually monitoring pigs that are in the chamber.

\* ** Methods of viewing the pigs inside the chamber could include:**

- CCTV**
- the provision of a window in the chamber/chamber door**

**Additional lighting may be required in order to facilitate viewing.**

- S 9.12 \* Once a pig enters the chamber, it must be conveyed to the point in the chamber of maximum concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> within 30 seconds, or within 20 seconds if a dip-lift system is in use.
- S 9.13 \* Pigs must not be lowered into the chamber until the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration is at least 85% at the point of maximum concentration.
- S 9.14 \* The average minimum CO<sub>2</sub> concentration for the batch must be 90%.
- S 9.13 \* Pigs must remain at the point of maximum concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> for long enough to ensure that there is no possibility of any pigs displaying signs of recovery prior to bleed-out being completed.

\* ** The Humane Slaughter Association's guidelines state that death is usually achieved within 90 seconds of exposure at 90% CO<sub>2</sub>, provided that the pigs reach the maximum concentration within 30 seconds (Humane Slaughter Association (2004) *'Best Practice Guidelines for the Welfare of Pigs in Abattoirs'*).**

## Slaughter

- S 9.14 \* The gas must be mixed following breaks in the line in excess of 10 minutes, in order to ensure good gas distribution within the chamber.
- S 9.15 \* The effectiveness of the stun/kill must be monitored at the start of each session and at least every 2 hours after that, and the outcome recorded.
- S 9.16 \* At least 10 animals must be checked on each occasion when assessing the effectiveness of the stun/kill (see S 9.15).

- \* **i** In addition to these formal checks, the shackling personnel should be aware of their responsibilities in continually monitoring pigs for any signs of recovery.

- \* **i** Signs of an effective CO<sub>2</sub> stun/kill:

- a) dilated pupils
- b) absence of rhythmic breathing
- c) absence of response to nose prick
- d) cessation of heart beat.

**A corneal reflex may be present briefly in low frequency (1 out of every 100 pigs), but may not be significant provided that other reflexes are absent; however, ideally no pigs should be displaying a corneal reflex.**

- S 9.17 \* The records of checks on the effectiveness of exposure to the gas mixture must include:
- a) the name of the person undertaking the checks
  - b) the number of pigs checked each time
  - c) the frequency of checks
  - d) the number of pigs showing signs of recovery
  - e) the action taken to correct the ineffective stun/kill.

- S 9.18 \* If there is any indication that the stun/kill has not been effective, or that animals are displaying signs of recovery, re-stunning/killing must take place immediately, using an approved back-up method (see information box below), and the action recorded.

- \* **i** a) **Methods of re-stunning:**
- captive bolt
  - **electronarcosis – the minimum current should be no less than 1.3amp, which should be attained within 200 ms and maintained for at least 3 seconds.**
- b) **Methods of killing:**
- **electrocution – the minimum current level during each stage (i.e. electrodes spanning the brain and when spanning the heart) should be no less than 1.3amp. This should be attained within 200 ms and maintained for at least 3 seconds.**

**For practical purposes, captive bolt is recommended as the preferred option for re-stunning.**

## Slaughter

- S 9.19 \* Where captive bolt or electronarcosis are used as methods of re-stunning, they must be followed by bleeding within 15 seconds.
- S 9.20 \* Emergency equipment for re-stunning/killing must be easily and immediately available and accessible.
- S 9.21 \* If any pig shows signs of recovery, the slaughter line must be stopped and no animals admitted into the chamber until all concentrations and dwell times have been checked.
- S 9.22 \* Records relating to S 9.21 must be kept.
- S 9.23 \* Emergency procedures must be in place, and followed, in the event of a failure of the gas system, including procedures for the removal and killing of pigs already in the chamber.
- S 9.24 \* In the event of an emergency, operators must be able to demonstrate that pigs can be bled swiftly when normal facilities cannot be used.
- S 9.25 \* The time from removal from the chamber to sticking must be sufficiently short to ensure that there is no possibility of any pigs displaying signs of recovery prior to bleed-out being completed.

- \*  **The European Food Safety Authority guidelines (Welfare Aspects of Animal Stunning and Killing Methods 2004) relating to new CO<sub>2</sub> group stunning equipment, with a minimum of 70 to 80% CO<sub>2</sub> in air at the first stop position of the gondolas, and 90% CO<sub>2</sub> at the bottom position, are as follows:**

<b>Total time of exposure (sec)</b>	<b>Sticking within (sec)</b>
120	30
130	45
140	60
150	75
160	90

**This table is only intended as a guideline as commercial systems vary widely with respect to the position of gondolas in the equipment, CO<sub>2</sub> gradients, and exposure times.**

- \*  **The RSPCA is aware that scientific studies have shown that there may be additional welfare benefits to using alternative gas mixtures that are not currently permitted under the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995. The RSPCA will keep under review the use of gas mixtures currently permitted in the RSPCA Welfare Standards in light of any further information, technical developments, and/or recommendations made, and relevant changes to existing legislation.**

## Herd biosecurity policy

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All farms must have, and must follow, an appropriate herd biosecurity policy to limit the introduction and/or spread of disease on to and within the production unit.

### Cleaning and disinfection

Approved producers must have a written policy for cleaning and disinfection, specifying the approved dilutions (see below) at which they are to be used and ensure full implementation. All disinfectants used on the approved premises must be on the list of Defra approved substances for the purposes of The Diseases of Animals (approved disinfectants) (amendment) (England) Order 2003, or its equivalent in Wales and Scotland.

Any exceptions must only be under veterinary direction. Cleaning and disinfection routines, including chemicals used to assist in the reduction of transmission of infectious agents, must be set out in the cleaning plan. This plan will be an integral part of the biosecurity policy and must consider:

- i) buildings and equipment
- ii) livestock, people, pests, pets and movable equipment
- iii) feed and water.

The plan will cover:

- a) preparation for cleaning – removal of stock, equipment, gross contamination
- b) cleaning
- c) disinfection
- d) 'resting' buildings
- e) foot dips
- f) personal hygiene of staff
- g) on-farm stock transporters
- h) 'clean to dirty' work routines
- i) livestock cleanliness
- j) drains
- k) water supplies and delivery systems
- l) feedbins, pipelines and troughs.

## Appendix 2

### Pest control policy

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Levels of potentially harmful pests (e.g. rodents and birds) must be humanely managed to avoid the risk of disease spread to humans and animals, damage to buildings and services, contamination and spoilage of feed.

Methods of physical exclusion must be included whenever possible. If these are inadequate or unsuccessful, other approaches must be enacted.

Approved production units must be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to minimise risk of pests.

Domestic animals must not have access to the unit, other than farm dogs and cats, which must be in a healthy condition and regularly wormed (record to be kept in medicine record book).

Domestic pets, pests or birds must not have access to carcasses.

Feed stores, offices, toilets etc, must be maintained in a clean, hygienic, tidy condition.

Pesticides must be covered by the farm COSHH assessment, if required to be in place.

## Appendix 3

### Visitor policy

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Records must be kept of visitors to the unit. The need for showering, foot dips, change of clothing, footwear, etc., must be satisfied.

### Transport – standard operating and emergency procedure

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Items to be included

1. RSPCA welfare standards relating to transport of pigs
2. Procedure for loading/unloading of pig delivery vehicles
3. Procedure for delivery of pigs to customer sites
4. Daily journey sheet
5. Pig delivery report
6. List of good hygiene measures, including procedure for cleaning of lorries prior to collection of pigs
7. Total quality management leaflet – if appropriate
8. Operating procedures for roadside checks
9. Accident procedure
10. Out of hours telephone numbers and emergency procedure
11. Mobile 'phones or other communication equipment (and procedures for use)
12. Fire extinguishers
13. Tyres – punctures – code of practice
14. FTA – *'The Driver's Handbook'* (2006) including tachograph regulations
15. Certificate of motor insurance
16. Guidelines on correct environmental conditions during the journey, depending on the length of journey and ambient temperature
17. Defra booklet: *'Code of practice for the prevention and control of salmonella on pig farms'* (PB 5399, 2000)
18. Defra booklet: *'Code of practice for the responsible use of medicines on the farm'* (2001) (Veterinary Medicines Directorate)
19. Farm Animal Welfare Council: *'FAWC report on the Welfare of Pigs Kept Outdoors'*. For outdoor units only.

Where possible, the following items should be included

1. Defra booklet: *'Heat Stress in pigs'* – solving the problem (PB 1316, 1993)
2. Defra booklet: *'Guidance on the transport of casualty farm animals'* (PB 1381, 1998)
3. Defra booklet: *'Condition Scoring of Pigs'* (PB 3480, 1998)

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