



Training on pig welfare in husbandry, transport and slaughter for inspectors

Recommendations for minimum standards and learning goals

Inger Anneberg, Jan Tind Sørensen, Katy Overstreet

Aarhus University, Denmark



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1. Executive Summary

This report describes standards for training materials for each of the eight welfare areas; tail biting, climate control and space allowance during transport, farrowing management and housing, handling in lairage, pig stunning, group housing and mixing, fitness for transport and on-farm killing. We suggest some general considerations that Member states can have in mind when planning courses. Secondly, we suggest learning goals for each of the eight prioritized pig welfare areas. Finally, we discuss how to develop training examples on the eight prioritized pig welfare areas.

2. Introduction

Current training for inspectors varies between member states (MS) in quality, relevance and practicality as inspectors often have different educational and professional experience. There is a need for minimum standards for training activities on pig welfare in husbandry, transport and slaughter for inspectors.

This report describes standards for training materials for each of the eight welfare areas, which have been prioritized by EURCAW Pigs in the work program 2019-2020. Firstly, we suggest some general considerations that MS can have in mind when planning courses. Secondly, we suggest learning goals for each of the eight prioritized pig welfare areas: intact tails, climate control and space allowance during transport, farrowing management and housing, handling in lairage, pig stunning, group housing and mixing, fitness for transport and on-farm killing.

During 2020 we will develop a set of training materials for each of the eight welfare areas. These materials can be seen as standard courses, which MS can further develop according to their needs.

The diversity of the MS in how training is organized in general has to be taken into account. For example possible considerations include but are not limited to MS priorities regarding training, MS resources for further training for inspectors. Hence, 'standards' for training provided by EURCAW-pigs will not fit to all national needs, but need to be adjusted to the specific context in each MS.

3. Suggestions for training standards before a training course

3.1 General aspects

When planning and evaluating training activities there are some general aspects of courses for inspectors (regardless of the topic) which should be considered. We suggest:

- Optimal number of participants (8-15).
- Duration (1- 3 days).
- Learning-outcomes are a part of the preparation. In this report EURCAW-pigs suggests learning outcomes specified for each of our 8 prioritized pig welfare areas, but these might have to be adapted to national expectations and needs.
- Teachers should be appropriate to the topic and the target group. Some MS cooperate with universities /animal scientists, inspectors, veterinarians, professional training companies, the industry, farmer's organizations, all of which could be involved as teachers.
- Let delegates prepare for the meeting (e.g. read a text, prepare a presentation, prepare a case study from practice etc.).
- Alternate the type of activities (eg. theory in the morning, practice in the afternoon).
- Have regular '15 minute check' moments: Did the trainees understand the previous block of information?
- Train from 9:00-17:00. Don't work in the evenings: socialise and let people catch up with their emails.
- Language should fit to the competences of the students.
- Always evaluate a course.

3.2 Minimum Standards

In the following, we will give examples of minimum course standards describing learning goals related to the 8 prioritized pig welfare areas that EURCAW works with. The suggestions can be more or less relevant in different contexts of training and of pig systems in the various member states.

4. Examples of learning goals in relation to training

4.1 Tail biting

Learning goals:

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the legal requirements related to tail docking: to be found in two Council Directives, and in two supporting documents from the Commission.
- Knowledge on (relevant) Member State Action Plans to prevent tail docking, including monitoring tail biting and tail docking and guidance to comply with legislation.
- Understanding of the origin of tail biting and how it affects pig welfare, according to current knowledge on behavioural and physiological needs of pigs.
- Based on the animals' needs, knowledge on six key factors for which correct management measures should be introduced, and for which a thorough risk analysis must be carried out on a farm: i.e. supplying appropriate enrichment materials, and provision of a comfortable climate, clean pens, good health status, avoidance of competition for resources, and a balanced diet.
- Knowledge on carrying out efficient inspections at farm level: including (1) monitoring animal welfare outcomes with indicators suggested by EURCAW and (2) practical guidance on how to verify compliance of the farm's practices with the EU legislation.
- Specific knowledge on assessing compliance with EU requirements for manipulability of enrichment/rooting materials.
- Knowledge on good and better practices to reduce tail biting and reduce the need for docking: e.g. examples from countries that stopped routine tail docking; productions systems that do not allow tail docking.
- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspections.

4.2 Climate Control and Space Allowance - transport

Learning goals:

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the intention of the EU-legislation (climate control and space allowance – overlapping to EU-legislation on food/water during transport).
- Updated knowledge about the biology and behavioral needs of pigs in relation to transport.
- Knowledge about how different production-categories of pigs affect pigs during transport.
- Training in reflection on difficult terms, e.g. “animal welfare,” “suffering,” “unnecessary suffering.”
- Training in reflection on the dilemmas between the behavioral needs of the animals in relation to what the legislation says about Climate Control and Space Allowance.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in calibration using the EURCAW indicators. Knowledge about indicators to use to check the compliance and the strengths/weaknesses of these.
- Knowledge on good practices/tools in relation to inspect transport.

- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspection.

4.3 Fitness for transport

Learning goals

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the intention of the EU-legislation /fitness for transport.
- An update on the current knowledge and debate about fitness for transport, including the current lack of definition of the concept “fitness for transport.”
- Knowledge about the Animal Transport Guide or other guidelines (e.g. national guides) with different types of recommendations.
- Knowledge about terms like “animal welfare,” “suffering,” and “unnecessary suffering.”
- Training in reflections on the dilemmas between the legislation/guidelines and knowledge about health and animal welfare.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in calibration. If possible, using the EURCAW indicators.
- Knowledge on good practice in relation to inspecting fitness for transport.
- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspection.

4.4 Farrowing housing and management

Learning goals:

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the intention of the EU-legislation (Farrowing management and housing).
- Updated knowledge about the biology and behavioral needs of sows and piglets in relation to farrowing management and housing and how this related to the animal welfare.
- Knowledge about at least the five main risk areas for poor welfare for sows and piglets. Knowledge about indicators suggested by EURCAW to use to check compliance within the five risk areas and the strength/weaknesses of these.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in calibration using the EURCAW indicators.
- Knowledge on measures to improve welfare within the five risk areas.
- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspection.

4.5 Sow group housing and mixing

Learning goals:

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- A brief history of group housing legislation, and the final outcome and presentation of the law: stall dimensions, 34-week period, enrichment, group space allowance, etc.
- Knowledge about the intention of the EU-legislation (Sow group housing and mixing): Why should sows be kept in groups?

- The reproductive cycle of the sow. Updated knowledge on behavioral and physiological needs of sows during estrus and gestation.
- Updated knowledge about the social structure and social behavior of pigs and its biological background. The difference between rank order fighting and competition for access to resources. How to prevent damaging behavior like vulva biting?
- Knowledge about main risk areas for poor welfare for sows post-weaning, during estrus and gestation and measures to improve welfare.
- Knowledge about indicators suggested by EURCAW to check compliance within the main risk areas and the strengths/weaknesses of these. Tools for calibration and practical training in calibration using the EURCAW indicators.
- ‘End the cage age’: What inspectors need to know about initiatives to end stall housing completely. Risk of stress during early pregnancy, remedial actions, examples from Sweden and UK.
- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspection.

4.6 Slaughter - On handling in lairage

Learning goals:

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the various aspects in EU-legislation 1099/2009 on handling in lairage and related components: waiting time, space allowance, temperature, feeding and watering during lairage.
- Roles & responsibilities of food business operator, welfare officer, vet, inspector
- How does a pig perceive the world and other pigs? For example, consider eyesight, smell, and sound.
- Stress, fear and aggression in pigs: physiological and psychological components. Thermoregulation, resting conditions, etc.
- How does stress, fear and aggression affect meat quality?
- How to handle pigs.
- Indicators of fear, exhaustion and distress.
- Knowledge about the risks to welfare for pigs, based on EFSA opinion to be published June 2020.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in calibration, using the EURCAW indicators if possible.
- Knowledge on good practices/tools in relation to handling in lairage.

4.7 Slaughter - Pig stunning techniques

Learning goals:

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the various aspects in EU-legislation 1099/2009 on stunning of pigs: general principles.
- Roles & responsibilities of food business operator, welfare officer/veterinarian inspectors.

- Knowledge about related operations: Unloading, driving animals, management in lairage.
- Updated knowledge about the biology of consciousness. Brain functioning, pain, distress.
- Detailed knowledge of stunning methods that are allowed in the EU. Latest scientific knowledge on possible alternatives like LAPS (low atmospheric pressure stunning – a stunning technology only used for poultry).
- Knowledge about the risks to welfare for pigs, based on EFSA opinion to be published June 2020.
- Indicators for consciousness as presented by EFSA 2013.
<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3523>
- Safety for persons.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in calibration, using the EURCAW indicators if possible.
- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with relevant staff at the slaughterhouse.

4.8 On-farm killing

Learning goals:

After the course, the participants will have gained:

- Knowledge about the various aspects in EU-legislation 1099/2009 on killing on farm: general principles.
- Reasons for on-farm killing: euthanasia, surplus animals, disease eradication.
- Discussion on indication for killing.
- Rules & regulations for disease eradication.
- Emotional aspects of mass killing of pigs on farm. After-care for vets, farmers and inspectors.
- Updated knowledge about the biology of consciousness, brain functioning, pain, and distress.
- Knowledge about handling of pigs before killing.
- Detailed knowledge of the killing methods that are allowed in the EU. Knowledge about specific national legislation in this area.
- Knowledge about different tools/gears/methods used for killing (e.g. how to check that the bolt-pistol functions as it should, the sharpness of knives, etc.)
- Knowledge about the risks to welfare for pigs, based on EFSA opinion to be published June 2020.
- Indicators for consciousness as presented by EFSA 2013.
<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3523>
- Handling resistance against euthanizing/killing.
- Farmer safety aspects of on-farm killing.
- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspection.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in calibration, using the EURCAW indicators if possible.
- Knowledge on good practices/tools in relation to on-farm killing.

5. Discussion

The learning goals above can be combined according to the needs and relevance for inspections of pig welfare in member states. It is important to have an understanding of pig's behavioral and physiological needs to understand the Directives and to understand relevant prevention of pig welfare problems. Compliance or noncompliance are the most important aspects when inspecting, according to EU legislation, but for some inspectors it is just as important to be able to guide the farmer in relation to the legislation and the needs of the pigs.

Research has shown that Danish inspectors ask for time to calibrate with colleagues in their job. Without time to discuss open norms with colleagues, inspections cannot be harmonized within and between member states. Without tools to harmonize compliance criteria inspectors can feel too isolated and might not emphasize lack of compliance. As such, calibration is an important part of the learning-goals.

Furthermore, it is important to make time in the courses for discussion of dilemmas between behavioral needs of the animals and what is said in the legislation.

On the basis of the learning goals suggested for the eight pig welfare areas, in 2020 EURCAW-Pigs will develop a set of training materials for each of the eight welfare areas, which can be seen as standard courses to be further developed by MS.