

## CHAPTER 7.13.

# ANIMAL WELFARE AND PIG PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

### Article 7.13.1.

#### Definitions

“Commercial pig production systems” means those systems in which the purpose of the operation includes some or all of the following: breeding, rearing and management of pigs (*Sus scrofa*) for the production and sale of pigs or pig *meat*.

For the purposes of this chapter, “management” is defined at the farm management level and at the *animal handler* level. At the level of farm management, human resources management practices, including selection and training of handlers, and animal management practices, such as best practice in housing and husbandry and implementation of welfare protocols and audits, all have an impact on *animal welfare*. At the *animal handler* level this requires a range of well-developed husbandry skills and knowledge of how to care for animals.

For the purposes of this chapter, “environmental enrichment” means increasing the complexity (e.g. foraging opportunities, social housing) of the animal's environment to foster the expression of normal behaviour, provide cognitive stimulation and reduce the expression of abnormal behaviour. The aim of providing enrichment should be to improve the physical and mental state of the animal.

For the purposes of this chapter “stereotypy” is a repetitive behaviour induced by frustration, repeated attempts to cope or central nervous system dysfunction. It is expressed as a sequence of abnormal behaviours which appear to have no obvious purpose or function. Permanent dysfunction of the central nervous system in response to stressful conditions may mean that developed stereotypies may not resolve despite later changes to the environment or other treatments such as those relating to feeding levels or diet composition. Some stereotypies commonly observed in pigs include sham chewing, stone chewing, tongue rolling, teeth grinding, bar biting and floor licking.

For the purposes of this chapter “apathy” means that the animal ceases to respond to stimuli that would normally elicit a response. Furthermore, apathetic behaviour has been described as an abnormal or maladaptive behaviour, indicated by reduced activity, lack of interest or concern (i.e. indifference) and lack of feeling or emotion (impassiveness).

For the purposes of this chapter “agonistic behaviour” is a continuum of behaviours expressed in conflict situations, and includes offence, defence and submissive or escape components. The behaviours involved may include contact, such as biting and pushing, or non-contact, such as threats in the form of body postures and gestures. Aggressive behaviour (i.e. fighting) is a component of agonistic behaviour.

For the purposes of this chapter, “play behaviour” is characterised by specific neuroendocrinological responses and the appearance of having fun. It is often prompted by novel or unpredictable stimuli, and is related to exploration. It functions to prepare animals for unexpected situations by increasing the versatility of movements and enhancing their ability to cope with unexpected stressful situations. Animals actively seek and create unexpected situations in play, deliberately relaxing their movements or putting themselves into disadvantageous positions.

### Article 7.13.2.

#### Scope

This chapter addresses the welfare aspects of commercial domestic pig production systems. *Captive wild* pigs are not considered.

### Article 7.13.3.

#### Commercial pig production systems

Commercial pig production systems include:

1. Indoor systems

These are systems in which pigs are kept indoors and are fully dependent on humans to provide for basic animal needs such as *feed* and water. The type of housing depends on the environment, climatic conditions and management system. The animals may be kept in groups or individually.

2. Outdoor systems

These are systems in which pigs live outdoors with shelter or shade, have some autonomy over access to shelter or shade, but may be fully dependent on humans to provide for basic animal needs such as *feed* and water. Pigs are typically kept in paddocks or pastures according to their production stage. The animals may be kept in groups or individually.

3. Combination systems

These are systems in which pigs are managed in any combination of indoor and outdoor production systems.

Article 7.13.4.

**Criteria (or measurables) for the welfare of pigs**

The following outcome-based criteria (or measurables), specifically animal-based criteria, can be useful indicators of *animal welfare*. The use of these indicators and their appropriate thresholds should be adapted to the different situations in which pigs are managed such as regional differences, *herd* health, pig breed or crossbreed, and climate. Consideration should also be given to the resources provided and the design of the system. These criteria can be considered as tools to monitor the efficiency of design and management, given that they can affect *animal welfare*.

1. Behaviour

Certain behaviours appear to be indicators of good animal welfare and health in pigs such as play and specific vocalisations.

Certain other behaviours could indicate an *animal welfare* and health problem. These include sudden immobility, escape attempts, changes in *feed* and water intake, altered locomotory behaviour or posture, altered lying time, postures and patterns, altered respiratory rate and panting, coughing, shivering and huddling, high-pitched vocalisations and increased call rate, increased agonistic (including aggression), stereotypic, apathetic or other abnormal behaviours.

Environments that induce stereotypies typically also reduce animal welfare. Although stereotypies are generally held to indicate poor welfare, there are some instances where there is a poor association between stereotypies and stress. For example, frustration-induced stress may be somewhat rectified if the behaviour itself reduces the underlying motivation. Within a group, individuals that perform stereotypies may thus be coping more successfully than those that do not. Nevertheless, stereotypies indicate either a present problem for the animal or a past problem that has resolved. As with other indicators, caution should be used when using stereotypies as a welfare measure in isolation from other indicators.

2. Morbidity rates

Rates of infectious and metabolic diseases, lameness, peripartum and post-procedural complications, injury and other forms of morbidity, above recognised thresholds, may be direct or indirect indicators of *animal welfare* at the *herd* level. Understanding the aetiology of the disease or syndrome is important for detecting potential *animal welfare* problems. Mastitis and metritis, leg and hoof problems, shoulder ulcers in sows, skin lesions, respiratory and digestive diseases, and reproductive diseases are also particularly important animal health problems for pigs. Scoring systems, such as for body condition, lameness and injuries, and information gathered at the *slaughterhouse/abattoir*, can provide additional information.

Both clinical and *post mortem* pathologic examination should be utilised as indicators of disease, injuries and other problems that may compromise *animal welfare*.

3. Mortality and culling rates

Mortality and culling rates affect the length of productive life and, like morbidity rates, may be direct or indirect indicators of *animal welfare* at the *herd* level. Depending on the production system, estimates of mortality and culling rates can be obtained by analysing the causes of *death* and culling and their temporal and spatial patterns of occurrence. Mortality and culling rates, and their causes, when known, should be recorded regularly, e.g. daily, and used for monitoring, e.g. monthly, annually.

Necropsy is useful in establishing the cause of *death*.

4. Changes in body weight and body condition

In growing animals, body weight changes outside the expected growth rate, especially excessive sudden weight loss, are indicators of poor *animal welfare* and health.

Body condition outside an acceptable range or large variation amongst individual animals in the group may be an indicator of compromised *animal welfare* and health, and reproductive efficiency in mature animals.

5. Reproductive efficiency

Reproductive efficiency can be an indicator of *animal welfare* and health status. Poor reproductive efficiency, compared with the targets expected for a particular breed or crossbreed, can indicate *animal welfare* problems.

Examples may include:

- low conception rates,
- high abortion rates,
- metritis and mastitis,
- small litter size (total born),
- low numbers born alive,
- high numbers of stillborns or mummies.

6. Physical appearance

Physical appearance may be an indicator of *animal welfare* and health. Attributes of physical appearance that may indicate compromised *animal welfare* include:

- body condition outside an acceptable range,
- presence of ectoparasites,
- abnormal texture or hair loss,
- excessive soiling with faeces,
- skin discolouration, including sunburn,
- swellings, injuries or lesions,
- discharges (e.g. from nose or eyes, including tear staining),
- feet and leg abnormalities,
- abnormal posture (e.g. rounded back, head low),
- emaciation or dehydration.

7. Handling response

Improper handling or lack of human contact can result in fear and distress in pigs. Fear of humans may be an indicator of poor *animal welfare*. Indicators may include:

- evidence of poor human-animal relationship, such as marked avoidance of handlers and abnormal or excessive vocalisation when being moved or when *animal handlers* interact with pigs,
- animals slipping or falling during handling,
- injuries sustained during handling, such as bruising, lacerations and fractures.

8. Lameness

Pigs are susceptible to a variety of infectious and non-infectious musculoskeletal disorders. These disorders may cause lameness and gait abnormalities. Pigs that are lame or have gait abnormalities may have difficulty reaching *feed* and water and may experience pain and distress. Musculoskeletal problems have many causes, including genetic, nutrition, sanitation, floor quality, and other environmental and management factors. There are several gait scoring systems available.

#### 9. Complications from common procedures

Some painful or potentially painful procedures such as surgical castration, tail docking, teeth clipping or grinding, tusk trimming, identification, nose ringing and hoof care are performed on pigs to facilitate management, meet market or environmental requirements and improve human safety or safeguard *animal welfare*.

However, if these procedures are not performed properly, *animal welfare* and health can be unnecessarily compromised.

Indicators of problems associated with these procedures could include:

- post-procedure *infection* and swelling,
- post-procedure lameness,
- behaviour indicating pain, fear, distress or suffering,
- increased morbidity rates, and increased mortality and culling rates,
- reduced *feed* and water intake,
- post procedure body condition and weight loss.

Article 7.13.5.

#### **Recommendations**

Ensuring good welfare of pigs is contingent on several management factors, including system design, environmental management, and animal management practices which include responsible husbandry and provision of appropriate care. Serious problems can arise in any system if one or more of these elements are lacking.

Articles 7.13.6. to 7.13.27. provide recommendations for measures applied to pigs.

Each recommendation in Article 7.13.6. to 7.13.24. includes a list of relevant animal-based criteria (or measurables) derived from Article 7.13.4. This does not exclude other criteria (or measurables) being used where or when appropriate.

Article 7.13.6.

#### **Training of personnel**

Pigs should be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel, who collectively possess the ability, knowledge and competence necessary to maintain the welfare and health of the animals.

All people responsible for pigs should be competent through formal training or practical experience in accordance with their responsibilities. This includes understanding of and skill in animal handling, nutrition, reproductive management techniques, behaviour, *biosecurity*, signs of disease, and indicators of poor *animal welfare* such as stress, pain and discomfort, and their alleviation.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): handling response, physical appearance, behaviour, changes in body weight, body condition, reproductive efficiency, lameness, morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, and complications from common procedures.

Article 7.13.7.

#### **Handling and inspection**

*Animal handlers* with positive attitudes to handling and caring for pigs can lead to positive welfare outcomes. This may be shown by the length of time taken for the animals to approach a human, a short flight distance, or a willingness to interact with humans.

Pigs should be inspected at least once a day when fully dependent on humans to provide for basic needs such as *feed* and water and to identify welfare and health problems.

Some animals should be inspected more frequently, for example, farrowing sows, new born piglets, newly weaned pigs, newly-mixed gilts and sows, sick or injured pigs and those showing abnormal behaviours such as tail biting.

Pigs identified as sick or injured should be given appropriate treatment as soon as possible by competent *animal handlers*. If *animal handlers* are unable to provide appropriate treatment, the services of a *veterinarian* should be sought.

Recommendations on the handling of pigs are also found in Chapter 7.3. In particular handling aids that may cause pain and distress (e.g. electric goads) should be used only when other methods fail and provided that the animal can move freely and is able to move away from the handling aid. The use of electric goads should be avoided (see also point 3 of Article 7.3.8.), and should not be repeatedly used on the same animal, and not be used in sensitive areas including the udder, face, eyes, nose, ears or anogenital region. *Animal handlers* should be alert for signs of stress in pigs and know when to release handling pressure (by giving pigs more time and space) to reduce the level of threat.

Exposure of pigs to sudden movement, loud noises or changes in visual contrasts should be minimised where possible to prevent stress and fear reactions. Pigs should not be improperly or aggressively handled (e.g. kicked, thrown, dropped, walked on top of, held or pulled by one front leg, ears or tail). Pigs that become distressed during handling should be attended to immediately.

Pigs should be restrained only for as long as necessary and only appropriate, well-maintained restraint devices should be used.

Well designed and maintained handling facilities assists proper handling.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): physical appearance, behaviour, changes in body weight and body condition, handling response, reproductive efficiency, lameness, morbidity rates, and mortality and culling rates.

#### Article 7.13.8.

##### **Painful procedures**

Some procedures such as surgical castration, tail docking, teeth clipping or grinding, tusk trimming, identification, and nose ringing may be performed on pigs. These procedures should only be performed by trained personnel, when necessary to facilitate management, meet market or environmental requirements, improve human safety or safeguard *animal welfare*.

These procedures are painful or have the potential to cause pain. They should be performed in such a way as to minimise any pain, distress or suffering to the animal.

Options for enhancing *animal welfare* in relation to these procedures include the internationally recognised “three Rs”: replacement (e.g. using entire males or immunocastrated males rather than surgically castrated males), reduction (e.g. tail docking and teeth clipping only when necessary) and refinement (e.g. providing analgesia or anaesthesia under the recommendation or supervision of a *veterinarian*).

Ovariectomy should not be performed without anaesthesia and prolonged analgesia. An immunological product that reversibly and effectively suppresses ovarian function in pigs is available. Immunological prevention of oestrus should be encouraged to avoid ovariectomy.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): complications from common procedures, morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, abnormal behaviour, physical appearance and changes in weight and body condition.

#### Article 7.13.9.

##### **Provision of feed and water**

The amount of *feed* and nutrients pigs require in any management system is affected by factors such as climate, the nutritional composition and quality of the diet, the age, gender, genetics, size and physiological state of the pigs (e.g. pregnancy, lactation, growth), and their state of health, growth rate, previous feeding levels and level of activity and exercise.

All pigs should receive adequate quantity and quality of *feed* and nutrients each day to enable each pig to:

- maintain good health;
- meet its physiological requirements; and
- meet its requirements for foraging and feeding behaviour.

*Feed* and water should be provided in such a way as to prevent excessive or injurious competition.

Pigs should be fed a diet with the intention of minimising the occurrence of gastric ulcers (e.g. increasing dietary fiber or reducing crude protein).

All pigs should have access to an adequate supply of drinkable water that meets their physiological requirements and is free from contaminants hazardous to pig health. Water flow rates in drinkers should be set according to the age of the animal, stage of production and environmental conditions.

In outdoor systems where pigs have some autonomy over diet selection, stocking density should be matched to the available natural *feed* supply.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): changes in body weight and body condition, physical appearance (emaciation, dehydration), behaviour (agonistic behaviour at feeding and watering places and abnormal behaviour such as tail biting), mortality and culling rates, and morbidity rates.

#### Article 7.13.10.

### Environmental enrichment

Animals should be provided with an environment that provides complexity, manipulability and cognitive stimulation to foster normal behaviour (e.g. exploration, foraging such as rooting, biting and chewing materials other than feedstuffs, and social interaction), reduce abnormal behaviour (e.g. tail, ear, leg and flank biting, sham chewing, bar biting and apathetic behaviour) and improve their physical and mental state.

Pigs should be provided with enrichments that aim to improve their welfare through the enhancement of their physical and social environments, such as:

- sufficient quantity of suitable materials to enable pigs to fulfil their needs to explore and look for *feed* (edible materials), bite (chewable materials), root (investigable materials) and manipulate materials. Novelty is another aspect that is important in maintaining interest in the provided materials;
- social enrichment that involves either keeping pigs in groups or individually with visual, olfactory and auditory contact with other pigs;
- positive human contact (such as regular direct physical contact associated with positive events, which may include *feed*, pats, rubs, scratching and talking when the opportunity arises).

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): physical appearance (injuries), behaviour (stereotypies, tail biting), changes in body weight and body condition, handling response, reproductive efficiency, lameness, mortality and culling rates, and morbidity rates.

#### Article 7.13.11.

### Prevention of abnormal behaviour

In pig production there is a number of abnormal behaviours that can be prevented or minimised with appropriate management procedures.

Many of these problems are multifactorial and minimising their occurrence requires an examination of the whole environment and of several management factors. Management procedures that may reduce the occurrence of some of these behavioural problems include:

- 1) Oral stereotypies (e.g. bar biting, sham chewing, excessive drinking) may be minimised by providing environmental enrichment and increasing feeding time and satiety by increasing fibre content in the diet or foraging roughage.
- 2) Tail biting may be reduced by providing an adequate enrichment material and an adequate diet (avoiding deficiencies of minerals or essential amino acids), and avoiding high stocking densities and competition for resources, such as *feed* and water. Other factors to consider include animal characteristics (breed, genetics, gender) and social environment (*herd* size, mixing animals), general health, thermal comfort and air quality.
- 3) Belly nosing and ear sucking may be reduced by increasing the weaning age, and providing *feed* to piglets prior to weaning to avoid the abrupt change of *feed*.
- 4) Vulva biting may be reduced by minimising competition for resources, including *feed* and water, and reducing group size.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): physical appearance (injuries), behaviour (abnormal behaviour), morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, reproductive efficiency and changes in body weight and body condition.

Article 7.13.12.

**Housing (including outdoor production systems)**

When new facilities to accommodate pigs are planned or existing facilities are modified, professional advice on design in regards to welfare and health of animals should be sought.

Housing systems and their components should be designed, constructed and regularly inspected and maintained in a manner that reduces the risk of injury, disease and stress for pigs. Facilities should allow for the safe, efficient and humane management and movement of pigs. In systems where pigs could be exposed to adverse weather conditions they should have access to shelter to avoid thermal stress and sunburn.

There should be a separate pen or area where sick and injured animals or animals that exhibit abnormal behaviour can be isolated, treated and monitored. Certain animals may need to be kept individually. When a separated space is provided, this should accommodate all the needs of the animal, e.g. recumbent or lame animals or animals with severe wounds may require additional bedding or an alternative floor surface, and water and *feed* should be within reach.

Pigs should not be tethered as part of their normal housing systems.

Good outcomes in the welfare and health of animals can be achieved in a range of housing systems. The design and management of the system are critical for achieving these outcomes.

Sows and gilts, like other pigs, are social animals and prefer living in groups, therefore pregnant sows and gilts should preferably be housed in groups. Boars may need to be housed in individual pens.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): physical appearance (injuries), behaviour, changes in body weight and body condition, handling response, reproductive efficiency, lameness, mortality and culling rates, and morbidity rates.

Article 7.13.13.

**Space allowance**

Space allowance should be managed taking into account different areas for lying, standing, feeding and elimination. Stocking density should not adversely affect normal behaviour of pigs and duration of time spent lying.

Insufficient and inadequate space allowance may increase stress, the occurrence of injuries and have an adverse effect on growth rate, *feed* efficiency, reproduction and behaviour such as locomotion, resting, feeding and drinking, agonistic and abnormal behaviour.

1. Group housing

Floor space may interact with a number of factors such as temperature, humidity, floor type and feeding systems to affect pig welfare. All pigs should be able to lie down simultaneously and to stand up and move freely. Sufficient space should be provided to enable animals to have access to *feed*, water, to separate lying and elimination areas and to avoid aggressive animals.

Group housing systems should provide sufficient space and opportunities to avoid or escape from potential aggressors.

If abnormally aggressive behaviour is seen, corrective measures should be taken, such as increasing space allowance and providing barriers where possible or individually housing the aggressive pig.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): reduction or variation in body weight and body condition, increasing agonistic and abnormal behaviour such as tail biting, injuries, morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, and physical appearance (e.g. excessive presence of faeces on the skin).

2. Individual pens

Pigs should only be housed in individual pens if necessary. In individual pens, pigs should be provided with sufficient space so that they can stand up, turn around and lie comfortably in a natural position, and that provides separate areas for elimination, lying and eating.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): increasing abnormal behaviour (stereotypies), morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, and physical appearance (e.g. excessive presence of faeces on the skin, injuries).

3. Stalls and crates

Feeding, insemination and gestation stalls and farrowing crates should be sized appropriately to allow pigs to:

- stand up in their natural stance without contact with either side of the stall or crate,
- stand up in their natural stance without contact with the top bars,
- stand without simultaneously touching both ends of the stall or crate,
- lie comfortably on their sides without disturbing neighbouring pigs or being injured by another pig, except in the case of stalls used only for feeding.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): physical appearance (e.g. injuries), increasing abnormal behaviour (stereotypies), reproductive efficiency, lameness, mortality and culling rates, and morbidity rates (e.g. piglets).

Article 7.13.14.

**Flooring, bedding, resting surfaces**

In all production systems, pigs need a well-drained, dry and comfortable place to rest, except in situations where sprinklers or misters may be used to prevent heat stress.

Floor management in indoor production systems can have a significant impact on pig welfare. Flooring, bedding, resting surfaces and outdoor yards should be cleaned as conditions warrant, to ensure good hygiene, comfort and minimise risk of diseases and injuries. Areas with excessive faecal accumulation are not suitable for resting.

Floors should be designed to minimise slipping and falling, promote foot health, and reduce the risk of claw injuries.

If a housing system includes areas of slatted floor, the slat and gap widths should be appropriate to the claw size of the pigs to prevent injuries.

Slope of the floor should allow water to drain and not pool.

In outdoor systems, pigs should be rotated between paddocks or pastures to ensure good hygiene and minimise risk of diseases.

If bedding or rubber matting is provided it should be maintained to provide pigs with a clean, dry and comfortable place on which to lie.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): physical appearance (e.g. injuries, presence of faeces on the skin, bursitis), lameness and morbidity rates (e.g. respiratory disorders, reproductive tract infections).

Article 7.13.15.

**Air quality**

Good air quality and ventilation are important for the welfare and health of pigs and reduce the risk of respiratory discomfort, diseases and abnormal behaviour. Dust, toxins, microorganisms and noxious gases, including ammonia, hydrogen sulphide, and methane caused by decomposing animal waste, can be problematic in indoor systems.

Air quality is influenced strongly by management and building design in housed systems. Air composition is influenced by stocking density, the size of the pigs, flooring, bedding, waste management, building design and ventilation system.

Proper ventilation, without draughts, particularly for young pigs, is important for effective heat dissipation in pigs and to prevent the build-up of effluent gases (e.g. ammonia and hydrogen sulphide), including those from manure and dust in the housing unit. The ammonia concentration in enclosed housing should not exceed 25 ppm. A useful indicator is that if air quality at the level of the pigs is unpleasant for humans it is most likely a problem for pigs.



Animal-based criteria (or measurables): morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, physical appearance (discharges from nose or eyes), behaviour (especially respiratory rate, coughing and tail biting), change in body weight and body condition.

Article 7.13.16.

**Thermal environment**

Although pigs can adapt to a range of thermal environments, particularly if appropriate breeds and housing are used for the anticipated conditions, sudden fluctuations in temperature can cause heat or cold stress.

1. Heat stress

Heat stress is a serious problem in pig production. It can cause significant discomfort, as well as reductions in weight gain and fertility, or sudden death.

The risk of heat stress for pigs is influenced by environmental factors including air temperature, solar radiation, relative humidity, wind speed, ventilation rates, stocking density, shade and wallow availability in outdoor systems and animal factors including breed, age and body condition.

At a given temperature, the heavier pigs are, the more susceptible they are to heat stress.

*Animal handlers* should be aware of the risk that heat stress poses to pigs and of the thresholds in relation to heat and humidity that may require action. If the risk of heat stress reaches too high levels the *animal handlers* should institute an emergency action plan that gives priority to access to additional water and could include provision of shade and wallows in outdoor systems, fans, reduction of stocking density, water-based cooling systems (dripping or misting), and provision of cooling systems as appropriate for the local conditions.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): behaviour (*feed* and water intake, respiratory rate, panting, lying postures and patterns, agonistic behaviour), physical appearance (presence of faeces on the skin, sunburn), morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, and reproductive efficiency.

2. Cold stress

Protection from cold should be provided when conditions are likely to compromise the welfare of pigs, particularly in neonates and young pigs and others that are physiologically compromised (e.g. ill animals). Protection can be provided by insulation, extra bedding, heat mats or lamps and natural or man-made shelters in outdoor systems.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, physical appearance (piloerection), behaviour (especially abnormal postures, shivering and huddling) and changes in body weight and body condition.

Article 7.13.17.

**Noise**

Exposure of pigs to sudden or prolonged loud noises should be avoided to prevent increased aggression, stress and fear. Ventilation fans, feeding machinery or other indoor or outdoor equipment should be constructed, placed, operated and maintained in such a way that they cause the least possible amount of noise.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): behaviour (e.g. fleeing and abnormal or excessive vocalisation), physical appearance (e.g. injuries), reproductive efficiency, changes in body weight and body condition.

Article 7.13.18.

**Lighting**

Indoor systems should have light levels sufficient to allow all pigs to see one another, to investigate their surroundings visually and to show other normal behaviour patterns and to be seen clearly by staff to allow adequate inspection of the pigs. The lighting regime should be such as to prevent health and behavioural problems. It should follow a 24-hour rhythm and include sufficient uninterrupted dark and light periods, preferably no less than 6 hours for both.

Artificial light sources should be located so as not to cause discomfort to the pigs.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): behaviour (locomotive behaviour), morbidity rates, reproductive efficiency, physical appearance (injuries) and changes in body weight and body condition.

#### Article 7.13.19.

### **Farrowing and lactation**

Sows and gilts need time to adjust to their farrowing accommodation before farrowing. Nesting material should be available to sows and gilts where possible for at least one day prior to. Sows and gilts should be observed frequently around their expected farrowing times. As some sows and gilts need assistance during farrowing, there should be sufficient space and competent staff.

Farrowing accommodation should also provide comfort, warmth and protection to the piglets.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): mortality and culling rates (piglets; gilts and sows), morbidity rates (metritis and mastitis), behaviour (restlessness and savaging), reproductive efficiency, physical appearance (injuries).

#### Article 7.13.20.

### **Weaning**

Weaning is a stressful time for sows and piglets and good management is required. Problems associated with weaning are generally related to the piglets' size and physiological maturity. Weaned piglets should be moved into clean and disinfected housing separate from where sows are kept, in order to minimise the transmission of diseases to the piglets.

Piglets should be weaned at three weeks or older, unless otherwise recommended by a *veterinarian* for disease control purposes. Early weaning systems require good management and nutrition of the piglets.

Delaying weaning to the age of four weeks or more may produce benefits such as improved gut immunity, less diarrhoea and less use of *antimicrobial agents*.

Regardless of age, low weight piglets require additional care and can benefit from being kept in small groups in specialised pens until they are able to be moved to the common nursery area.

Newly weaned pigs are susceptible to disease challenges, so adherence to high-level hygiene protocols and appropriate diet is important. The area that piglets are weaned into should be clean, dry and warm.

All newly weaned pigs should be monitored carefully during the first two weeks after weaning for any signs of ill-health or abnormal stress.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): mortality and culling rates (piglets), morbidity rates (respiratory disease, diarrhoea), behaviour (belly nosing and ear sucking), physical appearance (injuries) and changes in body weight and body condition.

#### Article 7.13.21.

### **Mixing**

Mixing of unfamiliar pigs can result in fighting to establish a dominance hierarchy, and therefore mixing should be minimised as much as possible. When mixing, strategies to reduce aggression should be implemented. Animals should be observed after mixing and interventions applied if the aggression is intense or prolonged, to minimise stress and injury.

Measures to prevent excessive fighting and injuries can include:

- providing additional space and a non-slippery floor,
- feeding before mixing,
- feeding on the floor in the mixing area,
- providing straw or other suitable enrichment materials in the mixing area,
- providing opportunities to escape and to hide from other pigs, such as visual barriers,
- mixing previously familiarised animals whenever possible,

- mixing young animals as soon after weaning as possible,
- avoiding the addition of one or small number of animals to a large established group.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, behaviour (agonistic), physical appearance (injuries), changes in body weight and body condition and reproductive efficiency.

Article 7.13.22.

### **Genetic selection**

Welfare and health considerations should balance any decisions on productivity and growth rate when choosing a breed or crossbreed for a particular location or production system.

Selective breeding can improve the welfare of pigs for example by selection to improve maternal behaviour, piglet viability, temperament and resistance to stress and disease and to reduce tail biting and aggressive behaviour. Including genetic characteristics related to social behaviour into breeding programmes may also reduce negative social interactions and increase positive ones and may have major positive effects on group-housed animals.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): physical appearance, behaviour (e.g. maternal and agonistic behaviour), changes in body weight and body condition, handling response, reproductive efficiency, lameness, mortality and culling rates, and morbidity rates.

Article 7.13.23.

### **Protection from predators and pests**

In outdoor and combination systems pigs should be protected from predators.

Where practicable, pigs should also be protected from pests such as excessive numbers of flies and mosquitoes.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, behaviour, and physical appearance (injuries).

Article 7.13.24.

### **Biosecurity and animal health (biosecurity and disease prevention)**

*Biosecurity plans* should be designed, implemented and maintained, commensurate with the best possible *herd* health status, available resources and infrastructure, and current disease risk and, for *listed diseases* in accordance with relevant recommendations in the *Terrestrial Code*.

These *biosecurity plans* should address the control of the major sources and pathways for spread of pathogenic agents including:

- introductions to the *herd*, especially from different sources,
- semen,
- other domestic animals, *wildlife* and pests,
- people, including sanitation practices,
- equipment, including *vehicles*, tools and facilities,
- air, water, *feed* and bedding,
- waste, including manure garbage and disposal of dead animals.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, reproductive efficiency, changes in weight and body condition, physical appearance (signs of disease).

1. Animal health management

*Animal health management* should optimise the welfare and health of pigs in the *herd*. It includes the prevention, treatment and control of diseases and conditions affecting the *herd* (in particular respiratory, reproductive and enteric diseases).

There should be an effective programme for the prevention and treatment of diseases and conditions, formulated in consultation with a *veterinarian*. This programme should include *biosecurity* and quarantine protocols, the acclimatisation of replacements, *vaccinations*, and good colostrum management, the recording of production data (e.g. number of sows, piglets per sow per year, *feed* conversion, and body weight at weaning), morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, and medical treatments. It should be kept up to date by the *animal handler*. Regular monitoring of records aids management and quickly reveals problem areas for intervention.

For parasitic burdens (e.g. endoparasites, ectoparasites and protozoa) and insect and rodents control, a programme should be implemented to monitor, control and treat, as appropriate.

Lameness can be a problem in pigs. *Animal handlers* should monitor the state of feet and legs and take measures to prevent lameness and maintain foot and leg health.

Those responsible for the care of pigs should be aware of early specific signs of disease, pain, distress or suffering, such as coughing, abortion, diarrhoea, changes in locomotory behaviour or apathetic behaviour, and non-specific signs such as reduced *feed* and water intake, changes in weight and body condition, changes in behaviour or abnormal physical appearance.

Pigs at higher risk will require more frequent inspection by *animal handlers*. If *animal handlers* suspect the presence of a disease or are not able to correct the causes of disease, pain, distress or suffering, they should seek advice from those having training and experience, such as *veterinarians* or other qualified advisers, as appropriate.

Nonambulatory pigs should not be transported or moved unless absolutely necessary for treatment, recovery, or diagnosis. Such movements should be done carefully using methods that avoid dragging the animal or lifting it in a way that might cause further pain, suffering or exacerbate injuries.

*Animal handlers* should also be competent in assessing fitness to transport, as described in Chapter 7.3.

In case of disease or injury, when treatment has failed, is not feasible or recovery is unlikely (e.g. pigs that are unable to stand up unaided or refuse to eat or drink), or severe pain that cannot be alleviated the animal should be humanely killed as soon as possible in accordance with Chapter 7.6.

Animal-based criteria (or measurables): morbidity rates, mortality and culling rates, reproductive efficiency, behaviour (apathetic behaviour), lameness, physical appearance (injuries) and changes in body weight and body condition.

2. Emergency plans for disease outbreaks

Emergency plans should cover the management of the farm in the event of a disease *outbreak*, consistent with national programmes and recommendations of *Veterinary Services* as appropriate.

Article 7.13.25.

**Contingency plans**

Where the failure of power, water or *feed* supply systems could compromise *animal welfare*, pig producers should have contingency plans in place. These plans may include the provision of fail-safe alarms to detect malfunctions, back-up generators, contact information for key service providers, ability to store water on farm, access to water cartage services, adequate on-farm storage of *feed* and an alternative *feed* supply.

Preventive measures for emergencies should be input-based rather than outcome-based. Alarms and back-up systems should be checked regularly.

Contingency plans should be documented and communicated to all responsible parties.

Article 7.13.26.

**Disaster management**

Plans should be in place to minimise and mitigate the effect of disasters (e.g. earthquake, fire, flooding, blizzard and hurricane). Such plans may include evacuation procedures, identifying high ground, maintaining emergency *feed* and water stores, destocking and humane *killing* when necessary.

Procedures for humane *killing* of sick or injured pigs should be part of the disaster management plan and should follow the recommendations of Chapter 7.6.

Reference to contingency plans can also be found in Article 7.13.25.

Article 7.13.27.

### **Humane killing**

Allowing a sick or injured animal to linger unnecessarily is unacceptable. Therefore, for sick and injured pigs a prompt diagnosis should be made to determine whether the animal should be treated or humanely killed.

The decision to kill an animal humanely and the procedure itself should be undertaken by a competent person.

For a description of acceptable methods for humane *killing* of pigs see Chapter 7.6.

The *establishment* should have documented procedures and the necessary equipment for on-farm humane *killing*. Staff should be trained in humane *killing* procedures appropriate for each class of pig.

Reasons for humane *killing* may include:

- severe emaciation, weak pigs that are nonambulatory or at risk of becoming nonambulatory,
- severely injured or nonambulatory pigs that will not stand up, refuse to eat or drink, or have not responded to treatment,
- rapid deterioration of a medical condition for which treatment has been unsuccessful,
- severe pain that cannot be alleviated,
- multiple joint *infections* with chronic weight loss,
- piglets that are premature and unlikely to survive, or have a debilitating congenital defect, and
- as part of disaster management response.

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NB: FIRST ADOPTED IN 2018; MOST RECENT UPDATE ADOPTED IN 2019.

