

"Humane Choice" Standards - Pigs



1.1 ANIMAL WELFARE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Animals should be allowed to satisfy their basic behavioural needs. In particular, livestock are able to forage on land, move untethered and uncaged.

Fences, yards and housing are constructed in ways which do not lead to injury or bruising as a consequence of poor design.

Farm systems shall ensure that the environment provided for pigs will permit safe, wholesome food production.

A system of animal identification should be implemented to ensure full traceability of all pigs.

Care of the environment should be part of a responsible farm management plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Operators should maintain conditions that promote the animals' physiological and behavioural needs.

Shelter in paddocks should include windbreaks and shade throughout the day.

Animal breed selection should encompass consideration of breeds and genetic material, which is naturally suited to the farm and district environment.

Yards next to animal housing should be managed to provide comfortable and secure conditions without excessive mud, dust, hazardous material.

STANDARDS

1.1.1 Shelter and shade shall be provided to give all animals protection against the sun, extreme wind and rain.

1.1.2 Measures must be taken to provide animals with adequate alternatives to waterlogged pasture, holding pens and accommodation.

1.1.3 Animals must be allowed free movement and access to pasture and mud wallows.

1.1.4 When confined for nights, inclement weather or for other reasons on a temporary basis, animals must have access to:

1.1.4.a A sleeping area with suitable bedding material;

1.1.4.b A supply of fresh water and feed;

1.1.4.c Space to stand, lie down, turn around and carry out natural behaviour;

1.1.4.d Fresh air, sunlight, ventilation (to prevent high humidity and build-up of gases), and insulation from heat and cold;

1.1.4.e Housing must be cleaned of manure, urine and uneaten or spilt feed as often as necessary to minimise unpleasant odours and avoid attracting pests.

1.1.5 Where livestock are housed on a temporary basis, the minimum "on ground" density shall comply with the following, for:

Small to medium animals	Not less than 1.5 square metres for every animal
Medium to large animals	Not less than 3 square metres for every animal

1.1.6 Housing, pens, equipment and utensils must be cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross infection and the build-up of disease carrying organisms.

1.1.7 Litter must be of good quality and be managed to maintain it in a dry, friable condition; it must be of a sufficient depth for dilution of faeces and be skimmed and topped up as necessary with fresh litter

1.1.8 Pigs must not be kept in crates or sows in sow stalls.

1.1.9 Herd animals must not be kept in isolation.

DEROGATION - Male animals and animals about to give birth may be exempted, as well as animals in smallholdings with individual animals only.

1.1.10 Animals must be protected from predation. Feral animals may be managed using the following:

1.1.10.a Physical exclusion, chasing and guard dogs;

1.1.10.b Trapping of individuals using live traps with relocation or, where there is no alternative, humane euthanasia;

- 1.1.10.c Poisons for control of rodents or feral animals in the field are prohibited, unless required by a statutory authority and the statutory authority confirms use in writing. Were baits are laid for rodents and feral animals, they must not be accessible to roaming animals and wildlife and concealed bait stations are recommended. A bait map will be maintained showing location of poisons and their use recorded in the Chemical Treatment Records. Refer to Section 1.7.
- 1.1.11 The use of restraining tethers, cages or pens are not permitted except for short periods for holding purposes only.
- 1.1.12 The restraint of sows by tether is not acceptable.

1.2 ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Livestock husbandry is based on the harmonious relationship between land, water, plants and livestock, respect for the physiological and behavioural needs of livestock and the feeding of good quality, feedstuffs. Animal management is based on the principles of balanced nutrition and feeding for prevention of disease and resistance to infection, parasitic attack and metabolic disorders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Producers should maintain conditions that enhance the animals' lives, physiological needs and behavioural needs.

Animal breeding and selection should consider breeds and genetic characteristics, which are naturally suited to the individual farm.

Refer to **Section 1.7** of this standard for requirements of records to be kept.

STANDARDS

- 1.2.1 Animals shall be allowed to practise their normal behaviours without interference to normal growth patterns.
 - In particular animals must be capable of natural copulation and birth.
 - 1.2.1.a Embryo transfer is prohibited;
 - 1.2.1.b Artificial insemination is not recommended;
 - 1.2.1.c The use of genetically engineered species or breeds is not allowed;
 - 1.2.1.e Hormonal heat treatment and induced birth are not allowed.

DEROGATION

Unless applied to individual animals for medical reasons and under veterinary supervision.

- 1.2.2 Synthetic growth promotants are prohibited in all livestock production systems.
- 1.2.3 The operator must make provision for animal welfare through adequate ground cover that considers all extremities in climatic conditions.
- 1.2.4 Stocking rates for livestock must be appropriate for the region, taking into consideration feed production capacity, health, nutrient balance, and environmental impact. A general guide is around 500 sq m per sow from farrowing to weaning and around 50 sq m per growing pig (up to 30 kg).
- 1.2.5 Animals shall be provided with adequate diet, nutrition and water supply.
- 1.2.6 Huts for farrowing must be warm and draught free.

1.3 DIET AND NUTRITION

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Animal health results from a combination of good management practice and sound nutrition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Energy, protein and roughage supplies should be adequate to maintain good animal health and condition. Based on human and animal health considerations, it is undesirable to feed meat meal to pigs.

STANDARDS

- 1.3.1 The diet must be balanced according to the needs of the animal, be sufficient and of good quality.
- 1.3.2 All animals must have access to forage.
- 1.3.3 Suckling animals must be reared by their mother in order to assist in their development of a natural immunity to infection.
- 1.3.4 Feeds containing offal, faeces, urine, urea, food industry by-products treated with solvents, same species materials or other prohibited substances are not permitted.

1.4 HEALTH

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Management practices promote and maintain the health and well being of animals through balanced nutrition, stress-free living conditions, breed and breeding selection for resistance to diseases, parasites and infection. Animal management is based on the prevention of disease and raising healthy animals that are able to resist infection, parasitic attack and metabolic disorders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Health promotion and disease prevention should include the following techniques:

- Breeding and selection;
- Exercise and access to the open;
- Appropriate stocking densities and rotational grazing.

Approved veterinary treatment should be considered as an adjunct to, and not a substitute for, good management practices.

The aim should be to develop resistance in animals through breeding and selection and to correct the cause of the disorder, rather than treating the symptoms.

STANDARDS

This Standard prohibits the addition of any antibiotics to feedstuff or water supply.

- 1.4.1 Animal health must be maintained primarily through pro-active management, breeding and selection to address the cause of disorders, rather than treating the symptoms.
- 1.4.2 The operator shall provide records of veterinary treatment to animals. Refer to Section 1.7.
- 1.4.3 If animals suffer disease or injury despite preventative measures the operator must not withhold appropriate veterinary treatment.

Derogation

Medication may be added to feed strictly on a case by case basis to avoid suffering and disease under veterinary advice.

1.5 WEANING

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Weaning of animals shall enable the natural process of animal rearing to occur, including progeny having access to first milk where relevant.

STANDARD

- 1.5.1 Weaning times shall conform to the following minimum time frames:
 - Piglets 6 weeks.

1.6 ANIMAL SURGICAL TREATMENTS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Animal surgical treatments are only carried out if the operator can demonstrate that the benefits of the action outweigh the consequences of non-treatment and there are no other acceptable management options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The operator should choose breeds and practices which do not rely on surgical treatments.

STANDARDS

- 1.6.1 Animal mutilations are not permitted.
- 1.6.2 Where the following surgical treatment is shown to be necessary, it shall be performed in such a way that minimises the stress and injury to the animal:
 - 1.6.2.a Ear notching before 7 days old.
- 1.6.3 Nose ringing is not permitted.
- 1.6.4 Tail cutting is not permitted.
- 1.6.5 Teeth cutting is not permitted.
- 1.6.6 Surgical castration is permitted in conjunction with the use of a local anaesthetic, and must be performed before 21 days of age.
- 1.6.7 Immuno castration is permitted.

1.7 ANIMAL RECORDS AND IDENTIFICATION

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Identification of animals is the basis for ensuring traceability, final product identity and permitting accurate and informed management. A record of all stock purchased, sold and deaths must be kept. A Farm Map clearly identifying individual paddocks, and also indicating the area of land within these paddock, as well as any permanent farm structures, will be required.

STANDARDS

- 1.7.1 Tags or markers shall be affixed to all breeding stock and any animals requiring individual identification.
- 1.7.2 Approved identification includes the following:
 - Electronic collars;
 - Ear notching;
 - Tattooing;
 - National Livestock Identification Scheme;
 - Ear tags.
- 1.7.3 The operator shall maintain adequate records and identification practices to ensure that each animal herd can be identified and traced back to the farm.
- 1.7.4 Records of all livestock deaths, sales and purchases must be maintained and kept for a period of five years after the disposal of the animal and made available at the time of an audit.
- 1.7.5 Each state has different requirements for the branding of pigs being transported and sent for slaughter. A registered Slap Brand must be purchased to meet these requirements. This brand must be maintained to ensure that it is clean and free of any damaged pins or points.
- 1.7.6 A Farm Diary will be maintained and kept for a minimum of 3 years, or between audits. Such a diary will be used to record significant farm practices as evidence of their occurrence. Such practices include, but not limited to, paddock rotations, soil management and crop or pasture planting, harvest of any forage or hay, movement of animals, surgical procedures, weaning dates, pen maintenance, cleaning etc.
- 1.7.7 The following records will be maintained and made available at the time of an audit;
 - Farm Diary
 - Animal Treatment Record
 - Medicine/Chemical Log
 - Crop/Pasture Treatment Record
 - Stored Grain Treatment Record
 - Records for animal deaths, sales and purchases
 - Feed Purchase Records

Animal Sourcing

- 1.7.8 Weaner pigs may be bought in from non certified farms when they are accompanied by a Vendor Declaration to guarantee that no sow stalls or farrowing crates were used in the production of those animals. Bought in weaners must be of the age of 10 weeks or under when delivered on farm and permanently identified so that their origin is fully traceable.
- 1.7.9 Breeding stock may be purchased from any source and will be accompanied by a Vendor Declaration at the time of purchase. Such animals must be permanently identified so that their origin is fully traceable.

1.8 TRANSPORT

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Transport of stock is carried out to ensure the best animal welfare and sanitation, the preservation of identity and to permit traceability of the animals. A management plan is used to ensure that the holding, loading, watering, transport and delivery of livestock is conducted with compassion, hygiene and oversight.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Animals should be transported to the nearest available facilities for slaughter and should not be unnecessarily transported between properties or owners unless required by feed shortages and drought.

Transport of animals between properties or to abattoirs shall take into consideration welfare requirements and shall ensure the minimisation of stress to the animal at all times.

STANDARDS

- 1.8.1 A Management Plan for transport of livestock shall be in place. This plan shall address the following:
 - 1.8.1.a Mustering;
 - 1.8.1.b Holding;
 - 1.8.1.c Feeding;
 - 1.8.1.d Watering;
 - 1.8.1.e Identification;
 - 1.8.1.f Loading;
 - 1.8.1.g Travel;
 - 1.8.1.h Oversight;
 - 1.8.1.i Delivery;
 - 1.8.1.j Documentation.
- 1.8.2 Loading and unloading facilities must not have parts protruding or sharp edges that can cause injury, soiling or damage to animals.
- 1.8.3 Transport vehicles shall be of suitable size to prevent damage and/or bruising.
- 1.8.4 Gates must be used in transport vehicles to segregate animals into compatible groups and restrict movement of animals that could cause injury or damage.
- 1.8.5 Floors and ramps must be corrugated or suitably designed so the animal does not slip unduly. Unloading ramps (not less than 1.5 metres in length) should have a level dock before the ramps go down so that animals have a level surface to walk on when they exit the truck. A good target for the slope of the ramp is no more than 20° with a non-slip surface. The inside walls of the ramp should be constructed so animals cannot see activities outside the ramp.
- 1.8.6 Animals should be offloaded by experienced personnel as soon as practicable after arrival.
- 1.8.7 The use of electric prods is prohibited. Substitutes for prods include plastic paddles or sticks with flags on the end.
- 1.8.8 Animals should not be lifted by the legs, ears or tail during unloading.
- 1.8.9 Water must be available before and after transport and feed must be provided if pigs are held overnight or for periods in excess of 8 hours.
- 1.8.10 Time period from loading to unloading must not exceed 8 hours.
- 1.8.11 Unfit animals must not be transported.
- 1.8.12 Each consignment of pigs will be accompanied by the current version of the National Vendor Declaration indicating that this document has been completed by a nominated competent person.

1.9 SLAUGHTER

STANDARDS

- 1.9.1 Slaughter will be carried out quickly and without undue stress.
- 1.9.2 For waiting periods in excess of 6 hours, provision of clean and dry areas must be made for animals to lie down and feed must be provided if pigs are to be held overnight.
- 1.9.3 Animals may not be held or herded in an area where the killing of other livestock is visible.
- 1.9.4 Animals must not be conscious during slaughter.
- 1.9.5 Stunning pigs with exposure to gas is the preferred practice to affect unconsciousness.
- 1.9.6 A stun device must be backed up by emergency measures in the case of failure.
- 1.9.7 Death by bleeding, without stunning, is not permissible.
- 1.9.8 Clearly identifiable labelling such as branding of all carcasses must take place which differentiates them by colour from conventional carcasses and identifies them as "Humane Choice".
- 1.9.9 Where stock is slaughtered for "Humane Choice" sale **the processing facility must be inspected as a certified component of the operator's operation or certified in its own right before the 'Humane Choice' Label may be applied.**

1.10 ENVIRONMENT

RECOMENDATIONS

Each farm should have in place a management system that considers the impact of grazing pigs on the environment.

A paddock rotation system that includes a cropping phase is recommended to help prevent nutrient buildup in the soil.

Manure and spent bedding should be collected, and where possible composted, and spread onto land that is not designated for the grazing of pigs.

STANDARDS

- 1.10.1 Pig manure must be carefully managed to avoid the build up of nutrients in the soil to unacceptable levels.
- 1.10.2 Careful consideration must be given to siting of paddocks and yards that they do not have the potential to allow runoff into river and water systems.
- 1.10.3 Paddocks must be monitored for signs of erosion and steps taken to minimize land degradation.
- 1.10.4 A paddock rotation system must be in place to prevent permanent damage to the land and to aid in the control of parasite infestations. As a guide; pasture cover should not fall below 40% before pigs are moved to new ground.
- 1.10.5 In the event of the death of a pig, the carcass must be disposed of in an appropriate and responsible manner. Composting, deep burial or in the case of suspected disease, incineration is recommended.

1.11 FOOD SAFETY

Australian consumers have the right to expect the food they buy to meet certain standards: that it be raised according to sound animal husbandry techniques and free from contaminants that could jeopardize the wholesomeness of that food.

STANDARD

- 1.11.1 Each producer must complete the Humane Choice Food Safety Risk Assessment and implement the systems required therein.

HSI concentrates on the preservation of endangered animals and ecosystems and works to ensure quality of life for all animals, both domestic and wild. HSI is the largest animal protection not-for-profit organisation in the world, with over 9 million supporters globally and has been established in Australia since 1994.



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