

Section 10.4

Group Sow Housing Certification

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GROUP SOW HOUSING CERTIFICATION

This section ensures the requirement #7 of section 7.3 – Housing system is met.

REQUIREMENTS

1. At least 60% of the bred gilts and sows in the breeding and gestation area(s) must be in group housing (unless using a multi-week batch farrowing system).
2. If using a multi-week batch farrowing system, at least 50% of the bred gilts and sows in the breeding and gestation area(s) must be in group housing.
3. All group-housed sows must be provided with sufficient space for separation of dunging from lying and eating areas.

RATIONALE

- a. A farm's group-housing system for breeding pigs can be evaluated by using the Code of Practice. This is done by comparing the number of pigs that are individually and group housed, respectively, in the barn's breeding and gestation areas against the ratio that would be expected in the Code of Practice.
- b. Four-week batch farrowing has additional animal health and welfare benefits because it creates a gap in time when there are no suckling pigs on the farm. This allows for a break in disease cycles, as young pigs are relatively naive to pathogens and therefore can amplify diseases on-farm. A complete cleaning and drying of the farrowing area(s) will also help to break up disease cycles.

Farms that use four-week batch farrowing often have healthier herds, resulting in enhanced animal welfare. To achieve these breaks in disease cycles, good herd management requires that bred sows be moved into groups at either 21 days or 49 days post-breeding. However, moving bred sows into groups at 21 days post-breeding can result in reduced conception rates and increased aggression. These are both indicators of reduced welfare. It is therefore recommended that bred sows not be moved into groups between days 3 and 28 post-breeding.

To optimize the welfare of the sows in these systems, it is recommended that bred sows be moved into groups at around 49 days post-breeding.

GUIDANCE

- a. The time spent by bred gilts and sows in both breeding and gestation areas combined are made up of the following:
 - i. the time from weaning to first service
 - ii. one day of breeding
 - iii. the time from breeding to being moved into gestation housing (max 35 days)
 - iv. the time from entering gestation housing to being moved to the farrowing area
 - v. non-productive days if an animal is not successfully bred but remains a part of the breeding herd (for the fraction of pigs that are unsuccessfully bred), and;
 - vi. Time spent in a stall after being removed from a gestation pen for welfare reasons (potentially full term, for the fraction of pigs that require individual housing).
- b. Note: Maiden gilts and cull pigs are not considered to be part of the breeding herd and should not be considered in evaluating qualification of the farm for this certification.
- c. Definitions:
 - i. Batch-farrowing: Weaning occurs a maximum of once per week, and could occur every 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 weeks.
 - ii. Multi-week batch farrowing: Weaning occurs once every 2 weeks or less frequently, such as every 3, 4, 5 or 6 weeks.
 - iii. Continuous flow: Weaning occurs multiple times per week on an ongoing basis.

AUDIT QUESTIONS

Q#	Audit Questions	Yes	No	N/A
Q10.4.1	If this producer is using a sow management system in continuous flow (other than a batch farrowing system) , is the actual percentage of bred gilts and sows in pens in the breeding and gestation area(s) greater than or equal to 60%?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q10.4.2	If this producer is using a batch farrowing system , is the actual percentage of bred gilts and sows in the pens in the breeding and gestation area(s) greater than or equal to 50%?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q10.4.3	Are all group-housed sows provided with sufficient space for separation of dunging area from lying and feeding areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DECLARATION BY VALIDATOR

I, _____ (name), visited the sow barn on _____ (date).
I observed all of the pigs in the breeding and gestation areas when the farm was fully stocked and determined the number of bred gilts and sows in both individual stalls and group pens, respectively.

I declare that:

_____ (farm name and premises ID number)

complies with all the requirements of the Canadian Pork Excellence Group Sow Housing Certification Program.

does not comply with all the requirements of the Canadian Pork Excellence Group Sow Housing Certification Program.

Name of validator (print)

Signature of validator

Date

Name of site manager (print)

Name of site manager (print)

Date