



Part 2: Sows and Piglets

Stockmanship

The housing systems currently used for pregnant sows have both advantages and disadvantages. Within any system, however, animal care is largely determined by the operator’s understanding of the animals and the extent and quality of care provided.

The swine industry in Canada acknowledges that the use of the gestation stall is not acceptable to some of the Canadian public. However, until a sustainable, animal-welfare friendly alternative is available to producers, sows will continue to be housed in stalls. Therefore, this assessment will include the measure of the welfare of these animals under current conditions. The industry is working with researchers and producers to develop sustainable alternatives to the gestation stall.

Stockpeople working in farrowing rooms must be aware of the vulnerability of sows and piglets during, and immediately after farrowing. Some sows and gilts may need assistance during farrowing. Sow health problems occur most commonly in the first few days after farrowing. Normally, newborn piglets will suckle soon after birth. It is the stockperson’s responsibility to confirm access (i.e. visually see piglet sucking) within the first 12 hours. All piglets must have access to colostrum within the first 12 hours of life as well as continuous access to a functional teat or an appropriate supplementary milk source.

Farrowing

25) Are sows and piglets observed closely during, and 24 hours post-farrowing, by knowledgeable staff?

Yes No

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Excessive fighting should be monitored by stockpeople and appropriate action (such as removing pigs) taken before severe injury occurs. Evaluate skin wounds and lesions to determine when fighting is excessive.

Stockpeople authorised to perform minor surgical tasks must be properly trained. Training should include the preparation of facilities and restraints and the ability to select and maintain the appropriate equipment for each procedure.



Piglet processing

Proper training of employees is critical to ensure that animals experience minimal stress, discomfort and pain during these procedures and are able to maintain normal health and productivity.

Teeth Trimming

Teeth trimming is a practice used to minimize the risk of damage to the sow's teats and to littermates. Teeth trimming may not be necessary, depending on breed and management; over time, this practice is becoming less common.

26) When teeth trimming is necessary, are teeth trimmed by a trained operator within a few days of the pig's birth?

Yes No N/A

Castration and Tail Docking Pain Mitigation Protocol for Suckling Pigs and/or Weaned Piglets

The administration of analgesics during castration and tail docking is beneficial in controlling post-procedure pain. An analgesic reduces or eliminates pain (pain killer) and an anesthetic causes the loss of sensation or consciousness.

Male piglets are castrated to control "boar taint" and to reduce aggression and handling challenges associated with intact males. This may, in turn, decrease the risk of injuries to personnel and other pigs. Vaccination against boar taint, is an effective alternative to surgical castration. Production of intact males at lighter weights reduces boar taint, but does not guarantee its absence.

Tail-biting can be triggered by a wide range or combination of factors, including overstocking, feed deficiencies, incorrect temperature levels, inadequate ventilation, drafts, high levels of dust and noxious gases such as ammonia, and lack of enrichment. Studies indicate that environmental enrichment reduces the chance of tail-biting.

Docking tails too short may lead to infections or prolapses. Docking tails too long is not effective at reducing tail-biting. Tail docking is known to cause acute stress, as indicated by physiological and behavioural responses. Some pigs with docked tails may develop increased sensitivity and/or chronic pain in the region. The tail wound should be healed before weaning.

Failure to keep instruments clean and sharp can lead to infections (examples: *Salmonella*, *Circovirus*, *Streptococcus suis*, and *Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED)*) spreading amongst pigs or to tissue deterioration. Disinfect instruments used for castration and tail docking with alcohol or iodine. Inspect instruments regularly to ensure they are sharp and clean.



Answer question 27 if you have suckling pigs on site.

27) A protocol is in place to administer pain control (analgesic) for castration and tail-docking of piglets (of any age).

Yes No N/A

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Answer question 28 if you have suckling pigs and/or weaned piglets on site.

28) A protocol is in place for castration performed after 10 days of age to administer pain control and anesthetic to piglets.

Yes No N/A

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