

Appendix 13: Sample Vices Protocol

Introduction:

Confinement rearing of hogs has resulted in removal of many of the pigs opportunities to root and chew. Periodically, these behaviors can be directed at other penmates resulting in tail, ear, and flank chewing. Many factors have been implicated in triggering the problem including crowding, temperature fluctuation/drafts, inadequate feed/water supplies and some nutritional deficiencies (eg. salt). Belly nosing/sucking of weaned pigs is also believed to result from reduced environmental stimulation and seems to be more frequent in early weaned pigs or smaller wean weight piglets.

Standards:

Target is to have < 1% of the chewing vices (tail, ear, or flank). Animals that are being injured by these activities are to be treated appropriately.

Preventive measures to minimize these vices should be incorporated into facility design, and are to be maintained and reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. In outbreak situations, appropriate measures to determine and correct underlying cause will be taken. Belly sucking incidence should be targeted at <1%.

Procedures:

1.) Tail Chewing

Prevention

- tails will be properly docked in all piglets at an age less than 5 days.
- proper stocking density of pens
- maintenance of physical environment as stress free as possible (ambient temperature, freedom from drafts, adequate feed and water access).
- appropriately balanced nutrition.
- provision of diversions for the pigs need to root/chew in the form of chains or other objects from the ceilings to dangle to the pens, and/or regularly changed toys such as tires to be rotated between pens daily.

Treatment

- affected pigs must be protected from further on going injury by removal of the chewed or the chewing pig(s) to a separate treatment pen whenever possible. Antimicrobial treatment of affected pigs.
- humane euthanasia of severe cases in a timely manner; ie. very severely, and suddenly affected animals or where therapy/convalence is obviously not being effective or freshly injured market weight pigs that cannot be held back before slaughter.

- when incidence is so high as to preclude removal to a separate sick pen:
 - i) affected animals must still be appropriately treated in a timely manner and approaches to pen control addressed more intensely; for example - use of water softener salt, additional toys/chains. Shipping of lighter weight animals to reduce stocking density may help. Movement of affected pigs into rooms of younger pigs can be considered on consultation with herd health veterinarians.
 - ii) Review and determination of any predisposing factors (physical, climatic, environmental, nutritional) in order to correct the problem
- barn with ongoing, recurrent problems must review basics of facility design, environment and nutrition to determine if larger scale, more permanent changes need be done.

2.) Belly Nosing

Prevention

- piglet wean weight and age will be maximized
- production guidelines to reduce light weight piglets at weaning.
- provide adequate and easy access to high quality fresh feed in a warm, draft free environment.

Treatment

- provide adequate stimulation in the environment of the nursery pen (toys, chains, etc.).
- extra feeder spaces and a variation in feed form (ie. wet feed with water or electrolytes) is to be made available for small wean weight pens or pens where the problem is developing.
- isolate the noser or, if it is beginning to fail as a result, euthanize it so it does not further injure other pen mates.

Monitoring:

- Barn staff to monitor daily and respond appropriately (management of pigs(s) or notify welfare committee).
- Herd health veterinarians and production managers will record/assess incidence on a monthly basis. Welfare committee audits will also assess the situation in the barns