Appendix 3: Optional Handling Assessment

Dr. Temple Grandin has developed an objective scoring system for assessing animal welfare in the processing industry. This scoring system is widely used in the US - it is easy to use and can identify problems that impede pig movement. When pigs balk, handlers tend to prod pigs. Handlers resort to using the prod because they don't understand why pigs are not moving forward. By identifying distractions and other impediments to movement, pigs will be less stressed and handlers will not have to use prods to load pigs.

Parts of this system can be used to identify problems which impede movement of pigs during handling on farm. The following is a short animal welfare assessment that you and your staff can use to score handling. If your score is below the prescribed level, you need to determine why and work together to remove distractions and improve understanding of animal behaviour.

Critical control points for objective scoring:

1. Percentage of pigs that vocalize (squeal) during handling:
    - 100 pigs should be observed at a specific point in the handling process (for example, at the room door or at the entrance to the truck).
    - Sites for observations should be varied over several days and sites should be located all along the route – this will show if the cause of the squealing is the prod, handler intervention or a problem with the facility (i.e., air blowing into the face of the pigs, poor lighting etc.)
    - A note is made as to whether or not the pig squeals (S) or doesn't squeal (X).
2. Percentage that fall during handling:
    - Again, observe 100 pigs. Pigs that fall or slip are given an "F" for falling and an "X" if no falling is observed.
    - A pig falls when part of its body touches the floor.
3. Percentage moved with electric prod (goad):
    - Observe 100 pigs and note which pigs are prodded with "P" and an "X" if no prod is used.

These critical control points are useful since they measure many problems. For example, pigs might squeal because they are prodded or they might squeal because they cannot see the way forward (due to bad lighting, distractions, changes in flooring type, etc.). Pigs will fall because of poor flooring, lameness or because they are being rushed. Both

measures (i.e., squealing and falling) can also tell us things about the stockmanship – pigs fall because stockpeople are rushing the pigs, are not tuned into the reason that pigs stop and are not examining individual pigs to isolate compromised animals.

If you score a high number of pigs being prodded (more than 25%) or more than 25% of the pigs falling, investigate the cause! Is there something in the facility that is stopping pigs from moving forward (i.e., bad lighting, change in flooring type, air in their faces etc.) or are staff over-using the prod because they have not been shown an alternative (i.e. pig boards) or they don't realize that pigs may be reluctant to leave their home pen? Are pigs falling because they are being forced to run or because floors are slippery?

Tip:

Is loading out difficult on your farm? Did you fall below the recommended scores in your audit? Try making a video of the loading out procedures and using this to identify spots where pigs are stopping and/or balking.

Use the video to analyze the behaviour of both pigs and handlers. Play the tape back for all staff involved and ask the following questions – use the answers to modify loading out procedures:

Are there identifiable areas where pigs stop to investigate changes in flooring or lighting? Is this the same spot where staff repeatedly used the prod?

Are pigs stopping because air is blowing in their faces as they move into the truck?

Is there a place for the truck driver to stand so that he/she is not impeding the forward motion of the truck?

Totals for Objective Numerical Percentage Scores

	Actual %	Min. Passing Score	Excellent	Final Score / Excellent / Pass/Fail
Percentage of pigs prodded with an electric prod	Animal # 1__2__3__4__5__6__7__8__9__10__11__12__13__14__15__ 16__17__18__19__20__21__22__23__24__25__26__27__28__29__30__ 31__32__33__34__35__36__37__38__39__40__41__42__43__44__45__ 46__47__48__49__50__51__52__53__54__55__56__57__58__59__60__ 61__62__63__64__65__66__67__68__69__70__71__72__73__74__75__ 76__77__78__79__80__81__82__83__84__85__86__87__88__89__90__ 91__92__93__94__95__96__97__98__99__100__	25%	5%	
Percentage of pigs falling	Animal # 1__2__3__4__5__6__7__8__9__10__11__12__13__14__15__ 16__17__18__19__20__21__22__23__24__25__26__27__28__29__30__ 31__32__33__34__35__36__37__38__39__40__41__42__43__44__45__ 46__47__48__49__50__51__52__53__54__55__56__57__58__59__60__ 61__62__63__64__65__66__67__68__69__70__71__72__73__74__75__ 76__77__78__79__80__81__82__83__84__85__86__87__88__89__90__ 91__92__93__94__95__96__97__98__99__100__	25%	5%	
Percentage of pigs squealing during handling in a specified area. The specified area was _____.	Animal # 1__2__3__4__5__6__7__8__9__10__11__12__13__14__15__ 16__17__18__19__20__21__22__23__24__25__26__27__28__29__30__ 31__32__33__34__35__36__37__38__39__40__41__42__43__44__45__ 46__47__48__49__50__51__52__53__54__55__56__57__58__59__60__ 61__62__63__64__65__66__67__68__69__70__71__72__73__74__75__ 76__77__78__79__80__81__82__83__84__85__86__87__88__89__90__ 91__92__93__94__95__96__97__98__99__100__	50%	25%	

Reasons for scores that are not acceptable minimum passing score:

References:

Gonyou, Harold, 2005. Practical Approaches to Ensure Animal Welfare on Farms. In Proceedings of the 2005. London Swine Conference.

Grandin, Temple, 2004. http://grandin.com/welfare.audit.using.haccp.html