



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

SMR 12: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Pigs

January 2017

The aim of these requirements is to protect the welfare of pigs by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. These rules apply to all pig keepers, in addition to the requirements for the welfare of all farmed animals (SMR 13).

Main requirements

- Where there are more than 10 sows, sows and gilts should be kept in groups.
- Sows can be kept individually from 7 days before farrowing and until the piglets have been completely weaned.
- On holding fewer than 10 sows, sows and gilts may be kept individually as long as their accommodation keeps to the general requirements for pig accommodation.

Minimum standards are required for pigs confined for rearing and fattening. These requirements are:

- A pig shall be free to turn round without difficulty at all times, including while tethered where this is permitted;
- Pigs can only be tethered for veterinary purposes. Tethers have to meet the following requirements:
 - They should not cause injury to the pigs and shall be inspected regularly and adjusted as necessary to ensure a comfortable fit;
 - Each tether shall be of sufficient length to allow the pig to move about, rest and groom itself and the design shall be such to avoid the risk of strangulation, pain or injury.

Where a farrowing crate system is used, piglets must be provided with a source of heat and a solid, dry and comfortable lying area away from the sow where all of them can rest at the same time.

A part of the floor area where the piglets are kept and which is large enough to allow the animals to rest together at the same time must be solid or covered with a mat, or be littered with straw or other suitable material.

Good Practice

To ensure that tail-docking is not carried out routinely but only where there is evidence that injury to sows' teats or to other pigs' ears or tails have occurred. Before carrying out tail-docking other measures are to be taken to prevent tail-biting and other vices, taking into account environment and stocking densities. For that reason, inadequate environmental conditions or management systems are to be changed. It is recommended that best practice is aimed at reducing the need for tail-docking and optimise solutions for providing enrichment materials.

Accommodation

This must be constructed in such a way to allow each pig to:

- Stand up, lie down and rest without difficulty;
- Have a clean, comfortable and adequately drained place in which it can rest;
- See other pigs, unless the pig is isolated for veterinary reasons;
- Maintain a comfortable temperature;
- Have enough space to allow all the animals to lie down at the same time;
- The size of any stall or pen shall be such that the internal area is not less than the square of the length of the pig, and no internal side is less than the square of the pig, and no internal side is less than 75% of the length of the pig;
- The length of the pig in each case being measured from the tip of its snout to the base of its tail while it is standing with its back straight;

- The above paragraph does not apply to a female pig for the period seven days before the predicted day of farrowing and the day on which the weaning of her piglets (including any piglets fostered by her) is complete.

Further information on pig accommodation is available in the Pig Welfare Code.

Field checks

- Check accommodation meets the requirements set out in the Welfare Code for Pigs.
- Check that the farmer or keeper has a copy or access to a copy of the Code.

For further information please contact:

Animal and Plant Health Agency

See 'Useful Contacts' factsheet within this pack