

# Welfare of pigs

The aim of these rules is to protect the welfare of pigs by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. These rules apply as well as the rules for the welfare of farmed animals (SMR 18).

## For all pigs<sup>1</sup>:

### A. You must

1. make sure that each of your pigs is free to turn around without difficulty at all times, including while tethered (where this is allowed);
2. make sure that the accommodation for your pigs allows them to:
  - stand up, lie down and rest without difficulty;
  - have a clean, comfortable and adequately drained place in which to rest (including making sure that any bedding is clean, dry and not harmful to the pigs);
  - see other pigs (unless the pig is isolated for veterinary reasons or for farrowing);
  - maintain a comfortable temperature;
  - have enough space to allow all of them to lie down at the same time;
3. make sure that individual stalls or pens satisfy the minimum size rules<sup>2</sup> (these do not apply in certain excepted situations);
4. provide flooring, for those pigs kept in buildings, that is:
  - smooth but not slippery;
  - suitable for the size and weight of the pigs;
  - rigid, even and stable, if there is no litter;
  - designed, constructed and maintained so there is no injury or suffering to the pigs standing or lying on it;
5. provide artificial lighting of at least 40 lux for at least 8 hours each day, for pigs kept in an artificially lit building;
6. give permanent access to enough manipulable material which allows proper investigation and manipulation, for example, straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such, which does not upset the health of your animals;
7. take measures to prevent fighting which goes beyond normal behaviour; if you keep your pigs together, keep those pigs separate which show persistent aggression or are victims of that aggression;
8. make sure that when feeding group-housed pigs each pig either:
  - has access to feed at the same time as the others in the feeding group;
  - has continuous access to feed;
  - is fed by an automatic feeding system;
9. give all pigs over 2 weeks old permanent access to a sufficient supply of fresh drinking water.

<sup>1</sup> 'Pig' means an animal of the porcine species of any age, kept for breeding or fattening.

<sup>2</sup> Details of minimum size rules are available from the cross compliance section of our website [rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices](http://rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices) or Schedule 8 to the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007.

**B. You must not**

1. tether pigs at any time;
2. keep pigs in the high temperature/high humidity environment known as the 'sweat box system';
3. expose your pigs to constant or sudden noise, or levels above 85 decibels in any building where you keep your pigs.

You will not break the rule relating to the tethering of pigs if it is for veterinary purposes. In this case any tether must be regularly inspected and adjusted to make sure that it does not cause pain or injury to the pig and allows it to lie down, rest, stand up and groom itself.

**For piglets<sup>3</sup>:****C. You must**

1. provide piglets with a source of heat and a dry and comfortable lying area away from the sow where all of them can rest at the same time;
2. make sure that a part of the total floor where you keep the piglets is large enough to allow the animals to rest together at the same time and is solid, covered with a mat or littered with straw or any other suitable material;
3. give the piglets enough space to be able to be suckled without difficulty if you use a farrowing crate.

**D. You must not**

1. wean piglets from the sow at an age of less than 28 days (unless there is a risk of adverse welfare or health of the dam or piglets).

You will not break the rule relating to the weaning of piglets if they are weaned up to 7 days earlier, provided that you move them into specialised housing which you empty and thoroughly clean and disinfect before you introduce a new group and which is separate from housing where you keep sows.

**For sows<sup>4</sup> and gilts<sup>5</sup>:****E. You must**

1. treat pregnant sows and gilts against internal and external parasites, if necessary;
2. thoroughly clean pregnant sows and gilts before they are placed in farrowing crates;
3. give sows and gilts enough suitable nesting material in the week before the expected farrowing time (unless it is not technically practical because of the slurry system you use);
4. keep sows and gilts in groups (except during the period between 7 days before the predicted day of farrowing and the day on which the weaning of piglets is complete);
5. provide an unobstructed area behind the sow or gilt during farrowing;
6. provide some method of protecting the piglets, such as farrowing rails, if you keep sows loose in farrowing pens;

<sup>3</sup> 'Piglet' means a pig from birth to weaning.

<sup>4</sup> 'Sow' means a female pig after the first farrowing.

<sup>5</sup> 'Gilt' means a female pig intended for breeding, after puberty and before farrowing.

7. feed sows and gilts using a system that makes sure each pig can get enough food even when other pigs are competing for food;
8. give all dry pregnant sows and gilts enough bulky or high-fibre food, as well as high-energy food, to satisfy their hunger and need to chew.

You will not break the rule relating to keeping sows and gilts in groups if they are kept on holdings of fewer than 10 sows provided that the individual accommodation keeps to the general rules for pig accommodation.

### **For boars<sup>6</sup>:**

#### **F. You must**

1. place and build boar pens to allow the boars to turn around and to hear, see and smell other pigs;
2. provide clean resting areas in the boar pens and make sure that the lying area is dry and comfortable;
3. make sure that each boar has its minimum allowance of unobstructed floor space<sup>7</sup>.

### **For weaners<sup>8</sup> and rearing pigs<sup>9</sup>:**

#### **G. You must**

1. make sure that each weaner or rearing pig, when kept in groups, has its minimum allowance of unobstructed floor space<sup>10</sup>;
2. place pigs in groups as soon as possible after weaning and keep these groups stable with as little mixing as possible;
3. provide opportunities for the animals to escape and hide from unfamiliar pigs if mixing is necessary. This must also be done at as young an age as possible, preferably before, or up to 1 week after, weaning.

#### **H. You must not**

1. use tranquilising medication to help with mixing, unless there are exceptional circumstances and is on the advice of a vet.

6 'Boar' means a male pig after puberty, intended for breeding.

7 Details of the minimum floor space allowance are available from the cross compliance section of our website at [rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices](http://rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices) or Schedule 8 to the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007.

8 'Weaner' means a pig from weaning to the age of 10 weeks.

9 'Rearing pig' means a pig from the age of 10 weeks until slaughter or service.

10 Details of minimum floor space allowance are available from the cross compliance section of our website at [rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices](http://rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices) or Schedule 8 to the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007.

**If your holding has been newly built, rebuilt or brought into use for the first time after 1 January 2003 the following rules also apply (these rules apply to all holdings from 1 January 2013):**

**I. You must**

1. provide flooring of the correct measurements (for openings and slats) if you use concrete slatted floors<sup>11</sup> (this applies for all pigs kept in groups);
2. make sure that each female pig after service, when kept in groups, has its minimum allowance<sup>12</sup> of unobstructed floor space, continuous solid floor and pens of correct dimensions.



**Further advice and guidance**

The appendix for welfare of pigs (SMR 17) is available on our website at [rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices](http://rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices)

For *Codes of Recommendation for the Welfare of Livestock: Pigs* (PB7950) visit the Defra website at [defra.gov.uk](http://defra.gov.uk)

For Council of Europe Recommendations made under the *European Convention on the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes* visit the Council of Europe website at [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

Your local Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency office at [animalhealth.defra.gov.uk](http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk)

Defra helpline: 08459 33 55 77

11 Further details are available from the cross compliance section of our website at [rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices](http://rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices) or Schedule 8 to the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007.

12 Further details are available from the cross compliance section of our website at [rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices](http://rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices) or Schedule 8 to the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007.