







# Raising the welfare standards for pigs

	Requirement	Why is it important	SPCA Certified Standard	Code of Welfare Minimum Standards
 <p><b>HEALTH</b></p>	<b>Food and water</b>	High quality and sufficient food and water help pigs maintain good health. It is important that the food minimises the risk of nutritional disorders such as mineral and vitamin deficiencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pigs must be fed a wholesome diet, nutritionally balanced for the age and physiological stage of the pig, to maintain good health and vigour.</li> <li>Feeding to be done in a way that minimises competition and bullying between pigs.</li> <li>Free access to clean, fresh water at all times, in a way that minimises competition.</li> <li>Water quality must be tested every year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate quantities of food and nutrients to maintain good health, meet physiological demands, and avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.</li> <li>Feed must be provided in such a way as to prevent undue competition and injury.</li> <li>Access to palatable water that is not harmful to health, and at a temperature that does not inhibit drinking.</li> <li>No water quality test required.</li> </ul>
	<b>Painful procedures</b>	Some husbandry procedures, for example tail docking and castration, can cause significant anxiety, fear, discomfort, and pain. Avoiding these procedures where possible, or minimising pain and associated stress when they are done, will result in better welfare outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surgical castration or spaying not permitted.</li> <li>Routine clipping/grinding of piglets' teeth not permitted.</li> <li>Routine tail docking not permitted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castration only by a veterinarian with pain relief at the time of the procedure.</li> <li>Grinding of needle teeth allowed in pigs four days of age or younger.</li> <li>Tail docking allowed. For pigs older than seven days must be carried out by a veterinarian with pain relief at the time of the procedure.</li> </ul>
	<b>Animal Health Plan</b>	A farm-specific animal health plan allows farmers to identify specific health challenges on their farm and put in place measures to ensure the health and welfare of their animals is top of mind. Regular veterinary visits also allow early identification and treatment of health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An animal health plan must be developed and maintained with a veterinarian.</li> <li>Regular veterinary visits are required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal health plan not required.</li> <li>Regular veterinary visits not required.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b></p>	<b>Shade and shelter</b>	Shade and shelter let animals manage their own temperature requirements by giving them a choice where to go when it's hot or cold. They help pigs to be more comfortable, avoiding heat and cold stress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pigs kept outdoors must have access to artificial shelter to protect them from weather extremes and must have access to shaded areas during hot and humid conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to adequately ventilated shelter at all times. Shelter must provide protection from extremes of heat and cold.</li> </ul>
	<b>Stocking density growing pigs</b>	Lower stocking density (number of animals per defined area) encourages exercise, leads to more comfort for pigs, and increases the opportunities for positive social, exploratory, and foraging behaviours such as rooting, nosing, and chewing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum indoor lying area for grower pigs (weaned pigs grown for meat) calculated by weight. For example, a 100kg pig must have a lying area of 0.875m<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>Outdoors, maximum of 18 sows/ha.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum indoor lying area for grower pigs calculated by weight. For example, a 100kg pig must have a lying area of 0.656m<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>No maximum outdoor stocking density.</li> </ul>
	<b>Use of sow crates and stalls</b>	The metal enclosures sows may be kept in during pregnancy and after giving birth (mating stalls and farrowing crates) restrict sow movement, even preventing them from turning around, and limit the ability for sows to express normal behaviours like foraging, rooting, socialising, and nest building. This is very frustrating and stressful for the sows and can lead to abnormal behaviours such as repetitively biting the metal bars of their crates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of crates and stalls is not allowed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sows can be confined in farrowing crates for up to 5 days before farrowing and up to 4 weeks after farrowing. Pigs can be confined in stalls for mating for up to 7 days per reproductive cycle.</li> </ul>
	<b>Bedding material</b>	Clean and dry bedding material helps ensure pigs can rest comfortably and helps to keep their feet healthy. As a bonus, it serves as enrichment.  Sows are highly motivated to build a nest when pregnant, so providing nesting/ bedding material for them is important. They can become frustrated and stressed if they are unable to build a nest, negatively affecting their welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to good quality, comfortable, absorbent bedding that provides for thermal needs of the pigs and is replaced regularly to ensure a clean, warm, and dry environment.</li> <li>Fully slatted floors and completely bare, full concrete floors are prohibited.</li> <li>Before giving birth, sows must be provided with enough bedding material to build a nest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedding not required. Where present, contaminated bedding must not accumulate to pose a threat to the health and welfare of pigs.</li> <li>Bare concrete and slatted floors allowed.</li> <li>Nest building not specifically mentioned, but material that can be manipulated until farrowing is required.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>BEHAVIOUR</b></p>	<b>Enrichment</b>	Enrichment makes an animal's environment more interesting, encouraging them to explore and allowing them to engage in normal behaviours to meet their mental and physical needs. Providing behavioural enrichment can help reduce abnormal and aggressive behaviours, such as tail biting and fighting.  Pigs love to roll about or lie in mud or water (wallow). Aside from being a comfort behaviour, wallowing can help pigs regulate their temperature during hot weather and control parasites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient foraging material must be provided to all pigs. If toys are provided, all pigs must have access to them.</li> <li>Where provided, wallows must be maintained so they do not dry out or become so muddy that they could entrap pigs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrichment not required.</li> <li>Wallow maintenance not required.</li> </ul>
	<b>Handling</b>	Regular handling of animals in a manner that is calm, gentle and that takes the animals' behaviour into consideration will reduce fear, anxiety, and stress.  Positive human-animal interactions also make it easier to handle and move animals. Appropriate human-animal interactions can even be enriching for animals and can create positive mental experiences (for both animals and humans!).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pigs handled and moved with low stress methods.</li> <li>The use of whips, sticks or other harmful equipment is not permitted. Electric goads can only be used as a last resort to protect human and animal safety during loading or unloading for transport on pigs over 150kg.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handled in a manner to minimise the risk of pain, injury or distress. Use minimal force when moving pigs.</li> <li>Electric prodders allowed during loading or unloading for transport on pigs that weigh over 150 kg.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>CONSUMER ASSURANCES</b></p>	<b>Animal welfare audits</b>	Announced and particularly unannounced audits ensure transparency, integrity, and credibility of standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independently audited by an external company annually, and at least one additional unannounced audit/year. SPCA Certified also visit every single farm when they join the programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal welfare audits not required.</li> </ul>
	<b>Free from sub-therapeutic antibiotics</b>	Using antibiotics sub-therapeutically - where there is no diagnosed disease, condition, or microorganism (bacteria etc) - can lead to antibiotic resistance and means that healthy animals are unnecessarily treated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of prescribed therapeutic antibiotics for the treatment of a specific, diagnosed condition, disease, or injury only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific requirement around antibiotic use.</li> <li>Medication can only be used in accordance with registration conditions and manufacturer's instructions or professional advice.</li> </ul>