

Caring for
**COMPROMISED
PIGS**



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www.ofac.org

www.livestockwelfare.com

Disclaimer

This guide is intended to assist producers in making ethical and responsible decisions regarding animals at risk. Producers are encouraged to consult with their herd health veterinarian for final culling decisions, as this guide should not be considered as the sole resource in these matters.

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Caring for **COMPROMISED PIGS**

Farmers work hard to ensure that their animals are properly cared for 365 days of the year. Unfortunately, the reality is that some animals will become injured or sick to the extent that they are considered unfit, compromised or at risk. This would include animals that are non-ambulatory (downers), unable to stand without assistance or to move without being dragged or carried.

This guide is designed to assist hog producers to recognize health-related problems and respond to them in a timely and responsible manner. Early recognition of problems and prompt, appropriate treatment are key factors in preventing the loss of an animal. Producers are encouraged to work with their herd veterinarians for early intervention treatment and culling decisions.

The detailed chart “Should this Pig be loaded?” on page 4 outlines a variety of conditions and scenarios that need to be considered before loading an animal on to a truck for transport.

Producers should simply ask themselves three questions before loading an animal:

- Can it walk?
- Will it be able to walk off the truck at the final destination?
- Would I eat it?

If any of these questions generates a “no” response, a timely decision needs to be made – treat the animal or euthanize it.

It is unacceptable and illegal to load, or cause to load, any animal that is sick, injured or would otherwise suffer unduly due to transport. This includes non-ambulatory animals. All animals that are unfit for transport or unfit for human consumption must be euthanized on farm or treated.

The objectives of this guide are:

- To help anyone who handles hogs identify and assess compromised animals.
- To ensure appropriate handling of compromised pigs as required by law and animal care standards.
- To help make responsible decisions about if, when, how and where to transport pigs.

Decisions to treat animals or to ship them to market are often difficult involving economic, food safety and animal welfare considerations. However, these decisions should be made as early as possible to minimize pain, discomfort or further deterioration of the animal and ensure a maximum monetary return for the farmer. An animal that has undergone treatment must be held for the required withdrawal time to allow the medications to clear the animal’s system.

Many producers are unaware their animals may be subjected to extended journeys that might last days making stops at a variety of destinations. Animals could be subjected to very cold or warm temperatures which can stress animals beyond their limits. **Only healthy animals should be loaded that are fit to withstand the journey to the final destination.**

Legislation, both federal and provincial, dictates that animals must be handled humanely. Enforcement agencies and the courts will use accepted industry standards and the law to determine which practices are not acceptable. The Recommended Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals are considered the industry standard for farm animal care, on farm and in transit (www.nfacc.ca).

Responsible stockmanship, treatment, culling, transporting and euthanizing decisions must be an industry priority.

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STEPS TO DEALING WITH COMPROMISED PIGS

The following actions by producers will assist in early detection of problems and options to address them.

- **PREVENTION:** Biosecurity, herd health programs, equipment and facility designs as well as early identification of herd or facility related problems will help to prevent many animal health or care problems.
- **OBSERVATION:** Pigs should be observed several times a day, especially during feeding. Early detection of illness and appropriate treatment are key elements in minimizing disease and discomfort.
- **TREATMENT:** Treatment should be determined and administered as soon as possible to prevent conditions from deteriorating. Consult with a veterinarian to develop treatment strategies and protocols for common ailments.
- **SEPARATION:** Segregate compromised animals into designated “hospital” pens or areas to permit close observation and treatment.
- **TRANSPORT:** If animals are fit for transport, decide where and when to ship them, ensuring all medicine withdrawal times have been observed.
- **EUTHANIZE:** All animals unfit for transport or unfit for human consumption must be euthanized on farm. It is illegal to load or transport an animal that is unfit (refer to “Should this Pig be Loaded?” decision tree chart for specific conditions). Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) enforced laws prohibit the loading, transporting and unloading of non-ambulatory animals for any purpose other than veterinary treatment under the order of a veterinarian.



SHOULD THIS PIG BE LOADED? Guidelines for Transporting Pigs

Load Healthy Pigs

Do Not Load Do Not Transport



Delay Transportation and Reassess

- dehydration
- fever (normal range 38.5°C to 39.5°C)
- sows that have farrowed within 48 hours, or likely to farrow during transport or upon arrival at market
- total blindness (consider on-farm slaughter)
- stressed pigs showing signs of:
 - exhaustion
 - heat stress
 - weakness
 - porcine stress syndrome



Euthanize

- Non-ambulatory, Lameness Class 4 & 5 (see reverse)
- fractures of limbs or spine
- any case where pigs are unable to eat or drink due to injury or disease
- chronic "poor-doers" or emaciated (extremely thin) pigs (see reverse)
- pigs suffering from severe non-responsive disease
- prolapsed uterus
- arthritis involving multiple joints
- nervous disorders, such as rabies must be reported to CFIA; contact your vet before euthanizing
- hernia that impedes movement, is painful, or touches the ground
- severe recent injury

Do Not Transport to a Sale or an Assembly Yard



Transport With Special Provisions Direct to Slaughter



As Soon As Possible

- abscess and local infections (no fever)
 - recent prolapsed vagina or rectum
 - Lameness Classes 1, 2 (see reverse)
 - penile or vulva injury
 - severe dewclaw injury
 - first stage anaemia or weight loss (no fever)
- These pigs must walk on their own and travel in a small compartment, individually or with one quiet pig.*

Animals with multiple conditions may not be fit to transport.

Non-ambulatory animals: Unable to stand without assistance, or unable to move without being dragged or carried (downers). **Do not load or transport.**

Lame animals:

- Animals should not be loaded if at risk of going down in transit.
- Pigs that can't bear weight on all four legs may be in pain and are at risk of going down during transit. These pigs are often euthanized at sales and plants.

Emergency On-Farm Slaughter

If an animal is fit for human consumption but not fit for transport (i.e. injured but not sick) emergency on-farm slaughter may be an option. Please consult with your provincial government for more information on the availability of emergency on-farm slaughter in your province.

Information on Dealing with Compromised Pigs

Updated 05/10

Federal Transportation Regulations

Health of Animals Regulations www.inspection.gc.ca

DO

- Ensure that animals segregated in trucks receive extra protection from cold and wind chill; supply ample bedding.
- Segregate boars, animals of different weights and ages, or if incompatible by nature.
- Provide proper ventilation, drainage and absorption of urine.
- Have sufficient headroom for animals to stand in a natural position.
- Either cover the vehicle floor with sand or have the vehicle fitted with safe footholds, in addition to appropriate bedding.
- Ensure that animals unloaded for feed, water and rest remain at least five hours and longer, if necessary, for all animals to receive food and water.
- Euthanize animals promptly as the conditions outlined on the reverse occur.

DO NOT

- Transport a sick or injured animal where undue suffering may result, or when the animal is liable to give birth during the journey.
- Continue to transport an animal that is injured, becomes ill, or is otherwise unfit to travel beyond the nearest place it can be treated.
- Use prods on the face, anal, udder or genital area.
- Load or unload animals in a way that would cause injury or undue suffering.
- Crowd animals to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering.
- Transport livestock in trailers not designed for safe handling of that species or class of livestock.

Source: *Transporting Livestock by Truck (CFIA)*



www.bcfacc.ca
(604) 287-3276



Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.
www.facs.sk.ca
(306) 249-3227



www.afac.ab.ca
(403) 932-8052



www.mbfacc.ca
(204) 632-9047

Lameness Classes

Transport as soon as possible

Class 1

Visibly lame but can keep up with the group.

Class 2

Unable to keep up; some difficulty climbing ramps. Load in rear compartment.

Do Not Load or Transport*

Class 3: Requires assistance to rise, but can walk freely.

Class 4

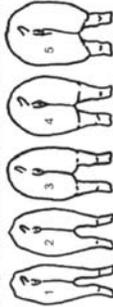
Requires assistance to rise; reluctant to walk; halted movement.

Class 5: Non-ambulatory

Unable to rise or remain standing.

* Any animal, including Lameness Classes 3, 4 or 5 may be loaded for transport for veterinary treatment under veterinary supervision.

Body Condition Scores of Sows



Score	Condition	Detection of ribs, backbone, "H" bones, and "pin" bones
1	Emaciated	Obvious
2	Thin	Easily detected with pressure
3	Ideal	Barely felt with firm pressure
4	Fat	None
5	Overly fat	None

Source: *Assessing the Body Condition, Calf, Piglet, Lamer University of Kentucky*



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Special thanks to the Ontario Humane Transport Working Group for their assistance in developing this document. For more information, contact the Ontario Humane Transport Working Group through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

PAIN IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT

Pain is an unpleasant sensation occurring in varying degrees of severity as a result of injury or disease. Signs of pain and suffering in a pig include one or more of the following:

- Unwillingness to rise to its feet
- Unwillingness to walk
- Vocalization when prodded to rise or move
- Reluctant to put a leg on the ground and bear weight
- Trembling
- Mouth open, breathing fast
- Arched back and abdomen tucked up
- Head down, ears drooping, tail uncurled
- Unwillingness to eat or drink
- Standing separate from group, not following group
- No response when touched or prodded

PAIN MANAGEMENT

The use of pain medications in treating sick or injured pigs has been underutilized on many farms in the past. Pigs suffering from ailments such as tail biting, lameness, pneumonia, and certain injuries benefit from a reduction in the pain associated with the condition. Recent studies have shown that reducing pain in sick animals decreases healing time and improves appetite. Some pain medications also decrease fever and inflammation and thus may improve outcomes through other pathways as well.

Remember that not all pain medications are equal. Similar to the use of an ineffective antibiotic, if one pain medication is not producing the desired effect, ask your veterinarian to suggest another.

HOSPITAL PENS

The requirement for hospital pens varies from farm to farm. Pigs suffering problems such as tail biting or lameness benefit from being segregated in an area where they can recuperate without having to compete with healthy pen mates for food, water and comfortable lying areas. Producers must judge the requirements for hospital pens on a farm by farm basis.

Hospital pens should be specifically designed to improve a pig's chances of recovery. Hospital pens should be in high traffic areas where stock people observe the occupants of the pens several times per day. Sick animals spend large amounts of time resting in a warm place and hospital pens should allow pigs to express this behaviour. They should be in a draft-free area and should have supplemental heat or bedding to help sick pigs stay warm. Pens should have solid or partially slatted floors to improve footing for weak or lame pigs. Pigs in a hospital pen should be offered fresh feed and water at least every 24 hours.

These pens should not be in an out-of-the-way corner of the barn where poor doing pigs accumulate until they die or are euthanized.

Specific treatments of pigs in the hospital pen should be administered according to a veterinarian's instructions or should be based on previous experiences on the farm. Treatment protocols for specific conditions should be strictly defined and should include stopping rules. If after a set period of time, no effect from a specific treatment is observed, an alternative treatment should be tried or the pig euthanized if further attempts at treatment are not warranted.

CARING FOR COMPROMISED PIGS

Daily observation of pigs will contribute to early identification of and prevention of many of the conditions in this booklet. In addition to observation, stock people are encouraged to record their observations so that seasonal, gestational and geographical trends can be identified.

This section is designed to help producers assess compromised animals and make responsible decisions regarding their care. The section features short descriptions of common conditions, in alphabetical order, explaining clear standards for humane handling of these animals.

Ask a veterinarian for assistance with individual cases or to clarify specific actions required. As with any animal health treatment, all withdrawal times must be met before shipping any animals.

ABSCESS

An abscess is a localized collection of pus in a cavity of disintegrated tissue. Some minor abscesses can be treated on farm. Multiple abscesses may be caused by a major illness involving other portions of the body and may result in condemnation of the carcass at slaughter.



- Transport animals with minor abscesses directly to slaughter.



- Do not load or transport animals with multiple abscesses.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Detect and treat early or ship promptly.
- ✓ Determine cause if several animals are affected.
- ✓ Euthanize animals with multiple abscesses.

Common causes of abscesses:

- Fighting
- Secondary infection arising from other conditions such as PRRS, pneumonia or tail biting
- Small widespread abscesses in the skin (pustular dermatitis) may be seen following general illness, septicaemia or greasy pig disease
- Damage to the skin by sharp objects in the environment
- Trauma to feet, knees, tail
- Teeth removal
- Poor injections
- Chronic abscesses may form around joints following fractures

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is an inflammation of the joint, characterized by a progressive difficulty moving and increased time spent lying down with the affected joints flexed. Swollen joints can be a symptom of arthritis. Treatment is dependent on the degree of lameness. Two or more affected joints can cause an animal to be condemned at slaughter.

Animals should be assessed according to the lameness class 1 through 5. See page 11 for more information on lameness classes.



- Animals with arthritis in multiple joints or animals that are judged to be in lameness classes 3, 4 or 5 should not be transported.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Observe all pigs and piglets for swollen joints.
- ✓ Detect and treat early or ship promptly.
- ✓ When there are a high percentage of pigs with arthritis, determine the cause and correct the problem.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize animals in lameness classes 3, 4, and 5.

CUTS AND WOUNDS

If a pig is cut or wounded, including flank and ear-bitten animals, producers must assess the severity of the injury and treat accordingly. It is key to observe pigs daily to detect wounds and cuts.



- Transport animals with small to moderate size wounds directly to slaughter; Separate affected animals during transportation.



- Do not load or transport animals with large wounds and/or are in severe pain.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Separate pigs with wounds to a hospital pen.
- ✓ Treat the wound(s).
- ✓ Euthanize animals with large wounds and in severe pain.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.

EXHAUSTION AND DEHYDRATION

This would include animals that appear to be exhausted and in a physically depressed state.



- Do not transport animals in this condition.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Delay transportation until animal is rested and/or hydrated.

EMACIATION

Emaciated pigs are extremely thin with a body condition score (BCS) of 1 or less. These pigs are very narrow in the loin, have a hollow flank area, ribs and backbones that be easily seen or felt and pin bones of the pelvis that can be easily felt. These pigs can sometimes have a rough or long hair coat.

Emaciation can be a sign of other diseases and conditions. Emaciated pigs are often chronic “poor doers” and are commonly condemned upon arrival at the processing plant.



- Do not load or transport pigs with a body condition score of 1 or less.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Observe animals regularly to assess body condition.
- ✓ Monitor for early signs of weight loss.
- ✓ Move thin pigs to a segregated pen to allow them access to more feed with less competition.
- ✓ Ship poor pigs that don't respond before they become emaciated.
- ✓ Euthanize emaciated animals.

FRACTURES

Fractures can cause an animal immense pain and can result in severe lameness and impede normal movement.



- Do not load or transport animals with limb or spine fractures.
- Never lift or drag a conscious animal or an unconscious animal.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Euthanize animals with limb or spine fractures on farm.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.

HERNIAS

A hernia occurs when there is a rupture or protrusion of an organ or part of an organ through an opening in the surrounding wall. Common sites for hernias include the navel or groin.



- Transport animals directly to slaughter with hernias that do not impede movement or touch the ground.



- Do not load or transport animals with hernias that impede movement or touch the ground.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Euthanize animals with hernias that impede movement, touch the ground or are painful.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.

LAMENESS

Pigs can be affected with various leg problems, ranging from mild to crippling, non-painful to extremely painful. Some examples of conditions that cause leg problems are arthritis, abscesses, fractures and skin ulcers in the joint area.

With leg problems, it is important to determine an animal's lameness class, discomfort or pain. To determine lameness, the whole pig must be assessed. A pig may be only moderately lame, but if it is also in poor condition and has other problems, it will likely be condemned at the plant. Conditions should not be viewed separately; the pig's whole situation and condition must be considered.

The following lameness classes should help producers determine the best approach when deciding how to deal with sick or injured pigs.

LAMENESS CLASSES:

Class 1: Visibly lame but can keep up with the group; no evidence of pain.

Class 2: Unable to keep up with the group; some difficulty climbing ramps.



- Transport pigs in lameness classes 1 and 2 directly to slaughter. Segregate and load animals in rear compartments with ample bedding.

LAMENESS CLASSES:

Class 3:	Requires assistance to rise, but can walk freely, non-weight bearing on one or more legs.
Class 4:	Requires assistance to rise; reluctant to walk; halted movement; unable to climb steep ramps.
Class 5:	Unable to rise or remain standing; extreme discomfort or vocalization with assisted movement.



- Do not load or transport class 3, 4 or 5 animals except for veterinary treatment and with the advice of a veterinarian.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Assess the risk of an animal becoming non-ambulatory in transport before loading the animal.
- ✓ Identify lame animals early and treat promptly.
- ✓ Cull animals with persistent problems.
- ✓ Euthanize animals in lameness classes 3, 4 and 5.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.

PREGNANT CULL SOWS

It is illegal to ship any animal if it is probable that the animal will give birth during the journey. Many culled sows are transported long distances. It is important to evaluate their condition and determine whether they can withstand a long journey and changes in weather without suffering undue distress. Stress can cause sows to abort or go into labour early.



- Do not transport any animals that are likely to give birth during the intended journey.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Check breeding records before making culling decisions.

PROLAPSE

A prolapse is the protrusion of an organ or part of an organ from its normal position outside the body due to inadequate strength of the supportive tissues. Pigs with rectal or vaginal prolapses should be segregated to avoid further trauma.

Uterine Prolapse

A uterine prolapse usually occurs right after farrowing. A uterine prolapse is life threatening.



- Do not load or transport an animal with a uterine prolapse.

Rectal Prolapse

A rectal prolapse occurs when the rectum is blocked, which prevents most or any manure from passing through. Rectal stricture can result from birth defects, injuries or previous infections, such as a prolapse or diarrhea. A scar forms that makes the opening too small for the manure to pass through the rectum.

The early stages can be difficult to detect. However, pigs with rectal strictures quickly stop eating and lose weight. They will appear pot-bellied because of trapped contents in the gut, and may be thin higher up. This condition is irreversible and these pigs will not respond to treatment.



- Transport animals directly to slaughter as soon as possible if animal is in good condition.



- Do not load or transport animals that are emaciated or bloated.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Routinely observe and monitor all pigs prior to and after farrowing.
- ✓ Watch for pigs that are not eating and for signs of a rectal blockage.
- ✓ Cull pigs with pre farrowing and/or multiple prolapses.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize pigs with untreatable cases.

TAIL BITTEN PIGS

Tail biting involves destructive chewing of pigs' tails, which become attractive to other pigs in the group once the tail bleeds. Tail biting occurs in two stages, a pre-injury and an injury stage. When the injury stage is reached, the result is wounds and bleeding that could result in infection, spinal abscesses, paralysis or even death.



- Transport affected animals directly to slaughter with special provisions.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Observe pigs daily for signs of tail biting.
- ✓ Segregate affected animals to prevent further injury from occurring.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize pigs with untreatable cases.
- ✓ Separate aggressive tail biters.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EUTHANASIA

It is inevitable that situations that require pigs to be euthanized will arise. These situations include, but are not limited to, illness and injuries. Since it is usually not possible or practical for the veterinarian to be available for timely euthanasia of pigs on-farm, producers and their employees often need to perform humane euthanasia of pigs.

When euthanasia is the most appropriate option for a pig, consider the following to select the suitable method:

Human safety: The method must not put producers or their employees at unnecessary risk.

Pig welfare: Any method should minimize pain or distress of the pig during administration.

Practicality/technical skill requirements: The method should be easily learned and repeatable with the same expected outcome. The caretaker should be trained to use the method.

Caretaker compliance: Producers and their employees must be comfortable with, and willing to perform, the chosen method when needed. Lack of compliance compromises the well-being of the pig.

Aesthetics (degree of unpleasantness for the observer and operator): The method should not be objectionable to the person administering the procedure. Public perception of the method and its application may also be a consideration.

Limitations: Some methods are only suitable for certain sizes of pigs or under certain circumstances. The availability of equipment in good working order and carcass disposal options can also be limiting factors for choosing a method.

For detailed explanations and diagrams on how to euthanize pigs, please refer to the booklet, “On-farm Euthanasia of Swine – Recommendations for the Producer” developed by the American Association of Swine Vets and the National Pork Board. Copies are available online at www.ontariopork.on.ca

EUTHANASIA ACTION PLAN

Work with your veterinarian to develop a euthanasia action plan appropriate for each stage of production. The plan should be kept in an obvious location in the barn. Review your plan with any new employees and annually with all staff and your veterinarian.

Below is an example action plan for a swine herd.

Farm Name: XYZ Farm

Date: Day / Month / Year

Drafted By: Janet Smith & Dr. Joe

Phase of Production	Euthanasia Method	Alternative Method
Piglets	Blunt trauma	
Nursery (<70 lb or 32 kg)	Penetrating captive bolt	Gunshot
Grow/finish (up to 300 lb or 136 kg)	Penetrating captive bolt	Gunshot
Mature animals (sows, boars)	Gunshot	Anesthetic overdose (by the vet)

Other Important Considerations

Deciding when and how to euthanise an animal is a difficult task that requires serious consideration. Individual judgement and attitude are important factors. When you have to euthanize an animal, think about how it might look or the impact it may have on those that may be able to see what you are doing but do not understand why it must be done. Again, the need for a simple, instant and reliable euthanasia method is important. Deadstock disposal should meet all legal requirements.

Consult your veterinarian or a swine practitioner for specific instructions on proper techniques and methods that would work best on your farm.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

Farmers and anyone who works with farm animals have a legal responsibility to do so in accordance with industry standards (i.e. Code of Practise) and all relevant laws.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT

Inspectors and Agents appointed under the OSPCA Act have the authority of police officers when enforcing laws pertaining to the welfare of animals. The OSPCA has had this authority since the Act's inception in 1919.

Distress – Orders and removals

- An Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA may order the owner or custodian to take such action as may be necessary to relieve the animal of its distress, or have the animal examined and treated by a veterinarian at the expense of the owner or custodian.
- An Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA may remove an animal from the building or place where it is and transport it to a location where the animal may be provided with food, care or treatment to relieve its distress.
 - *Distress* means that an animal is in need of proper care, water, food or shelter or being injured, sick or in pain, suffering or being abused, subject to undue or unnecessary hardship, privation or neglect.

Immediate distress – Entry without warrant

- Where an Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA has reasonable grounds to believe that an animal is in immediate distress, he or she may enter, without warrant, any premises, building or place other than a dwelling either alone or accompanied by one or more veterinarians or other persons as he or she considers advisable.
 - *Immediate* distress means there is distress that requires immediate intervention in order to alleviate suffering or to preserve life.

Destruction of an animal

- An Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA may destroy an animal: with the consent of the owner, or if a veterinarian has examined the animal and has advised the Inspector or Agent in writing that, in his or her opinion, it is the most humane course of action.

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ACT ONTARIO REGULATION 105/09

Ontario's *Disposal of Deadstock Regulation (O.Reg 105/09)* requires that every person that has care of or control over a fallen animal has the obligation to promptly destroy the animal in a humane manner or make arrangements for it to be promptly and humanely destroyed.

The regulation also prohibits the movement of a fallen animal before it has been killed. The regulation applies to horses, donkeys, ponies, pigs, alpaca, cattle, bison, deer, elk, goats, llamas, sheep, yaks, poultry, ratites and rabbits.

The regulation defines "fallen animal" as an animal that has been disabled by disease, emaciation or another condition that is likely to cause its death. This regulation is enforced by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

LIVESTOCK COMMUNITY SALES ACT

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has the responsibility for monitoring the health and welfare of livestock at auctions in Ontario under the authority of the Livestock Community Sales Act. Animals found that are diseased, injured, or otherwise compromised at an auction can ordered by OMAFRA inspectors to be:

- Euthanized; or
- Sent directly for slaughter; or
- Marked and sold for slaughter only; or
- Sold with a ring announcement of condition; or
- Ordered returned to the consignor for treatment.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Health of Animals Act

Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII Transportation of Animals

It is a violation to:

- Transport a sick or injured animal where undue suffering will result, or when the animal is liable to give birth.
- Continue to transport an animal that is injured, becomes ill, or is otherwise unfit to travel.
- Load or unload animals in a way that would cause injury or undue suffering.
- Crowd animals to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering.
- Transport animals if injury or suffering is likely to be caused by inadequate construction of the vehicle, insecure fittings, and undue exposure to the weather or inadequate ventilation.
- Use ramps, gangplanks or chutes that are inadequately constructed or maintained and would be likely to cause injury or undue suffering to the animals.
- Confine monogastric animals, such as horses or pigs, in a motor vehicle for longer than 36 hours, unless the animals are fed, watered and rested on a vehicle that is suitably equipped for the purpose. Ruminants may not be confined in a transport vehicle without food, water or rest for more than 48 hours, unless final destination can be reached within 52 hours.
- Transport young calves (not on grain/hay diets) longer than 18 hours without suitable food and water.
- Load an animal for a trip of more than 24 hours without first providing food and water within 5 hours before loading.

You must:

- Segregate animals of different species, of substantially different weights and ages, or if incompatible by nature.
- Allow animals to stand in a natural position.
- Provide drainage and absorption of urine.
- Either spread sand or have the vehicle fitted with safe footholds in addition to adequate bedding.
- Ensure that animals unloaded for feed, water and rest remain at least 5 hours, and longer, if necessary, for all of the animals to have access to feed and water.

Criminal Code of Canada

The Criminal Code states that you are guilty of an offence if you:

- Fail to exercise reasonable care or supervision of an animal thereby causing it pain, suffering, damage or injury.
- Wilfully cause or allow unnecessary pain, suffering, or injury to an animal.
- By wilful neglect cause injury to animals while they are being transported.
- Abandon an animal for fail to provide it with enough suitable food, water, shelter and care.

It is an offence to fail to exercise reasonable care or supervision thereby causing an animal pain during transport.

BODY CONDITION SCORING FOR PIGS

Body Condition Scoring can contribute significantly to good management of sows in all settings. Body condition scoring provides a clear indication of both the appropriateness of the feed and the effectiveness of the feed delivery system.

Sows should not enter the farrowing house with a condition of less than 3. Condition score of an individual sow may fall to 2.5 during lactation but a score of 2 or less is not acceptable and producers should take steps to avoid this problem.

Sows should be condition scored at weaning, at service, mid-gestation and at farrowing. Body condition lost during lactation needs to be regained during gestation.

Body Condition Score 1: Emaciated

The pelvic bones of the pig are very prominent; there is a deep cavity around the tail of the animal. The vertebrae are prominent and sharp. The loin of the animal is narrow and the flank area is hollow. The pig's individual ribs are very prominent.

Body Condition Score 2: Thin

The pelvic bones are obvious and have slight cover over them. The pig has a narrow loin and a rather hollow flank area. There is slight cover over the spine of the animal but the vertebrae are still prominent. The animal's rib cage is less apparent and individual ribs can be easily detected with slight pressure.

Body Condition Score 3: Ideal

The animal's pelvic bones are covered but can be felt when pressure is applied. The spine of the animal is covered and rounded. The ribs of the pig are covered but can be felt with pressure.

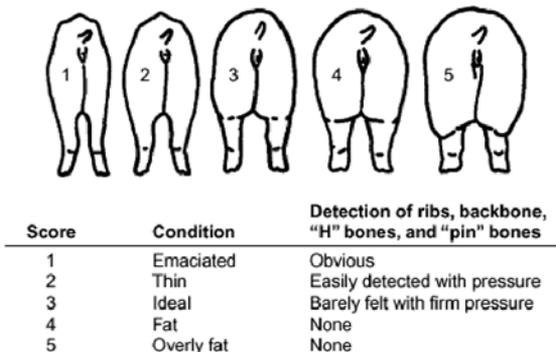
Body Condition Score 4: Fat

The pig's pelvis bones are only felt when firm pressure is applied. There is no cavity around the tail of the animal. It is difficult to feel the vertebrae of the animal and the flank area is filled. The rib cage is not visible and is difficult to feel.

Body Condition Score 5: Obese

It is impossible to feel the pig's pelvic bones and there are fat deposits in this area (hanging skin and fat). The animal has a thick cover over its back and it is impossible to feel bones. The flank area of the animal is full and rounded. There is also a thick cover over the animal's ribs and it is not possible to feel the ribs when pressure is applied.

Figure 2. Body condition scores of sows.



Source: *Assessing Sow Body Condition*, Coffey, Parker, Laurent University of Kentucky

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Humane Handling of Swine: Standards for the Care of Unfit Animals; Alberta Pork.
- Farm Animal Welfare Database of Research: www.livestockwelfare.com
- Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs; National Farm Animal Care Council www.nfacc.ca
- Pigs in Transit; Manitoba Pork.

For More Information

Ontario Pork
1-877-ONT-PORK (668-7675)
www.ontariopork.on.ca

Ontario Farm Animal Council
Farm Animal Care Help Line (519) 837-1326
www.ofac.org www.livestockwelfare.com

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Transport Emergency Number 1-877-814-2342
General Inquiries (519) 837-9400

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
1-877-424-1300
www.omafra.gov.on.ca

Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA)
1-888-668-7722
www.ontariospca.ca

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association
1-800-670-1702
www.ovma.org

DEFINITIONS

ANIMAL WELFARE:

Animals must be thriving and free from disease, injury and malnutrition. Welfare implies freedom from suffering in the sense of prolonged pain, fear, distress, discomfort, hunger, thirst and other negative experiences. Short-term negative states, such as short-term pain, hunger and anxiety, are virtually inevitable in an animal's life, and the difference between acceptable and unacceptable standards will remain a source of debate.

ANIMAL AT RISK OR COMPROMISED ANIMAL:

An animal with reduced capacity to withstand the stress of living or transportation due to injury, fatigue, infirmity, poor health, distress, very young or old age, impending birth or any other cause.

DISTRESS:

Distress may include: lack of food, water and shelter, lack of proper care of sick or injured animals, pain or suffering due to abuse or unnecessary hardship, deprivation or neglect.

EUTHANASIA:

A humane acceptable method of killing an animal with minimal fear or anxiety. The chosen method must be reliable, reproducible, irreversible, simple, safe and rapid. For detailed explanations and diagrams on how to euthanize pigs, refer to the On-Farm Euthanasia of Swine - Recommendations for the Producer developed by the American Association of Swine Vets and the National Pork Board. Copies are available at www.ontariopork.on.ca.

SUFFERING:

An unpleasant physical state associated with more-than-minimal pain or distress.

UNFIT:

An animal that is sick, injured, disabled or fatigued, is unfit and cannot be moved without avoidable suffering. This animal must not be loaded for transport.

NOTES

The Ontario Farm Animal Council represents Ontario's 40,000 livestock and poultry farmers and associated businesses on issues in animal agriculture.



www.ofac.org

