



# BEST PRACTICE PIG WELFARE ON THE FARM

The abattoir plays a key role in ensuring a high standard of pig welfare during stunning and slaughter. Management practices on farm can also impact pig welfare at the abattoir.

## STOCK HANDLING

- ▶ Handle pigs quietly and calmly
- ▶ Regular handling makes pigs more cooperative
- ▶ Regular contact with humans reduces stress

Handling pigs quietly and calmly on the farm has a direct impact on how they react when they are handled at the abattoir. Pigs that receive regular handling on the farm are more cooperative and less stressed at the abattoir. Abattoir staff will be less likely have to resort to harsh handling methods.

Regular interactions between stockpeople and pigs in finisher pens, shelters and paddocks allow them to become used to humans, which results in easier handling. Having stockpeople walk through finisher pens, shelters, and paddocks each day can result in easier handling. However, stockpeople should not stand still or encourage the pigs to approach them, as this can cause pigs to become overconfident and more difficult to handle.

## SOCIAL GROUPS

- ▶ Where possible, avoid mixing groups of pigs

Mixing unfamiliar pigs may cause pigs to fight to establish a new social hierarchy on the truck and in lairage at the abattoir. Mixing pigs increases the risk of undesirable behaviours like mounting.

Skin damage (cuts, scrapes, and bruising) may be more prevalent in mixed pigs.

## FASTING

- ▶ Fast pigs prior to transportation

While pigs should have free access to water right up until the time they are loaded, fasting pigs off feed helps them cope with transport and lairage stress. Fasting prevents vomiting, reduces the likelihood of overheating and mortality during transport.

The recommended fasting time is 12-18 hrs before slaughter, this includes farm lairage and transport. Pigs fasted over 18 hrs are harder to handle and load.

## EXTREME TEMPS

- ▶ Consider the weather when planning transport

Consider the weather and humidity when planning transport to the abattoir. Both hot and cold weather can negatively impact pig welfare during loading and transport and cause stress and discomfort.

Pigs should not be loaded nor travel in the hottest part of the day, but if this is not possible, using sprinklers and reducing the stocking density on the truck will help pigs cope.