Swine Health Guide

Swine Health Recommendations: Exhibitors of All Pigs Going to Exhibits or Sales

With the animals being commingled at an exhibition, show or sale, spreading disease is a risk. The recommendations listed apply to all swine at an exhibit or sale that are physically on the premise. Having a plan in place to identify and handle sick animals properly will help reduce the chance of disease spread.

In preparation for the exhibit or sale:

Consult a veterinarian to understand and implement applicable biosecurity and swine health practices; keep the veterinarian's phone number in your barn with your pig's papers and if possible, in your cell phone.

Have a premises identification number for your farm or where the pig(s) are housed (required for PQA Plus® certification or state equivalent)

Utilize an individual, readable identification method for each pig:

- Individual identification helps accurately and quickly identify a pig in the event of a health issue, validation of ownership or for other exhibit needs; papers can get lost or misplaced, but individual identification will remain with the pig
- Refer to the exhibit organizers and the State Veterinarian for specific requirements for individual animal identification

Become familiar with the clinical signs of a sick pig (such as fever, off-feed, lethargy, nasal discharge, cough, "thumping" or hard time breathing, and diarrhea).

- Normal rectal temperature of a pig = 101.5° - 102.5° F
- Pigs can't sweat, they need help staying cool on hot days.
  - › During hot weather a pig's temperature may be elevated.
  - › If its temperature is raised, allow the pig to cool off and re-take the temperature in 15 minutes.
- Work with your veterinarian if your pig becomes sick.

How do I take my pig's temperature?

1. Restrain your pig to avoid injury to you or the pig
2. Use a thermometer to measure temperature:
   a. Digital – insert into the rectum; push the button and wait for the beep; read temperature
   b. Mercury – shake down the thermometer so the red line is not showing; insert into the rectum of the pig and wait 30 seconds before reading the temperature
   c. Laser: point the laser at the space on the skin behind the ear and read temperature

NOTE: Laser thermometer may not be as accurate as rectal thermometer

Some diseases can transmit from humans to pigs and from pigs to humans, so it is important to not go to the exhibition or show if you or your pig is sick.

Make sure that you have all of your equipment, including your show box and its contents, clean, disinfected and ready to go prior to the exhibition. Do not share any equipment with other exhibitors once at the exhibit.

Fill out the appropriate paperwork for the exhibition including health certificates

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For your pig's health certificate, you will need to provide the following information:

- Your name, contact information and farm address
- Individual pig identification and physical description for each animal going to the exhibit or sale
- If exhibiting in a state other than where you live, have your veterinarian check with the state you are exhibiting in for specific requirements
- Include information for exhibit-specific requirements
- If requested, list any current vaccines the pig has received (i.e. influenza or PRRS) and current disease testing (i.e. PRRS; PRV)

Animals like cats and dogs can carry pathogens that can make pigs sick. It is important to prevent the spread of pathogens to your pigs or to others. Keep pets at home, do not let them be in contact with your pigs and do not bring them to the exhibit.

At the exhibition or sale:

- Assess your pigs' health on a daily basis
- Report any swine health issues to the exhibit organizer (i.e. swine superintendent) or show veterinarian so they can assess the pig in question
- Ask the exhibition organizer about any specific actions that may be required if a pig becomes sick at the show.
- Keep your area clean and free of manure contamination
- Do not share equipment with other exhibitors
- Do not bring your pets (cats or dogs) at the exhibit

Once you get home:

When pigs from different farms are brought to an exhibit or sale and commingled with other pigs of a different health status, the risk of catching a disease can be high. Just like people can spread illness to each other when gathered in a group, pigs from many locations in an exhibit can also spread illness to each other. Therefore, when you bring your pig back home from an exhibit or sale, it is best to place them in isolation.

Isolate returning pigs from the other pigs at your farm.

- Work with your veterinarian for an isolation plan. The isolation/observation period before returning to contact with other pigs should be no fewer than 7-30 days in order to detect an illness.
- Consult a veterinarian if your pig becomes ill.
- Clean and disinfect equipment, clothing, shoes, show box and contents, and vehicles/trailers that were used at the exhibition.

Clean-up can be as simple as washing, disinfecting and allowing your equipment to dry out in the sun

Clean and dry equipment will help to prevent the spread of pathogens

Recommendations for isolation: (if you have other pigs at your farm)

- Isolation will allow for time for pigs to be observed for disease after they return from an exhibition or sale. When pigs are in isolation, additional testing can be complete to check for diseases before pigs are added back to the rest of the farm (e.g. PRRS). Check with your veterinarian for testing recommendations.
- Have a designated area away from other pigs that have not been to a show.
- Do chores for the pigs in the isolation area as the last task of the day after you have already worked with your other pigs.
- Have dedicated boots and coveralls for isolation only. Another option is to use disposable coveralls and plastic boots for use in isolation and then thrown away when done in isolation.
- Have a separate trash can for use in isolation only.
- Supplies such as buckets and feed pans should not be shared between pigs in isolation and other animals.
- All equipment should be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and allowed to dry after use in the isolation area.