



# pigbytesnewsletter

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## RENOVATE – BUT DO HOMEWORK FIRST

On every piggery, there are probably facilities in need of upgrading, modification or replacement.

Before embarking on costly upgrades, inspect every building with a 'new' set of eyes. If possible, ask someone unfamiliar with each building to walk through with you and suggest modifications. If not possible, imagine that you are on someone else's farm and if cost was no object, how would you improve these facilities to modern high performance and high welfare standards.

There are 4 main ways to improve conventional sheds for hot weather performance:

**Ventilate** to remove heat load from buildings

**Insulate** to stop heat entering, mainly through the roof

**Irrigate** to wet the pigs via spray or drip cooling

**Automate** to take the guesswork out of managing the environment

Check each building to see if improvements can be made in these four areas.. Talk to technical experts, Industry & Investment NSW staff or respected pork producers for ideas.

While you are reviewing your facilities, check the stocking densities of the pens to ensure you are complying with the The Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs. If not, now is the time to make some changes.

If you are unsure about the pig welfare code of practice, it can be downloaded from the following web site: [www.publish.csiro.au/nid/22/pid/5698.htm](http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/22/pid/5698.htm)

## CAPTIVE BOLT GUN EUTHANASIA OF PIGS

Pigs that do not respond to treatment and/or are in acute pain and distress should be euthanised. The Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs (revised; MCOP) provides guidelines on approved euthanasia methods. Commonly-used methods include blunt trauma to the head, penetrating captive bolt and gunshot.

It is acceptable (under the MCOP) to euthanise pigs less than 15 kg using blunt trauma. But the MCOP also states that pigs must be "small and easily controlled (up to three weeks old)". At three weeks of age, most pigs would weigh less than 8 kg. The American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV) has recently released revised euthanasia guidelines for pigs. In it, blunt trauma is recommended for "suckling pigs less than 12 lb (5.5 kg)".

Timely euthanasia of pigs is an important component of a piggery's welfare plan. The MCOP Standard for euthanasia (7.1) reads "the method of euthanasia must cause sudden unconsciousness with death occurring when unconscious".

Blunt trauma is not appropriate for pigs that cannot be easily controlled. For pigs weighing more than 6 – 10 kg (depending on the strength of the operator), it is recommend to use a penetrating captive bolt gun. Do not use a non-penetrating captive bolt gun as these can be unreliable.

This is a 2-person job, with one person holding the pig using a snare or snout-rope, whilst the other performs the euthanasia. The placement of the gun should be directed towards the brain at a central point, 2 finger-widths above the eyes and held very firmly against the skull at 90 degrees (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Placement of a captive bolt gun (photo care of Dr Tony Fahy).**

It is important to confirm that the pig has been euthanised effectively. Check that the pig is not breathing regularly, that the eye does not blink when you touch it and that the pupil of the eye is dilated. If the pig has only been stunned it should be bled out by severing the blood vessels under the neck or front leg.

You do not need a firearms licence to own or use a captive bolt gun in NSW. Captive bolt guns can be purchased in Australia for around \$500. Activator cartridges sell for around \$2 each. These are colour-coded, with green cartridges suitable for larger pigs. For smaller pigs, you may need to adjust the degree of penetration of your captive bolt gun (if possible), and/or use cartridges with lower charge (eg. pink ones). Careful cleaning after use is essential to prevent misfire.

For more information or to discuss your euthanasia policy, contact Trish Holyoake.

### CHANGES TO REGULATIONS

The NSW Stock Diseases Regulation 2009 was gazetted on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009. There are a number of changes to requirements for the selling of pigs. Most important is that the PigPass NVD must have a unique serial number and be accurately completed with PIC and number and type of pigs. It is now unlawful for any pig to be sold or slaughtered if unaccompanied by a movement document (eg. PigPass NVD).

A Primefact which summarises the requirements for pigs is available from the following link:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/pigs/health/regulation>

The link to the full regulation which includes sections on other livestock (sheep, cattle, goats as well as pigs) is:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/about/legislation-acts/stock-diseases>

### MODEL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS – PIGS

Producers are reminded that the sections labelled as “Standards” in the welfare code are to be legislated over the coming months. One of these standards is the requirement for stockpersons to be “**competent** to maintain the health and welfare of the animals in accordance with the Standards listed in this Code.”

By March 2011 all persons responsible for the care and welfare of pigs must be able to demonstrate competence or must be under the supervision of a competent stockperson.

A person is deemed competent if they are a vet, hold a Certificate III in Agriculture (Pork Production), have been assessed in the stock person skill set or have worked on a commercial

piggery and cared for pigs for at least 12 months and had on the job training and experience.

I & I NSW through Tocal College is a Registered Training Organisation and can help growers with training or the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process. Please contact Jayce Morgan or Trish Holyoake.

### SEASONS GREETINGS

Jayce, Trish, Ian, Greg and Tim (Burfitt) wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

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To subscribe to an email version of this newsletter phone or email the editor.

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