

HUMANE ANIMAL HANDLING

Animal Handling

From Brianne: Pork Checkoff is the research and promotional body of the National Pork Board sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. The Checkoff was previously supported by farmers with a fee paid for every 100 pounds of market weight per pig. In 2000, farmers voted to stop payments for the Checkoff program, but the election was invalidated by the Secretary of Agriculture.



Give a look at this and the Farm Sanctuary site. How are pigs differently represented in these two sources.

In the pork industry, we do what's right, for people, pigs and the planet. The decisions made by any caretaker or handler about animal handling affect the entire pork chain down the line. Everyone in this process should be aware of their role and how actions that begin at the farm and extend to transport can impact animal health, welfare, and pork quality at the plant.



THESE MATERIALS WILL PROVIDE MORE CLARITY AROUND WILLFUL ACTS OF ABUSE.

They will assist caretakers and handlers in understanding what is and is not an act of abuse, how to prevent and resolve an abuse event, how these actions impact the pig, and observations that can be made to anticipate animal response and avoid situations that may lead to abuse events.

REAL SITUATIONS: WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Each module features real-world scenarios to help you recognize the best actions to take and why. You'll see examples like...

“ You are moving a group of pigs through an alley when one pig in the group falls down and does not get back up. ”

- ✓ Get around the pigs so a sort board can be put between downed pig and the other pigs
- ✓ Do not let ambulatory pigs walk or step on downed pig



It may be difficult to determine if the downed pig has become non-ambulatory or if it just needs a few moments to recover before moving again. Observing the pig is the best way to determine its immediate needs.



Here are some actions a handler can take if frustrated:



- Take a break and come back later
- Rotate handlers and roles while moving pigs
- Let the pigs take a break
- Reconsider plan
- Ask for help from nearby caretakers
- Try moving fewer animals
- Remember the basics of pig handling (point of balance, flight zone, blind spot), etc.

The chart below defines what is and is not an act of abuse related to animal handling:

Willful Acts of Abuse 	Caution Be cautious of situations where... 	Abusive Examples Handler's actions when moving pigs are abusive when... 
Malicious driving of ambulatory animals on top of one another either manually or with direct contact with motorized equipment (this excludes use of a bucket loader, or sled for example, to load a non-ambulatory animal for transport).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An animal may go down in a group of animals that allows other animals to go across or over the downed animal before you are able to take control of the situation You are applying too much pressure to a group of animals who are either stalling or in a pinch point, causing animals to go across one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are continuing to move or load animals over a non-ambulatory animal
Deliberate slamming of gates on animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are using moderate force to latch a gate, which could result in striking an animal Animals are in the swing pattern of a gate and may be struck when it's open or closed You find yourself using a gate to apply constant, slight pressure in place of a sort board or other handling tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You use a gate to strike an animal, to stop them from heading toward the opening You use a gate to strike an animal from behind, prompting it to move forward
Causing physical damage to the snout or tusks of a boar as a means to reduce aggression (this excludes nose ringing and tusk trimming).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You find yourself reasoning that causing physical damage to the snout or tusks is better than the animals fighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any occurrence or variation of causing physical damage to the snout or tusks of a boar is abuse

Watch for Animal Handling Concerns in All Phases of Production

For Example:

- Do not slam a gate on a **sow** to get her into a stall.
- Weaned pigs** tend to pile frequently than other sized pigs; do not drive pigs too quickly.
- Market hogs** may be reluctant to move through a chute or narrow alley, causing piling or a downed animal; avoid this by allowing pigs time to react.
- In **transport trailers**, do not strike animals with gates to stop them or turn them around.
- Be aware of free-swinging gates at **plants**.