



Top Ten Tips: Reducing environmental risks from outdoor pig production

Catchment Sensitive Farming may be able to help with advice and grant aid for environmental improvements [Catchment Sensitive Farming: advice for farmers and land managers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Farming Rules for Water are legal requirements for land management. Are you on the right track? [Farming rules for water from April 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

1 Locate special designations and restrictions

- Check your fields on Magic Maps: www.magic.defra.gov.uk to look for Source Protection Zones (SPZs), NVZs, SSSIs, watercourses and boreholes.
- Outdoor pigs should not be sited in a Source Protection Zone 1.
- As a minimum pigs and manure should not be within 50m of any borehole or 10m of a watercourse.

2 Understand potential surface water connectivity

- For each field, plot the flow of any ditch, stream, track, road network or gateway. Establish where surface water could travel and what it could connect with.
- Think about mitigation techniques such as buffer strips.
- Remember SOURCE, PATHWAY, RECEPTOR.

3 Visit potential fields regularly before taking them on

- Understand how soils react to the weather. Outdoor pigs could exacerbate existing issues.
- Coarse loamy sands through to sandy loams are generally acceptable for outdoor pigs.
- Silty loams are not acceptable.
- Fields with multiple soil types will require a lot more management. Discuss with the landowner. Catchment Sensitive Farming may be able to advise.

4 Use cover crops, grass mixes or mixed cover crops to protect soils

- Identify areas on the field where you may be able to agree planting of environmentally beneficial mixes.
- Where possible establish cover early and before the pigs move onto site.
- Don't put pigs onto fields following potatoes, maize or root crops.
- Growing crops take up significant amounts of Soil Mineral Nitrogen and reduce the risk of nitrate leaching over winter - (up to 200kg/ha N is lost from pig fields)

5 Identify no-go areas and buffer strips

- Ensure you have suitable buffer strips of at least 10m in place and don't drive/traffic on them or store things on them.
- Buffer strips don't work if you drive on them and vehicle tracks can be a pathway for run off. Ensure all staff are aware of run off and pollution risk.
- Consider hedges, pollen/nectar strips along with buffers to enhance biodiversity.

6 Do not trap water behind bunds

- Deal with the source of the surface water or use short catch ditches that can be de-silted as required.
- Do not use soak-aways or silt traps to deal with contaminated water.

7 Use a specialist to assess the land and identify any problems prior to pig occupation

- Look for soil pans (dig a soil pit), capping and compaction.
- Agree with the landowner or land manager the state in which the fields are to be both received and handed back.
- Agree with the landowner who is going to do what work before, during and after the pigs are on the land.

8 Use pig feeding troughs

- Don't broadcast-spread food as this encourages pigs to root through the soil and damage the soil structure.
- Do use a feeding trough.

9 Ensure water troughs and drinkers are checked regularly

- Fix leaks as soon as they are noticed.
- Be prepared to move water troughs and drinkers if the land around them is becoming poached.

10 Be prepared to shut or rest pens and rotate

- This is important if conditions become bad or very wet.
- Remember to rotate fields and do not keep pigs on the same fields/sections continuously.