

New pig keepers guide Small-scale production



Contents

03	Getting Started
04	Register your pigs and land
07	Pig movements
09	Feed Legislation
11	Basic husbandry and care
14	Biosecurity
17	Zoonosis
17	On-farm euthanasia
18	Pedigree pigs

The information in this guide was compiled by:

- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB)
- Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
- British Pig Association (BPA)
- National Pig Association (NPA)

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Getting started

Keeping pigs is a satisfying experience but, before making the decision to become a keeper, you need to know the basics of:

- Pig husbandry
- Pig health and welfare
- Pig identification (ear tags, ear tattoos, etc.)
- Pig movement licensing
- Biosecurity
- Legislation

You also need to:

- Decide whether you want to keep pigs for meat production, breeding or as a pet
- Do your research to ensure you buy from a reputable source
- Register with a local farm vet and keep the number to hand
- Contact a local knackerman or the National Fallen Stock Company (NFSCo) to remove dead stock, if necessary
- Ensure you have access to the following two documents: The Casualty Pig and The Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Pigs

Useful contacts and links

British Pig Association (BPA)

Email: bpa@britishpigs.org

Tel: 01223 845100

Website: britishpigs.org.uk

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB)

Email: pork.kt@ahdb.org.uk

Tel: 024 7669 2051

Website: ahdb.org.uk

National Pig Association (NPA)

Tel: 024 7685 8780

Website: npa-uk.org.uk

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons: Find a vet

Tel: 020 7222 2001

Website: findavet.rcvs.org.uk/home

National Fallen Stock Company

Tel: 01335 320014

Website: nfsc.co.uk

Register your pigs and land

Before your pigs arrive, you must register your land with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). They will provide you with a County Parish Holding number (CPH), a nine-digit number that identifies the land where the pigs will be kept.

Within 30 days of your pigs arriving, you must register as a pig keeper with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), who will provide you with a unique herd mark. The herd mark provides a quick and effective means to identify the location of all livestock in the event of a disease outbreak.

APHA needs both your correspondence address and the location of your pigs, if different. If there are changes to either, APHA must be updated as soon as possible.

Useful contacts and links

Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

Tel: 0300 0200 301

Website: gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency

Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

Tel: 0300 0200 301

Website: gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency

Pig land and registration

Website: gov.uk/topic/keeping-farmed-animals/pig-identity-registration-movements

British Pig Association (BPA)

Tel: 01223 845100

Email: bpa@britishpigs.org

Website: britishpigs.org.uk/pedigree%20owning.htm



Identification

Now that you have registered your pigs, they must be legally identified. This can be in the form of an ear tag, herd mark tattoo or slapmark.

Ear tag

- An ear tag must be stamped or printed – not handwritten
- It must contain the letters 'UK', followed by your herd mark
- Tags used for slaughter must be metal or plastic and sufficiently heat-resistant to withstand carcase processing



Herd mark tattoo

- Must be on the ear, and clear and visible
- If not visible, e.g. due to coat colour, an ear tag will also be required
- You only need to tattoo your herd mark
- This method requires six-digit tattooing pliers

Slapmark

- A permanent ink imprint of your herd mark, which is applied once on each front shoulder area of your pigs
- Must be clear and visible for the point of sale and throughout the processing of your pigs' carcasses
- If the slapmark is not visible, e.g. due to coat colour, an ear tag will also be required
- Slapmark equipment includes a slapper, tattoo pins and an ink pad
- Although uncommon, use of compressed air slapmarking equipment is permitted



Temporary mark

- This can be a livestock spray mark on your pig, for example, a blue circle
- It must last until your pigs reach their destination
- The temporary mark must be recorded in the haulier summary/movement document
- It can only be used if your pigs are less than 12 months old and are moving between two farms

If moving your pigs to market, abattoir or shows, they must be marked with your official herd mark before moving.

If you are moving your pigs to either an artificial insemination (AI) centre or other breeding location, exhibition, show, or another country, a unique identification number must be added to the original identifier.

Useful contacts and links

AHDB work instruction

pork.ahdb.org.uk/media/74304/wi-2-slapmarking-pigs.pdf

APHA guidance

gov.uk/guidance/pig-keepers-identify-animals-before-moving-them#types-of-identifier

BPA guidance

britishpigs.org.uk/pedigree%20govt%20ID.htm

britishpigs.org.uk/BPA%20leaflet%20First%20Steps%20web.pdf

Approved list of slapmark suppliers

gov.uk/government/publications/slapmarking-pigs-approved-suppliers-of-equipment

Pig movements

Licences must be arranged for any pig movement before you move your pigs. As a registered keeper, you are responsible for notifying the movement on the electronic Animal Movement Licensing (eAML2) system. To receive your first pigs, you will need to register with eAML2 at eaml2.org.uk or by calling the bureau service on **0844 335 8400**. The bureau team will help you register a movement and send you a copy of the Haulier Summary/Movement Documents (HS/MD) that need to accompany your pigs as they move. The HS/MD will have a unique reference number generated by the system.

You will need to:

1. Remember to leave extra time if using the bureau telephone service to allow the HS/MD to be delivered before your pigs are moved.
2. Once your pigs are loaded, provide the haulier with two printed HS/MD documents. One for the haulier and one for the new keeper.
3. After your pigs have left, confirm the movement. This can be done via the eAML2 system, or by calling the bureau telephone service.
4. When the pigs arrive at their destination (abattoir/market/farm), their arrival, (including their number/quantity), should be confirmed by the recipient via the eAML2 system, or the bureau telephone service
5. For all movements, the HS/MD records must be kept for three years and be available for inspection by the relevant authorities (paper copies are filed in the eAML2 Movement Archive, if required). The transporter must keep their copies of HS/MDs for six months. If transporting your own pigs, you must keep HS/MDs for three years.



Herd register

If you do not have an eAML2 account, you must keep a record of all the pigs on your holding. This is known as a herd register (also called on-farm movement records). The following details need to be recorded:

- The herd mark
- Date of movement
- Number of pigs you have moved
- Details of the holding the pigs came from (include the CPH number)
- Details of their next location (include the CPH number)
- If you are moving your pigs to a breeding location, AI centre, show or another country, you must record the pig's individual identity number

A record must be made before the movement happens and kept for three years after you stop keeping pigs, in case of inspection. You do not have to keep a holding register if you have an eAML2 account but paper copies must be made available for inspection.

Standstill restrictions

Once your pigs arrive, your farm will be placed under a standstill restriction, which means movement restrictions apply to your other farmed livestock. This is to minimise the risk of disease spread.

The impact of the standstill is that:

- New pigs arriving will trigger a 20-day standstill on your existing pigs and a 6-day standstill on your other livestock
- Other livestock, e.g. cattle, entering your farm will place a six-day standstill on your existing pigs
- Piglets born on a farm will not trigger a standstill
- Standstill does not apply if you are moving your pigs directly to slaughter
- You can apply at your APHA office to have an approved on-farm isolation facility so breeding stock can be moved onto your farm and placed into quarantine, thus avoiding a standstill restriction on your other livestock

If you have any queries or issues regarding movements, contact your local APHA office.

Trailer licensing

If you are transporting pigs in your own trailer, you will require licences.

- Journeys less than 65 km require the eAML2 movement licence
- Journeys over 65 km require an eAML2 movement licence, as well as an Authorisation Licence

The 'Welfare in transport – animal transporter type 1 authorisation licence' is available from APHA. It allows you to transport your animals over 65 km, but under eight hours, and remains valid for five years. You must also have a certificate of competence.

Where journeys exceed eight hours, a type two transporter authorisation licence will be required. Alongside this, the driver must have valid certificates of competence for drivers and handlers. Defra has a list of approved independent organisations offering these assessments and certificates.

Your trailer will also need to be suitable for transporting pigs. Below is a list of basic requirements:

- Ramp angles of no greater than 20°
- Loading gates fitted
- Non-slip flooring, e.g. rubber matting
- Easily cleaned and disinfected (so no wooden trailers)
- Species-appropriate ventilation

- Suitable space (pigs must be able to comfortably stand up and lie down in their own space)
- Suitable bedding provided during travel, which is both absorbent and insulating, e.g. straw

Pet pig walking licences

If you are a pet pig owner, and wish to walk them, you must have a walking licence from APHA, as your route will need to be pre-approved.

Routes may not be approved if there is a risk of disease spread. For example, if the route is close to: a livestock market, a high health status pig farm or fast food outlets.

If your route is approved, you are issued with a licence that needs to be renewed annually and must be carried with you during the walk.

Useful contacts and links

eAML2 and bureau service

Tel: 0844 335 8400

Website: eaml2.org.uk

Opening times: Monday–Friday 9:00am–5:00pm

APHA movement guidance

gov.uk/guidance/pig-keepers-report-and-record-movements-to-or-from-your-holding

APHA office access and opening times: gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening

APHA guidance on keeping a pet pig or ‘micropig’: gov.uk/guidance/keeping-a-pet-pig-or-micropig

Live transport: welfare regulations: gov.uk/guidance/farm-animal-welfare-during-transportation

Application for type 1 authorisation: gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-a-united-kingdom-animal-transporter-authorisation-for-type-1-authorisations-valid-for-journeys-over-65km-and-up-to-8-hours

Feed legislation

After the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001, new legislation came into place banning the feeding of any domestic kitchen scraps or catering waste to any farmed animals, regardless of whether they are entering the food chain, i.e. pet pigs, or even if reared for personal consumption.

Contaminated food can spread viruses and bacteria, and when infected with a disease such as African swine fever (ASF), pigs can quickly infect other pigs with devastating consequences. Following the rules will reduce the risk of both disease and prosecution.

To add clarity, it is illegal to feed any catering waste to pigs (including used cooking oil) from restaurants, kitchens (both domestic and commercial), and other catering facilities, even if those establishments cater only for vegetarians/vegans.

There are a small number of exceptions:

- Liquid milk or colostrum produced on the same farm on which the pigs are kept
- Former foodstuffs containing rennet, melted fat, milk or eggs but where these materials are not the main ingredient and where they have not passed through a kitchen, whether domestic or commercial
- Fishmeal, (animal derived) di-or tri-calcium phosphate
- Commercially available blood products (see Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies Regulations)
- Milk, milk products and white water when suitably treated

Please note that if you use waste milk, milk products or white water to feed to your pigs, you need to register with Defra for this purpose. In the case of milk products, this would only be necessary if they contained more than 80% milk.

You can get certain types of former foodstuffs (see above), as well as fruit and vegetables, from non-catering premises for feeding to pigs. These food items must only be sourced from premises that either do not handle food banned from being fed to pigs, or that have Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) procedures in place, to ensure safe separation from prohibited materials, and where these procedures have been agreed with your local authority.

If you feed commercially prepared feed to your pigs, e.g. sow nuts, grower pellets, you need to register with your local authority under regulation 183/2005.

If you are uncertain about what can and cannot be fed, please contact your vet or APHA for further advice. If in doubt, don't feed it.

Useful contacts and links

Animal by-product guidance

gov.uk/guidance/animal-by-product-categories-site-approval-hygiene-and-disposal

Animal feed legislation

food.gov.uk/business-guidance/animal-feed-legislation

Defra

gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies Regulations

legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/731/contents/made

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point

gov.uk/food-safety-hazard-analysis



Basic husbandry and care

Keeping pigs healthy and occupied means you need to consider how you treat and keep them.

Water

Your pigs will drink different volumes of water depending on age, health and weather; see the Defra Welfare Codes for guidance. Water needs to be fresh and clean; as a guide, if you wouldn't drink it, then it isn't suitable for your pigs.

- Water storage must be fresh, clean and vermin-proof
- To prevent contamination, test any water not sourced from the mains water supply
- However you provide your water, i.e. through refillable bowls or troughs, there must be enough drinkers for the number of pigs you are keeping
- If you are raising piglets, they must have access to fresh, clean water from two weeks of age



Nutrition

Similar to water, nutritional requirements vary depending upon pig age and health, but also weather.

- Talk to your vet to decide diet, ration and feeding methods
- Your pigs should be fed on a clean surface, preferably a trough
- Any uneaten feed should be removed, to avoid it spoiling or attracting vermin
- If milling your own feed, you must comply with current legislation
- Feed must be stored away from vermin and harsh weather conditions, to prevent

Housing

Whether indoor or outdoor, housing is essential to protect pigs from the elements and predators. Space and temperature requirements can be found within the Defra Welfare Codes.

- Housing should be insulated and have good ventilation (without draughts)
- If using arcs, ensure they are adapted to the temperature. In summer, paint them white or move them into an area of shade to keep them cool. In winter, they need to be draught-free and have a good supply of bedding at all times
- In sunny weather, your pigs must have access to shade



Veterinary attention and reporting of disease

If your pig shows signs of disease, you must contact your vet for advice. Setting up a veterinary health plan will ensure you are up to date with routine treatments.

- Vaccinations and worming need to be kept up to date to prevent disease
- Check your pigs every day for signs of ill health. If in doubt, contact your vet
- Record any pig medicine usage. This should include medicine batch numbers, with which animals have been treated, amount used and the reason for treatment. It can be either handwritten or via the AHDB electronic medicine book (eMB)
- Learn to recognise common and notifiable pig diseases. In the event you suspect a notifiable disease, you or your vet must report this to APHA immediately

Use industry tools such as AHDB's Significant Diseases Charter or APHA's disease surveillance map to keep yourself informed of the latest disease outbreaks.

Bedding material and enrichment

Bedding is essential for warmth, comfort and nesting. Examples of bedding that can be used, include straw (various types), woodchip (unscented) and shredded paper.

- Buy bedding from a reputable source where it has been stored away from weathering and manure
- Do not use bedding that is damp or mouldy, as this can harbour harmful mycotoxins that your pigs will breathe in
- Bedding must be stored to prevent contamination by vermin and should be protected from the weather
- Adjust the amount of bedding you use, based on the temperature and season
- Do not use hay as your main bedding material, as it holds moisture, which can result in mould growth
- Provide toys and enrichment for your pigs to play with. It is stimulating and can help reduce aggression and boredom

Nose ringing

Nose ringing is a mutilation and should be avoided, wherever possible, as it interferes with your pigs' natural rooting behaviours. Where it is necessary to nose ring your pigs, e.g. to protect ground cover, it should only be carried out by a suitably trained and competent person. All equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between pigs.

Useful contacts and links

Defra welfare guidance

gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-recommendations-for-the-welfare-of-livestock-pigs

AHDB

Water, soil and air: pork.ahdb.org.uk/environment-buildings/water-soil-and-air

Optimising the use of antimicrobials

pork.ahdb.org.uk/media/274247/51510014_ft014_raft-solutions-ltd-water-report_approved_september-2017.pdf

Notifiable diseases

gov.uk/government/collections/notifiable-diseases-in-animals

eMB

emb-pigs.ahdb.org.uk

AHDB Significant Diseases Charter

pork.ahdb.org.uk/health-welfare/health/significant-diseases-charter/

APHA disease surveillance

apha.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/surveillance/scanning/disease-dashboards.htm

Bedding

pork.ahdb.org.uk/environment-buildings/pig-buildings-housing-development/bedding/

Environmental enrichment guide

pork.ahdb.org.uk/health-welfare/welfare/environment-enrichment/environment-enrichment-a-practical-guide/

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the term used for taking preventative measures to help stop the spread of infectious disease. Good biosecurity is the first line of defence against any disease, both on and off your farm.

Incoming stock

- The owner and vet should check the health of the pigs entering the property before introducing them to your existing pigs
- Isolate/quarantine any new pigs to an area on the perimeter of your farm, preferably in a Defra/APHA-approved on-farm isolation facility
- If your pigs are kept inside, remember to clean, disinfect and thoroughly dry between each intake of pigs. If your pigs are kept outside, do not reuse incoming stock pens for vulnerable pigs, e.g. farrowing pigs or recently weaned pigs
- If you don't have a dedicated person to look after isolated stock, you should change your clothing/overalls and boots before visiting these pigs
- Discuss with your vet and agree a suitable introductory period and vaccination requirements



Access

- Ensure your visitors are aware of the rules around feeding scraps to pigs, and don't bring any meat products into the area where your pigs are kept
- Footwear should be cleaned and disinfected before and after visiting your pigs. If spare footwear or cleaning and disinfection is not available, shoe covers should be used and disposed of after use
- Provide a bell or horn for visitors/deliveries to use, to attract your attention to avoid visitors entering where your pigs are kept
- If you have a public footpath on your land, site pigs where the public cannot access them. If this is impractical, use signs, such as the AHDB sign 'do not feed the pigs', to make the rules and risks clear

Vehicles

- Trailers must be cleaned and disinfected within 24 hours of unloading pigs
- Where possible, keep vehicles outside the perimeter of your farm
- Vehicles that need to enter your farm must be cleaned and disinfected prior to entering, e.g. dead stock removal lorries



Rodent control

- Have a rodent control plan in place and review regularly
- Keep the farm clean and tidy
- Control birds and rodents by keeping food stores and hoppers covered and clearing any feed spillages
- Keep outside water troughs far enough away from the fence line and trees to prevent birds defecating into the water, when perched
- Keep your pets away from the area where your pigs are kept



Dead pig disposal

- Ensure all deadstock (including stillborn piglets) are disposed of quickly and correctly
- Provide sealed and locked storage for dead pigs, in line with legal requirements; this must be cleaned and disinfected after every use
- The burial or burning of deadstock is illegal
- Agree a collection point with the local knackerman or National Fallen Stock Company (NFSCo), away from your pig housing and public access
- If in doubt, ask your vet or deadstock removal contact for advice

Boar sharing

Before agreeing to share a boar, ensure the boar is healthy, fit to work and up to date with vaccinations, including mange treatment.

- Your sows/gilts must be in good health, to ensure the boar doesn't take any disease back with him after mating
- Ensure the boar is delivered in a clean vehicle
- Treat the boar as incoming stock and isolate for 20 days before using him. If time is restricted, make provision to move your sows/gilts into the isolation pens with him for the duration of mating and for three to six weeks afterwards
- If you have loaned a boar, isolate him for six weeks upon returning to your site



Disinfectants

- When disinfecting, you must use a Defra-approved disinfectant
- Disinfectants must be used at the correct dilution rate, as specified in the manufacturer's instructions
- Before using disinfectants, ensure muck and bedding have been removed or the disinfectant will not be effective

Zoonosis

A zoonotic disease is a disease that can be transferred from animal to human and vice versa. Your pigs can carry a number of these diseases including influenza, erysipelas, salmonella and streptococcus suis. People who are immunocompromised, e.g. pregnant or taking immunosuppressing medication, are at more risk of catching such a disease, so will need to take care when around pigs.

To prevent disease spread, make sure you wash your hands after handling your pigs and before you eat. You should also have a separate eating and drinking facility away from your pigs.

Useful contacts and links

Best practice for rodent control

bpc.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Documents/Codes%20of%20Best%20Practice/COBP-CRRU-Rodent-Control-and-Safe-Use-of-Rodenticides-2015.PDF

Defra-approved disinfectants

gov.uk/guidance/defra-approved-disinfectant-when-and-how-to-use-it

Defra fallen stock

gov.uk/guidance/fallen-stock

National Fallen Stock company

Tel: 01335 320014

Website: nfsco.co.uk

On-farm euthanasia

If your pig needs to be euthanised, it must be carried out without delay by a competent person with either a Welfare at the Time of Killing (WAToK) licence or Certificate of Competence (CoC). Pigs must be killed using a permitted method, according to current legislation.

In an emergency, as an owner/keeper, you must ensure your pig is killed immediately and humanely to prevent its continued suffering. Again, this must be done by someone who is suitably trained and competent, both in slaughter methods and use of the equipment.

- Under emergency circumstances, a slaughter licence or Certificate of Competence (CoC) is not required
- If your pig has to be killed in an emergency, for example, if injured or suffering from a disease associated with severe pain or debility that cannot be practically relieved, then any method of killing is allowed, as long as the animal is spared any avoidable pain, distress and suffering, and is killed as soon as possible

For further guidance, see the PVS Casualty Pig booklet.

On-farm slaughter for home consumption

If you wish to slaughter animals to eat at home, a licence is not required, provided:

- You own the animal and you kill it on your property
- You're killing it for you or your immediate family who live on your property to eat
- You follow relevant welfare rules for the stunning and bleeding of pigs

You cannot kill pigs in accordance with religious rites.

However, it is important to be aware of the restrictions and controls around this process under food safety legislation; refer to the links below for further details.

Useful contacts and links

PVS Casualty Pig booklet

pigvetsoc.org.uk/files/document/192/Casualty%20Pig%20-%20April%202013-1.pdf

Food Standards Agency guidance

food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/home-killguide.pdf

Defra guidance

gov.uk/guidance/slaughter-poultry-livestock-and-rabbits-for-home-consumption

Pedigree pigs

If you are breeding or raising pedigree pigs, you may wish to register with the BPA. The BPA has all the details on how to register and identify pedigree individuals and litters. You can also find details of your breed or area representatives for additional help. Many of the breeds are used for conservation, as well as for meat consumption. There are two breeds that are not registered with the BPA, these are British Lops and British KuneKune, you will need to register with these societies directly.

Useful contacts and links

British Lop Pig Society: britishloppig.org.uk

British KuneKune Pig Society: britishkunekunesociety.org.uk

British Pig Association: britishpigs.org.uk/pedigree.htm



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