

Explanatory note

The current version of the RSPCA Welfare Standards for Pigs that RSPCA Assured scheme members are required to implement is dated November 2016 with an addendum dated March 2021. Due to changes in recent legislation, they have now been amended and updated, which includes the addition of a number of new standards and guidance (information boxes).

These changes will be incorporated into a revised edition of the RSPCA Welfare Standards for Pigs when the next update is published.

All the amendments made to the November 2016 version of the standards and the March 2021 addendum are listed below and been labelled as NEW or REVISED.

RSPCA Assured scheme members have three months from the date of this letter to fully implement these changes (i.e. by July 2022) unless otherwise stated by the standard, or required by law.

RSPCA Farm Animals Department

19/04/2022

Please note:

All standards in the November 2016 edition and March 2021 addendum that are not shown below or are shown but do not have a label next to them remain unchanged in the new edition. Due to the amendment process, some existing standards have been re-ordered and therefore re-numbered.

Casualty animals

H 2.1 Each farm must have provisions for the humane killing, without delay, of casualty pigs.

H 2.2 **REVISED** Anyone carrying out emergency killing of pigs must:

- a) have access to the latest version of the Humane Slaughter Association's (HSA) guide: *Emergency Slaughter* or, in the case of piglets, the *On-Farm Humane Killing of Neonate Pigs, Goats and Sheep*,
- b) be familiar with the content, and
- c) follow the guidance where applicable (see information box below).



NEW With reference to H 2.2 c), the Humane Slaughter Association's documents should complement and support these RSPCA welfare standards for pigs. However, if there is a conflict between the HSA guidance and what is required under these RSPCA standards, the requirements set out in these standards are to be followed.

H 2.3 **NEW** **LEGAL** Casualty pigs requiring emergency euthanasia must only be humanely killed using the following methods (which are listed in no particular order):

- a) Free bullet
- b) Shot gun
- c) Penetrative captive bolt followed swiftly by pithing or bleeding such that the animal dies without regaining consciousness
- d) For the emergency killing of piglets under 10kg only, a non-penetrative captive bolt provided that the device is capable of delivering a force equivalent to or greater than 27.7 Joules
- e) Chemical euthanasia by overdose of an anaesthetic drug carried out by veterinary surgeon.



NEW The method outlined in standard H 2.3d), under the specific circumstances listed, does not need to be followed by bleeding or pithing.



NEW With reference to the methods of emergency slaughter listed in standard H 2.3, it is advised that national laws are checked to ascertain which methods are permitted under national law in the country in question.



NEW LEGAL Manual blunt force trauma cannot legally be used to kill piglets of any age or weight in England and Wales, including in emergencies (see standard H 2.3 for a list of permitted methods).

H 2.3.1 **NEW** A permitted method of emergency slaughter (see standard H 2.3) must also be available as a back-up method for use in the event that the primary method is unavailable, i.e. for occasions where it is not possible to use the primary method (e.g. due to failure).

H 2.3.2 **NEW** Equipment for the slaughter/killing of animals must be:

- a) maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions,
- b) easily accessible to the relevant member of staff,
- c) checked at least monthly to ensure good working order, and
- d) checked immediately prior to the first use of the day to ensure good working order.

- H 2.3.3** **NEW LEGAL** Non-ambulatory pigs, which are unable to stand/rise unaided, must be killed without being moved, unless:
- they can be lifted without causing further suffering, and
 - where there is full body support.



NEW A pig is considered non-ambulatory when the animal cannot rise or is unable to stand unaided.

- H 2.4** Casualty killing must be carried out by either:
- a named, trained, competent member of staff, or
 - a licensed slaughterman, or
 - a veterinary surgeon.

- H 2.4.1** **NEW** Where the member of staff/slaughterman responsible for killing the casualty pig is unable to attend to the pig without delay, a veterinary surgeon must be called immediately to carry out the procedure.

- H 2.5** With regard to a casualty animal, if there is any doubt as to how to proceed, the veterinary surgeon must be called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane killing is required to prevent suffering.

- H 2.6** If an animal is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, then the animal must be promptly humanely killed.



It is not illegal to euthanase an animal to prevent further severe suffering if a method of humane killing is available on the premises and there is someone competent to undertake the procedure. However, for non-emergency casualty killing, a slaughterman's licence is required if a captive bolt pistol is used.

- H 2.7** **REVISED** All carcasses must be:
- stored in suitable containers that are locked when the site is not attended and always at the end of each working day, and
 - disposed of strictly according to current legislation.

- H 2.8** A record must be kept of how and where all such carcasses are disposed of.

