



Pigs

A code of practice issued under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Code of Practice 2013



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

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This Code replaces “The Northern Ireland Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Pigs” published in 2007 – ISBN: 978-1-84807-013-4.





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1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is the purpose of this Code of Practice?

Efficient pig management requires both experience and the observance of high standards of care. Unless management and handling are done well, the welfare of the pigs cannot be adequately protected. This Code sets out minimum standards that represent society's expectation of that standard of care which are based on good practice and scientific knowledge. It is intended to encourage all those responsible for its implementation to exceed the minimum standards and to adopt the good practice of husbandry, care and handling. Advice is given throughout the Code and is designed to encourage those responsible for an animal to strive for a high level of welfare.

1.2 Who does this Code apply to?

This Code applies to all persons responsible for the welfare of pigs. Under the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 a person responsible for a farmed animal is responsible for meeting the legal obligations for animal welfare. Responsibility for meeting minimum standards relating to the provision, design and maintenance of the facilities and equipment, the allocation of operational responsibilities and the competence and supervision of performance of employees, lies with the owner and every person in charge of the pigs at all times.

Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Regulation 5 - (1) A person responsible for a farmed animal -

- (a) shall not attend to the animal unless that person is acquainted with any relevant Code of practice and has access to the Code while attending to the animal;
- (b) shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that a person employed or engaged by that person does not attend to the animal unless that other person -
 - (i) is acquainted with any relevant Codes of practice;
 - (ii) has access to all such Codes while attending to the animal; and
 - (iii) has received instruction and guidance on those Codes.

(2) In this section, a "relevant Code of practice" means a Code of practice issued or revised under section 16 of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 relating to the particular species of farmed animal to which a person is attending.

1.3 What animals does this Code apply to?

This Code covers all pigs. The word “pigs” refers to all porcine stock, and includes wild boar kept for farming purposes. A piglet refers to a pig from birth to weaning.

The Code’s recommendations apply to pigs under all husbandry systems. Section 1 of the Code gives the recommendations that apply to all ages and types of pig. Section 2 covers the recommendations that apply to specific categories of pigs (such as boars or pigs kept outdoors).

1.4 What happens if I do not follow the minimum standards in this Code?

Failure to meet a minimum standard in this Code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 or the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012. A person who is charged with an offence under the Animal Welfare legislation can defend himself or herself by showing that he or she has equalled or exceeded the minimum standards in this Code. You should be aware that any of the legal requirements quoted in the Code could change - you should check that these are an accurate statement of the law as it currently stands.

Section 1 – Recommendations for All Pigs

2.0 Stockmanship

2.1 General

Stock-keepers have the most significant influence on the welfare of pigs. In general, the larger the size of the unit the greater the degree of skill and care needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased, nor should a unit be set up, unless it is certain that the number of stock-keepers will be sufficiently high to safeguard the welfare of each individual pig.

Those responsible for managing the farm should make sure that the pigs are cared for by enough well motivated and competent staff. These staff need to be aware of the welfare needs of pigs and be capable of protecting them from all expected problems before they are given any responsibility. This means that the staff need specific knowledge and skills, which they should develop on-farm by working with a skilled stock-keeper who is experienced in the relevant system. A written contract can be of value in ensuring that all parties are clear about their responsibilities in respect of welfare. However, the obligations imposed by law will still apply. Wherever possible, staff should also attend relevant courses run by a suitable training organisation. Ideally, the training should lead to formal recognition of competence. Any contract or casual labour used on the farm should be trained and competent in the relevant activity.



Stock-keepers should be knowledgeable and competent in a wide range of animal health and welfare skills, which should include:

- handling skills;
- emergency slaughter;
- preventing and treating lameness;
- preventing and treating internal and external parasites;
- giving medicines by injection;
- providing appropriate care to sick and injured pigs;
- care of the sow and her litter; and
- management of pigs to minimise aggression.

If stock-keepers are expected to perform specific tasks on-farm (e.g. artificial insemination or teeth clipping/grinding), they should be trained and competent and comply with the relevant legislation. See Section 6.3 - Permitted and Prohibited Procedures.

Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 1 - Animals shall be cared for by a sufficient number of staff who possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence.

Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states at:

Section 9 (1) - A person commits an offence if that person does not take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure that the needs of an animal for which that person is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice.

Section 9 (2) - For the purposes of this Act, an animal's needs shall be taken to include -

- (a) its need for a suitable environment,
- (b) its need for a suitable diet,
- (c) its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns,
- (d) any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and
- (e) its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Section 9 (3) - The circumstances to which it is relevant to have regard when applying subsection (1) include, in particular -

- (a) any lawful purpose for which the animal is kept, and
- (b) any lawful activity undertaken in relation to the animal.

Section 9 (4) - This section does not apply to the destruction of an animal in an appropriate and humane manner.

2.2 Animal Handling

Pigs should be moved at their own pace. They should be encouraged gently around corners and where it is slippery underfoot. Stock-keepers should avoid using too much noise, excitement or force and must not hit the animals, or put pressure on any particularly sensitive part of the body. Anything used, such as pig boards and flat slap sticks, to guide the animals should only be used for that purpose and slap sticks must not have a sharp or pointed end. The use of electric goads on pigs should be avoided.

Stock-keepers should make sure that all floors and walkways are well maintained and provide a non-slip surface. The floor should not slope too steeply as this can cause leg problems.

All stock-keepers must have access to easy to use and efficient handling systems. This is to allow stock-keepers to routinely manage and treat the animals, and make sure that they are quietly and firmly handled.

Further information is available on “Understanding Flight Zone and Point of Balance for Low Stress Handling of Cattle, Sheep, and Pigs” at www.grandin.com/behaviour/principles/flight.zone.html

All stock handlers should be aware of their own safety as handling pigs can cause a variety of manual injuries, ranging from strains and sprains through to broken bones.

Reducing the risk of manual handling injuries includes attention to posture, correct lifting techniques and maintaining fitness. All stock-keepers should walk through all pig handling areas and look for hazards, and make any necessary changes to improve safety. Remember inexperienced workers are at a greater risk of injury, so make sure they are thoroughly trained.

The HSE website provides essential information and guidance on health and safety in agriculture - <http://farmsafe.hseni.gov.uk/>



Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 9 - The freedom of movement of animals, having regard to their species and in accordance with good practice and scientific knowledge, shall not be restricted in such a way as to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury.

Schedule 1, paragraph 30 - A person shall not apply an electrical current to any animal for the purpose of immobilisation.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 3 - A person shall not tether or cause to be tethered any pig except while it is undergoing any examination, test, treatment or operation carried out for any veterinary purpose.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 4 (1) - Where tethers are used in accordance with paragraph 3, they shall not cause injury to the pigs and shall be inspected regularly and adjusted as necessary to ensure a comfortable fit.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 4 (2) - Each tether shall be of sufficient length to allow the pigs to move as stipulated in paragraph 5 (2)(a) and (e) and the design shall be such as to avoid, as far as possible, any risk of strangulation, pain or injury.

2.3 Transport

Facilities should be available on-farm to load and unload pigs onto and from a vehicle, with as little stress as possible. Stock-keepers should know how to handle animals during loading and unloading, (see Section 2.2 Animal Handling).

All transporters of animals must meet these general conditions for transport:

- No one shall transport animals, or cause them to be transported, in a way likely to cause them injury or undue suffering.
- Journey times are kept to a minimum.
- The animals are fit to transport.
- Those handling animals have been trained and are competent.
- The vehicle and its loading and unloading facilities are designed, constructed and maintained to avoid injury and suffering and to ensure the safety of the animals.
- Water, feed and opportunity to rest are made available to the animals as appropriate, and sufficient floor space and height is available in the transport.
- For non-export journeys, documentation is provided which shows the following: origin and ownership of animals; place of departure and destination; date and time of departure and expected duration of journey (usually referred to as an Animal Transport Certificate).

If you transport animals you should make sure that you know the rules and procedures that affect you. There are a number of specific points that anyone transporting pigs needs to take account of. These are summarised in a DEFRA leaflet at www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/04/18/pb12544d-pigs/

In order to transport pigs on journeys of more than 65km (approximately 40 miles) transporters based in Northern Ireland must hold a transporter authorisation issued by DARD and a certificate of competence. Additional requirements apply for journeys lasting more than 8 hours.

Further details can be obtained at www.dardni.gov.uk/animal-welfare-welfare-of-animals-during-transport or by contacting DARD Direct Dungannon Tel: 028 8775 4832

2.4 Fitness to Transport

If there is any doubt about an animal's fitness to transport veterinary advice must be sought before the animal is loaded onto the transport.

Pigs are not normally considered fit to transport if they:

- are unable to move independently without pain or to walk unassisted;
- have a severe open wound, or prolapse;
- are heavily pregnant (past 90% gestation); or
- have given birth within the previous seven days.

Such animals may however be transported for up to 50 km (e.g. between or within farm premises) if the journey is for the purposes of improving conditions of birth and this does not cause unnecessary pain or suffering.

Piglets are not normally considered fit to transport if:

- their navel has not completely healed; or
- the journey is more than 100 km and they are less than three weeks old.

Weak, sick or injured pigs may be transported if the transport will not cause unnecessary suffering or ill treatment to the animals, and:

- they are only slightly injured or ill and transport would not cause additional suffering; and/or
- they are transported under veterinary supervision for or following veterinary treatment or diagnosis.



Legislative Requirements

The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (as amended) makes for the administration and enforcement of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97.

Article 3 of the Council Regulation states -

General conditions for the transport of animals

No person shall transport animals or cause animals to be transported in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to them.

In addition, the following conditions shall be complied with:

- (a) all necessary arrangements have been made in advance to minimise the length of the journey and meet animals' needs during the journey;
- (b) the animals are fit for the journey;
- (c) the means of transport are designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to avoid injury and suffering and ensure the safety of the animals;
- (d) the loading and unloading facilities are adequately designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to avoid injury and suffering and ensure the safety of the animals;
- (e) the personnel handling animals are trained or competent as appropriate for this purpose and carry out their tasks without using violence or any method likely to cause unnecessary fear, injury or suffering;
- (f) the transport is carried out without delay to the place of destination and the welfare conditions of the animals are regularly checked and appropriately maintained;
- (g) sufficient floor area and height is provided for the animals, appropriate to their size and the intended journey;
- (h) water, feed and rest are offered to the animals at suitable intervals and are appropriate in quality and quantity to their species and size.

2.5 Identification

Permanent identification of pigs by, for example, ear tagging, slap marking, ear tattooing, should be carried out only by a trained and competent operator following the manufacturers instructions, using properly maintained instruments and maintaining hygienic conditions. Breeding pigs must be identified by an ear tag, which should be of suitable design and size for use in pigs. Slap marking is an acceptable method of identification for slaughter pigs. The use of excessive force when slap marking pigs should be avoided as pigs can be injured by the slap marker. Young pigs with a weight of 20 kg can be slap marked if a specialised hammer for the size of pig is used. Ear tattoos are best applied in the first three weeks of life and good hygiene is essential to prevent infection.

When ear tagging or ear tattooing, the animals must be properly restrained. Take care to position and insert tags correctly, avoiding main blood vessels and ridges of cartilage.

If aerosols or paints are used for temporary marking, make sure only non-toxic substances are used.

Further information on pig identification can be obtained from the DARD website at www.dardni.gov.uk/pigs-irm or by contacting your DARD Direct Office - See Appendix B.

3.0 Health

3.1 General

Maintenance of good health is the most basic requirement affecting the welfare of the pig. Measures to protect health include good hygiene, good husbandry and effective ventilation. Vaccinations may be appropriate for certain diseases. Stock-keepers should ensure that only authorised veterinary medicinal products, including vaccines, are used. Analysing the meat inspection report from the abattoir could help determine the health status of the herd.

Stock-keepers should draw up a written health and welfare plan with the herd's veterinary surgeon and, where necessary, other technical advisers which should be reviewed and updated at least once a year. This plan should set out health and husbandry activities that cover the cycle of production, and include strategies to treat or limit existing disease problems. The plan should include enough records for stock-keepers to assess the basic output of the herd.

A written health and welfare plan should also, as a minimum, look at:

- biosecurity arrangements on farm and during transport;
- purchased stock procedures;
- any specific disease programmes, such as salmonella, erysipelas, E. coli, mycoplasma and parvo virus;
- vaccination policy and timing;
- isolation procedures;
- mixing and grouping of pigs;
- external and internal parasite control;
- lameness monitoring and foot care;
- routine procedures, such as ear tagging;
- prevention, monitoring and control of vices such as tail biting;
- vermin control; and
- euthanasia procedures.



In terms of individual animal management, as part of the health and welfare plan, you should note specific cases of relevant pig diseases e.g. MMA and pre-weaning scour, and the relevant treatment given.

The health and welfare plan should make sure that animals get any necessary medical treatment at the correct time and in the correct dose.

3.2 Inspection

The health and welfare of animals depends on them being regularly inspected. Adequate lighting must be available to enable thorough inspection of the stock. All stock-keepers should be familiar with the normal behaviour of pigs. Badly managed and unhealthy pigs will not thrive, and it is essential that stock-keepers watch for signs of distress, disease or aggression towards an animal by other pigs in the group. To do this, it is important that stock-keepers have enough time to:

- inspect the stock;
- check equipment; and
- take action to deal with any problem.

The stock-keeper should always be looking out for signs of ill health in pigs, which include:

- separation from the group;
- listlessness;
- poor appetite;
- vomiting;
- constipation;
- diarrhoea;
- discoloration or blistering of the skin;
- loss of body condition;
- shivering;
- sneezing;
- rapid or irregular breathing;
- persistent coughing or panting;
- swollen navel, udder or joints;
- lameness (inspection of the feet and legs is particularly important); and
- lack of co-ordination.

Stock-keepers should be able to anticipate problems or recognise them in their earliest stages, and, in many cases, they should be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. Always consider the possibility that the pigs may be affected by a notifiable disease. An up-to-date list of Notifiable Diseases relevant to Northern Ireland can be found at the following site - www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications-ahw-notifiable-diseases.htm

3.3 Biosecurity

Stock-keepers who take proper precautions when moving within the farm or when moving animals and equipment, can greatly reduce the chance of spreading disease.

Biosecurity is improved by:

- good management and husbandry practices;
- good hygiene;
- good vermin control; and
- effective disease control systems such as vaccination and worming programmes.

Biosecurity results in:

- reduced stress in the herd;
- farm units being more secure from the introduction of new infectious diseases; and
- the spread of any diseases on the unit itself being kept to a minimum.

Incoming stock presents the greatest risk to the health of the herd as regards infectious disease. Stock-keepers should ask the vendor to provide them with information on the health status of the herd and routine vaccination and other treatments (e.g. worming) or disease prevention methods. Stock-keepers should have isolation facilities on the pig holding so that they can isolate and observe/test incoming stock for a suitable period when they arrive, before they join the rest of the herd.

Only essential visitors should be allowed onto the unit and they should follow disinfection procedures and wear unit clothing and footwear. A visitor book should be provided and visitors asked to sign to say they have not been near other pigs or livestock for an agreed period, as stipulated in the herd health and welfare plan. If possible or where possible a system should be provided to alert staff of visitors at the gate.

Loading facilities and, where possible, feed bins should be sited at the unit perimeter. Vehicles, which visit other pig units, should be kept off the unit wherever possible, but where entry is essential, wheels and footwear must be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected.

A programme of pest and vermin control should be in place. Every effort should be made to bird proof the housing. Domestic pets, feral cats and other wild animals should be discouraged from entering the farm and should not, under any circumstances, be in pig houses, or any building housing livestock.

It is not possible to prevent all airborne infections from entering a unit but when planning new units these should be sited as far as is practicable from other pig units as this will reduce the risk of spread of airborne infectious diseases. More information is available in



the DARD publication 'Biosecurity Code for Northern Ireland Farms' www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/biosecurity-Code-booklet.htm

3.4 Condition Scoring

Body condition scoring can contribute greatly to good husbandry and help avoid costly welfare problems. Condition scoring is an easy technique to learn. Basically, it means that stock-keepers can quickly assess the body reserves (i.e. fat) of individual animals. The technique will be of benefit if it is used as a routine management tool to check that sows are in the target body condition for the stages of the breeding cycle. This will be particularly useful:

- during pregnancy; and
- at weaning.

Feeding should be adjusted as necessary for animals that have become too fat or too thin. More information is available in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) booklet "Condition scoring of Pigs" <http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/resources/000/250/231/PB3480.pdf>

3.5 Lameness

Lameness in any animal is usually a sign that they are in pain. Lameness in pigs is a sign of ill health and discomfort. It clearly affects an animal's welfare, as well as its performance and production. If a significant percentage of the pigs have severe lameness, this is a sign of disease or poor overall welfare standards within the herd. In these circumstances, urgent veterinary advice should be sought. More information is available in Defra's booklet "Lameness in Pigs" <http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=20004&id=20005>

If lame pigs do not respond to treatment, stock-keepers should call a veterinary surgeon immediately. Lameness can have a number of causes and early and accurate diagnosis of the specific type of lameness affecting the herd will enable rapid and appropriate action to be taken.

If a lame animal does not respond to the veterinary surgeon's treatment, stock-keepers should have it culled rather than leave it to suffer. If lame animals cannot be transported without causing them more pain, they should be humanely slaughtered on the farm (see section 3.11). Also, stock-keepers must not transport any pig off-farm that cannot stand up unaided or cannot bear its weight on all four legs when standing or walking (see section 2.5).

3.6 External Parasites

Stock-keepers should control diseases caused by external parasites - especially where the animal's skin is irritated and it is rubbing the area - with the appropriate parasiticides. Animals should be treated for parasites in accordance with veterinary advice and ensure that control and treatment regimes form part of the health and welfare plan.

3.7 Internal Parasites

Stock-keepers should control internal parasites by using effective anthelmintics (drugs to treat parasites) or vaccines. As part of the herd health and welfare plan, it should be ensured that treatment is based on the life cycle of the particular parasites being tackled. Animals should be treated for parasites in accordance with veterinary advice. Organic producers in particular should seek veterinary advice on this aspect of their herd health and welfare plan.

3.8 Equipment for Vaccination and Treatment

Stock-keepers must make sure that all the equipment used for vaccinating and treating the animals is in good working order. Stock-keepers should regularly clean and sterilise any equipment used for injections, to avoid infections and abscesses and, ideally, use disposable needles. Any dangerous objects should be disposed of in accordance with the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland requirements for the disposal of pharmaceutical and sharps waste. http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/hazardous_waste_2005_online.pdf

3.9 Notifiable Diseases

Stock-keepers should be able to anticipate problems or recognise them in their earliest stages. In many cases, they should be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. The possibility that pigs may be affected by a notifiable disease should always be considered. If stock-keepers suspect that any animal is suffering from a notifiable disease, they have a legal duty to notify a local DARD Direct Office. Contact details can be found at Appendix B.

An up-to-date list of Notifiable Diseases relevant to Northern Ireland can be found at the following site - www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-animal-health/publications-ahw-notifiable-diseases.htm

3.10 Sick and Injured Animals

Stock-keepers should take action immediately if any pigs are injured or appear ill or distressed. It is important to include the possibility of notifiable diseases. If in any doubt about the cause of the ill health or the most effective treatment consult a veterinary



surgeon without delay. Likewise, if an animal being treated does not respond to treatment, a veterinary surgeon's advice is required.

Health and welfare plans should specify a procedure for isolating and caring for sick or injured animals. Hospital pens should be an integral part of any pig unit and should be available for each category of pig on the unit. It is important that these pens are far enough away from remaining stock that they are effective as isolation facilities and easily reached so that stock-keepers can regularly check on the animal. When moving sick or injured pigs to the hospital pens, it should be ensured that unnecessary suffering does not occur. In these hospital pens, stock-keepers should make sure that drinking water is freely available, and that there are feeding facilities. Particular care is needed where recumbent animals are isolated to ensure that there is easy access to water and feed and that the animals are eating and drinking.

Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 5 - Any animals which appear to be ill or injured shall be cared for appropriately without delay, and where they do not respond to such care, veterinary advice shall be maintained as soon as possible.

Schedule 1, paragraph 6 - Where necessary, sick or injured animals shall be isolated in suitable accommodation with, where appropriate, dry comfortable bedding.

3.11 Humane Slaughter

If an unfit animal does not respond to treatment, it should be humanely killed on-farm (culled). Herd keepers must draw up and follow Standard Operating Procedures to ensure that animals are spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during killing operations. Standard Operating Procedures are written instructions on how to carry out tasks and should:

- take into account manufacturer's instructions for use of equipment;
- define key parameters for stunning animals (for example, position of shooting);
- include checks that animals have been effectively stunned and remain unconscious until death;
- specify what to do if an animal is not properly stunned, and
- be made available to the Department when requested.

Culling a diseased or injured animal on-farm does not usually require a formal qualification but the animal should be humanely destroyed by someone who is suitably trained and competent both in killing methods and the use of the equipment.

Any animals suffering from painful and incurable conditions should be culled as soon as possible.

Some permitted methods for killing pigs which may be used on-farm are:

- Captive bolt, followed as quickly as possible by a procedure ensuring death such as bleeding, pithing, electrocution or prolonged exposure to anoxia;
- Free bullet;
- Percussive blow to the head (limited to pigs up to 5 kg); or
- Lethal injection (should be administered by a veterinary surgeon).

If animals are killed on-farm, the operation must be carried out in accordance with current welfare of animals at time of killing legislation.

For further details follow the link to Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013: www.legislation.gov.uk/title/welfare%20of%20animals?sort=type

Fallen animals must be disposed of by a suitable method. The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011(as amended) bans the on-farm burial or open burning of animal carcasses in Northern Ireland. Follow link for legislation www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2011/124/contents/made

3.12 Medicine and Record Keeping

Only authorised animal medicines should be bought and used. Full records of all the medicines, including vaccine, bought must be kept, including where it was bought. Also, records must be kept for at least three years of:

- the date the animals were treated;
- the identity and quantity of the medicine used; and
- which animal or group of animals were treated.

Withdrawal periods for any medicines used should be observed i.e. the period between the end of treatment and the slaughter of the animal. Food-producing animals should not be given any restricted substances (footnote) unless given in line with any permitted exceptions*.

In addition to the legal requirements under the Welfare of Animals Regulations (NI) 2012 for retaining medicine records you should note that additional requirements are outlined in the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Medicines records must be kept for food producing animals. All records and proof of purchase must be kept for at least five years following

**Restricted substances” means, thyrostatic substances, stilbenes, stilbene derivatives, their salts and esters, oestradiol 17_ and its ester like derivatives and substances having oestrogenic, androgenic or gestagenic action and betaagonists.*



the administration or disposal of the product, even if the animals concerned have been slaughtered or have died during that period.

More information can be found in the “Code of Practice on responsible use of animal medicines on the farm” - <http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RUCOP.pdf> and further information and templates can be found on the DARD website at www.dardni.gov.uk/animal-medicines-and-residues-vet-medicine-record

All stock-keepers should keep a record of the number of dead animals found on each inspection of animals. This information should be retained for three years. All pigs should be inspected at least once a day, to check that they are in a state of wellbeing.

Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 7 - A record shall be maintained of -

- (a) any medicinal treatment given to animals; and
- (b) the number of mortalities found on each inspection of animals carried out in accordance with any of the following provisions -
 - (iv) in the case of pigs, paragraph 2 of part 2 of Schedule 8.

Schedule 8, paragraph 2 of part 2 - A person responsible for pigs shall ensure that all pigs are inspected at least once a day to check that they are in a state of well-being.

Schedule 1, paragraph 8 - The record referred to shall be retained for a period of at least three years from the date on which the medicinal treatment was given, or the date of the inspection, as the case may be, and shall be available to an inspector upon request.

4.0 Accommodation

4.1 General

Stock-keepers should seek appropriate welfare advice when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified. Some specialised buildings use complex mechanical and electrical equipment which require additional technical and management skills and training may be required to ensure that husbandry and welfare requirements are met.

The internal surfaces of housing and pens should be made of materials that can be easily cleaned and disinfected regularly, and easily replaced when necessary. If stock-keepers are going to treat these surfaces, paints or wood preservatives that are safe for animals must be used.

Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 11 - Materials used for the construction of accommodation, and in particular for the construction of pens, cages, stalls and equipment with which the animals may come into contact, shall not be harmful to them and shall be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Schedule 1, paragraph 12 - Accommodation and fittings for securing animals shall be constructed and maintained so that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury to them.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 5 (1) - A pig shall be free to turn round without difficulty at all times.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 5 (2) - The accommodation used for pigs shall be constructed in such a way as to allow each pig to -

- (a) stand up, lie down and rest without difficulty;
- (b) have a clean, comfortable and adequately drained place in which it can rest;
- (c) see other pigs, except -
 - (i) where the pig is isolated for veterinary reasons; or
 - (ii) in the week before the expected farrowing time and during farrowing, when sows and gilts may be kept out of sight of other pigs;
- (d) maintain a comfortable temperature; and
- (e) have enough space to allow it and all the other animals in the accommodation to lie down at the same time.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (1) - The dimensions of any stall or pen used for holding individual pigs shall be such that the internal area is not less than the square of the length of the pig, and no internal side is less than 75% of the length of the pig, the length of the pig in each case being measured from the tip of its snout to the base of its tail while it is standing with its back straight.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (2) - Sub-paragraph (1) shall not apply to a female pig for the period starting seven days before the predicted day of her farrowing and ending on the day on which the weaning of her piglets (including any piglets fostered by her) is complete.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (3) - Sub-paragraph (1) does not apply to a pig held in a stall or pen -

- (a) while it is undergoing any examination, test, treatment or operation carried out for veterinary purposes;
- (b) for the purposes of service, artificial insemination or collection of semen;
- (c) while it is fed on any particular occasion;

- (d) for the purposes of marking, washing or weighing it;
- (e) while its accommodation is being cleaned; or
- (f) while it is awaiting loading for transportation, provided that the period during which it is so kept is not longer than necessary for the purpose in question.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (4) - Sub-paragraph (1) does not apply to a pig held in a stall or pen which the pig can enter or leave at will, provided that the stall or pen is entered from a stall or pen in which the pig is kept without contravention of this paragraph.

4.2 Floors

Good floor design and adequate maintenance is essential. Poorly constructed floors, slats that are not properly matched to the weight/size of pig and surfaces that are worn and/or damaged, can cause injury to the feet and legs of pigs. Excessive gaps should be avoided as they can trap the feet/claws and may cause physical damage. Damaged floors must be repaired immediately or stock removed from the house until the repair work has been carried out.

The lying area should always be kept dry and pen floors, including the dunging area, should be drained effectively. Where bedding is provided, this must be clean and dry, regularly topped up or changed, and not detrimental to the health of the pigs.

Legislative Requirements

Table 1 - Slat width and gap openings as required by the Pig Welfare Directive where concrete slatted floors are used for pigs kept in groups.

Type	Definition	Pig Welfare Directive – Maximum Gap	Permitted Gap Tolerance Levels	Pig Welfare Directive – Minimum Slat Widths
Piglet	Birth to weaning	11 mm	No tolerance	50 mm
Weaner	Weaning to ten weeks	14 mm	+2 mm	50 mm
Rearer (Finisher)	From 10 weeks to slaughter or service	18 mm	+3 mm	80 mm
Gilt	From ten weeks to slaughter or service	20 mm	+3 mm	80 mm
Sow	Female pig after first farrowing	20 mm	+3 mm	80 mm
Boar	Male pig after puberty intended for breeding	20 mm	+3 mm	80 mm

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 4 - Where any animals (other than poultry) are kept in a building they shall be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area which is well drained or well maintained with dry bedding.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 10 - Where bedding is provided, this shall be clean, dry and not harmful to the pigs.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 11 - Where pigs are kept in a building, floors shall -

- (a) be smooth but not slippery;
- (b) be designed, constructed and maintained so as not to cause injury or suffering to pigs standing or lying on them;
- (c) be suitable for the size and weight of the pigs; and
- (d) where no litter is provided, form a rigid, even and stable surface.

4.3 Ventilation and Temperature

Ventilation is the process of changing or replacing air with the aim of improving the air quality within a building by increasing oxygen levels and lowering levels of moisture, ammonia and airborne bacteria thus helping to prevent respiratory diseases in animals.

All new buildings should be designed with the animals' comfort in mind, and with the aim of preventing respiratory diseases. The buildings should provide enough ventilation throughout the year for the type, size and number of stock to be housed in them. In addition to meeting the ventilation requirements, the system should be designed to avoid draughts affecting the pigs' living space. It is essential that there are adequate air outlets in the building and that there is adequate inlet ventilation.

Effective ventilation is essential to the well-being of the stock as it provides fresh air, removes noxious gases and aids in controlling temperature. Excessive heat loss should be prevented either by insulation of the external walls, roof and the floor in the lying area, or by the provision of adequate bedding. Heat gain to buildings in hot conditions will be minimised by the insulation in the walls and roof.

Pigs have a very limited ability to sweat and are acutely susceptible to heat stress. Possible cooling methods, including blowing air over the pigs, providing water spray/misting systems or simply wetting floors with a hosepipe, can be used to ensure that pigs in buildings do not become overheated in hot weather. There should always be some dry lying area available as a matter of choice so that the pigs can move away from the cooler conditions.



Liveweight, group size, floor type, air speed and feed intake markedly affect temperature requirements and stock-keepers must take these factors into account when determining the minimum temperature appropriate in each case. Slatted floors and low feed levels generally increase temperature requirements whilst straw bedding, high feed levels and higher body weights decrease requirements. For most circumstances, an appropriate minimum temperature can be found within the range given below:

Category of Pig	Temperature	
	(°C)	(°F)
Sows	15 - 20	59 - 68
Suckling pigs in creeps	25 - 30	77 - 84
Weaned pigs (3 – 4 weeks)	27 - 32	81 - 90
Later weaned pigs (5 weeks +)	22 - 27	71 - 80
Finishing pigs	15 - 21	59 - 70

The stock-keeper should make efforts to prevent or reduce wide fluctuations in temperature within any 24-hour period. Wide fluctuations in the daily temperature regime can create stress that may trigger outbreaks of vice, such as tail biting, or disease, such as pneumonia. Stock-keepers should maintain a higher than normal level of vigilance at these times.

When pigs are moved to new accommodation the possibility of cold stress occurring as a result of sudden changes in the thermal environment should be reduced. This can be done by ensuring that the pen is dry, by the provision of bedding, such as straw, or by preheating the building.

When removing slurry from under slats, special care must be taken to avoid fouling the air with dangerous gases such as ammonia, which can kill both humans and animals. Buildings should be empty or very well ventilated during this procedure.

Further advice can be found at HSE Northern Ireland - <http://farmsafe.hseni.gov.uk/latest-news.htm?id=5285&working-safely-with-slurry>

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 13 - Air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative air humidity and gas concentrations shall be kept within limits which are not harmful to the animals.

Schedule 1, paragraph 20 - Where the health and well-being of the animals is dependent on an artificial ventilation system -

- (a) Provision shall be made for an appropriate back-up system to guarantee sufficient air renewal to preserve the health and well-being of the animals in the event of failure of the system; and
- (b) An alarm system (which will operate if the principal electricity supply to it has failed) shall be provided to give warning of any failure of the system.

Schedule 1, paragraph 21 - The back-up system referred to in paragraph 20 (a) shall be thoroughly inspected and the alarm system referred to in paragraph 20 (b) tested at least once every seven days in order to check that there is no defect in the system, and, if any defect is found at any time, it shall be rectified immediately.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 16 - Pigs shall not be kept in an environment which involves maintaining high temperatures and high humidity (known as the “sweatbox system”).

4.4 Lighting and Noise Levels

Stock-keepers should have enough fixed or portable lighting available at any time for animals to be inspected.

The siting of machinery such as feed milling units should be appropriate to minimise the noise impact on housed stock. Any bell or buzzer which is likely to occur intermittently, e.g. a visitor to the site, should be sufficiently loud to attract human attention but without causing undue alarm to the stock.



Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 3 - Where animals are kept in a building, adequate lighting (whether fixed or portable) shall be available to enable them to be thoroughly inspected at any time.

Schedule 1, paragraph 14 - Animals kept in buildings shall not be kept in permanent darkness.

Schedule 1, paragraph 15 - Where the natural light available in a building is insufficient to meet the physiological and ethological needs of any animals being kept in it, then appropriate artificial lighting shall be provided.

Schedule 1, paragraph 16 - Animals kept in buildings shall not be kept without an appropriate period of rest from artificial lighting.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 7 - Subject to paragraph 16 of Schedule 1, where pigs are kept in an artificially lit building then lighting with an intensity of at least 40 lux shall be provided for a minimum period of 8 hours per day.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 17 - Pigs shall not be exposed to constant or sudden noise.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 18 - Noise levels above 85dBA shall be avoided in that part of any building where pigs are kept.

4.5 Automated and Mechanical Equipment

All mains electrical equipment should meet relevant standards and be properly earthed, safeguarded from rodents and out of the pigs' reach.

All equipment, including feed hoppers, drinkers, ventilation equipment, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems, should be cleaned and inspected regularly and kept in good working order.

All automatic equipment used in intensive systems should be thoroughly inspected by the stock-keeper, or other competent person, not less than once each day to check that there are no defects. Any defect must be rectified immediately.

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 18 - All automated or mechanical equipment essential for the health and well being of the animals shall be inspected at least once a day to check that there is no defect in it and no parts of the equipment have become seriously worn.

Schedule 1, paragraph 19 - Where defects or worn parts in automated or mechanical equipment of the type specified in paragraph 18 are discovered, these shall be rectified immediately, or if this is impossible, appropriate steps shall be taken to safeguard the health and well being of the animals pending the rectification of such defects including the use of alternative methods of feeding and watering and methods of providing and maintaining a satisfactory environment.

4.6 Fire and Other Emergency Precautions

There should be plans in place to deal with emergencies on the farm, such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies. The owner should make sure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action.

It is important that the stock-keeper gets advice about design when building or modifying a building. Stock-keepers need to be able to release and evacuate livestock quickly if there is an emergency. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarms that can be heard and responded to at any time of day or night.

In case a 999 call has to be made ensure that:

- an emergency action plan is prominently displayed in all livestock buildings or staff office;
- each phone has fixed by it a notice giving instructions to the emergency services on how to reach the building; and
- the farm name is prominently displayed at the entrance.

The HSE website provides essential information and guidance in agriculture and practical guidance to help improve health and safety on the farm. It is relevant to everyone, whether an employer, employee or self-employed person. <http://farmsafe.hseni.gov.uk/>

More information is available in the Northern Ireland Fire safety booklet, “fire safety risk assessment, animal premises” <https://www.nifrs.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Animal-Premises.pdf> and the Defra booklet, “Farm Fires: protecting farm animal welfare” https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69362/pb9326-farm-fires.pdf



Expert advice on all fire precautions can be obtained from local fire officers in Fire Brigade Area Command Headquarters - www.nifrs.org/feedback.php

5.0 Feed, Water and Other Substances

All pigs need a balanced daily diet to maintain full health and vigour. Stock-keepers should plan any changes in the diet and introduce them gradually.

When introducing pigs to unaccustomed housing, ensure that the animals are able to find the feed and water points. When newly weaned pigs are moved to pens where water is provided through nipple drinkers unfamiliar to the piglets, it is good practice to provide alternative water sources for the first few days.

Where pigs are fed on a rationed feed level to control intake, stock-keepers should ensure that adequate trough space is provided to ensure that all pigs can receive their allocation. The following guidelines for trough space per pig apply:

Weight of Pig (kg)	Trough Space (cms)
5	10
10	13
15	15
35	20
60	23
90	28
120	30

Good hygiene is necessary for storage and feeding systems as moulds can develop in stale feed that can have a detrimental effect on pigs. Feed bins should be cleaned out regularly.

Several factors should be taken into consideration when looking at the provision of water to pigs:

- the total volume available;
- the flow rate (pigs will not spend a long time taking water);
- the method of provision e.g. the type of drinker; and
- its accessibility to all stock.

The following is a guide to minimum daily water requirements for various weights of pig:

Weight of Pig (kg)	Daily Requirement (litres)	Minimum Flow Rate through Nipple Drinkers (litres/min)
Newly weaned	1.0 – 1.5	0.3
Up to 20 kg	1.5 – 2.0	0.5 – 1.0
20 kg – 40 kg	2.0 – 5.0	1.0 – 1.5
Finishing pigs (up to 100 kg)	5.0 – 6.0	1.0 – 1.5
Sows and gilts – pre-service and in-pig	5.0 – 8.0	2.0
Sows and gilts – in lactation	15 – 30	2.0
Boars	5.0 – 8.0	2.0

Waste water and excessive flow rates can be detrimental, particularly for sows in farrowing accommodation and very young pigs.

Stock-keepers should carefully consider the height at which water nipples and bowls are placed. All pigs must be able to access the drinking point. This might require height adjustable, or several different drinkers at various heights when groups of pigs of a range of weights are housed together or when pigs are housed in a pen for a long period. It is recommended for bowl drinkers, that where pigs are fed on a rationed basis, that one bowl be used per 20 pigs as a minimum. For pigs fed ad libitum, it is recommended as a minimum, that one bowl be used per 30 pigs.

Where nipple drinkers are used, a drinking point should be available for each ten pigs on rationed feeding. On ad lib feeding, one nipple drinker should provide adequate supply for 15 pigs given sufficient flow rates.

Where trough systems are used, it is recommended that for pigs over 35kgs, they receive 30cms trough space per 25 pigs. Guidelines for other weights of pigs are as follows:

Weight of Pig (kg)	Trough Space Per Head (cm)
Up to 15	0.8
15 - 35	1.0

If a wet feeding system is used, pigs must have access to a separate fresh water supply.

Feed and water should not be completely withdrawn from sows which are being dried off.



Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 22 - Animals shall be fed a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species and which is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health, to satisfy their nutritional needs and promote a positive state of well-being.

Schedule 1, paragraph 23 - Animals shall not –

- (a) be provided with food or liquid in a manner which may cause unnecessary suffering or injury; or
- (b) be provided food or liquid containing any substance which may cause unnecessary suffering or injury.

Schedule 1, paragraph 24 - All animals shall have access to feed at intervals appropriate to their physiological needs (and, in case, at least once a day), except where a veterinary surgeon acting in the exercise of his profession otherwise directs.

Schedule 1, paragraph 25 - All animals shall have access to a suitable water supply and be provided with an adequate supply of fresh drinking water each day to be able to satisfy their fluid intake needs by other means.

Schedule 1, paragraph 26 - Feeding and watering equipment shall be designed, constructed, placed and maintained so that contamination of food and water and the harmful effects of competition between animals are minimised.

Schedule 1, paragraph 27 (1) - No other substance, with the exception of those given for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes or for the purpose of zootechnical treatment shall be administered to animals unless it has been demonstrated by scientific studies of animal welfare or established experience that the effect of that substance is not detrimental to the health or welfare of the animals.

Schedule 1, paragraph 27 (2) - “zootechnical treatment” has a meaning given Article 1(2)(C) of Council Directive 96/22/EEC(a) concerning the prohibition on the use in stock farming of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action and beta-agonists.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 13, (1) - All pigs shall be fed at least once a day.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 13, (2) - Where pigs are housed in a group and do not have continuous access to feed, or are not fed by an automatic feeding system feeding the animals individually, each pig shall have access to the food at the same time as the others in the feeding group.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 14 - All pigs over two weeks of age shall have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of fresh drinking water.

6.0 Management

6.1 General

All buildings, fields and paddocks should be kept clear of debris, such as wire, plastic and sharp objects that could injure the pigs or rip out their ear tags and damage their ears.

All practical measures should be taken to remove all pigs from areas that are in imminent danger of flooding.

Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 17 - Animals not kept in buildings shall, where necessary and possible, be given protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health and shall, at all times, have access to a well drained lying area.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 9, (1) - Housing, pens, equipment and utensils used for pigs shall be properly cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross-infection and the build-up of disease-carrying organisms.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 9, (2) - Faeces, urine and uneaten or spilt food shall be removed as often as necessary to minimise smell and avoid attracting flies or rodents.

6.2 Environmental Enrichment

Environmental enrichment provides pigs with a stimulus and outlet for natural exploratory and manipulation activities. Research shows that this leads to reduced levels of harmful social behaviour, such as tail biting. Suggested environmental enrichment material includes straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such.

It is important that sufficient enrichment is provided to stimulate and interest all the pigs in the pens. It is also important to change the material or alternate the materials available to maintain the pigs interest.

If you require further information BPEX has produced helpful practical guidance on manipulable materials which you can find on its website at: www.bpex.org.uk/articles/301028



Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 15 - To enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, all pigs shall have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such which does not adversely affect the health of the animals.

6.3 Permitted and Prohibited Procedures

There are different procedures that are allowed or not allowed to be carried out by lay persons on farmed animals. In this section a “lay person” is the same definition as that set out in Regulation 2 (1) Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, which is a person who has received instruction or who is otherwise experienced in the performance of that procedure. Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 sets out the procedures that are permitted to be carried out on animals by a lay person.

A prohibited procedure means a procedure which involves interference with the sensitive tissues or bone structure of an animal. A person commits an offence under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 if that person carries out a prohibited procedure on a protected animal for example, vasectomy, electro-ejaculation, and surgical procedures.

Legislative Requirement

The Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Regulation 4 (1) – (3) - A prohibited procedure may be carried out in an emergency for the purpose of saving life or relieving pain of a protected animal and must be done:

- in such a way as to minimize pain and suffering it causes;
- in hygienic conditions; and
- in accordance with best practice.

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A record shall be kept for three years detailing the circumstances and reasons for carrying out the emergency procedures.

Permitted procedures and any conditions that are attached to that procedure which may be performed by a lay person in relation to pigs are set out in The Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 - Schedule 2 -

- Ear tagging;
- Microchipping;
- Tattooing;
- Other methods of identification involving a prohibited procedure required by law and not restricted to being undertaken by a veterinary surgeon.
- Artificial insemination - Note: Stock-keepers should keep the sows in their groups until insemination, at which time they can be moved to an appropriate stall or pen and inseminated. Sows should be allowed to settle down in the stall or pen, and then exposed to a boar in order to encourage the standing reflex before artificial insemination takes place.

Sows should be left undisturbed, to encourage uterine contractions, for up to thirty minutes after artificial insemination (and natural service), but they should then rejoin their group in order to minimise bullying within the group hierarchy. When double insemination is used, sows may be penned separately until 30 minutes after the second insemination, but pens must allow the animal to turn around easily.

Semen collection and artificial insemination should only be carried out by a veterinary surgeon or by a trained, competent and experienced operator. Vasectomy or electro-ejaculation may only be carried out by a veterinary surgeon.

- Castration - Castration of pigs aged not more than seven days by a method not involving the tearing of tissues. Note: Stock-keepers should consider carefully whether castration is necessary.
- Nose ringing - The procedure shall only be carried out on an animal that is not kept continuously in an indoor husbandry system. Note: Nose ringing should be avoided wherever possible. It is usually carried out to deter excavation of the paddocks and damage to the cover vegetation through excessive rooting. Nose ringing can reduce the risk of environmental pollution where there is a risk of soil erosion and leaching of nutrients from faeces. Where it is necessary to nose ring pigs, it should only be carried out by a suitably trained and competent operator. After nose ringing each pig, all equipment should be cleaned and disinfected.
- Tail docking - The procedure shall only be carried out where measures to improve environmental conditions or management systems have first been taken to prevent



tail-biting, but there is still evidence to show that injury to pigs' tails by biting has occurred.

Tail docking of pigs aged not more than seven days may be carried out without an anaesthetic as long as there is quick and complete severance of the part of the tail to be removed.

Note: Tail biting and other vices, such as ear and flank biting, are associated with some form of stress. They can be triggered by a wide range or combination of factors, including: overstocking, feed deficiencies, incorrect temperature levels, fluctuating temperature levels, inadequate ventilation, draughts, high levels of dust and noxious gases (i.e. ammonia) and lack of environmental enrichment. Changes in external weather conditions can also sometimes trigger an outbreak.

If tail biting does occur, it can spread quickly through the pen and the degree of injury increases very quickly. Stock-keepers should ensure that affected pigs are moved to a hospital pen and treated without delay. If possible, the instigator should be identified and moved to a separate pen.

Routine tail docking is not permitted. Tail docking should only be used as a last resort after improvements to the pigs' environment and management have proved ineffectual.

As part of the herd health and welfare plan, stock-keepers should have a strategy for dealing with outbreaks of tail biting. Although much has been learnt from research and practical on-farm experience, it is not possible to produce a definitive solution for all cases. A thorough assessment and planned approach is therefore recommended to identify the particular cause of an outbreak on the unit and to find the appropriate solution to the problem.

- Quantify the problem: note the position of pens and numbers of pigs affected, check records of previous incidents.
- List possible causes: such as interruption or inadequate supply of feed or water, lack of environmental enrichment, inadequate ventilation, draughts, incorrect temperature levels, overstocking, competition at feeding, excessive light levels, elevated dust/noxious gas levels etc. Different causes may be found in different pens on the same unit.
- Modify health and welfare plan: having identified areas for improvement, in consultation with your veterinary surgeon and other technical advisers, modify the health and welfare plan to implement the necessary changes with a view to preventing future outbreaks of tail biting.

- Tooth reduction - The procedure shall only be carried out where measures to improve environmental conditions or management systems have first been taken to prevent tail-biting and other vices, but there is still evidence to show that injury to sows' teats or to other pigs' ears or tails by biting has occurred.

The procedure shall only be carried out on an animal that is aged not more than 7 days.

The procedure shall consist only of the uniform reduction of the corner teeth by -

- grinding; or
- clipping,

so as to leave an intact smooth surface.

Note: Routine clipping or grinding of teeth is not permitted. Tooth reduction to the upper and lower corner teeth ("eye" or canine teeth) of piglets should only be used as a last resort. The health and welfare plan should identify circumstances where tooth reduction may be necessary. These might include large litter size, cross fostering, gilts and poor milk let down.

Where tooth reduction is necessary, suitable sharp, clean clippers or an appropriate grinder should be used. All equipment used should be cleaned and disinfected between pigs. Teeth grinders are recommended as there is a reduced risk of shattering the teeth.

- Tusk trimming - The procedure shall only be carried out where there is evidence to show that it is necessary to prevent injury to other animals or for safety reasons. An anaesthetic shall be administered.

6.4 Prevention of Fighting

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 8, (1) - If pigs are kept together, measures shall be taken to prevent fighting which goes beyond normal behaviour.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 8, (2) - Pigs which show persistent aggression towards others or are victims of such aggression shall be kept separate from the group.



Section 2 – Specific Recommendations

7.0 Boars

Walls between pens should be high enough to prevent boars climbing and/or jumping into adjacent pens. Pens should be sited so that boars can see other pigs. Stock-keepers should not enter boar pens without a pig board and they must be able to escape easily from the pen if the boar becomes aggressive.

Boars are generally individually housed and need either plenty of bedding material or a closely controlled environmental temperature. Extremes of temperature can lead to temporary infertility and may affect a boar's willingness or ability to work satisfactorily.

Each adult boar must have at least six square metres of unobstructed floor space to live in. If the pen is used for natural service the floor area must be at least ten square metres, the whole floor area should be kept dry or sufficient bedding provided to give adequate grip during service. The use of small quantities of coarse sand on floors will reduce the risk of slipping.

All boars should have good and safe service conditions. Slatted floors and slippery conditions underfoot are not suitable for mating animals. As part of the health and welfare plan, stock-keepers should discuss with the herd's veterinary surgeon how to avoid injury to boars and sows through excessive mating activity.

Legislative Requirement

The Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 3, paragraph 19 - Boar pens shall be sited and constructed so as to allow the boar to turn round and to hear, see and smell other pigs, and shall contain clean resting areas.

Schedule 8, Part 3, paragraph 20 - The lying area for boars shall be dry and comfortable.

Schedule 8, Part 3, paragraph 21 - Subject to paragraph 22, the minimum unobstructed floor area for an adult boar shall be 6 m²

Schedule 8, Part 3, paragraph 22 - When boar pens are also used for natural service, the floor area shall be at least 10 m² and shall be free of any obstacles.

8.0 Farrowing Sows and Gilts

The feeding of sows and gilts should be managed so that they are in a suitable body condition (see Section 3.4 Condition Scoring) at the time of farrowing. A target score of 3 - 3.5 should be the aim at just prior to farrowing. The feeding regime should then be geared to minimise any loss in body condition during lactation.

Nesting material should be provided, whenever possible, particularly in the 24 hours prior to farrowing to satisfy the sow's need to nest-build and therefore minimise stress.

The environmental requirements of the sow and litter are considerably different. In an environmentally controlled farrowing house a heated creep area - up to 32°C - should be provided for the piglets. This can be by artificial heating, e.g. overhead infra-red lamps, a heat pad, underfloor heating or alternatively by providing a well-bedded lying area. The sow, however, has different environmental requirements. The temperature in the farrowing room as a whole should be around 18°C - 20°C. High temperatures for the sow can impair feed intake and her milking ability.

Where overhead lamps/heaters are used they should be securely fixed and should be protected from interference by the sow or piglets.

Farrowing accommodation should be sufficiently big enough to allow the sow to rise up and lie down again without difficulty. Stock-keepers should be experienced and competent in the techniques of farrowing and should pay particular attention to hygiene, especially at assisted farrowings.

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 23 - Pregnant gilts and sows shall, where necessary, be treated against external and internal parasites.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 24 - Before they are placed in farrowing crates, pregnant sows and gilts shall be thoroughly cleaned.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 25 - In the week before the expected farrowing time sows and gilts shall be given suitable nesting material in sufficient quantity unless it is not technically feasible because of the slurry system used.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 26 - During farrowing, an unobstructed area behind the sow or gilt shall be available for the ease of natural or assisted farrowing.



Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 27 - Farrowing pens where sows or gilts are kept loose shall have some means of protecting the piglets, such as farrowing rails.

9.0 Group Housing Sows and Gilts

Innate aggressiveness can present a severe problem where sows and gilts are kept in groups. Much depends on the temperament of individual animals. Adequate space is particularly important at the time of mixing sows so that the animals can escape from aggressors. First parity sows and sows that have lost body condition should be managed as separate groups. Stock-keepers should ensure that persistent bullying, which could lead to severe injury or deprivation of food, does not take place. Any animal suffering persistent bullying should be moved to different accommodation.

Feeding facilities in which animals can be fed individually and thereafter released are recommended. However, if sows are fed using a system that does not include some form of protection during feeding, such as floor feeding, then feed must be distributed widely and in such a way to ensure that all members of the group can obtain their allocation.

Breeding sows and gilts should be fed simultaneously wherever possible to avoid undue excitement. Some feeding systems have been designed to feed animals sequentially without interference from pen-mates. Stock-keepers need to pay special attention to the proper functioning of such equipment and that all members of the group can obtain their allocation.

The provision of bedding in loose housing systems for sows and gilts is strongly recommended.

Legislative Requirement

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 28 - Sows and gilts shall be kept in groups except during the period between seven days before the predicted day of farrowing and the day on which the weaning of piglets (including any piglets fostered) is complete.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 29 - The pen where the group is kept shall have sides greater than 2.8 metres in length, except when there are less than 6 individuals in the group, when the sides of the pen shall be no less than 2.4 metres in length.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 30 - The total unobstructed floor area available to each gilt after service and to each sow when gilts or sows or gilts and sows are kept in groups shall be at least 1.64 m² and 2.25 m² respectively. When these animals are kept in

groups of less than 6 individuals the unobstructed floor area shall be increased by 10%. When these animals are kept in groups of 40 or more individuals the unobstructed floor area may be decreased by 10%.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 31 - For gilts after service and pregnant sows a part of the area required in paragraph 30 equal to at least 0.95 m² per gilt and at least 1.3 m² per sow shall be of continuous solid floor of which a maximum of 15% is reserved for drainage opening.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 32 - Sows and gilts kept on holdings of fewer than 10 sows may be kept individually provided that their accommodation complies with the requirements of paragraphs 6 and 7.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (1) - The dimensions of any stall or pen used for holding individual pigs shall be such that the internal area is not less than the square of the length of the pig, and no internal side is less than 75% of the length of the pig, the length of the pig in each case being measured from the tip of its snout to the base of its tail while it is standing with its back straight.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (2) - Sub-paragraph (1) shall not apply to a female pig for the period starting seven days before the predicted day of her farrowing and ending on the day on which the weaning of her piglets (including any piglets fostered by her) is complete.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (3) - Sub-paragraph (1) does not apply to a pig held in a stall or pen-

- (a) while it is undergoing any examination, test, treatment or operation carried out for veterinary purposes;
- (b) for the purposes of service, artificial insemination or collection of semen;
- (c) while it is fed on any particular occasion;
- (d) for the purposes of marking, washing or weighing it;
- (e) while its accommodation is being cleaned; or
- (f) while it is awaiting loading for transportation, provided that the period during which it is so kept is not longer than necessary for the purpose in question.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 6 (4) - Sub-paragraph (1) does not apply to a pig held in a stall or pen which the pig can enter or leave at will, provided that the stall or pen is entered from a stall or pen in which the pig is kept without contravention of this paragraph.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 33 - In addition to the requirements of paragraph 13, sows and gilts shall be fed using a system which ensures that each individual can obtain sufficient food even when competitors for the food are present.

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 13, (1) - All pigs shall be fed at least once a day.



Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 13, (2) - Where pigs are housed in a group and do not have continuous access to feed, or are not fed by an automatic feeding system feeding the animals individually, each pig shall have access to the food at the same time as the others in the feeding group.

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 34 - All dry pregnant sows and gilts shall be given a sufficient quantity of bulky or high fibre food as well as high energy food to satisfy their hunger and need to chew.

10.0 Piglets

It is particularly important that stock-keepers watch piglets carefully for signs of diarrhoea or respiratory disease, such as coughing or rapid or laboured breathing, both of which can spread rapidly. If the piglets do not respond to treatment promptly or properly, veterinary advice should be sought.

Weaning must be managed to minimise any negative impact on the health and welfare of the sow and piglets. The earlier the weaning age the better must be the system of management and nutrition if welfare problems are to be avoided. Piglets should not be weaned from the sow at less than 28 days, although orphaned, sick and surplus piglets requiring special attention are obvious exceptions. The all-in-all-out system of managing pig housing maximises opportunities to prevent disease introduction or spread on a unit. Where these conditions are met, weaning may occur up to seven days earlier. At weaning, piglets should be moved into a specialised house which has previously been completely emptied of pigs, cleaned and disinfected.

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 5, paragraph 35 - Piglets shall, where necessary, be provided with a source of heat and a solid, dry and comfortable lying area away from the sow where all of them can rest at the same time.

Schedule 8, Part 5, paragraph 36 - A part of the total floor where the piglets are kept and which is large enough to allow the animals to rest together at the same time shall be solid or covered with a mat or be littered with straw or any other suitable material.

Schedule 8, Part 5, paragraph 37 - Where a farrowing crate is used the piglets shall have sufficient space to be able to suckle without difficulty.

Schedule 8, Part 5, paragraph 38 - Subject to paragraph 39 piglets shall not be weaned from the sow at an age of less than 28 days unless the welfare or health of the sow or piglets would otherwise be adversely affected.

Schedule 8, Part 5, paragraph 39 - Piglets may be weaned up to 7 days earlier than the age referred to in paragraph 38 if they are moved into specialised housings which is -

- (a) emptied and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before the introduction of a new group; and
- (b) separate from housing where other sows are kept.

11.0 Weaners and Rearing Pigs

The unobstructed floor area available to each weaner or rearing pig is outlined in the Legislative Requirements section below. These are minimum requirements and the type of housing and its management may mean that greater space allowances are necessary. The total floor space should be adequate for sleeping, feeding and exercising. The lying area, excluding the dunging and exercise areas, should be of sufficient size to allow all the pigs to lie down on their sides at the same time.

The herd health and welfare plan should include a strategy for managing the mixing and establishment of groups of pigs. Plenty of space, sufficient environmental enrichment and using shower sprays/sprinklers can all help to minimise aggression at mixing.

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 6, paragraph 40 - As soon as possible after weaning, weaners and rearing pigs shall be kept in stable groups with as little mixing as possible.

Schedule 8, Part 6, paragraph 41 - If weaners and rearing pigs unfamiliar with one another have to be mixed-

- (a) this shall, if possible, be done before weaning or up to 1 week after weaning or otherwise when the pigs are as young as possible; and
- (b) they shall be provided with adequate opportunities to escape and hide from other pigs.

Schedule 8, Part 6, paragraph 42 - The use of tranquillising medication in order to facilitate mixing shall be limited to exceptional conditions and only after consultation with a veterinary surgeon.



Schedule 8, Part 6, paragraph 43 - If signs of severe fighting appear, the causes shall be immediately investigated and appropriate measures shall be taken.

Schedule 8, Part 6, paragraph 44 - The unobstructed floor area available to each weaner or rearing pig reared in a group shall be at least -

- (a) 0.15 m² for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is 10 kg or less;
- (b) 0.20 m² for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 10 kg but less than or equal to 20 kg;
- (c) 0.30 m² for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 20 kg but less than or equal to 30 kg;
- (d) 0.40 m² for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 30 kg but less than or equal to 50 kg;
- (e) 0.55 m² for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 50 kg but less than or equal to 85 kg;
- (f) 0.65 m² for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 85 kg but less than or equal to 110 kg; and
- (g) 1.00 m² for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 110 kg.

12.0 Pigs Kept in Outdoor Husbandry Systems

12.1 General

Sites for outdoor pig enterprises must be chosen carefully. Land prone to flooding, poorly drained sites, stony (especially flinty) soils and sites with heavy soils (especially in areas with high rainfall), are generally unsuitable for outdoor systems. Free-draining soils, in low rainfall areas, with low frost incidence are most suitable.

Field stocking densities must reflect the suitability of the site and the system of management. A guideline of 25 sows per hectare overall is reasonable for suitable sites. Stock-keepers may need to reduce stocking densities on less ideal sites or in extreme circumstances during periods of adverse weather. More information can be found in DEFRA's booklet, "Site suitability for Outdoor Pig Farming" <http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=25546&id=25547>

Stock selected for outdoor production must be suitable for outdoor conditions. Most breeding companies provide lines that have been developed for outdoor use.

The herd health and welfare plan should include a strategy for dealing with emergency situations such as, water provision in freezing conditions and feed provision to the site and to the paddocks in snow or severe wet weather.

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 1, paragraph 17 - Animals not kept in buildings shall, where necessary and possible, be given protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health and shall, at all times, have access to a well drained lying area.

12.2 Biosecurity

Stock-keepers who take proper precautions when moving within the farm or when moving animals and equipment, can greatly reduce the chance of spreading disease. Incoming replacement stock may also need to be acclimatised to outdoor conditions as they will often have been bred in indoor conditions. It is especially important to provide warm comfortable accommodation for these animals.

To prevent the build-up and transfer of disease organisms, arcs should be resited between batches of pigs and the straw bedding etc. should be removed. More information on biosecurity can be found in the DARD publication 'Biosecurity Code for Northern Ireland Farms' www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/biosecurity-Code-booklet.htm

12.3 Accommodation

All arcs and huts used should be liberally provided with bedding and have a warm, draught-free lying area. This is especially important for the sow and litter at farrowing and during the suckling period and for newly weaned pigs.

Stock-keepers should properly maintain arcs and huts, especially to ensure that damage through handling does not produce sharp edges that may injure the animals.

Adequate shelter must be provided to protect the animals from the cold and wet in winter. Arcs should be well fixed to the ground, particularly in cold windy conditions and should be sited so that the doorways can be adjusted to allow for changing weather circumstances. Wet conditions create greater welfare problems than the cold as moisture is easily carried into the arcs on feet and bodies, causing chilling in piglets, and provides the ideal environment for micro-organisms to flourish.



Adequate shelter must also be provided to protect the animals from sunny conditions in summer. Wallows should be provided for breeding stock to allow them to cool themselves and to produce mud which can prevent sunburn. More information can be found in DEFRA's booklet, 'Heat stress in pigs - solving the problem' <http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=23344&id=23348>

12.4 Feed and Water

Food should be distributed widely and evenly to minimise aggression between animals unless an alternative method is used to ensure even consumption.

Stock-keepers should carefully monitor the body condition of pigs during extremes of weather and adjust feed provision if necessary.

Arrangements should be in place to ensure the supply of water to all stock in all weathers. Particular attention is needed at times of freezing conditions.

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 14 - All pigs over two weeks of age shall have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of fresh drinking water.

12.5 Fences

Electric fencing should be designed, constructed, used and maintained properly, so that when the animals touch them they only feel slight discomfort. All power units for electric fences must be properly earthed to prevent short circuits or electricity being conducted anywhere it should not, e.g. gates and water troughs.

New breeding animals are unlikely to have been trained to electric fencing. Stock-keepers should have a training paddock with secure fencing, such as pig netting, outside the electric fencing to help the animals see the fencing and to ensure that they cannot escape from the unit.

Every effort should be made to protect pigs, particularly young piglets, from predation. Steps such as a predator control programme and possibly fox fencing should be considered.

12.6 Farrowing Sows and Piglets

In hot conditions lactating sows may be prompted to leave the arc to seek more comfortable conditions outside, effectively abandoning her litter. Farrowing arcs should be insulated and have provision for some degree of extra ventilation such as manual flaps.

Farrowing arcs should be sited on level ground to reduce the risk of overlying. Suitable restrainer boards should be used to prevent very young piglets from straying during the first few weeks during the post-farrowing period.

Legislative Requirements

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states at:

Schedule 8, Part 4, paragraph 27 - Farrowing pens where sows or gilts are kept loose shall have some means of protecting the piglets, such as farrowing rails.



Appendix A

Useful Information

For further DARD Animal Health and Welfare publications please visit the DARD website at: <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-animal-health.htm>

For general information visit www.dardni.gov.uk

DEFRA Publications:		
PB Number	Title	Hyperlink
12544d	Welfare of Animals During Transport: Advice for Transporters of Pigs.	www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/04/18/pb12544d-pigs/
3480	Condition scoring of Pigs.	http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/resources/000/250/231/PB3480.pdf
1148	Lameness in Pigs.	http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=20004&id=20005
9326	Farm Fires: Protecting Farm Animal Welfare.	www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/04/12/pb9326-farm-fires/
1147	Emergencies on Livestock Farms.	http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=12814&id=12815
4444	Site suitability for Outdoor Pig Farming.	http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=25546&id=25547
1316	Heat stress in pigs – solving the problem.	http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=23344&id=23348
<p>Copies of the above DEFRA publications can be viewed on Defra's website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/</p>		

Rural Support - offer a listening and signposting service for farmers and rural families in Northern Ireland, who may need help with bureaucracy, family circumstances, health and finances. They can help you source information and advice about farm payments, personal and business finance and debt, social security benefits, support for carers, mental health assistance and many other issues. If you're feeling worried or stressed and would like to talk to someone in confidence, trained volunteers are ready to help. **All calls are confidential and the helpline operates from 8am to 11pm, seven days a week (voicemail and support options available at all other times).** - 0845 606 7 607 - <http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk/>

Other Useful Sites	
DARD rules for the registration of pig holdings and the identification and movement of pigs.	www.dardni.gov.uk/pigs-irm
DARD publication 'Biosecurity Code for Northern Ireland Farms'.	www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/biosecurity-Code-booklet.htm
Understanding Flight Zone and Point of Balance for Low Stress Handling of Cattle, Sheep, and Pigs.	www.grandin.com/behaviour/principles/flight.zone.html
List of Notifiable Diseases relevant to Northern Ireland.	www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications-ahw-notifiable-diseases.htm
Welfare of Animals at Time of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/title/welfare%20of%20animals%20?sort=type
Animal By-Products (Enforcement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 (as amended).	www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2011/124/contents/made
The Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2012/153/contents/made
Code of Practice on responsible use of animal medicines on the farm.	http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RUCOP.pdf
DARD - Rural NI Pig section, here you will find you can find a wealth of information on all the latest developments within the pig industry.	www.dardni.gov.uk/ruralni/index/livestock/pigs_main.htm



Other Useful Sites

BPEX - practical guidance on manipulable materials.

www.bpex.org.uk/articles/301028

HSE website provides essential information and guidance on health and safety in agriculture.

<http://farmsafe.hseni.gov.uk/>

Expert advice on all fire precautions can be obtained from local fire officers in Fire Brigade Area Command Headquarters.

www.nifrs.org/feedback.php

Appendix B

Contact details for Codes of Practice at DARD Direct Offices

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Armagh
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Town Parks
Ballymena
BT43 6HY
Tel: 0300 200 7840
Fax: 028 2566 2853

COLERAINE

Crown Buildings
Artillery Road
Millburn
Coleraine
BT52 2AJ
Tel: 0300 200 7840
Fax: 028 7034 1135

DOWNPATRICK

Rathkeltair House
Market Street
Demesne of Down Acre
Downpatrick
BT30 6LZ
Tel: 0300 200 7840
Fax: 028 4461 8226

DUNGANNON

Crown Buildings
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Drumcoo
Dungannon
BT70 1HR
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Fax: 028 8775 4888

ENNISKILLEN

Inishkeen House
Killyhevlin Industrial Estate
Killyhevlin
Enniskillen
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Fax: 028 6634 3043

LONDONDERRY

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Fax: 028 7137 2489

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Moneymore Road
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Mallusk
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Pigs Updated 2014

ISBN: 978-1-84807-467-5



Department of
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