European Commission

Monitoring and evaluation of transported pigs

‘How do I observe the animals during transport and at stops?’

The main points to be aware during transport, stops and upon arrival:

1

Are the animals calm and quiet?
Animals should lie down and not vocalize, cry and/or fight

2

Observe the position of the pigs
Are they standing, lying? When hot, pigs will use all the space. When cold, animals are huddling

3

During journey breaks, do you hear the animals coughing?

4

Are the pigs panting?
In hot weather, this is a clear indicator of the need to adjust the ventilation

5

Are the animals clean during the journey?
This includes presence of blood, frothing at the mouth, discharge

6

Fitness of pigs during transport
Are all pigs fit for further transport?
See ‘*Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Pigs*’

Quick check of the truck equipment at each stop

CHECKLIST

- Regulation of fans and lateral shutters
- Watering system
- Temperature monitoring in the cabin and probe in the truck
- Alarms
- Video camera, if available

‘What action should I take?’

Adverse effects	Observations	Action
Hunger	*Weight loss*	Pigs should not be fed on the truck, as they will suffer motion sickness. Either wait until final destination or unload pigs for 24 hours to feed them. Control the watering devices
Dehydration	*Thirst, wrinkled skin, congested mucous membranes*	Provide fresh, not too cold water. Pigs must have permanent access to water during the journey
Lack of comfort around resting	Dirty pigs, animals stand all the time, no animals lay down	• Add bedding • Adjust the pen size according to the transported pigs • Adapt ventilation by regulating forced ventilation and / or inlet of lateral shutters
Poor ventilation	*Unusual hyperventilation of pigs with open mouth and quick respiratory frequency*	• Check the ventilation and the inside temperature • Provide sufficient ventilation to the pigs; open all lateral shutters and switch on forced ventilation if available • Avoid to stop the truck in an hot place (e.g. sunny place) • Sprinkling water can be required in very hot conditions
Heat stress	*Panting*	• Immediately open all lateral shutters and switch on mechanical ventilation if available • Spraying water can be required in very hot conditions
Cold stress	*Shivering, skin color*	• Reduce openings and control the temperature inside • Use more bedding material (e.g. sawdust) to increase insulation of the floor in contact with the pigs
Exhaustion	*Apathy, reluctance to move, prostration, collapse, mortality*	Consult a vet
Disease	*Prostration, collapse, mortality, nasal ocular discharge, abnormal respiration, diarrhoea, blood in faeces*	Consult a vet
Injury / pain	*Lameness, reluctance to move, abnormal body posture, skin lesions, swollen joints and feet*	• Consult a vet • Try to separate the injured pig or pigs, otherwise unload them at nearest point
Ease of movement	*Slipping and falling*	• Provide grip on the flooring of the truck, the ramp and / or the alley from, and towards the resting pen • Reduce ramp slope as much as possible • Provide clear and easy access for the truck to the loading quay • Handle pigs in groups and leave them sufficient time to move safely
Fear	*Vocalisation, turning away, reluctance to move*	• Calm handling • Groups of pigs should be kept stable, during loading • Check the direction of the light, when unloading
Isolation or mixing distress	*Skin lesions, fighting*	Avoid mixing unfamiliar pigs
Motion sickness	*Pigs are very stressful and can vomit and die during transport*	A fasting period before loading and transport is necessary, with a minimum of 6 – 12 hours before loading at the farm, but in any case adapted to the duration of the journey

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