SOP No: AT 022

SUBJECT: Pig handling and restraint

DATE ISSUED: 16.07.2014

POLICY: Minimum number of 2 operators required.
Demonstrator: Experience in the procedure.
Students: Understanding of pig handling principles.
Procedures should be clearly demonstrated before students work with pigs.

PRECAUTIONS: Ensure that all OH&S conditions on lifting are met.
Wear steel-capped rubber boots and appropriate sun protection as required.
Overalls, ear muffs or plugs.
Do not use electric prodders or hit animals.
Wash hands and exposed body parts thoroughly with soap and water after handling animals.
Sows with young piglets may become aggressive towards staff in their environment.
Do not attempt to work with piglets while within reach of the sow’s head. The sow may attack a handler who is “interfering with her piglets.
Weaners may startle easily so minimise movement and noise when working with them.
Be aware that pigs (young and adult) vocalise when they are handled. This does not necessarily indicate that they are distressed or in pain. Learn to distinguish between the calls of pigs. Ask your supervisor for advice if you are uncertain.
Do not restrain pigs for longer than is ethically approved.
Keep pens and laneways free of obstructions.

EQUIPMENT: Drafting boards

PROCEDURE:

1. Moving. When moving pigs, use drafting boards and or pig paddles to control pigs and protect operator. Pig boards must be held low in front of handler so pigs cannot see underneath – this encourages pigs to move ahead. Pigs must not be hit or kicked to encourage movement. Dogs, electric prodders and hitting with solid objects must not be used to move pigs.

2. Take extra care if floor surfaces are wet and slippery and allow pigs to walk calmly along the race.

3. Ensure laneways and passages are clear as this will encourage pigs to move forward.

4. Piglets - when handling piglets, restrain by grasping a hind leg above the hock, and then lift the animal by placing your other hand underneath the piglet at the thorax to support the body as you lift.
5. Larger piglets (weaners) may be caught by grasping a hind leg above the hock and raising this leg so that the piglet is standing on the other three legs. Restrain the animal by holding it under your free arm, and move your other hand under the thorax and abdomen to support the piglet's weight. Smaller weaners may be lifted and held in this way. If the animal is too large to lift completely off the ground, restrain it by holding it under your arm and lifting the rear of the animal slightly off the ground. Hold one foreleg if further restraint is required. If required to collect a blood sample, restrain pig on its back on the a flat surface with one person holding hind legs out straight, one person holding front legs flat towards pig's belly and another person holding the pig's head down with hand over lower jaw to hold mouth shut.

6. Medium pigs should be restrained with a snout rope. Alternatively, medium pigs may be restrained by standing astride them with one operator's leg on each shoulder of the pig. The pigs may be held for further restraint. This procedure may require three people." Note that three are needed only when something like blood sampling is done, and in most cases two would be enough.

7. Adult pigs are restrained using a snout snare around the upper jaw, caudal to the canines. If the pig struggles, the snare will tighten around the animal's nose and the animal will tend to sit down against the wall. The rope can then be tied to a secure post at the animal's head height or held by second person while first person collects blood etc. If necessary or appropriate, you can hold the pig against a wall by placing your knee into its flank.

8. Health inspection: With the animal restrained perform a physical examination by checking the eyes, ears, mouth, gums, feet, udder, genitalia, rectum and coat for any signs of external parasites. Inspect faeces.

On completion of procedure observe animal for signs of distress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

REVISED: 24.06.2009
15.05.2013

[Signature]
CHAIR OF AEC

REFERENCES

1. [Link to website]
2. [Link to legislation]