

Biosecurity Practices for Swine Shows and Exhibitions - A Checklist

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Introduction

Comingling of pigs and equipment from different sources can often result in transmission of pathogens from one pig to another. The livestock exhibitor faces an inherent risk of disease transmission each time a novel person (visitor to farm, CEA on a project visit, veterinarian, etc.) comes into contact with that animal, or any time that the animal leaves the premises. Mitigating the risk of disease transmission at a show is the role of both the show management committee and the youth exhibitor. The following steps will aid in decreasing the risk of disease transmission during a swine show.

Prior to the Show:

Training the Show Committee

Conduct a 15-20 minute orientation of biosecurity practices for entire committee. Make sure everyone understands protocols. Encourage any volunteer who is not feeling well to refrain from helping until they are feeling better.

Encourage exhibitors to not bring sick pigs to the show

Include this encouragement in newsletters, premium books and other informational outlets concerning the show.

Develop protocol for pigs that appear ill during the show

If an exhibitor arrives at validation with pigs that appear ill for any reason, including, but not limited to: coughing or other respiratory illness, diarrhea, mange, etc. have a protocol developed to isolate the sick pigs from others.

Exhibit breeding animals prior to market animals

If both breeding and market swine are exhibited at the show, exhibit and remove the breeding animals before bringing market hogs onto the grounds. Removing shavings between groups is also recommended.

Consider a terminal show

The risk of transmission of a disease away from the show is greatly reduced if the animals do not return to the farm.

Provide education to exhibitors on biosecurity practices

See "Biosecurity Practices for Swine Exhibitors: A Checklist". Provide copies to exhibitors at validation. Include in clinics, newsletters, etc.

During the Show:

Require each pig to undergo health inspection by show veterinarian/staff prior to unloading

Animals that appear ill should not be allowed to enter facilities. A brief visual inspection by a veterinarian or trained show staff while in line prior to unloading may aid in identifying sick pigs. Protocol for these pigs should be developed prior to the show, and exhibitors made aware of the protocol before the show.

Require twice daily visual inspection (walk throughs) by show veterinarian/staff

A walk through the barn when animals are quiet may aid in identifying sick pigs. This could be done by veterinarians or trained show staff. Follow protocol developed for animals that appear ill during the show.

Require exhibitors to complete an affidavit stating that neither their family members nor their animals have exhibited flu-like symptoms in the past week

For examples, contact Jodi Sterle at j-sterle@tamu.edu.

Provide appropriate signage throughout barn

Consider wording such as: "NOTICE: Frequent handwashing is recommended in livestock areas", "ATTENTION Spectators and Guests: To protect the health of our pigs, please refrain from entering if you are not feeling well today" and "ATTENTION Spectators and Guests: To protect the health of our pigs, please refrain from touching our animals or entering their pens. Thank you!". National Pork Board has developed fliers and posters for consumers and exhibitor areas that can be reproduced from pdf files. Contact Jodi Sterle at j-sterle@tamu.edu for more information.

Provide hand washing stations, antibacterial gel

Provide an adequate supply of antibacterial hand washing gel along with signage.

Limit foot traffic in areas with direct contact to pigs

Blocking or partially blocking off alleyways to keep the general public on main alleys will reduce the risk of transmission. This should be done carefully, working with fire marshals and others to ensure overall safety of both animal and human movement through the barn.