
General Husbandry Recommendations for Pigs

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Feeding:

- **Types of food:**
 - Pigs should be fed a commercially made pig pellet which contains 16-20% protein and a variety of minerals when young.
 - Barastock Pig Pellets (Grower or Breeder)
 - <https://www.riverina.com.au/products/pig-grower-pellets-meal/>
 - Young, fast growing pigs require adequate amounts of calcium for optimal bone growth, protein for muscle development and minerals for organ function. If a pig is fed inadequate amounts of protein and calcium their growth may become stunted and lead to a multitude of health issues. We recommend feeding a "GROWER PIG PELLETT".
 - All-purpose stock pellets are acceptable alternative in the first 6 months of life; however, it is essential that these pellets **do not** contain Monensin. However, the excess calcium can cause issues with urolithiasis in both male and female pigs when fed long term.
 - **MYTH BUSTER:** Pig Grower pellets have less energy and fat in them than a general all-purpose pellet. **Pig pellets do not make pigs FAT! Over feeding pigs makes them fat.**
 - Lucerne or oaten chaff can be fed as a source of fibre.
 - Pigs can be fed a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit which have not been in contact with kitchen waste or meat. However, fruit is high in sugar so should be fed sparingly as it can be very fattening!
 - Grain can be fed as a small treat but not recommended for adult pigs
 - Pigs should never be fed table scraps or feed containing meat from other animals.
- **How much to feed:**
 - Pigs should be fed 2-3% of their bodyweight in pellets every day
 - We recommend splitting over two feeds AM & PM.
 - Chaff can be fed ad lib.
 - Fresh veg, fruit and grain can be used as a daily treat.
- **Water:**
 - Clean fresh water must always be available.
 - A large shallow dog bowl or tub is a suitable drinking source. Pigs cannot stretch their necks up very far so many buckets are too tall for them.

- Automatic watering systems with drinker tips are ideal for pigs and they quickly learn to use them.
- Pigs can drink 50ml water per Kg of their bodyweight per day and if they are deprived of water for any amount of time this can be fatal due to salt toxicity, particularly in hot weather.
- Always check water source is working daily. And avoid allowing water to leak and form muddy wallows.

Monitoring body condition and weight:

- **Regular weight checks:**
 - Monthly weight checks are a useful way to check that your pig is growing and healthy.
 - An up-to-date weight is required to guide feeding amounts.
 - Your local vet will have weight scales suitably sized for any pig and they can record the weight for you to keep track of growth or you can purchase a “pig weigh tape” from the local produce store or Shoof International (<https://www.farmshopaustralia.com/product/weight-tape-pig/>) that can be used to estimate body weight.
- **Body condition scoring:**
 - Your local vet can assess the body condition score of your pig to ensure that it is growing properly and not getting too fat!
 - The ideal body condition score for your pig is 2.5-3 (see attached charts). Pigs only have small legs so are not built for carrying a lot of extra weight as fat. So, keeping pet pigs slim is essential.

Housing:

- **Living area space:**
 - Boars/castrated males require a minimum living space of 7.5m².
 - Sows/gilts require a minimum living space of 2.8m²
 - Sows need to be kept separated from boars or you can expect piglets.
- **Shelter:**
 - Pigs require shelter from both inclement and hot weather. A hut or house which provides shade, cover from rain and wind protection will be ideal. It should be big enough for the pig to grow into and turn around in.
 - It is useful to have a door on the shelter with a top and bottom bolt to securely confine the pig in case a medical examination is required.
 - **Restraint:**
 - To allow us to work safely with your pig we will require a restraining area where we can safely administer treatments and sedation.
- **Bedding:**
 - Pigs enjoy making their own bed in deep straw or shavings but can also sleep on rubber matting or a slatted concrete floor.
 - Organic bedding should be changed and cleaned regularly.

- **Toys:**

- Pigs are highly intelligent creatures and like to be kept occupied. Hard large balls, large dog toys and treat food 'treasure hunts' are great fun for them.
- Ensure that toys selected are not easily broken into small pieces or can be ingested as this can lead to obstructions.

Health care:

- **Worming:**

- Pet pigs who live on concrete should be wormed annually.
- If they have access to a paddock or lawn, then pigs have a greater risk of becoming infected with internal parasites also called "worms".
 - We recommend submitting faeces every 2-3 months for assessment.
 - Most common parasite to affect pigs is the large roundworm (*Ascaris suum*) which is found in the small intestine.
 - Heavily infested pigs can suffer loss of appetite, vomiting and death.
 - In less extreme cases there is reduced appetite, poor feed efficiency and slow growth.
 - Whipworm (*Trichuris suis* and *T. trichuria*) are parasites that are found in the large intestine of your pet pig. This worm can cause weight loss, bloody diarrhoea, and sudden death.
- **Anthelmintics (worming products) often used to treat internal parasites in pigs include:**
 - Ivermectin (or similar) injection annually to treat for Ascarid worms (available from your vet).
 - Nilverm® Pig and Poultry Wormer is effective in pigs against sensitive strains of mature and immature Large Roundworms (*Ascaris suum*), Stomach Worm (*Hyostrogylus rubidus*), Nodule Worm (*Oesophagostomum dentatum*), Lung Worm (*Metastrongylus* spp.) and mature Kidney Worm (*Stephanurus dentatus*). This product is available at most produce stores and can be added to drinking water.

- **External Parasites (Ticks, Fleas and Lice)**

- External parasites produce a range of clinical signs in pigs including rubbing, scratching, and skin lesions.
- External Parasites of Pigs: PrimeFact 1148 is a useful resource
https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/433084/External-parasites-of-pigs.pdf
 - If your pigs are showing any of these signs, please contact one of our team for advice

- **Vaccinations:**

- Vaccinations are recommended to protect your pig from the most common fatal diseases which are Leptospirosis, *E. coli* scours and Erysipelas.
 - Vaccine protocol: A primary course of 2 vaccinations given 4-6weeks apart, followed by annual boosters.

- **Vaccinations (continued):**

- If you are going to breed your sow, she should receive a vaccination against *Pig Parvovirus* at least 4 weeks before exposure to a boar to prevent piglet mummification. She will only need to be vaccinated once. ***Please contact us if you are considering breeding your pig.***
- If you are a commercial operation and having issues with ***respiratory disease or scouring***, please contact one of our vets and we will tailor a vaccination program to meet the needs of your herd.

- **Veterinary health care check-ups:**

- Our Team at Livestock Veterinary Service can provide annual health check-ups which include a health exam, vaccination, and parasite management for your pet pig. Please call to book an appointment.
- We are happy to discuss cases with your local vet and provide a referral service for more complex medical and surgical problems.
- We also can assist with trimming tusk and feet.

- **Desexing – Castration and Spey:**

- We offer desexing services for piglets and pigs.
 - Males (Boars) – can be desexed as early as 7 days of age. This ideal for commercial operations.
 - Females (Gilts/Sows) – can be desexed after weaning. And is best performed before reaching puberty. Required overnight stay in hospital. Prices are based on weight.
- ***Please contacts us for pricing for individual animals and litters.***

- **Identification and Tagging:**

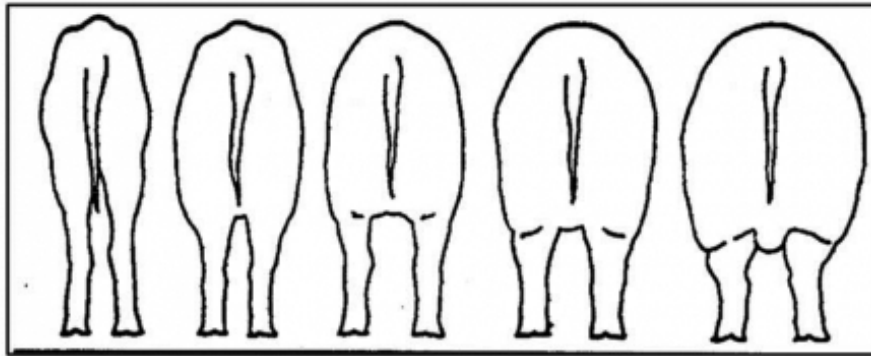
- It is required by law that all pigs carry an NLIS tag in an ear.
- You will need to ensure that you have a Property Identification Code (PIC) - <https://www.lis.nsw.gov.au/i-want-to/apply-for-a-property-identification-code>
 - If you intend to sell or breed pigs will need to purchase ear tags and register is Australian Pork's PigPass program (<https://pigpass.australianpork.com.au>)
- We **DO NOT** microchip pigs as this is a companion animal registry only.

- **Nose Rings:**

- **We DO NOT place nose rings in pigs, nor do we recommend placement of nose rings in pet pigs.**

Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us on 02 4655 0777.

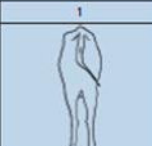

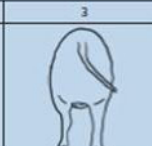
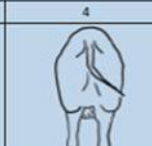




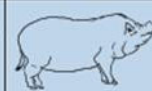
















Figure 1. Body Condition Score Chart



Score	1	2	3	4	5
Backfat Depth, mm	≤10	11-15	16-22	23-29	≥30

Body condition scores

Overweight pigs are extremely common and this can result in serious welfare problems ranging from 'fat blindness' (ie, the eyes are obscured by fat) to increased rates of arthritis. There is no normal weight for a pet pig, but animals should be maintained at a body condition score of 2 to 2.5 from nine months to eight years of age, and at 2.5 to 3 thereafter.

1	2	3	4	5
				
				
				
				
				
<p>Dulky goat shape Ribs can be seen Backbone is obvious Tailhead is higher than the backbone from the side Eyes can be clearly seen</p>	<p>Flat/slab-sided Ribs can be felt Backbone can be felt Tail head is level with the backbone Eyes can be clearly seen</p>	<p>Tube Ribs are felt with difficulty Backbone is rounded Dip apparent in the middle of the back when viewed from the side Tail head is below the backbone when viewed from the rear</p>	<p>Bulbous Ribs cannot be felt Backbone is very rounded Prominent dip in the middle of back when viewed from the side Head is rounded, with the ears separating and recessed into head Eyes seen with difficulty Tail head is recessed into rump Perineal area sags</p>	<p>Bloated tick Distinct double hump to the crown and tail head Tail head is inverted in folds Folds of flesh hang from the head Folds of fat on the head push the ears forward Pig may be fat blind Stomach may touch the ground Legs are held further apart</p>