

About pigs

- “Sweat like a pig”? Actually, they do not have sweat glands. That’s why shade is so important for pigs.
- “Like a pig in muck”? Actually, pigs are clean animals. If they don’t have access to a cool shady spot, they may lie in mud on a warm day simply because it helps keep them cool.
- A pig’s squeal can reach up to 115 decibels. That’s louder than a chainsaw or a rock concert ! Noise pollution is a serious issue for commercial piggeries.
- The first evidence of domesticated pigs is in China around 4900 BC, although it’s believed that pig farming may have started in Thailand around 10,000 BC
- The average life span of a pig is 15 to 25 years.
- While pigs are farmed primarily for meat, they are also a major source of insulin for treating diabetes in humans.
- Originally, piggy banks had nothing to do with pigs. In the Middle Ages, they were one piece jars made of a special clay, known as “pygg”, with a slot in the top to receive coins. The only way to retrieve the coins was to smash the pygg jar, and this helped people save their loose change. They became known as pygg banks in the early 1800s and piggy banks by the mid 1800s.

Pig welfare

- Your pigs should have an all-weather shed with a dry floor, dry bedding and access to a grassed run. Pigs are susceptible to sunburn, especially white pigs. It’s essential they have access to plenty of shade.
- Pigs do not cope with hot weather very well. On a hot day, consider running a sprinkler on the pig shed’s roof.
- Pigs must have a constant supply of clean, cool water. Small self-filling water bowls are better because larger water containers often get soiled.
- Rats and mice can carry a number of pig diseases, so it’s important that your pigs are protected from them and that your feed storage is rodent-proof.
- Don’t hesitate to report any case of cruelty to pigs (including neglect) to the RSPCA on 1300 139 947.

The information in this pamphlet is general advice only and is intended for smallholders and hobby farmers. You should always get professional advice for your specific situation from your local vet.

*Need more information?
Visit us at
www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au
or contact your local
vet.*



PIGS and the Smallholder



Some biosecurity tips

Thinking of buying a few pigs?

- Check with your local council to see if you need any approvals to run pigs.
- If you are **buying pigs**, try and do so from a property that you know practises good biosecurity.
- You should apply to DPIPWE for a **registered tattoo** so that your pigs can be easily identified. This will not only enable rapid traceback in the event of a disease outbreak but also be a significant protection against theft of your animals. All pigs over 10 weeks old must have a registered tattoo before they leave the property for sale or slaughter.
- New arrivals should be kept separate from any pigs already on your property for at least one month. You should keep a close eye on the new pigs for any sign of disease.
- All pigs should be **vaccinated** against erysipelas and leptospirosis at the very least and sows should be vaccinated against parvo virus. If you do not know the vaccination history of your new pigs, you should vaccinate them on arrival on your property.

Swill feeding

- **It is illegal to feed swill to pigs**, or to supply swill to a pig owner. The penalties for doing so have recently been increased.
- **Swill is any food waste that includes, or has been in contact with, meat, bone, meat product or some dairy products such as soft cheeses.** So, in most cases, food scraps from the kitchen or from restaurants are swill.
- The Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in the UK in 2001 was caused by a farmer feeding swill to his pigs. That outbreak resulted in the slaughter of around 5 million sheep, cattle, pigs and goats.
- Swill feeding can also spread Swine Fever and a range of other serious pig diseases.
- The swill feeding ban is supported by conducting random audits on pig farmers and on potential sources of swill, such as restaurants and hotels.
- Anyone who feeds swill or who supplies swill is putting your animals, and Tasmania's livestock industries generally, at risk. If you know of anyone doing the wrong thing, you should report them to DPIPWE so we can visit them and explain the swill feeding ban.

RAM

- As a pig owner, you have an important part to play in helping prevent **Mad Cow Disease**.
- **It is illegal to feed anything containing Restricted Animal Material, also known as RAM, to ruminant animals.**
- RAM includes meat, meat meal, bone meal, blood meal, poultry offal meal, feather meal, fishmeal or any other animal meals. It does not include tallow, gelatin, milk or milk products.
- Most pig feeds contain Restricted Animal Material or RAM. So, **it is most important that ruminants such as cattle, sheep, alpacas, deer or goats cannot access pig feed.**
- The law requires all bagged feed to be labelled to identify whether it does or does not contain RAM. With bulk feed, the warning must appear on the invoice or delivery docket. If in doubt, check with your rural supplier.
- When you clean out a pig shed, the sweepings may contain spilled feed which may, in turn, contain RAM. So, ensure that you dispose of these sweepings where ruminant animals are unable to access them.
- If you buy processed feed for both pigs and ruminant animals, keep the feed separate so there is no chance of a mix up. Also, don't put ruminant feed into an old pigfeed bag. It takes only a minute quantity of RAM in ruminant feed to put the whole of Australia's cattle industries at risk.

All livestock owners are required by law to report any signs of an emergency animal disease. If you think your pig is showing the signs, contact your local vet or the DPIPWE all hours hotline on 1800 675 888