
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2003 No. 244

**Welfare of Farmed Animals (Amendment)
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003**

Amendment of the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

5. For Schedule 6 there shall be substituted the following Schedule –

“SCHEDULE 6

Regulation 8

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS THAT APPLY TO THE KEEPING OF PIGS

PART I

Interpretation

1. In this Schedule –

“boar” means a male pig after puberty, intended for breeding;

“gilt” means a female pig intended for breeding after puberty and before farrowing;

“piglet” means a pig from birth to weaning;

“rearing pig” means a pig from ten weeks to slaughter or service;

“sow” means a female pig after the first farrowing; and

“weaner” means a pig from weaning to the age of ten weeks.

PART II

GENERAL ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

Inspection

2. All pigs shall be inspected by the owner or keeper of the pigs at least once a day to check that they are in a state of well-being.

3. Where necessary, sick or injured pigs shall be temporarily isolated in suitable accommodation with dry comfortable bedding.

Tethering

4. A person shall not tether or cause to be tethered any pig except while it is undergoing any examination, test, treatment or operation carried out for any veterinary purpose.

5.—(1) Where the use of tethers is permitted in accordance with paragraph 4, they shall not cause injury to the pigs and shall be inspected regularly and adjusted as necessary to ensure a comfortable fit.

(2) Each tether shall be of sufficient length to allow the pigs to move as stipulated in paragraph 6(2) and the design shall be such as to avoid, as far as possible, any risk of strangulation, pain or injury.

Accommodation

6.—(1) A pig shall be free to turn round without difficulty at all times.

(2) The accommodation used for pigs shall be constructed in such a way as to allow each pig to –

- (a) stand up, lie down and rest without difficulty;
- (b) have a clean, comfortable and adequately drained place in which it can rest;
- (c) see other pigs, unless the pig is isolated for veterinary reasons;
- (d) maintain a comfortable temperature; and
- (e) have enough space to allow it and all the other animals in the accommodation to lie down at the same time.

7.—(1) The dimension of any stall or pen used for holding individual pigs in accordance with these Regulations shall be such that the internal area is not less than the square of the length of the pig, and no internal side is less than 75% of the length of the pig, the length of the pig in each case being measured from the tip of its snout to the base of its tail while it is standing with its back straight.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a female pig for the period starting seven days before the predicted day of her farrowing and the day on which the weaning of her piglets (including any piglets fostered by her) is complete.

(3) A person shall not be guilty of an offence in accordance with regulation 13(1) of contravening or failing to comply with this paragraph by reason of the keeping of a pig in a stall or pen –

- (a) while it is undergoing any examination, test, treatment or operation carried out for veterinary purposes;
- (b) for the purposes of service, artificial insemination or collection of semen;
- (c) while it is fed on any particular occasion;
- (d) for the purposes of marking, washing or weighing it;
- (e) while its accommodation is being cleaned; or
- (f) while it is awaiting loading for transportation,

provided that the period during which it is so kept is not longer than necessary for the purpose in question.

(4) A person shall not be guilty of an offence in accordance with regulation 13(1) of contravening or failing to comply with this paragraph by reason of the keeping of a pig in a stall or pen which the pig can enter or leave at will, provided that the stall or pen is entered from a stall or pen in which the pig is kept without contravention of this paragraph.

Artificially lit buildings

8. Subject to paragraph 16 of Schedule 1, where pigs are kept in an artificially lit building then lighting with an intensity of at least 40 lux shall be provided for a minimum period of 8 hours per day.

Prevention of fighting

9.—(1) If pigs are kept together, measures shall be taken to prevent fighting which goes beyond normal behaviour.

(2) Pigs which show persistent aggression towards others or are victims of such aggression shall be isolated or kept separate from the group.

Cleansing and disinfection

10.—(1) Housing, pens, equipment and utensils used for pigs must be properly cleansed and disinfected as necessary to prevent cross-infection and the build-up of disease-carrying organisms.

(2) Faeces, urine and uneaten or spilt food must be removed as often as necessary to minimise smell and avoid attracting flies or rodents.

Bedding

11. Where bedding is provided, this must be clean, dry and not harmful to the pigs.

Floors

12. Where pigs are kept in a building, floors shall –

- (a) be smooth but not slippery so as to prevent injury to the pigs;
- (b) be so designed, constructed and maintained so as not to cause injury or suffering to pigs standing or lying on them;
- (c) be suitable for the size and weight of the pigs; and
- (d) where no litter is provided, form a rigid, even and stable surface.

13. When concrete slatted floors are used for pigs kept in groups –

- (a) the maximum width of the openings must be –
 - (i) 11mm for piglets
 - (ii) 14 mm for weaners
 - (iii) 18mm for rearing pigs; and
 - (iv) 20 mm for gilts after service and sows;
- (b) the minimum slot width must be –
 - (i) 50 mm for piglets and weaners; and
 - (ii) 80 mm for rearing pigs, gilts after service and sows.

Feeding

14.—(1) All pigs must be fed at least once a day.

(2) Where pigs are housed in a group and do not have continuous access to feed, or are not fed by an automatic feeding system feeding the animals individually, each pig must have access to the food at the same time as the others in the feeding group.

Drinking water

15. All pigs over two weeks of age must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of fresh drinking water.

Environmental enrichment

16. To enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, all pigs must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such which does not adversely affect the health of the animals.

Prohibition on the use of the sweatbox system

17. Pigs shall not be kept in an environment which involves maintaining high temperatures and high humidity (known as the “sweatbox system”).

Noise levels

18. Pigs shall not be exposed to constant or sudden noise. Noise levels above 85dBA shall be avoided in that part of any building where pigs are kept.

Interventions

19. Save as set out in paragraphs 21 to 26, no intervention procedures which result in damage or loss to or loss of a sensitive part of the body or the alteration of bone structure shall be carried out except for therapeutic or diagnostic purposes.

20. The procedures set out in paragraphs 21 to 26 may only be carried out under hygienic conditions by a veterinary surgeon, or where it is legally permitted, by a person who has been trained in accordance with these Regulations and who is experienced in performing the procedures.

21. The following procedures shall not be carried out routinely but only where there is evidence that injuries to sows' teats or to other pigs' ears or tails have occurred:

- (a) uniform reduction of corner teeth of piglets by grinding or clipping not later than the seventh day of life of the piglets leaving an intact smooth surface; or
- (b) docking of a part of the tail

but no tooth reduction or tail docking may be carried out unless other measures to improve environmental conditions or management systems have been taken in order to prevent tail biting and other vices.

22. Male pigs may be castrated provided the means employed do not involve tearing of tissues.

23. Docking of tails or castration shall be carried out by a veterinary surgeon in accordance with the provisions of section 14(1) and Schedule 1 to the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

24. Boars' tusks may be reduced in length where necessary to prevent injuries to other animals or for safety reasons.

25. Nose rings may not be put in animals kept continuously in indoor husbandry systems.

26. Ear tagging or ear notching may be carried out for identification purposes.

PART III

BOARS

27. Boar pens shall be sited and constructed so as to allow the boar to turn round and to hear, see and smell other pigs, and shall contain clean resting areas.

28. The lying area for boars shall be dry and comfortable.

29. Subject to paragraph 30, the minimum unobstructed floor area for an adult boar shall be six square metres.

30. When boar pens are also used for natural service the floor area must be at least 10 square metres and must be free of any obstacles.

PART IV

SOWS AND GILTS

31. Pregnant gilts and sows shall, where necessary, be treated against external and internal parasites.

Farrowing

32. If they are placed in farrowing crates, pregnant sows and gilts shall be thoroughly cleaned.

33. In the week before the expected farrowing time sows and gilts must be given suitable nesting material in sufficient quantity unless it is not technically feasible because of the slurry system used.

34. During farrowing, an unobstructed area behind the sow or gilt shall be available for the ease of natural or assisted farrowing.

35. Farrowing pens where sows are kept loose must have some means of protecting the piglets, such as farrowing rails.

36. In the week before the expected farrowing time and during farrowing, sows and gilts may be kept out of sight of other pigs.

Group housing

37. Sows and gilts shall be kept in groups except during the period between seven days before the predicted day of farrowing and the day on which the weaning of piglets (including any piglets fostered) is complete.

38. The pen where the group is kept must have sides greater than 2.8 metres in length, except when there are less than 6 individuals in the group, when the sides of the pen must be no less than 2.4 metres in length.

39. The total unobstructed floor area available to each gilt after service and to each sow when gilts and/or sows are kept in groups must be at least 1.64 square metres and 2.25 square metres respectively. When these animals are kept in groups of less than 6 individuals the unobstructed floor area must be increased by 10%. When these animals are kept in groups of 40 or more individuals the unobstructed floor area may be decreased by 10%.

40. For gilts after service and pregnant sows a part of the area required in paragraph 39 equal to at least 0.95 square metres per gilt and at least 1.3 square metres per sow must be of continuous solid floor of which a maximum of 15% is reserved for drainage openings.

41. Sows and gilts kept on holdings of fewer than 10 sows may be kept individually provided that their accommodation complies with the requirements of paragraphs 6 and 7.

42. In addition to the requirements of paragraph 14, sows and gilts must be fed using a system which ensures that each individual can obtain sufficient food even when competitors for the food are present.

43. All dry pregnant sows and gilts must be given a sufficient quantity of bulky or high fibre food as well as high energy food to satisfy their hunger and need to chew.

PART V

PIGLETS

44. Piglets shall where necessary, be provided with a source of heat and a solid, dry and comfortable lying area away from the sow where all of them can rest at the same time.

45. A part of the total floor where the piglets are and which is large enough to allow the animals to rest together at the same time must be solid or covered with a mat or be littered with straw or any other suitable material.

46. Where a farrowing crate is used the piglets must have sufficient space to be able to suckle without difficulty.

47. Piglets shall not be weaned from the sow at an age of less than 28 days unless the welfare or health of the dam or piglets would otherwise be adversely affected.

48. Piglets may be weaned up to seven days earlier if they are moved into specialised housings which are emptied and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before the introduction of a new group and which are separate from housing where other pigs are kept.

PART VI

WEANERS AND REARING PIGS

49. Pigs shall be placed in groups as soon as possible after weaning. They shall be kept in stable groups with as little mixing as possible.

50. If pigs unfamiliar with one another have to be mixed, this should be done at as young an age as possible, preferably not later than one week after weaning. When pigs are mixed they shall be provided with adequate opportunities to escape and hide from other pigs.

51. The use of tranquillising medication in order to facilitate mixing shall be limited to exceptional conditions and only after consultation with a veterinary surgeon.

52. When signs of severe fighting appear, the causes shall be immediately investigated and appropriate measures shall be taken.

53. The unobstructed floor area available to each weaner or rearing pig reared in a group shall be at least –

- (a) 0.15 square metres for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is 10 kg or less;

- (b) 0.20 square metres for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 10 kg but less than or equal to 20 kg;
- (c) 0.30 square metres for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 20 kg but less than or equal to 30 kg;
- (d) 0.40 square metres for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 30 kg but less than or equal to 50 kg;
- (e) 0.55 square metres for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 50 kg but less than or equal to 85 kg;
- (f) 0.65 square metres for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 85 kg but less than or equal to 110 kg; and
- (g) 1.00 square metre for each pig where the average weight of the pigs in the group is more than 110 kg.”.