

Advice for owners of Pet and Micro Pigs



Introduction

This information is designed for people who keep, or are considering keeping pigs or micro-pigs as pets or as a hobby. While owners may regard their pig to be of similar status to a cat or dog, they are farmed animals in the eyes of the law and subject to the same disease control measures and regulations as pigs kept in a commercial livestock herd.

These regulations have been put in place because all pigs are susceptible to a number of highly contagious diseases, such as Swine Fever and Foot and Mouth Disease, which could have a devastating effect on the UK's agricultural industry if allowed to spread unchecked. These viruses are known as 'Notifiable Diseases' because of the legal requirement for pig owners to notify the authorities if their animals are suspected of carrying them.

Keeping a pig in domestic surroundings has the potential to expose you and your family to Zoonotic Diseases, that is diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans. If you are thinking about getting a pet pig you should carefully consider whether your home environment will allow you to properly cater for its needs and welfare.

Advice and Guidance

The following guidance explains in more detail about animal disease control, animal welfare requirements and what hobby keepers and owners of pet pigs or micro pigs need to do to keep their animals fit, healthy and legally compliant.

Abiding by it will help prevent owners and keepers from unwittingly spreading disease and protect them from prosecution and the risk of being banned from keeping animals, fined or even sent to prison.

As a prospective pig owner you **must**:

- ◆ Ensure you know what type of pig you are buying so you can provide it with a suitable living environment.
- ◆ Ensure you understand and can cater for the welfare needs of your pig before you get it.
- ◆ Get a County Parish Holding (CPH) number before buying your pig.
- ◆ Register your pigs with APHA (Animal Health and Plant Agency) this must be done within 30 days of the pig arriving on your premises.
- ◆ Make sure your pig is properly and legally identified.
- ◆ Implement good biosecurity to protect both your health and the health of your pig.
- ◆ Keep accurate records of your pig's movements.
- ◆ Keep records of any veterinary treatment it receives.

As a pig owner you **must never**:

- ◆ Move your pig without the proper licence, or walk them without obtaining a walking licence from APHA.
- ◆ Feed your pig, or allow your pig access to, any waste food, kitchen scraps or food that has come from a domestic or commercial kitchen.

For further advice about any of the above, please contact Staffordshire County Council's Animal Health Team - 01785 277 875, your local APHA office - 03000 200 301 or your vet.

Apply for a CPH Number

You will need to contact the RPA (Rural Payments Agency) - [03000 200 301](tel:03000200301) and obtain a holding number before you move the pigs onto your premises.

Registering Your Pig

Whether you have one pet pig or a commercial herd, you are legally obliged to register them with APHA within 30 days of their arrival at your premise. Registration is vital for effective control of animal diseases. It allows the authorities to precisely locate, and take action to protect, animals within a given area in the event of an outbreak of notifiable disease. Registration also allows you to be sent information about any changes in legislation that may affect you as a pig keeper.

To register your pet pig you will need to contact APHA - [03000 200 301](tel:03000200301)

If your correspondence address is different from the location where your pigs will be kept inform APHA and make sure they have the correct details.

Once your pigs are registered, you will be issued with a herd mark, usually 1 or 2 letters followed by 4 digits i.e. AB1234. This is a unique code which provides a quick and effective means of identification.

Please note that registration with APHA is a legal requirement for disease control purposes and is not related to registration with any breed / pedigree societies.

NOTE: if you stop keeping pigs you must report the move from your premise and you should inform APHA that you no longer keep pigs, this will prevent them from contacting you unnecessarily.

Report and Confirm Moves Using the eAML2 system

Once you have your CPH number the move is pre notified by the Departure Premises on the eAML2 (www.eaml2.org.uk) system so that you can legally move your pig to its new home.

The person or company you are buying your pig from is the Departure Premise, they are responsible for pre notifying the move.

Once the pig arrives at your premise, which is the Destination Premise, you will need to confirm the arrival of the pig onto your premise within 3 days, as the Destination Premise, this is your responsibility.

All pig movements are now reported electronically, to register with eAML2 you can call the helpline - [0844 335 8400](tel:08443358400), e mail at eaml2@bpex.ahdb.org.uk or go to the website - www.eaml2.org.uk and select Producer Registration.

If you have no computer or internet access, movements can be reported and confirmed through the eAML2 Bureau Service which is operated by MLCSL (Meat and Livestock Commercial Services Ltd) or the British Pig Association, they will enter the information onto the system and provide copies of the movement document / haulier summary prior to the movement taking place.

The bureau service and the helpline operate Monday to Friday 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

During its journey, the pig must be accompanied by a Haulier Summary, this gives details of the movement and must be available for inspection in the event of a traffic stop. Transporters must keep a copy of the Haulier Summaries for 6 months.

Transporting your Pet Pig

Regulations concerning the transport of pigs do not apply if the transport is not in connection with an economic activity or for veterinary treatment under veterinary advice. However, when transporting your pig you must ensure that you are mindful of its welfare needs and that you follow any instructions on its movement licence. For this reason it is advisable to transport it either in a vehicle or trailer designed for livestock transport or, in the case of micro-pigs, in a pet carrier of appropriate size and strength. Whatever means of transport you use you will need to thoroughly cleanse and disinfect it within 24 hours of the movement and before any other animals are transported. A list of approved disinfectants can be found on the gov.uk website.

Identifying your pet pig

All pigs must be identified before being moved. If you are purchasing a pig which is over 12 months old it should already be identified with the Herd Mark of the dispatching keeper, the identification can be in the form of an ear tag, a tattoo or double slap marks.

As pet pigs are likely to live for several years it is advisable to officially identify it with your own official herd mark and a unique individual identification number, it is up to you what the individual mark is to be. This is particularly important if you intend to take your pig to a show or if you are applying for a walking licence as your pig's official identification will have to be included on any licences required.

If you are purchasing a pig under 12 months old and it arrives at your premise with a temporary mark i.e. a paint mark, it must be fully identified with your official herd mark before it leaves your premise.

If you are using an ear tag to identify your pig, the tag can either be metal or plastic but must be stamped, not hand written, with the letters 'UK' followed by your herd mark. It is an offence to remove or tamper with an ear tag or tattoo to the extent that the pig's official identification cannot be clearly distinguished. If your pig loses its ear tag a replacement should be applied and this must be recorded in your movement records.

All of the equipment required for applying ear tags, tattoos and temporary marks can be purchased from agricultural merchants.

A list of approved ear tag suppliers can be found on the gov.uk website.

Once the Pig is on your Premises

Once your pig arrives at its new home your premises will be subject to 'standstill' rules. This means that your pig, or any other livestock already on your premises, will not be able to move off the address for a set period of time.

Standstill rules help to guard against the rapid spread of notifiable diseases by providing a period during which disease being incubated can be detected and identified. Standstill rules apply different time restrictions to different species. For example, a pig arriving at your premises will trigger a 20 day standstill on any other pig already living on your holding whereas resident cattle, sheep and goats will only need to observe a 6 day standstill. The standstill days are counted as 20 and 6 clear days, the day of purchase / arrival does not count as a clear day.

Pet Pig Walking Licences

Your pig should be kept in an environment where it can get sufficient exercise without being walked. However, if you do want to walk your pig you are legally obliged to obtain a pig walking licence. To apply for a licence you will need to submit a proposed walking route for assessment to APHA by an APHA veterinarian. If they believe your route risks spreading disease, for example, due to the proximity of a livestock market, high health status pig farm or fast food outlets, you may be asked to submit an alternative route. These controls are necessary because walking your pig can increase its risk of contracting or spreading disease. If your application is approved, you will be issued with a licence that allows you to walk your pig on the licensed route only. There is no requirement to keep a record of movements covered by a walking licence, but you will be required to carry a copy of the licence with you when walking your pig. You will need to renew your licence on an annual basis.

Record Keeping Requirements

Movement Records

All pig owners, from those keeping pet pigs to commercial pig farmers, are required to keep records of the animals moving on or off their premises. This information, known as a 'holding movement record' can be kept in written or electronic form. The holding movement record should contain the following information.

- ◆ The name and address of the person keeping the record
- ◆ The date of the movement
- ◆ The identification number or temporary mark
- ◆ The number of pigs moved
- ◆ The address of the holding from which they were moved
- ◆ The address of the holding to which they were moved

You are obliged to record each movement of a pig on or off your premises within 36 hours of the movement taking place, and once a year you will need to record the maximum number of pigs you normally keep. These records should be available for inspection upon request. Even after you stop keeping pigs, your records should be kept for a period of six years after the date that the last pig left your premise.

Medicine Records

It is a legal requirement for you to keep a record of any veterinary medicines purchased and administered to your pigs. Primarily these rules are in place for consumer protection purposes but, even if your pig is a pet you must record

- ◆ The name of the product and the batch number
- ◆ The date of purchase or acquisition
- ◆ The quantity acquired
- ◆ The name and address of the supplier
- ◆ The date of administration

- ◆ The quantity administered
- ◆ The withdrawal period
- ◆ The identity of the pigs treated

If the veterinary medicine is administered by your veterinary surgeon, they must provide in writing the information relating to administration as well as the batch number and their name.

You also need to keep a record of how you dispose of any unused veterinary medicine. This must include

- ◆ The date of disposal
- ◆ The quantity of product involved
- ◆ How, and where it was disposed of

Your veterinary surgeon will be able to advise you on any routine medicines your pig requires, such as vaccinations and treatment for both internal and external parasites. These treatments will also have to be recorded.

Medicine records must be kept for 5 years. They can be kept on paper or computer there is no specific format required. They must be available for inspection on request. Failure to keep proper records is an offence under the Veterinary Medicine Regulations.

Feeding Your Pig

As a pig owner you must know it is illegal to feed your animal with waste food and scraps from your own kitchen or dinner table. It is also illegal to feed pigs with waste food from restaurants, commercial kitchens, and other catering facilities, even if those establishments cater solely for vegetarians. This is because contaminated waste food can spread viruses and bacteria to livestock, so not only could your pet become very ill, but it could also quickly infect other animals. Many diseases, like Foot and Mouth disease can become airborne and infect animals up to several hundred metres away.

The first case of the 2001 Foot and Mouth disease outbreak was found at a farm where unprocessed waste food was being fed to pigs. The disease then spread to sheep in surrounding fields and eventually across a wide area of the UK. The subsequent review of the outbreak led to legislation banning the feeding of catering waste to any farmed animals, or any other ruminant animal (an animal which chews the cud), pig or poultry. This is now reflected in EU legislation.

In addition, current legislation imposes strict controls banning the feeding of other materials of animal origin, or products containing them, to farmed animals.

There are a small number of exceptions to the feed rules, however these are unlikely to apply in a domestic situation and may require you to be specially registered.

If you have other pets, for example cats, dogs or rabbits, you must not allow your pig access to their food. You should also store the pig food separately from other animal feed to prevent accidental contamination. You can purchase a number of proprietary pig foods from your local agricultural merchant that can be safely fed to your pig. For further information check the APHA website or contact Staffordshire County Council Animal Health Team—01785 277875.

Your Pig's Welfare

Owners and keepers are legally responsible for ensuring that the welfare needs of their animals are met. For your pet pig this means that you should ensure that it:

Has a suitable place to live

- ◆ Pigs are intelligent animals and need to be stimulated, so you will need to consider how to enrich their environment. Environmental enrichment provides pigs with the opportunity to root, investigate, chew and play. Straw is an excellent material for environmental enrichment as it can satisfy many of the pigs behavioural and physical needs. It provides a fibrous material which the pig can eat; the pig is able to root in and play with long straw

and, when used as bedding can provide the pig with physical and thermal comfort. Objects such as footballs and chains can satisfy some of the pigs behavioural needs but can quickly lose their novelty factor.

- ◆ You should also check how much space your pig will need, this will depend on the breed and how big it is expected to grow.

Has a Suitable Diet

- ◆ Appropriate food, as outlined previously and a supply of clean, fresh drinking water. If the water is supplied in buckets check regularly that they have not been tipped over.

Can Exhibit Normal Behaviour

- ◆ Pigs like to be able to root about and to wallow, particularly in hot weather.

Is Protected from Pain, Suffering, Injury and Disease

- ◆ Can your pig access sufficient shade to protect it from the sun, pigs are prone to sunburn.
- ◆ Is your pigs housing sturdy enough to withstand adverse weather conditions.
- ◆ Is your pig protected from predators.
- ◆ Is your pigs environment free of objects that could harm it, such as items with sharp edges or toys which are too small and could present a choking hazard, or plants which may be harmful to your pigs health.

Cruelty to your pig and / or failure to meet its welfare needs may result in you being banned from keeping animals, fined or even a prison sentence.

If you decide, for whatever reason, you can no longer keep your pig you should ensure the new owner or keeper has suitable premises and adequate knowledge so that the pig can be properly cared for.

If Your Pig Dies

As a farmed animal species the law prohibits burial or burning of your pet pig in the event of its death. The pig must be taken to or collected by, an approved knackers yard, hunt kennel, incinerator or render operator. Details of suitable facilities can be found on the APHA website or are available from the Staffordshire County Council Animal Health Team. Collection should be without 'undue delay' and whilst awaiting collection the carcass must be covered and not accessible to any other animals or wildlife.

Biosecurity

There are some simple steps you can take to protect the health of your pet pig and other animals. Most importantly you should prevent both direct and indirect contact with other farmed animal species. Indirect contact could be coming into contact with material such as faeces or saliva from another animal e.g. walking through dirty animal bedding or stroking an animal at a petting zoo or farm. By ensuring your clothing and footwear are clean you can help to prevent your pig and other animals becoming infected. Make sure your pigs housing is secure, pigs that escape risk picking up disease or other injuries. Birds and vermin can easily spread disease so you will need to use appropriate pest control as required and make sure the area is kept clean i.e. sweep up any spilt food and make sure any feed storage bins are secure.

Good biosecurity, keeping your pig's environment clean, and washing your hands after handling your pet pig will also help to protect your and your family's health. This is because pigs can carry diseases which can be passed to people e.g. salmonella, meningitis and erysipelas (acute skin infection) so good hygiene should be observed at all times. Further information on these and other zoonotic diseases can be found on the Public Health website - www.hpa.org.uk

If you have any concerns about the health of your pig you should consult your vet for advice immediately.

Useful Contacts

[Staffordshire County Council Animal Health Team - 01785 277875](tel:01785277875)

For advice on welfare, legislation, information leaflets, record books or to report animal welfare concerns.

For advice on pest infestations or animal related residential nuisance complaints contact the Environmental Department of your local Borough or District Council

[Rural Payments Agency - 03000 200 301](tel:03000200301)

For CPH numbers

[Animal Health & Plant Agency - 03000 200 301](tel:03000200301)

For registration of pigs, pet pig walking licences

[eAML2 - 0844 335 8400](tel:08443358400)

www.eaml2.org.uk

For reporting pig movements

Associations

[Staffordshire Smallholders - 01889 881377](tel:01889881377)

www.staffsmallholders.info/

Email - brian.portsmouth@hotmail.co.uk

For direct advice on keeping animals, practical event days, regular group meetings

