

Marketing Your Outdoor Pigs

Marketing pigs requires some preplanning to ensure pigs are slaughtered on a timely basis. In most cases abattoirs often require you to book your pigs a couple months in advance, ensure you can reserve an approximate slaughter date. Pigs going to slaughter off farm also require an approved PigTRACE ear tag, tattoo, or stencil which can be obtained from your provincial pork organization. Another important note is to ensure all withdrawal times are followed for and treatments or medications administered to your pigs prior to shipment or slaughter - not following withdrawal times could create a food safety risk.

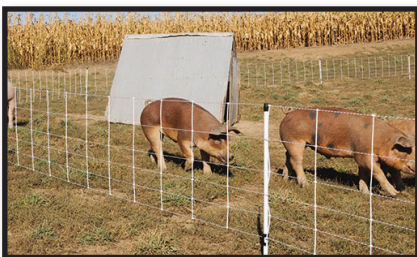


An often over looked aspect of marketing is your interaction with the abattoir, as this location has a very high risk for disease contamination. Ensure you change clothes and wash your truck and trailer prior to coming back home and into contact with your pigs - this will help reduce potential disease spread. If you plan on slaughtering on-farm, take pre-cautions that will reduce contamination during processing and from handling and consuming raw or undercooked meat products.

PRE-SLAUGHTER CONSIDERATIONS

There are a couple of important things you need to know before reaching the final step in the pig production journey. Avoid making last minute arrangements with an abattoir, as some abattoirs require reserving your date weeks or months in advance – as well not all abattoirs process hogs. Pigs also need to be tagged, or tattooed, and transport manifest completed. It is the simplest to ask the abattoir what their pig ID preference is. A couple of items you will need for identifying your pigs, include: ear tags and tagger, tattoo ink and slap hammer, or stencil and food-safe animal spray paint. You don't need all of these – which ever one you prefer.

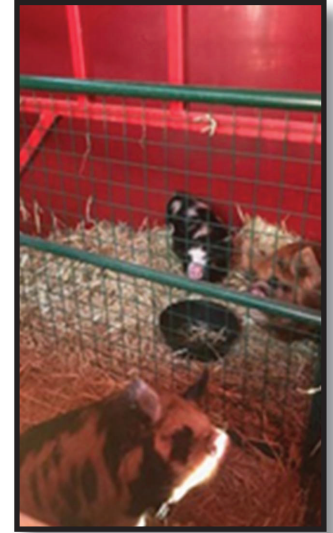
- Ensure that proper withdrawal times are met for any drugs or medications (injectable, feed, or water) prior to having your pigs slaughtered.
- Ensure pigs are healthy and fit for transport when having pigs slaughtered off farm. Take appropriate measures to reduce stress.
- Withdraw feed 12 to 18 hours before the anticipated slaughter time (not 12 to 18 hours before transport). A full stomach at the time of slaughter increases the chances of carcass contamination from stomach and intestinal contents.
- Transport manifests need to be filled out and kept onboard during transport, and all pig movements need to be reported to PigTRACE within seven days.



You can find more information on handling, marketing and food safety - along with other topics on outdoor pig production at smallscalepigfarming.com.

ABATTOIR HEALTH & SAFETY

- Consider the abattoir a dirty location, an area of potential contamination. Without proper care, you can bring disease back to your farm.
- Wash your vehicle/trailer prior to loading your pigs for transport.
- Wear disposable boot covers, or specific set of boots, and gloves at the abattoir. Don't wear clothing used to deliver your pigs to the abattoir, at your farm, until they are thoroughly washed and dried. Avoid using the boots (footwear) entirely.
- Do not transport pigs that are sick or have obvious signs of lameness.
- After leaving the abattoir, ALWAYS wash and disinfect your vehicle and trailer prior to arriving at your farm.



Pig Handling Tips

Handling pigs is easiest when you use their natural herd behaviour to your advantage. The instinct of pigs is to stay together, follow one another, and move as a group. Using appropriate handling equipment (sorting boards, shaker panels, flags) for the different sizes of the pigs will increase the ease of movement.

Pigs should be moved calmly, without yelling, and identify when pigs are becoming stressed during handling, providing them time to calm down. Personal safety is also very important when specifically handling breeding stock (e.g. boars, sows with their litters), due to their large size they require caution at all times. It is best to always bring a sort board with you when handling them to ensure your safety.

- Changes in ground or floor surface, temperature, and airflow may slow or stop pig flow/movement.
- Visual distractions — people, moving objects, shadows, or beams of light — may distract their attention.
- Pigs prefer well lit areas. They will move more easily from dark to light areas than the reverse.
- Daily contact with the pigs reduces their stress during handling and makes handling easier for you.
- Pigs are social animals and move better as a group rather than a single animal.
- Food can sometimes be used as motivation when moving pigs.
- Moving pigs may be easiest at feeding time, allowing you to lead them to a specific area, resulting in less stress for you and the pigs.



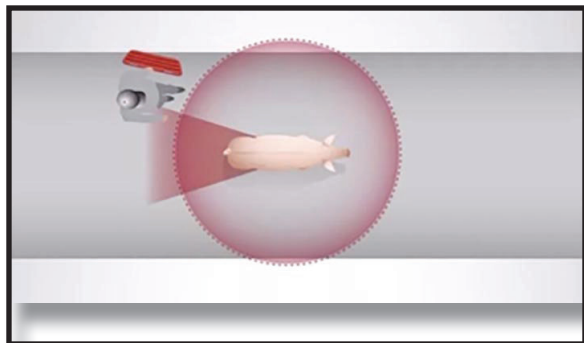
TRANSPORTING YOUR PIGS

There are a couple of key things to remember when transporting pigs. Only pigs that are “fit” to be transported should ever be loaded onto a vehicle for transport. Any pigs showing signs of injury or lameness should never be loaded until they are treated and fully recovered, and ensuring (treatment) withdrawal times are followed. Time spent on scheduling and planning around transportation is well spent, as it reduces the time spent on the trailer and stress on your animals. Properly designed loading facilities also reduce handling stress for the pigs and people involved and aides in pig movement.



- Unfamiliarity with an area, flooring, ramp, or vehicle can result in pigs being reluctant to move or be loaded. Access to the area prior to transport or completing a test run will familiarize the pigs with the area.
- The ramp leading into the trailer should be at a gentle slope (< 20 degrees works best).
- Sides of the ramp should be smooth, solid, and high enough to prevent pigs from jumping off the ramp.
- Trailer opening/door must be wide enough that pigs will fit comfortably through it.
- Sufficiently bed the trailer floor with shavings, straw, or other bedding material. This provides insulation and comfort during the trip and ensures the floor is not slippery.

Flight Zone



Pigs have wide-angle vision (310°), with a small blind spot directly behind them (50°). Avoid being in a pig’s blind spot while moving them as this typically causes them to stop moving and turn around.

- Pigs will generally move in a direction opposite when entering their flight zone.
- Approaching from behind tends to encourage pigs to move forward.
- Approaching from in front of a pig’s shoulder tends to encourage the pig to move the other way (e.g. backwards). Over-pressuring the pig will encourage it to try to flee past you to get release from your pressure.
- Apply light pressure to get the pig moving, then reward the pig by backing off or releasing the initial pressure.

FOOD SAFETY



When it comes time for slaughter using an abattoir usually is the easiest and most preferable method, as they are well-equipped to identify carcasses not safe for human consumption. However, if you slaughter and process at home, it is very important that you take precautions to ensure the health and safety of the individuals handling and consuming the final product.

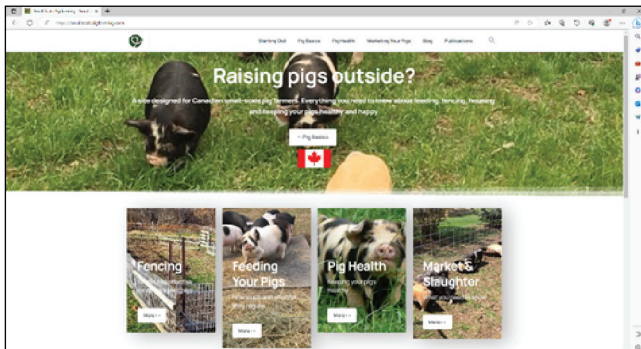
Contamination Prior To Processing

- Always wash your hands before and after handling pigs.
- The four most common parasites are pork tapeworms (*Tenia solium*), large roundworms (*Ascaris suum*), *Trichinella*, and *Toxoplasma*. *Trichinella* and *toxoplasma* can live in cysts in the meat and are infectious to humans if consumed.
- Feeding food waste or garbage (contaminated with meat or meat products) to pigs is a risk factor for *Trichinella*, this is one of the main reasons this practice is illegal in Canada.

Fully cook all pork products. Cooking pork to the recommended (end) internal temperature of 71°C (160°F) will ensure any internal parasites are killed during the cooking process.

Contamination During Processing

- Transmission occurs through contact of an open wound with blood or tissue from an infected pig (e.g. knife cuts) - (*Streptococcus suis* and *erysipelas*).
- Ensure you are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) – gloves, masks, boots, goggles, and ear plugs to reduce contamination.
- **Carcass contamination**
 - Can occur through manure contamination of the processing area, or cutting the intestines during processing, releasing manure onto the dressed carcass.
 - Carcass contamination during processing unsanitary procedures or equipment (*Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and *Campylobacter*).



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A collaborative effort, designed to provide outdoor pig producers essential information on biosecurity, food safety, nutrition and other topics.