

ADVICE FOR OWNERS OF PET PIGS AND 'MICRO' PIGS

Guidance on the legal obligations of pig keepers





This leaflet is designed for people who keep, or are considering keeping, pigs or 'micro' pigs as pets or as a hobby. While owners of these animals may consider them 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 rules and regulations as pigs kept in commercial livestock herds.

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.



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 must 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 pigs
- Register your pig(s) with Animal Health as soon as they are on your premises
- Make sure your pig is properly and legally identified
- Implement good biosecurity to protect your health and your pig's
- 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(s) without the proper licence, or walk them without obtaining a walking licence from Animal Health
- Feed your pig(s), or allow your pig(s) 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 your veterinary surgeon or local Animal Health office.

Buying pigs

When purchasing a pig for keeping as a hobby or pet, particularly when purchasing a piglet, you may wish to assure yourself that you are purchasing a breed that is suited to your situation. 'Micro' pigs are not a recognised breed, but have been developed through selective breeding to create a pig that is smaller than those produced for commercial pig keeping. However, such selective breeding, as with other specialised domestic pets such as cats and dogs, can lead to animals which have genetic weaknesses or susceptibilities.

A number of owners have also been caught out when their 'micro' pig has grown into a full size pig weighing 150-200kg. Because they have not had the facilities to care for an animal of this size they have had to make some difficult decisions.

You may find it useful to talk to a veterinary surgeon with experience in pig husbandry and treatment for further advice before you purchase a pig as pet.

The British Pig Association (BPA) has some useful advice on types of breed on their website, www.britishpigs.org.uk

Moving pigs to their new home

Before moving pigs from their place of purchase to new accommodation, you will need a County Parish Holding (CPH) number. The CPH number is a nine digit code which identifies the premises or area of land where your animals will eventually be kept – important information in the event of a notifiable disease outbreak.

To apply for a CPH number you will need to contact the appropriate issuing agency

at least 15 working days (three weeks) before you intend to move the pig onto your premises. The agencies are:

- In England - the Rural Payment Agency (RPA)
- In Scotland - the area office of the Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (SGRPID)
- In Wales - the Rural Payments Division

When you have your CPH number you will need to obtain a movement licence so you can legally move your pig to its new home. The movement licence will enable the authorities to trace your pig's movements in the event of a disease outbreak.

In England and Wales the person or company you are buying your pigs from (known as the 'departing address') is responsible for providing you with an animal movement document known as an AML2. The departing address must complete sections A and C of this form, keeping the yellow copy for their records. The person responsible for transporting the pigs from the departing address to your premises will need to complete section B with their details and retain the blue copy.

Once these sections of the document have been completed your pigs will be free to move - provided the transporter complies with the conditions of the general licence for moving pigs. Once your pigs have arrived at your premises you will need to complete section D of the AML2 form with your details.



Within three days of your pigs arriving you must send the white copy of the AML2 to your Local Authority, retaining the pink copy of the form for your records for at least six months.

To move a pig off your premises, you will need to contact your Local Authority for blank AML2 forms. Pigs bought from a market will need an Individual Movement Licence, which will be issued at the market by a Local Authority officer. This licence will serve as the appropriate movement document.

In Scotland you will need to obtain a **Schedule 7** form of licence from your Local Authority for movements both on and off your premises. You must abide by any conditions specified in the licence and must keep a copy for six months and make it available for inspection by an Inspector under the Animal Health Act 1981, if required.

If you stop keeping pigs you must ensure you have the correct licence to move them off your premises and should inform Animal Health so they can update

your record and avoid contacting you unnecessarily.

Animal Health is currently working with the pig industry to develop an electronic system of recording pig movements instead of using the current system of paper licences. The system should be fully operational by the autumn of 2011 and more information will be provided on the Animal Health website when it is available.

Registering your pigs

Whether you have one pet pig or many animals in a commercial herd, you are **legally obliged** to register them with Animal Health as soon as they arrive at their new home. Registration is vital to effective disease control because it allows the authorities to precisely locate, and take action to protect, livestock animals within a given area in the event of an outbreak of notifiable disease.

Registration also allows you to be sent information about disease outbreaks or about any changes in legislation that may affect you as a pig keeper.

To register your pet pig, you will need to phone your local Animal Health office and provide staff with your County Parish Holding (CPH) number. Once you have informed Animal Health that you are keeping pigs, they will register the animals for you. This may be done over the phone or you may be required to put the information in writing. (NOTE: If your correspondence address is different from the location where your pigs will be kept, you must inform Animal Health and confirm they have the correct details.)

When your pigs are registered you will be issued with a herd mark. The herd mark is a unique code which provides a quick and effective means for inspectors to identify premises from which pigs have moved. Your local Animal Health office will send you a document confirming your registration details and your herd mark.

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

Identifying your pet pig(s)

All pigs must be identified before being moved; however the identification rules are different depending on whether your pig is kept in England, Scotland or Wales.

In Scotland identification of pet pigs may be by means of an official ear tag, or a tattoo of the herd mark on the ear. However it is permissible to use a temporary mark when moving your pig, as long as the mark and any accompanying documentation enable the premises from which your pig was last moved to be identified.

In England and Wales the requirements are similar to those in Scotland until the pig reaches 12 months of age, after which an official herd mark must be applied before you move your pig off your premises. Pet pigs are likely to live for several years, so it is advisable to officially identify it using either a tattoo or ear-tag as soon as possible, particularly if you are applying for a walking licence (see below) because your pig's official identification will have to be included on the licence.

If using an ear tag to identify your pig it can be either metal or plastic, but must be stamped or printed with the letters 'UK' followed by your herd mark. A tattoo needs only to be your herdmark. If your pig already has an official ear tag or tattoo when you get it you do not need to re-identify it with your own 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 tag should be applied and this must be recorded in your movement record.

All the equipment required for applying ear tags, tattoos and temporary marks can be purchased from agricultural suppliers. You may also choose to micro-chip your pig, although this is not currently a legally recognised means of identification.

For more information on how you should identify your pet pig, including when you can use slap and temporary marks, and where you can obtain official eartags, please contact your local Animal Health office, Local Authority or visit

the Animal health website or the Defra, Scottish Government or Welsh Assembly Government website, according to where you keep your pig.

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.

Once the pigs are on your premises

Once your pigs have arrived at their new home, your premises will be subject to 'standstill' rules. These rules mean

that any pigs or other livestock animals already on your premises, will not be allowed 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 on different species of livestock animal. For example, pigs arriving at your premises will trigger a 20 day standstill on other pigs already living there, whereas resident cattle, sheep and goats will only need a six day standstill (13 days in Scotland). Similarly, cattle, sheep and goats moving onto your premises will impose a six day standstill (13 days in Scotland) on any pig you own.

For more information on livestock movements contact your local Animal Health office, or Local Authority.

Pet pig walking licences

Your pig should be kept in an environment where it can get sufficient exercise without being walked. However, if you



live in England or Wales and you do want to walk your pig you are legally obliged to obtain a pig walking licence from your local Animal Health office.

To apply for a licence you will need to submit a proposed walking route for assessment by one of our Veterinary Officers. 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, your application will be rejected and you will be asked to provide an amended or alternative route. These controls are necessary because walking your pig can increase its risk of contracting and/or spreading diseases. 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 need to keep a written 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 and to present it to the police or an Animal Health inspector, if required to do so. You will need to renew your licence annually.

Pig walking licences, as outlined above, are not currently available in Scotland, although the Scottish Government plans to introduce new rules in 2011 that permit pig walking licences, subject to the applicant meeting the requirements of the new rules. Until then you should contact your local Animal Health office if you require further advice about what options are available to you.

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 be in the following format:

- The name and address of the person keeping the record
- The date of 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 must be available for inspection by your Local Authority, which can visit your premises to review your records or ask for them to be sent for inspection. Even after you stop keeping pigs, your records must be kept for a period of six years after the date that the last animal left your premises.

Medicines records

It is a legal requirement for you to keep a record of any veterinary medicines purchased and administered to your pig(s).



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 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 pig(s) treated.

If the veterinary medicine is administered by your veterinary surgeon he/she must provide in writing the above information relating to administration, as well as the batch number and his/her 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 that your pig requires, such as vaccinations and treatment for both internal and external parasites. These treatments will also have to be recorded. The medicine records described above must be kept for five years. These records can be kept either on paper or as a computerised record. There is no specific format required. If kept on a computer you must supply a printed copy if requested by an inspector. Failure to keep proper records is an offence under the Veterinary Medicines 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, kitchens, and other catering facilities, even if

they 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 lot of the United Kingdom. The subsequent review of the outbreak led to legislation banning the feeding of catering waste to any farmed animals, or any other ruminant animal, pig or poultry. This is now reflected in EU-wide 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(s) access to their food and 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. Further information on how you can legally feed your pig can be found on the

Animal Health website or obtained from your local Animal Health office.

Your pig's welfare

Owners and keepers are legally responsible for ensuring that the welfare needs of their animal(s) 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. You should also seek advice on how much space your pig will need, this will depend on the breed and how big it will grow
- Has a suitable diet. Appropriate food, as outlined in this document, and a supply of clean, fresh drinking water
- Can exhibit normal behaviour. Pigs like to be able to root about and, particularly in hot weather, to wallow
- Is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. For example, you need to consider if your pig can access sufficient shade to protect it from the sun, and that its environment is free of objects that could harm it, such as items with sharp edges.

Cruelty to your pig and/or failure to meet its welfare needs may result in you being banned from keeping animals, fined up to £20,000 and/or sent to prison. If you stop keeping pigs you should ensure that the new owner or keeper has suitable premises and adequate knowledge of the requirements outlined in this leaflet so that the pigs can be properly cared for.



If your pig dies

As a farmed animal species the law prohibits burial of your pet pig when it dies. Instead the body must be taken to, or collected by, an approved knacker's yard, hunt kennel, incinerator or rendering operator by private arrangement. Details of suitable facilities in your area can be found on the Animal Health website or can be obtained from your local Animal Health office, Local Authority or veterinary surgeon.

Biosecurity

As well as observing the licensing and standstill requirements for pig movements both on and off of your premises there are some simple steps that you can take to protect the health of both your pet pig(s) and other animals. Most importantly you should prevent both direct and indirect contact with other farmed animal species. Indirect contact means coming into contact with material such as faeces or saliva from another animal, for example as a result of walking through dirty bedding or stroking

an animal at a petting zoo or farm. By ensuring that your clothing and footwear are clean you can help to prevent your pig(s), and other animals becoming infected.

Human health

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, for example Salmonella, Meningitis and Erysipelas, so good hygiene should be observed at all times during and after contact with the pig and its environment. Details of these and other zoonotic diseases can be found on the Health Protection Agency's website, www.hpa.org.uk, or the Health Protection Scotland website, www.hps.scot.nhs.uk

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

Further information

If you would like more information on keeping pigs you can visit Animal Health's website, www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth, or contact your local Animal Health office. Contact details for your local office are on the website or can be obtained by contacting Animal Health's head office on 01905 763355.

For specific information about the laws concerning pigs for the country that you are living in please visit the following websites:

England

www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/pigs/

Scotland

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture

Wales

www.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/farmanimaltracing

For general information about keeping pigs you may find the following websites useful:

<http://www.britishpigs.org/>

www.businesslink.gov.uk/farming

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Smallholders

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