

What is biosecurity and why is it so important for my pigs?

Biosecurity encompasses the management practices and hygiene measures required to prevent or reduce the likelihood of disease introduction or spread to/from your premises. This includes keeping out exotic diseases such as African swine fever and foot-and-mouth disease and minimising the spread of endemic diseases within Ireland.

Disease outbreaks can have a severe impact on animals, people, trade and the economy.

Pathogens which cause diseases in pigs can spread in several ways. Some of the methods of spread, such as aerial transmission by wind, are more difficult to control. However, there are measures you can take to help minimise the chances of your pigs becoming infected.

Notifiable Diseases

Some diseases of pigs are of national importance, and you are obliged to notify the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine if you suspect the presence of these diseases on your premises.

You must notify any suspicion of these diseases to your local Regional Veterinary Office or the Department's headquarters in Dublin at 01 6072000. Do not move any pigs, carcasses or anything else (e.g. feed or waste) until a Department of Agriculture veterinary inspector has carried out an examination. If you have any doubts about the health of your pigs, contact your veterinary practitioner.

A list of notifiable diseases and Regional Veterinary Offices can be found in the *disease control* section of the Department's website at www.agriculture.gov.ie.



It is a legal requirement to register all pig holdings with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

- Even if you intend to keep just one pig you must register your holding with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- Unregistered herds present a significant risk in the event of an outbreak of exotic disease. These herds will be unknown to the Department, and direct communication of current disease threats to these pig keepers is not possible.
- If you already have a herd number for other livestock you must still register your pig holding.
- Contact your local Regional Veterinary Office to register.
- All pig movements in and out of your farm, including temporary movements e.g. to shows, must be notified to a central database.
- Further information on the National Pig Identification and Tracing System can be found in the *animal identification and movement* section of the Department of Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.ie.

If you intend to keep pigs for the first time, you should consider the implications carefully, and contact your Regional Veterinary Office beforehand.



Photos: Pedigree Middle White pigs courtesy of Siobhán Luff
www.agriculture.gov.ie
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Department of
**Agriculture,
Food and the Marine**

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**



**Biosecurity Advice
for
Keepers of
Non-Intensive and
Pet Pigs**

**(Includes Free Range,
Organic and Small Herds)**

Biosecurity – What are the risks and what measures can I take to protect my pigs?

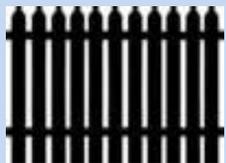


Food Waste

Risk: Meat and meat products can contain organisms which are harmless to humans, but can be life threatening to pigs e.g. African swine fever and foot-and-mouth disease.

Measures:

- Never feed food waste of animal origin or food waste that has been in contact with products of animal origin (kitchen scraps, picnic leftovers etc.) to pigs. It is **illegal** to do so.
- A leaflet on feeding food waste to pigs can be found in the *farming sectors* section of the Department's website at www.agriculture.gov.ie.
- Ensure proper disposal of food waste so that it cannot be accessed by livestock or birds.
- Open/pet farms should locate car parks, picnic areas and cafés as far away as possible from where the pigs are kept, and ensure that food is not consumed near them.



Fencing

Risk: Pigs coming into contact with other animals carrying diseases and with food waste can become infected with diseases.

Measures:

- Keep boundary fences and gates secure - particularly near roads and car parks, where there is an increased risk of pigs accessing food waste thrown from vehicles.
- Place biosecurity signs at the entrance, to advise people of the risks of spreading animal diseases.



Animals

Risk: Other pigs and animals represent the greatest threat to the health of your pigs.

Measures:

- Only source animals from known and trusted sources, and quarantine all incoming and returning stock for a minimum of 30 days.
- Keep different species of animals separate.
- Prepare isolation facilities on your farm for sick pigs.
- Dispose of dead pigs to an approved knackery.
- Use artificial insemination for reproduction if possible, and only source boar semen from approved collection centres.
- Consult your vet about specific vaccines and treatments to protect all incoming and returning pigs e.g. from shows.



Visitors and Personnel

Risk: People can carry disease pathogens that affect pigs on their hands, clothes or footwear - especially if coming from other farms.

Measures:

- Only allow essential visitors/personnel to enter, and ensure that they adhere to good hygiene practices, such as clean clothes and hand washing.
- Place disinfection points at entrances and ensure that they are used.
- If contact does occur between people and animals e.g. open farms, place hand washing facilities nearby, and ensure people wash hands before and after contact with pigs.
- If visitors/personnel are coming from other pig farms then ensure they have changed their clothes and footwear before arrival and impose a pig free period (3 days if possible).



Premises, Vehicles, Equipment

Risk: Dirt on vehicles transporting livestock or pig products (like slurry) can introduce disease pathogens to your farm. Dirty equipment and farmyards can also harbour these pathogens for later transfer to your pigs.

Measures:

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect all vehicles and trailers after each use.
- Keep farmyards clean and tidy, and disinfect housing and loading areas periodically.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment after each use and do not share between farms.
- Remove manure from pens daily, and preferably stack and compost it before spreading.



Rodents and Birds

Risk: Rats, mice and birds are common carriers of diseases such as *Salmonella* bacteria and can spread diseases from farm to farm.

Measures:

- Keep vermin under control.
- Prevent rodents and birds from accessing feed storage areas.
- Only purchase feed and feed supplements from licensed sources.

The feeding of food waste of animal origin or food waste which has been in contact with products of animal origin, whether raw or cooked is illegal in Ireland