

# Responsible Pig Ownership

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## Introduction

There are legal requirements for the keeping of pigs; whether for commercial production, home-grown own-use meat pigs or pigs as pets. The aim of this Primefact is to provide a guide to these requirements and a list of the Legislation and Codes of Practice for reference. For the purpose of this document pig keeping will be referred to as commercial or hobby, where hobby includes pet pigs and home-grown own-use meat pigs.

This document provides a summary of, and links to, regulations for:

- Environmental protection and land use planning
- Pig biosecurity including swill feeding regulations, traceability through NLIS pigs, notifiable diseases, feral pigs and PICs
- Pig welfare including Codes of practice for the care and transport of pigs,

There is a general expectation that pig owners will be responsible caretakers of their pigs and the environment, respectful of their neighbours, and be compliant with regulations.

The document titled [Eight "Must Do's" for pig owners](#) is a good guide for the health, welfare and biosecurity requirements of pigs. Additional to these are the requirements for Environmental protection, management and Council requirements.

## 1. Environmental

If you have plans to keep pigs for commercial or hobby purposes, you need to talk to the local council. Council has the power to limit the number of pigs that may be kept on a property and to specify separation distances from sensitive community or environmental elements. Council is also the consent authority for development application proposals.

## Key NSW Environmental Legislation

There are several state Acts and Regulations that govern piggery development and operation within NSW. All NSW state legislation may be viewed in detail at the [NSW Government legislation website](#).

## Local Government

Local Government (council) is the consent authority for land use proposals. All councils have a Local Environment Plan (LEP) and different geographical areas have designated Landuse classifications; for example, rural, residential or industrial. Landuse zones determine which activities are permissible. For example, there may be restrictions for the keeping of pigs in sensitive environmental areas such as drinking water catchments and close to residential areas. Always check with council before you purchase the pigs or the property (if it is not already yours) and discuss your proposed land use.

The *Local Government Act 1993* provides the framework for the operation of local government. Section 124(18) of the Act specifically allows a council to prevent the keeping of pigs in sensitive areas such as catchment areas.

The Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 in Schedule 2 Part 5 makes specific reference to pigs, stating that swine (pigs) must be kept in a manner that does not cause pollution to any water supply. Clause 18 of this section also states that *"swine must not be kept (and swine's dung must not be deposited) within 60 metres (or such greater distance as the council may determine in a particular case) of a dwelling, shop, office, factory, church or other place of public worship, workshop, school or public place in a city, town, village or other urban part of an area."*

Be respectful to your neighbours.

## Planning and development

The major legislation for planning and development is the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. This EP&A Act was reviewed, and the amendments are contained in the *Environment Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2017*. More information about these Acts is available on the [NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment website](#).

Associated with the EP&A Act are the Regulations and various planning instruments which include:

- Standard Instrument Local Environment Plan (LEP) with legislated LEPs for each local government area. The LEP lists the type of development that is allowed in each zone of a local government area (LGA), as well as the types of development that need consent. The LEP for an LGA area can be found on their website.
- Development Control Plans – some LGAs may have further specifications in their development control plans pertinent to the keeping of livestock due to regional or landscape conditions.

- [State Environmental Planning Policy Primary Production and Rural Development](#) – (replaces SEPP 30 Intensive Agriculture)

To assist with proposed developments within Intensive livestock agriculture the Department of Planning and Environment has created [Planning Guidelines for Intensive livestock Agriculture Development](#). It is recommended that proponents read this document and consult with local council for guidance before progressing with new agricultural developments.

The guideline emphasises the importance of early, open and on-going consultation with neighbours, community, and the local government at all stages of the DA process, from initial site selection and project scoping, through to the formal submission and decision-making stages.

The keeping of pigs (including free range pigs) is classified as Intensive Livestock Agriculture and is prohibited in some land-use zones. Intending owners of commercial or hobby pigs should always consult council before acquiring their pig/s.

### **Environment Protection Legislation**

The *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO)* is the key piece of environment protection legislation administered by the EPA; and provides for the management of water, air, odour, and noise pollution through a licensing regime. Persons or corporations who operate an Intensive Livestock industry, including piggeries that are intended to accommodate more than 2,000 pigs or 200 breeding sows, must hold a licence under Section 48 of the Act.

An unlicensed occupier of premises with a piggery accommodating more than 2,000 pigs or 200 breeding sows is guilty of an offence, and liable for financial penalties.

### **National Environmental Guidelines – Australian Pork Limited**

[National Environmental Guidelines for Piggeries \(NEGIP\)](#)

[National Environmental Guidelines for Rotational Outdoor Piggeries \(NEGROP\)](#)

[NEGP Environmental Risk Assessment](#)

[Piggery Manure and Effluent Management and Reuse Guidelines](#)

## **2. Biosecurity**

Biosecurity is important because it protects our economy, environment and community from the negative impacts of pests and diseases, weeds and contaminants for the benefit of all people in NSW.

### **Key NSW biosecurity legislation**

All NSW state legislation may be viewed in detail at the [NSW Government legislation website](#).

## **Biosecurity Act 2015**

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) and the accompanying subordinate legislation came into force from 1st July 2017.

The Act introduces the concept of the *general biosecurity duty* which supports the principle of shared responsibility and means everyone must do what is reasonable for them to do to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks.

Under the Act you are expected to know about biosecurity risks associated with your industry, business, day-to-day work and hobbies.

Biosecurity measures to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risk on a pig farm should include:

- compliance with prohibited pig feed legislation – no swill feeding
- on-farm biosecurity plans – this includes contingency measures to minimise biosecurity risks
- good fences to keep feral pigs out and your pigs at home
- requesting completed animal health declarations with purchased stock
- a quarantine period for animals new to the property
- isolation of sick animals
- good personal hygiene around the animals

## **Biosecurity Regulation 2017**

The *Biosecurity Regulation 2017* makes provision for certain functions described in the Act.

Of interest to pig owners are the following:

### **Division 2: Notification of Pests and Diseases**

There is a requirement for notification (reporting) of certain pests and diseases. A full listing of these diseases may be found in Schedule 1 of the Regulation and on [NSW DPI website](#). These notifiable diseases are also referred to as Emergency Animal Diseases (EAD) in the context of disease response. *Brucella suis* (in all animals and humans) is a notifiable disease; as are exotic diseases such as African Swine Fever (ASF) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Report using the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline 1800 675 888 or contact your LLS 1300 795 299.

### **Division 4: Animal Pests and Diseases**

Clause 17(B) Prohibition on dealings with camels, deer, pigs, rabbits and foxes.

This section prohibits possession or movement of these (live) animals, or their release from captivity.

Feral pigs can carry several pig diseases which are zoonotic meaning they are contagious to humans such as *Brucella suis* (swine brucellosis) and leptospirosis. If feral pigs are a problem on your property contact your Local Land Services (LLS) for assistance.

**Division 9: Section 36-37: Feed Regulations** – in particular, prohibited feeds for pigs.

Essentially it is illegal:

- *to feed, to allow or direct another person to feed prohibited pig feed; or*
- *to allow a pig to have access to prohibited pig feed; or*
- *to collect, store or possess prohibited pig feed on a premise where pigs are kept; or*
- *to supply prohibited pig feed to a person knowing it will be fed to pigs.*

Prohibited pig feed includes products of mammalian origin (meat) or any food that has been in contact with meat of mammalian origin. This means that food waste from households or restaurants, and some bakery waste (containing meat such as pies or sausage rolls) is prohibited pig feed. For more information visit [Animal Health Australia Prohibited Pig Feed \(Swill\)](#). Or [NSW DPI Swill Feeding](#).

### **Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017**

This regulation mandates the requirements for NLIS Pigs which are:

- Property Identification Code (PIC) must be obtained from Local Land Services (LLS) for land on which one or more pigs are kept
- When sold or transported all pigs less than 25kg live must carry a yellow NLIS breeder device (ear tag) if bred on farm; or an orange NLIS post-breeder device (ear tag) if they were purchased or are of unknown origins.
- Pigs greater than 25 kg live weight may be branded with tattoo slap brand on their shoulder; or fitted with a NLIS device – yellow breeder device for bred on farm, orange post-breeder device for purchased or of unknown origin.
- A PigPass NVD must accompany pigs when they are transported to a saleyard, abattoir or another farm. The NVD must be kept for 3 years.
- All pig transport movements must be recorded within 2 working days on the PigPass database by the person receiving the pigs. Saleyard and abattoir operators will do this for you.
- Register for PigPass online on the PigPass website; or with assistance from the PigPass Helpdesk 1800 001458 between 8.30 and 4.30 Monday to Friday.

More information:

[PigPass website](#)

[NSW DPI NLIS pigs](#)

[NSW DPI Biosecurity](#)

[Animal Health Australia website](#)

[National Biosecurity Manual for Pork Production](#)

### 3. Pig Welfare

Animal Welfare in NSW is protected by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation. There are also several Codes of Practice pertaining to husbandry, transport, euthanasia, saleyards and abattoirs and all are available on the NSW DPI website under [General Animal Welfare](#). There is the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs which outlines the minimum standards for the care of pigs. Parts of this Model Code are legislated and form the NSW Code of Practice Commercial Pig Production which is applicable to commercial pig production and has been enforceable since 2010.

#### **Legislation and Codes of Practice specific to pig welfare include:**

[NSW Code of Practice Commercial Pig Production](#)

[Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals Pigs](#)

[Care of the Compromised Pig – Australian Pork Limited](#)

[Companion Handbook to the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals Pigs – Australian Pork Limited](#)

[Is it fit for the intended journey? Australian Pork Limited](#)

#### **Legislation and Codes of Practice for animals and including pigs:**

[Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(Land Transport of Livestock\) Standards 2013](#)

[Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Animals at Saleyards](#)

[Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments](#)

Pig welfare is very much a product of the knowledge and management of the pigs by their human attendants. The most common welfare cases relate to pig nutrition – insufficient amount of feed and poor nutrient content of feed. Poor nutrition affects growth, reproduction, lameness and bone structure, growth rates, disease resilience and carcass quality.

It is recommended that pig owners purchase commercial pig rations that are formulated to meet the pigs' needs for protein, energy, vitamins, minerals and amino acids. Home mixers of feed for pigs should purchase a vitamin and mineral premix to ensure pigs' nutritional needs are met and seek help to formulate suitable rations for their pigs.

#### **Production Guides for Nutrition**

[Producers guide to pig production and nutrition – Australian Pork Limited](#)

[Basic Pig Nutrition Tocal on-line course](#)

## Commonwealth Legislation

All Commonwealth legislation may be viewed in detail on the [Federal Register of Legislation](#).

### **Pig Industry Act 2001**

The *Pig Industry Act 2001* is the legislative framework for the formation and operation of Australian Pork Limited (APL). APL is the national representative body for Australian pork producers. It is a producer-owned, not-for-profit company conducting marketing, export development, research, innovation and strategic policy development for the Australian pork industry.

### **Primary Industry Excise Levies Act 1999 – Schedule 22**

The *Primary Industry Excise Levies Act 1999 – Schedule 22* is the legislative framework for the collection of statutory slaughter levies, which provide the operational funding for the National Residue Survey Pig Monitoring Program and Australian Pork Limited. More information about the current slaughter levy can be found on the [Australian Pork Limited website](#)

Pig slaughter levy Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/rates/pig-slaughter>

### **Border Controls**

Importation of animals and animal products into Australia is regulated by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment under the Biosecurity Act and its subordinate legislation, and by the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) and its subordinate legislation. ([AHiA System Report 2021](#))

Import of live pigs or pig semen has been prohibited since 1995 under import protocols specified under the *Quarantine Act 1904* and *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

More information and any enquiries should be directed to the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

Biosecurity import conditions system ([BICON](#)) phone 1800 900 090

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/live-animals>

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/online-services/bicon>

## Industry Organisations and Contact Details

**[NSW Department of Primary Industries \(NSW DPI\)](#)** – industry assistance in emergencies, landuse planning information, food safety and biosecurity, animal welfare and general pig information [NSW DPI Pigs](#)

**Australian Pork Limited (APL)** – Peak body for the Australian Pork Industry

Phone: 02 6285 2200

Email: [apl@australianpork.com.au](mailto:apl@australianpork.com.au)

**Local Land Services (LLS)** – Find your region, animal health, biosecurity, pest management, weeds, PIC and Swine brand registrations.

Phone: 1300 795 299

**PigPass** – website to register for and order PigPass NVD, report stock movements

Helpdesk: 1800 001 458

Email: [helpdesk@pigpass.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@pigpass.com.au)

**Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program (APIQv)** – Quality assurance program for the pork industry – provides the framework and standards by which Australian pig producers can demonstrate they are responsible farmers who care for their animals, the environment and their customers by following safe and sustainable practices.

Phone: 02 6285 2200

**Animal Health Australia (AHA)**

AHA works with the pork industry to develop and implement national programs to safeguard the health of Australia's commercial pig populations. AUSVETPLAN documents for use in Emergency Animal Disease response are on this website.

Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline: 1800 675 888

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