



# Daily Observation

## General Protocol

- Caretakers are required to observe all pigs on a daily basis.
- Daily observations ensure prompt care of animals with critical health needs and detect any equipment or barn issues that need to be addressed.
- Daily observations determine the effectiveness of health and feeding programs and note any animal health issues.
- Caretakers are required to document daily observations including date, caretaker identity, and location.
- All daily observation records must be kept for a minimum of 12 months.

## Procedures

### Animal observations

*Caretakers should walk the pens of the barn to properly complete this task.*

- Ensure the animals have access to fresh feed and clean water.
- Identify pigs exhibiting signs of illness or that are disadvantaged, and form a treatment plan.
  - » Observe for hernias, body condition scores of 1, tail bites, vulva injuries, prolapse, deep wounds or lesions, lameness, abscesses, shoulder sores (if applicable), scratches that are 12 inches or longer, proper body space, and thermoregulatory behaviors.
- Identify all nonambulatory animals with expectations of recovery and follow a treatment plan.
- Following farm guidelines, euthanize all animals deemed unable to recover.
- Remove all dead animals from the living space and handle according to the farm mortality management plan.

### Thermoregulatory behavior observations

*Caretakers should observe thermoregulatory behavior (the behavioral response of pigs to the barn environment).*

- Animals piling or huddling on top of one another indicates that the temperature is too low.
- Animals widely spread apart, along with increased respirations, indicates that the barn temperature is too high.
- Animals, which are close, but not huddling or piling, indicates that the temperature is appropriate.





## Environmental observations

*Caretakers should observe the environment of the animals, including air quality, ventilation, and manure levels.*

- Ensure the ventilation equipment is functioning properly. Check that fans, inlets, baffles, and curtains are working and clean.
- Determine if the air quality or humidity level is appropriate.
  - » Ensure that a strong ammonia smell that may cause a burning sensation or a burning sensation in the throat and chest is not present.
  - » Ensure that fan settings are appropriate for the conditions. If humidity is a concern, make sure that minimal speed ventilation or greater is occurring.
  - » Observe the barn for signs indicating high humidity is present, including water dripping from pipes, condensation on windows and walls, wet floors and dust balling up on gates.
  - » Ensure the animals have access to a dry area in which to lie down. If a dry area is not found, make adjustments to the ventilation system.
- Keep manure levels 12 inches or lower from slatted surface or pig access, to ensure adequate air movement and reduce herd infection from exposure to manure.

## Daily barn observations

*Facilities should be evaluated daily to ensure that they are in good repair and mechanisms are functioning fully.*

- Ensure that feed systems are properly functioning to avoid out-of-feed events.
- Ensure that individual pigs and groups have adequate feed and water access to meet daily requirements without inducing excessive fighting and competition.
- Immediately repair broken slats or flooring that may risk injury to animals or caretakers.
- Check pens and alleys for sharp objects or broken pieces of pens or equipment to reduce injury to pigs.
- Address all equipment issues that require immediate repair.
- Record equipment needing general maintenance and make a plan to address it.
- Observe the premises around barns as well as inside barns for debris, spillage of feed or manure, and rodent damage.

**Related document:** “Daily Temperature Record Sheet”



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