



Safe Pig Handling

**Group Sow
Housing**

Step 1 Put on your personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Recommended PPE:
 - Steel toe boots
 - Earplugs
- Suggested PPE:
 - Bump caps
 - Dust masks
 - Knee pads
 - Safety glasses



Step 2 Recognize normal sow behavior.

- Eating
- Drinking
- Sleeping
- Occasional fighting, especially after weaning
 - Always carry a sort board to separate aggressive sows.
 - If you cannot safely separate the sows, back away and let them fight it out.



Step 3 Calmly and quietly interact with sows regularly.

- Walk calmly through the sows to observe or chore.
- Respect the flight zones of individual sows as well as the flight zone of the herd.
- Use minimal noise and only when necessary.
- Communicate your presence with gentle touch.
- Bend the knees to squat, don't bend at the waist.



Step 4

Observe freshly weaned sows regularly and monitor for fighting.

- Use a sort board.
- Have an escape route.
- If sows are fighting, it might be possible to separate them if aggressive intention has just started.
 - If necessary, let them fight it out to stay safe.



Step 5 Identify and treat sick sows.

- Do a head to tail observation of every sow and look for clinical signs that are abnormal.
 - Lethargic
 - Feverish
 - Thin
 - Lamé
 - Off-feed
 - Other
- Avoid slip and trip hazards.
 - Bodily fluids
 - Feces
 - Damaged flooring
- Handle needles safely between use.
 - Never carry uncapped needles in your pocket.
 - Always use pliers to recap needles.
 - Always dispose of used, bent, burred, or dirty needles in designated sharps containers.



Step 6

Follow your farm's protocol for the timing of pregnancy confirmation.

- Ultrasound according to your farm's protocol.
- Conduct weekly walk-throughs to visually confirm pregnancy in sows 60+ days pregnant.
- Do not perform ultrasounds if a boar is in the pen and you are alone.
- Remain aware of the behavior of other females in the pen.



Step 7 Sort sows out when needed for special treatment or movement.

- Prepare the path of movement before sorting.
- Enter the pen with a coworker, each with a sort board.
- Keep a slight bend to the knees while in the pen.
- Use the sort board to separate the sow and encourage forward movement to her destination.



Step 8 Tag gilts prior to entry to a group according to your farm's protocol.

- The center of the ear is the correct placement for the tag.
 - Improper placement increases the risk of the tag being pulled out,
- If using a snare
 - Snare behind the canines.
 - Release the snare careful to prevent injury.

