Safe Pig Handling

Semen Collection & Boar Stud Safety
Semen Collection & Boar Stud Safety

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

• Recommended PPE:
  ▫ Earplugs
  ▫ Steel toe boots
  ▫ Dust masks
  ▫ Gloves
  ▫ Sorting boards
    ▪ Make sure the sorting board fits easily down the hallway so it doesn't snag or trip you.
    ▪ Make sure the sorting board is not too narrow, or it will limit your ability to guide the boar.

• Suggested PPE:
  ▫ Knee pads
  ▫ Bump caps
  ▫ Safety glasses
Understand procedure for moving the boar from his stall to the collection area.

- Only move one boar at a time to prevent opportunities for fighting.
- Prepare the pathway and pick up any obstacles, such as feed that has spilled onto or close to the pathway, that could distract the boar.
- Regularly clean the aisle to remove feces and other slipping and tripping hazards.
- When you release the boar from his stall, stand behind the stall gate, and safely move the boar forward out of his stall.
- If you need to encourage the boar to exit the stall, use a sorting board to protect yourself while you guide him out of the stall. Or have a team member encourage him from behind and step back to allow a clear path forward for him.
  - Eventually, the boar will learn that leaving his stall to go to the collection pen is a positive event.
Step 3: It is important for employees to feel safe while working with boars.

- If you are uncomfortable moving a boar because he exhibits aggressive behavior, report him.
- Use caution and strongly consider culling a boar who has behaved aggressively.
- Follow your farm’s protocol for aggressive boar culling if applicable.
**Step 4**

Understand that untrained boars may need more guidance and training than older boars.

- Be patient with younger boars.
- Give time to explore the environment the first time they are moved through the barn.
- Their flight zone will be larger until they feel comfortable in the new environment, so apply pressure and release appropriately.
- Limit distractions by preparing the hallway before movement.
Step 5  Know how to position yourself safely when in a pen with the boar.

- Never work alone when training boars in isolation.
- Employees should work in teams of two when working with boars.
- Never turn your back on a boar.
- Always carry a sorting board to guide boars to the dummy.
Semen Collection & Boar Stud Safety

Step 6

Be able to identify normal calm boar behavior and normal mating behavior.

• Normal behavior
  ▫ Most time is spent eating, drinking, sleeping, and rubbing against the stall.
  ▫ Muscles and posture will be relaxed.

• Mating behavior
  ▫ Dominating other boars to ensure they are first to mate
  ▫ Aggression to secure dominance
  ▫ Salivating
  ▫ Chomping
  ▫ Vocalizing
  ▫ Attempting to mount and nudge objects representing the female with his snout or the side of his head
Step 7  Be able to identify aggressive boar behavior.

- Muscle tension
- Chomping or popping of jaw
- Making eye contact
- Swinging the head
- Bowing head while holding gaze and pointing tusks toward potential victim and lean back in a stiff legged stance
- They may become confrontational and sniff, poke, or jab other boars
- Hair on the shoulders or along the spine standing on end
- Charging forward
Step 8 Stay safe during times of elevated libido.

- Never let your guard down when boars are calm or exhibiting normal breeding behavior.
- Keep a sorting board with you to protect you from normal breeding behavior, and never stand where you may become trapped.
- When boars become aggressive, dominant, or competitive, stay behind your sorting board and move to a safe spot as quickly as possible without turning your back.
- Move one boar at a time.
- If boars are competing, dominating or expressing aggression toward you or another boar, get out of the pen or aisle immediately.
If the boar becomes aggressive, get to safety as quickly as possible.

If you can’t get out quickly, protect yourself by holding a sorting board between you and the boar while moving backwards to safety.

Some pens are designed with vertical slats, so people can easily move to safety if needed.

Never turn your back.

If a pig charges and you do not have a sorting board or easy means of escape, a quick sidestep or side leap may avoid a head-on charge and potential swing of the tusks.
Be aware of strategies to be mindful of in the case of injury.

- Call for help to notify others immediately of your situation.
- If you are impaled by a tusk, try to remain standing at all costs.
  - People who fall to the ground typically sustain more serious injuries.
- Work to remove yourself from the situation.
• Evaluate the dummy for stability and the need for repairs prior to collection.
• Wear two pairs of gloves to prevent bacterial contamination of the semen.
• For a trained boar, stand back and allow the boar to go through his routine prior to mounting the dummy.
• Position yourself to the side of the boar and dummy.
• Approach and ejaculate the boar after he is mounted.
• Keep distractions to a minimum and let the boar focus on his task.
• As you collect be aware of the boar’s positioning and watch for signs of unbalance.
• Have your cup warmer ready for collection.
• Be aware of the boar’s changing moods or behavior. It is important that you do not drop your guard.
• If you use Lutalyse, follow safety precautions for the use of hormonal products.
  ◦ Women of childbearing age and persons with respiratory problems should exercise extreme caution when handling Lutalyse.
• Boars should be active, in good body condition, and have no lameness.
  ▫ Check for lesions near the prepuce or testes or across the body.
  ▫ If a boar needs treatment, take care of him immediately.
• Follow your farm’s treatment and vaccination plan.
• Know how to safely gather diagnostics per your veterinarian’s protocol.
• Many farms gather diagnostics during semen collection with no additional restraint, and other farms snare the boar prior to treatment or gathering diagnostics.
  ▫ If you need to snare the boar, be sure to use a longer functional snare and hook the snare behind the canine teeth.
  ▫ If the snare is not behind the canines, it could slip out of the boar’s mouth and injure you.

Step 12 Be safe during routine health and wellness events.
Be aware and implement safe culling and transport practices.

• Culling programs should be implemented and understood.
  
  ◦ Cull older or dangerous boars.
  ◦ Some systems choose to euthanize boars on-site, while others send them to market.
  ◦ Only ship healthy boars.
  ◦ Any lame, sick, or aggressive boars should be euthanized on-site.

• If your farm sends boars to market, use a sorting board to load them one at a time.

• If possible, use a trailer that separates each boar because they will likely fight during the ride to market.

• Depending on your farm’s protocol, regular de-tusking according to your veterinarian’s protocol may be allowed to facilitate movement and safety.

• The driver should always be TQA certified and use a sorting panel for unloading.