**Swine Behaviour**

Hogs can seem small, because they are generally low to the ground. Do not be misled by this. These animals are very strong, agile and have a lot of body weight behind them when they move, and can move very fast when frightened, challenged or on the offensive.

**Vision**

People working with hogs should be aware of the limitations of their vision. Hogs may have: colour blindness, poor eyesight and depth perception making it difficult for them to judge distances. Hogs may have extreme sensitivity to contrasts, which may cause them to hesitate at sudden changes in temperature, lighting, shadows, colour or texture; Hogs may balk at being moved into brightly lit areas. Hogs are sensitive to distractions or sudden movement because of their wide angled vision.

**Blind Spot**

1. Hogs have a very wide circle of vision that extends almost 310 degrees to everywhere except directly behind their head: their blind spot. A quick movement behind a hog is just as apt to "set them off" as a move in front of them.

**Hearing**

Workers should be aware that hogs have sensitive hearing and can detect sounds that human ears cannot hear. Loud, abrupt noises can frighten hogs and cause distress. Keep noise and yelling to a minimum when working with hogs. Reducing nose levels will have a calming effect on hogs.

1. **Signs of Distress**

Hogs demonstrate signs of distress by lying down, refusing to move or panting. If hogs are showing these signs of distress, leave them alone. The squeal of a hog does not necessarily mean that it is in distress. Hogs squeal for no apparent reason. Hog squeals are loud and high pitched enough to cause serious hearing damage to a person. When working around hogs, always use hearing protection.

**Ways an animal can hurt you**

Punctures, cuts, and needle stick injuries are among the most common injuries that handlers experience while clipping teeth, giving shots, cutting tails, ear tattooing, and castrating. When handling medication and completing injections, don’t carry a syringe or needle in your pocket. Deaths and severe medical reactions have been reported after accidental injections of certain medications meant for animals.

**Safe Handling**

When approaching a hog, handlers should announce their presence by voice or by being clearly visible or gently touch the animal on the side. Stay calm and move slowly and deliberately, avoiding loud noises or quick movements. Never prod an animal when it has nowhere to go. Do not startle them or awaken them suddenly. Aggressive handling can cause heart attacks in hogs. Use proper lifting techniques when lifting hogs to avoid back injury. Workers should not attempt to move or stop hogs with their knees. Use a sorting board to move and direct the hogs. Have an escape route when working with hogs in a closed area. Do not overcrowd hog pens or chutes. Crowding can cause hogs to become aggressive and territorial and they may injure each other.

**Flight Zone**

The flight zone is the hog’s personal space or the minimum acceptable distance between the animal and any perceived threat. Entering an animal’s flight zone could cause panic and confusion. The flight zone can vary from animal to animal and is determined by the individual animal’s comfort with the handler. Handlers can effectively move hogs by understanding and remaining at the edge of the flight zone.

**Transporting Hogs**

Hogs are under a great deal of stress when they are being transported. When loading and unloading hogs, the animals should be moved as quickly and efficiently. Workers should remain calm and only load small groups at one time. Use hog panels to move hogs through the chute. Blocking vision on loading ramps will stop escape attempts and lower the stress level of the hogs. Keep the flooring consistent wherever the hogs will be moved, because these animals can detect changes and may resist being moved. Directing a spotlight onto a ramp may facilitate movement. Limit the number of hogs being moved at one time to a manageable group size.

**Swine Behaviour – DISCUSSION RECORD**

**Agenda:**

* Discuss the hazards with the swine on your farm.
* Identify swine with risky behaviour or tendencies.
* Review control methods of handling swine on your farm.
* Discuss incidents and injuries that have occurred on farm when working with this animal.

Comments or safety concerns as a result of the discussion or observed since the last rally?

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Follow-up to concerns raised at previous rally?  
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Action Items?  
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Near Miss/Incidents/Unsafe Acts/Conditions to Report?

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Topics recommended for future Rallies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank the rally members for their participation.**

**Quiz Answers:** 1. T, 2. T, 3. d, 4. T, 5. b

**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

1. Swine are very strong, agile and have a lot of body weight behind them when they move, and can move very fast when frightened, challenged or on the offensive. True or False

2. When approaching a hog, handlers should announce their presence by voice or by being clearly visible or gently touch the animal on the side.True or False

3. Hogs demonstrate signs of distress by:

1. lying down
2. refusing to move
3. panting
4. all of the Above

4. Workers should remain calm and only load small groups at one time. Use hog panels to move hogs through the chute. True or False

5.Hogs have a very wide circle of vision that extends almost \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ degrees to everywhere except directly behind their head:

a. 360

b. 310

c. 180

d. 190

e. all of the above

**Attendance RECORD**

\*This is to acknowledge that I understand and agree to actively participate in the safety meeting.

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