

Importing swine to Yukon

Winter 2018
Animal Health Program

There are several things to consider before you arrange to bring pigs to your Yukon farm. Herd health is even more important with the recent diagnosis of a new disease (porcine epidemic diarrhea) in Canada so you should ask about the health status of pigs you import and provide the best possible conditions for them when they arrive.

First steps for importing swine

If you prepare well before you bring pigs home, you will minimize the possibility of introducing sick animals to Yukon and ease the stress on pigs you have invested in.

- Review your goals for swine production and plan ahead through to slaughter.
- Avoid adding new pigs to an established herd. Practice “all-in/all-out” management to reduce spread of disease. Allow for a dry period on your farm (i.e., clean, disinfect and leave the facility empty for 2 weeks).
- Consider importing in the spring when temperatures are most suitable for swine.
- Buy from a reputable producer and inquire about the health status of the herd and individual pigs before you purchase.
- Ensure safe and humane transport for your pigs. The trailer or truck should be cleaned and disinfected prior to loading your animals. Don't mix pigs from various sources in one load.

Purchasing your pigs

- Make a pre-purchase checklist that you develop with your veterinarian's advice.
- Buy from a healthy herd. New pigs are the most common way that diseases are brought into a herd.
- Buy from a single source herd that has been tested and is free of, or vaccinated for, common diseases including Porcine circovirus 2 (PCV2), Erysipelas, Mycoplasma spp., Swine influenza virus, Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSv), Swine dysentery, and Transmissible gastroenteritis (TGE)/Porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED).

Disease transmission

- Disease is most often spread to pigs from direct contact with other pigs. Disease can also be transmitted through contact with things (boots, clothes, vehicles, tools) or people as well as from other animals including wildlife and birds.



Contact

Animal Health Unit
Government of Yukon
867-667-5600 or
1-800-661-0408, ext. 5600

Box 2703 (V-7)
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 2C6

Email:
animalhealth@gov.yk.ca

Swine diseases

As a swine producer, it is up to you to stay current on disease concerns and outbreaks in your area. Porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv) and swine flu (which can also affect humans) are some of the more important swine diseases you should monitor for.

Basic housing and husbandry

Swine are strong and grow to be large animals. Prepare housing considering the size the pigs will be at each stage of your production.

- Ensure adequate space, including shelter for all animals and room for activity. Pens should be strong enough to prevent escape.
- Ensure supplemental heat, if needed, is provided safely. Good ventilation is required with enclosed barns to control humidity and air quality. Shelter should protect from drafts and temperature extremes and provide shade.
- Set up an isolation pen or area to allow segregation of sick animals and separation of aggressive animals as needed.

Monitoring/caretaking

Once your pigs arrive, develop a routine that will help identify problems early.

- Pigs perform best when they have consistent access to feed and water. Monitor feed consumption. Ensure water sources do not freeze. Snow is not adequate to support good growth.
- Become familiar with swine body condition scoring and use these guidelines to watch for changes in your animals.
- Observe the pigs closely at least twice daily. Spend time learning what is normal behaviour for your pigs.

Signs of illness in pigs

- Drop in feed consumption.
- Listlessness, reluctance to rise, self-isolation from the herd.
- Shivering and raising of hair over the body.
- Loss of body weight, declining body condition score.
- Vomiting/diarrhea.
- Change in feces (blood, mucous).
- Discharge from eyes/nose.
- Skin changes, bluing of extremities.
- Lameness, limping, weakness.
- Change in respiration rate or effort.

What to do if pigs are sick or die

- Segregate sick animals, provide nursing care (ensure the animal can access food and water), tend to the sick pigs only after you have cared for the healthy herd.
- Contact a veterinarian or the Animal Health Unit if you are concerned. If an animal dies, consider requesting a necropsy to determine the cause of death.