

ZQAP

Zimbabwe Quality Assured Pork



Zimbabwe Quality Assured Pork (ZQAP) Scheme

Administered by the Livestock Identification Trust (LIT)

To achieve Zimbabwe Quality Assured Pork status, producers must comply with the following regulations:

- 1. Pig Welfare Code**
- 2. African Swine Fever**
- 3. Traceability**
- 4. Halothane Status**
- 5. Drug Usage & Withdrawal Periods**
- 6. Stockfeed & Feed Raw Ingredients**
- 7. Export Stock & Slaughter Pig Age Determination Register**

Developed by the Zimbabwe Pig Producers Association in conjunction with Colcom Foods Ltd, Harare, Zimbabwe in 2000.

1.1 Pig Welfare Code

Note: - This code of practice is intended to be a supplementary set of rules that in no way supersedes or contradicts existing legislation concerning the care and handling of animals or the provisions of Meat Hygiene Regulations.

General

Zimbabwe Pig Producers Association and Colcom Foods Limited accepts that pigs should be afforded the five Freedoms of Webster, namely:-

1. Freedom from Malnutrition
2. Freedom from thermal and physical discomfort
3. Freedom from injury
4. Freedom to express most normal patterns of behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and stress

Welfare Officer and Welfare Visits to Farms

All pig production units wishing to achieve ZQAP status should be visited at least monthly by an approved Welfare Officer whose task is to monitor and give advice on pig welfare to the owners/managers of the units. The Welfare Officer must be a veterinarian.

Stockmanship, Husbandry and Health Care

1. Stock workers must be appropriately trained to deal with pigs, and perform routine procedures in a manner that is clean, quick and with minimum discomfort to pigs.
2. Routine procedures which may be performed by the owner or trained stock workers are the following:-
 - Injections (the neck muscles are the preferred site);
 - Tail docking, clipping, ear notching and tattooing of piglets up to 7 days of age; and
 - Basic wound care, claw trimming, using antiseptics and pesticides, providing manual assistance with farrowing, sheath washing of boars, semen collection and insemination on the home property and pregnancy testing with externally applied apparatus.
3. Kicking, the use of electric prodders, whips, metal rods, heavy sticks or other objects liable to injure or terrify pigs are all forbidden.
4. Medication and growth promotants in feed may be used in consultation with a veterinarian or qualified

nutritionist.

5. Animal waste and waste products must be handled in such a way as to minimise the risk of spread of disease to other animals or to humans, and in a way that keeps pollution to a minimum.
6. Strict control on vermin such as flies and rodents should be maintained.

Housing

1. Tethers:-
 - No tether systems will be acceptable under the ZQAP scheme.
2. Crates:-
 - Dry sow crates shall be no less than 600mm wide (first parity 520mm) by 2 000mm long by 1 000mm high, with no sharp projections. The bottom rail must be high enough to permit the sow to lie with her legs naturally extended;
 - Farrowing crates must be designed to allow the sow to stand or lie comfortably without impedance to her legs or udder and which must be readily accessible to her piglets; and
 - A demarcated creep area with bedding and provision for warmth for piglets is highly desirable in the farrowing pen.
3. Floors must be finished to allow for easy cleaning without being slippery and causing pigs difficulty in standing or moving. Slats must be aligned evenly and spaced to avoid danger to feet.
4. Space allocation must be at least one metre square per 100kg live body mass on non-slatted floor types.
5. Housing and crates must be well drained and kept in a clean hygienic condition.
6. Pens (indoor and outdoor) and handling facilities must be constructed and maintained so discomfort and injuries to the animals are minimised
7. Animals must have shelter against direct sunlight.
8. Separate pens or sufficient space must be provided for housing different categories of pigs to avoid unnecessary distress or injury. Consideration must be given to size, sex, maturity and function when mixing pigs in confined areas. Sick or victimised pigs require isolation from healthy and aggressive pen mates.
9. Seriously injured or terminally sick animals should be destroyed humanely.

Nutrition

1. Pigs must have access to clean, fresh, cool drinking water at all times.
2. Pigs must have easy access to adequate quantities of clean, fresh and balanced diets every day.

Transport

1. Whenever possible, pigs must be transported in the cooler part of the day. They must in any case be protected from direct sun and exhaust gases from motor vehicles.
2. Sick and injured pigs should only be transported for purposes of getting veterinary treatment and must be separated from fit pigs if on the same vehicle
3. The vehicle must have:-
 - A free flow of air over all pigs on the load that avoids sucking exhaust fumes into the load area;
 - Provision for partitioning to separate different categories of pigs, or to divide large numbers into groups to avoid crushing;
 - A floor that is designed, or adapted by use of sand, bedding etc to minimise slipping;
 - Sides high enough to prevent the animals from jumping out;
 - Internal surfaces and structures that will not cause injury to pigs; and
 - Loading gate(s) large enough to allow free movement of pigs onto and off the vehicle.
4. Floor Space:-
 - Allow 0.4 square metres per 100kg live mass.
5. Loading and Driving:-
 - Loading ramps and platforms must be built or adapted to match vehicle height and loading gate to ensure that pigs cannot escape or fall off;
 - Loading and unloading must be done quietly and with minimum force. The use of boards and rolled plastic bags is recommended. No electric prodders are to be used;
 - Drivers of motor vehicles must do their best to ensure a smooth ride and only stop the vehicle when absolutely necessary; and
 - Owners / managers must have pre-arranged contingency plans for emergencies such as breakdowns at all times.
6. Feeding and Watering:-
 - If journeys are extensive e.g. longer than 24hours, water must be available en route and preferably food as well where practical.

Abattoirs

1. Lairage

- Offloading area and passageways must be such as to allow free movement of pigs from transport to holding pens;
- Water sprays or hoses should be available for cleaning and cooling hot, dirty or fractious pigs;
- Batches of pigs from different producers must be penned separately;
- Pens and passageways must have non-slip floors, rounded corners, secure gates and sides and kept in good repair;
- The whole lairage must be kept thoroughly clean;
- Personnel handling pigs must be trained in welfare standards and in the use of boards and non-damaging “slaps” to ensure that stress and injury are avoided. No electric prodders are permitted in a pig abattoir; and
- All waiting pens must be supplied with readily available clean water for pigs of all sizes. Pigs to be held overnight may be fed in the evening.

2. Stunning

- Pigs should be slaughtered after a few hours in the lairage unless they are exhausted or distressed by heat or illness or hunger, in which case they should be given appropriate handling on veterinary advice;
- No pig shall be stunned until the previously stunned pig has been hoisted for sticking;
- Electrical or effective carbon dioxide stunning is the method of choice for routine stunning. Captive bolt pistols must only be used on individual animals where electrical stunning is inadequate;
- Stunning apparatus must be kept in faultless working order and be used only in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Pigs should be restrained or closely confined in the stunning pen to avoid chasing around. The use of stunning apparatus to immobilise pigs by application to parts other than head or neck is forbidden;
- Good contact between electrodes and the pig's head or neck is best achieved by wet electrodes on a dry pig to avoid scattering of current to earth;
- The criterion for efficient stunning is to pass a current of at least 1.25 amperes through the central nervous system of the pig and a visible ammeter should be mounted in the stunning pen;
- Effective stunning can be presumed to have taken place when the pigs hind legs are fully extended and the corneal reflex is absent (i.e. touching the eye surface produces no reaction of the eyelids) which may take up to 10 seconds with low voltages (less than 100V);
- Sticking must follow stunning without delay and should be achieved within 8 seconds; and
- The slaughter staff must be trained in the principles of efficient and humane stunning.

1.2 African Swine Fever Regulations

Section 4 of the Animal Health (African Swine Fever), gazetted 1994, specifies that no pig may be kept on any place except in facilities approved by the Director of Veterinary Services.

An approved facility means a facility fenced to the satisfaction of the Department so that there will be no direct contact between domestic and wild pigs or warthog. In order to achieve this, the domestic pigs must be housed in sties, which must be further protected by an outer perimeter fence. Any units not in compliance with the Swine Fever regulations may be closed with immediate effect at the discretion of the Department of Livestock and Veterinary Services.

Fencing specifications:-

- The outer perimeter fence must be at least 3m from the housing;
- The fencing type must be diamond mesh or segura-mesh;
- The outer perimeter fence must be at least 1.3m high;
- The outer perimeter fence must be buried vertically to a depth of 30cm below ground level and a further 30cm running horizontally (facing out) at the bottom of the trench; and
- Gates must be kept closed except to permit entry of personnel or vehicles.

If pigs are to be kept on pastures, they should be protected from making contact with wild pig and warthog by a double fence system. The fences must be at least 3m apart, with the outer perimeter fence complying with the specifications detailed above.

1.3 Traceability

Traceability is based on a unique identification for an animal and the geographic movement of that animal from birth to slaughter.

Methods of Identification on Farm

1. Reusable eartags;
2. Reusable eartags with microchips;
3. Tattooing – ear and slapping; and
4. Ear notching

Method of Identification Farm to Market

Prior to dispatch to Colcom, pigs must be slapped with an allocated producer code specific to farm.

1.4 Halothane Status

Pale Soft Exudative (PSE) meat is related to one or both of two causes, namely mishandling leading to stress and the genetic constitution of the pig. These conditions interact so that susceptible pigs, when stressed, will show a high frequency of PSE. A high incidence of halothane “carrier” and “reactor” pigs represent a loss to the industry at both the primary production and processing levels. As the mode of inheritance for the halothane gene is simple Mendelian, ensuring that all services are performed by sires or semen from sires proven to be halothane free will drastically reduce the negative aspects associated with the stress gene.

The following conditions must be adhered to as one of the conditions of achieving ZQAP status:-

Natural Services

All sires are to be certified halothane free either by:-

1. Proving that the individual animal is halothane free by means of DNA follicle testing; and
2. Proving that the individual animal is halothane free by virtue of that animal having been derived from parentage proven to be halothane free.

Artificial Insemination

Semen used to be derived from sires proven to be halothane free as per either method 1 or 2 above.

1.5 Drug Usage Withdrawal Periods

Antibiotics are used in livestock production for the purposes of enhancing production, disease prevention and control, and therapy in farm animals. To ensure that consumers feel comfortable that meat coming from food animals is produced in a responsible manner with antibiotics having been used to compliment good husbandry practices, producers wishing to achieve ZQAP status must conform to the following conditions:

Label instructions

These should be carefully followed and due attention paid to species and disease indications and contra indications, dosage regime, withdrawal periods and storage instructions.

Off label use of antibiotics should be exceptional and always under the professional responsibility of a veterinarian.

Antibiotics used for therapy

Antibiotics should be used for as long as needed, over as short a dosage period as possible and at the appropriate dosage regime.

Dosage Regime: - It is essential to administer the antibiotic in accordance with the recommended dosage regime. This will minimise therapy failures, exploit fully the efficacy potential of the product, and comply with the regulated withdrawal times. Each class of antibiotics has its own unique pharmacodynamic properties, which are expressed fully when the recommended dosage regime is applied.

As long as necessary: - Insufficient duration of administration can lead to recrudescence of the infection. This may lead to increased likelihood of selecting micro-organisms with reduced sensitivity.

As short as possible: - Limiting the duration of use to only that required for therapeutic effect will minimise the exposure of the bacterial population to the antibiotic. The adverse effects on the surviving commensal microflora are minimised and the medical impact of the remaining zoonotic organisms is minimised/reduced. Theoretically, antibiotic use should be stopped as soon as the animals own host defence system can control the infection itself.

Records

Records should be kept of all antibiotic administrations. A register for the recording all antibiotic administrations is provided by ZQAP.

1.6 Feed & Reed raw Ingredients

Feed is a critical and major input into a pig unit. It can also be the source of infections or toxic agents which, besides having implications for the health of the pig, can potentially affect consumers of pork and pork products.

Sourcing

The source of formulated compound feeds or raw ingredients for on-farm manufacture must be maintained. Please refer to the Materials/Feed Ingredient Receipt Schedule form provided by ZQAP. This allows traceability back to the source should any contamination have taken place. Suppliers of feed and feed ingredients should also take precautions to prevent contamination.

Transport

The movement of feed or feed ingredients from the supplier or mill to the piggery should be done in such a way as to prevent contamination by infectious or toxic agents.

Swill

No ZQAP registered producer may feed swill under any circumstances.

1.7 Export Stock and Age Determination Register

Stock Register

A Stock Register must be completed by all persons wishing to achieve ZQAP status.

Age Determination Register

In order to qualify for the cost-plus contract, the producer must average 25 weeks or less to slaughter to minimise the risks of “Boar Taint” in the carcasses and thus resistance from the more discerning markets.

This will be determined by the inspecting veterinarian at every visit and the producer is required to meet the desired maximum average age at slaughter. Should the producer not meet the required age at one inspection he/she will be given a period of three (3) months after which a further calculation will be made and those not compliant will be no longer eligible for the contract.

The average age at slaughter will be determined as follows: -

Average age at Slaughter (Weeks)

Total number of pigs present on the farm from birth to slaughter, excluding breeding stock

Average number of pigs sold per week over the last 21 weeks

OR

Total number of pigs present post-weaning, excluding breeding stock

Average number of pigs sold per week over 21 weeks

PLUS the average weaning age of the pigs