

Make a stepwise action plan for improving welfare

Topic	Question	Yes	Can be better	No	Priority yes/no
Human–animal interaction	Are the pigs calm and can be handled efficiently?				
Enrichment	Is enrichment available?				
	Is the enrichment suitable for the age/type of animal?				
	Is the enrichment in the correct place?				
Neonatal piglets	Is the mortality reasonable given the litter size?				
	Can the sows nurse their piglets well?				
Procedures	Is pain relief/anaesthesia given when castrating?				
	Are procedures carried out quickly with minimal stress to piglets and sow?				
Euthanasia	Are the staff members proficient in performing euthanasia on piglets?				
Weaning	Does weaning provide a gradual transition of changes?				

	Does weaning stress subside after one day?				
Tail biting	Is attention paid to the tail posture?				
Aggression	Is regrouping minimized?				
Boars	Is the welfare of the boars similar to the gilts?				
Nest building	Do the sows have some form of nest building material?				
Farrowing pen	Is the farrowing pen design optimal?				
	Would the pens be suitable to transition to free farrowing pens?				
Pain relief	Is pain relief given to sows when required?				
Lying comfort	Are sows free from lying injuries?				
	Can sows stand up easily in the pen?				
Prenatal stress	Is stress minimized during gestation?				
Sow aggression	Is regrouping of sows largely avoided?				
Hunger	Are sows fed roughage?				
Cull sows	Are cull sows in reasonable condition when transported?				
Gilt rearing	Are the gilts calm and used to human contact?				

Topic	Suggestion
Human–animal interaction	Improve human–animal interaction by frequent calm (hand) contact and using a calm voice. Give the pigs more positive experiences with humans.
Enrichment	Provide enrichment appropriate to the age and type of pig.
	Ensure that materials are chewable, edible, deformable, can be used together, and do not pose a risk.
	Adjust the enrichment to the right height and ensure that it does not get soiled.
Neonatal piglets	Do not push the genetics for large litter size if the housing and management available is not suitable for it.
	Select the right genetics to optimize number and vitality of weaned piglets within the system.
Procedures	Consider options that minimize pain.
	Think of how procedures can be done more efficiently, for example, by treating piglets in a separate room.
Euthanasia	Provide staff training on best practice.
Weaning	Consider spreading the stressful events for pigs over several days by removing the sow before moving piglets.
	Aim to keep litters together to minimize aggression. Make weaning as smooth as possible.
Tail biting	Train staff to pay attention to tail posture to detect tail biting early on. Use the action plan in Section 4.4.2 for further steps.
Aggression	Minimize regrouping when possible.
Boars	House boars with appropriate flooring to reduce lameness due to mounting.
Nest building	Provide some form of nest material to reduce sow stress, even if just a few handfuls of hay/straw.
Farrowing pen	See if small things can be improved at reasonable costs.
	If the farm is in Europe, think ahead for the possibility that free farrowing might be a new standard in the future.
Pain relief	Consider giving pain relief when sows have difficulty with farrowing.
Lying comfort	Provide mats or different flooring to reduce injuries.
	Consider adjusting the roughness of the floor or a bar to stand/lie more easily.

Pre-natal stress	Assess stressful situations for pregnant sows and discuss how these can be minimized. Look at improving handling, and of minimizing heat stress due to increasing environmental temperatures.
Sow aggression	Aim to keep stable groups of sows and introduce new sows gradually. Interfere when needed.
Hunger	Provide roughage or foraging materials for sows.
Cull sows	Provide cull sows with a comfortable pen with bedding to gain energy/recover ahead of transport. Avoid regrouping of weak sows.
Gilt rearing	Have daily contact with the gilts, using voice and touch.