



National Pig Association

Agriculture House
Stoneleigh Park
Warwickshire
CV8 2TZ

Tel: 02476 858780

Fax: 02476 858786

Direct line: 07790 117091

Email: lizzie.press@npanet.org.uk

NPA Heads of Breeding Companies committee – harmonised import protocol

One of the principal threats to the health of the UK pig herd is via imported pork products, whether in the form of live animals, ova/semen or meat and meat products. As responsible businesses, the primary breeding companies operating within the UK already employ health protocols that exceed the statutory requirements. However it is incumbent on any individual importing products to protect the health status of the National herd by adhering to a formal protocol. Therefore, the NPA Breeding Companies committee, which comprises the aforementioned breeding companies and their veterinarians, have developed harmonised import protocols for live pigs entering the country. The guidance and protocols below are designed to include stock from both new and existing sources and aims to monitor all major pathogens of concern to UK pig health. Additional information such as useful government links and quarantine definition details are also included. Annex 1 comprises suggested diseases testing regimes **in addition to legal requirements**. It is important that any party intending to import live pigs or semen to the UK does so using an imports protocol, incorporating the guidance below as a base. This will then be audited under the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme. Please note this is merely a guidance document and minor protocol variations for individual imports and farm situations may be required.

1.0 Legal requirements

All domestic species of pigs imported from other Member States must comply with the requirements of Council Directive 64/432/EEC (as amended).

The Directive requires that pigs for breeding and production must come from:

- brucellosis-free stock; and
- an officially swine fever-free region or a swine fever-free holding (if they come from the latter, they must be accompanied by a certificate testifying that they have not been vaccinated).

All consignments of pigs must be accompanied by an original health certificate signed by an official veterinarian or inspector of the veterinary authorities of the Member State concerned. The certificate must:

- be drawn up on the day of inspection (which must be within 24 hours of departure);
- be made out for a single consignee and single transport container; and
- be valid for a period of 10 days from the date of the health examination.

As a general rule, pigs imported from another Member State and being transported in a single vehicle will be regarded as a single consignment. As such, it must be accompanied by a single health certificate and be delivered to a single address. Multi-destination consignments are only permitted under certain circumstances.

Please follow the link below for further legal conditions applicable for the imports of pigs from both EU Member States and specified third countries.

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/animaltrade/imports/iins/pigs/index.htm>

2.0 Pre import protocol

Responsible parties must ensure proper pretesting of stock before departure from the source country. If importing from a new source, testing for the following pathogens would be expected;

- Porcine respiratory and reproductive syndrome virus (PRRSv)
- MRSA
- *Leptospira Pomona*, *L. Tarassovi*, *L. Grippotyphosa*
- Salmonella
- *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae* (APP)
- *Brucella suis*
- Porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus (PEDv) and Deltacoronavirus

N.B. Please refer to annex 1 (pre and post importation testing regime) for detailed information on suggested testing requirements.

If importing from an existing source, regular monitoring of the following pathogens would be expected;

- PRRSv
- MRSA
- *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae* (APP)
- *Brucella suis*
- PEDv and Deltacoronavirus

N.B. Please refer to annex 1 (pre and post importation testing regime) for detailed information on suggested testing requirements.

3.0 Transportation of stock

Importers are reminded that they must comply with rules on the [welfare of animals during transport](#). However please find key requirements detailed below.

The following general provisions and requirements of the Regulation are applicable to the transport of **all vertebrate species** in connection with an economic activity.

- Protection during transport.
- Means of transport and transport practices.
- Space allowances.
- Duties of transporters.
- Fitness to travel.
- Feed, water and rest periods (but see specific requirements below).
- Competent and/or trained handlers.
- Treatment of sick animals.

Transporting cattle, sheep, pigs, goats or poultry;

- Must comply with technical rules on fitness to travel, means of transport and transport practices (see section 2 of this guidance on **General Conditions for the Transport of Animals**).
- Anyone transporting cattle, sheep, pigs, goats or poultry on journeys of over 65km must apply for and be granted a transporter authorisation (see section 3 of this guidance on **Transporter Authorisations**).
- Vehicles and containers transporting cattle, sheep, pigs or goats on long journeys (over eight hours) must be inspected and approved. These must meet the criteria for approval (see section 5 of this guidance on **Transportation by Road**).
- Anyone transporting cattle, sheep, pigs, goats or poultry over 65km must be competent to do so. Drivers and attendants must hold a valid certificate of competence (see section 4 of this guidance on **Training and Competence Certification**).
- Cattle, sheep, pigs, goats or poultry being transported must be accompanied with either an Animal Transport Certificate or a journey log (see section 8 of this guidance on **Travel Documentation**).

- Vehicles should be subject to thorough cleaning & disinfection and a stand down period of at least 48 hours. An internal assessment should also be completed as per the [BPEX lorry wash project](#).

Any live pigs shipped via P&O Ferries (import or export) must be booked in by the NPA. Please note P&O Ferries will only transport breeding stock. Please contact the NPA office as early as possible before the intended sailing to allow us to book the crossing for you. We require the following information;

Details of crossing [*From-to*], [*date*] departing at [*time*]:

Vehicle reg:

Vehicle details: [*size/type of vehicle*]

Cargo: [*type, breed, sex and number of pigs*]

Driver: [*name*]

Driver contact: [*phone number of drive*]

Transport Co – [*your company name*]

Authorisation code for livestock transport – [*the authorization code given to you by Defra/Animal Health*]

Katy.allen@npanet.org.uk

Tel: 02476 858780

4.0 Post import protocol

4.1 Quarantine/isolation of incoming animals

Irrespective of the reliability of herd of origin health status, it is essential that any incoming pigs undergo a period of isolation or quarantine for at least 4-6 weeks. Isolation allows pigs to recover from the stress of a journey and adapt to a new environment, it will also allow time for any clinical disease symptoms to develop and become apparent. This should be followed by gradual acclimatisation and challenge with resident pathogens, ultimately leading to full integration into the herd. Isolation provides an opportunity for clinical inspection, laboratory testing and vaccination, if appropriate.

Animals imported directly to stud/AI centre

Imported pigs should be accommodated in clean and disinfected (registered) isolation for a period of **30 days**. This isolation period should only commence when the animals have been compulsorily tested for notifiable diseases (depending on source and country of origin) and a negative result obtained. During the isolation period any other particular diseases of concern should also be tested for (PRRSv for example) and a negative result obtained prior to release from quarantine. Please refer to annex 1 (pre and post importation testing regime) for detailed information on suggested testing requirements.

Animals imported directly to destination farm

The recipient farm must identify a suitable isolation unit and register the site with the local AHVLA office which will be subject to an inspection by an AHVLA officer. Imported animals may be tested for all notifiable diseases, depending on source and country of origin. The purchaser may wish to privately test for other disease related pathogens of particular concern such as PRRSv and PEDv. Imported pigs should be accommodated in clean and disinfected isolation for a period of **4-6 weeks** during which time particular diseases of concern should be tested for and a negative result obtained prior to release from quarantine. Please refer to annex 1 (pre and post importation testing regime) for detailed information on suggested testing requirements.

Guidelines for isolation units

- Ensure that biosecurity of an isolation unit is at least as good as that of the main herd
- Locate isolation units at least 50m from the main herd, preferably on another site (recommendation is a distance greater than 3km as this is critical for imports from countries with American PRRS, PEDv & Deltacoronavirus)
- Consider the risks from effluent and drainage outputs
- Ensure that buildings are easy to clean and disinfect

- Provide clean dry bedding where possible and readily available water
- Ensure good lighting and accessibility of animals for visual inspection
- Use dedicated boots and clothing. A shower, hair wash and complete change of clothes is recommended (and, ideally, personnel) and machinery (including scraper tractors etc)
- Isolate animals for at least 4-6 weeks
- Make regular clinical inspections and observe animals closely
- Operate isolation premises on an all-in, all-out basis
- For animals imported from high risk disease countries, transport movements to and from the isolation site should be minimised until animals are tested clear of disease. Sufficient feed and straw should be available on site until the first test results are confirmed. Furthermore there should be no slurry movement off site
- Personnel movements to isolation to be minimised with 72 hours pig freedom for personnel post any visit to isolation pigs

(Pritchard, G., Dennis, I. and Waddilove, J. (2005) Biosecurity: reducing disease risks to pig breeding herds. *In Practice*. **27**, 230-237.)

Animals should not be permitted to enter the UK for slaughter either through a slaughter market or directly unless they comply with the above conditions.

Pigs from third countries should be isolated for 30 days (unless consigned from the holding direct to a slaughterhouse), at the premises of destination, under the [TARP Regulations, Schedule 2, Part 2](#).

4.2 Testing requirements

Regular testing of the following diseases should be considered;

- PRRS
- MRSA
- *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae* (APP)
- Swine Influenza virus
- PEDv and Deltacoronavirus

N.B. Please refer to annex 1 (pre and post importation testing regime) for detailed information on suggested testing requirements.

All assured units must be able to demonstrate evidence of an imports protocol for all imported stock and semen for auditing purposes.

It is recommended that imports should be limited to fewer larger shipments to minimise the number of import (risk) events.

5.0 For pigs imported from countries with high risk exotic disease

The risk of the introduction of virulent PEDv and the newly detected Deltacoronavirus from affected countries must always be considered when importing live animals and that the knowledge and understanding of these viruses is still evolving. Therefore ideally, no animals should be imported (directly or indirectly) from countries affected with virulent PEDv or Deltacoronavirus.

Alternatively when importing live animals from countries affected with virulent PEDv or Deltacoronavirus, responsible parties must complete a thorough risk assessment (as detailed below) of pig sources prior to quarantine release and subsequent actions undertaken to mitigate any risks.

Test results should always be considered in conjunction with other information on which the importing business and vet should base their decision. The many other aspects including PEDv/Deltacoronavirus status of the herds of origin, stockmanship (detection of individual pigs with clinical signs of diarrhoea), biosecurity, the management and degree of biosecurity between pens and whether PEDv/Deltacoronavirus would be likely to disseminate in a group of imported pigs during transport and quarantine etc are all factors to be considered.

Pigs must only be imported from PEDv negative and Deltacoronavirus negative herds. The status of the herd(s) from where the pigs originate is critical, both when the pigs to be imported were part of the herd and whether the status has changed since they were removed. Therefore herds in countries affected with virulent PEDv or Deltacoronavirus should be tested prior to export and must be confirmed as negative.

Although this document relates to live animal imports specifically it should be noted that semen importation is also a significant risk; viraemic boars and the subsequent importation of semen and fomite spread via the associated semen packaging. Semen therefore must only be sourced from studs free from disease and which employ regular monitoring to demonstrate freedom. Regular testing should be employed as per section 2.0.

PEDv and Deltacoronaviruses are spread by the faeco-oral route directly from infected pigs and by anything (clothing, equipment, vehicles) contaminated with infected faeces. Strict biosecurity during transport and post-import quarantine is essential to avoid the risk of spread into the UK from the imported pigs at this stage.

For transport to the isolation site we would encourage suitable non-routine pig vehicles and drivers to be used where possible. Where there is a perceived higher risk; a positive release system is recommended. Vehicles should incur a post-delivery stand down period if carrying animals with possible emerging disease(s); a minimum of 48 hours after thorough C&D and drying.