Toolbox Talks

Animal Handling: Swine

Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions.
Find more Toolbox Talks on the Occupational Safety web page.

General Information

The majority of injuries on a swine farm occur during human/animal interactions. It is important to pay close attention to the potential dangers of working with swine, and always use correct animal handling techniques. Attention to these dangers is key to personal and animal safety. When handling swine, remember to:

Preventive measures

- Know the characteristics of pigs
  - Poor vision
  - Sensitive hearing
  - Frighten easily
  - Do not like to be moved individually
  - Must be driven from behind
  - Moving should not be rushed, as this can cause stress
  - Sows with piglets can become aggressive.
- Calmly handle to prevent the animal from becoming stressed or causing injury to itself, other animals or the handler.
- Have an escape route, if it becomes necessary to get out quickly.
- Use sorting boards, panels, or shaker paddles.
- Maintain housekeeping.
- Keep unauthorized people out of pens or away from the facility altogether. Biosecurity can be an important issue.
- Hearing protection is recommended when working around pigs.

Safety tips when working with swine

- Do not expose the animals to loud noises or quick movements.
- Do not use electric prodders.
- Do not enter a small, enclosed area with an animal unless you have an escape route.
- Do not position yourself between the boar and a sow.
- Avoid cluttered alleyways and walking surfaces.
- Avoid overcrowding pens or chutes.

Discussion Date:

Supervisor:

Participants: