

Swine – Basic Care

- Pigs are exceptionally social animals, gregarious in nature, and establish a social hierarchy when group housed.
- Highly intelligent animals that prefer a clean environment. If given enough room, they will defecate in one corner of the pen and sleep in another corner.
- Swine are omnivorous and diurnal.
- Same sex social groups will live in harmony when enough space is provided. Stable social groups should be established at weaning, should be of uniform size and temperament.
- Mature boars should be housed individually to avoid intense fighting.
- Because of their social nature, research that proposes to house growing pigs individually or in isolation from other swine should be approved by the IACUC.
- Enrichment should be provided unless specified in protocol and approved by the IACUC.
- Examples of enrichment:
 - Chain suspended from the side of the pen
 - Nylon brush or broom head attached to fencing
 - Heavy balls
 - Bowling pins
 - Human contact
 - Food treats
- It is very important to provide items that can be manipulated to satisfy the needs of chewing and rooting.
- Pigs spend 70 to 80% of their time lying or sleeping, the rest of the time they are active, exploring and rooting.
- Relatively insensitive to noise, are very noisy themselves.
- Fences, pen dividers and gates should be well constructed and made of durable material.
- Minimum pen sizes are specified in the Animal Welfare Regulations, The Guide for the Care of Use of Laboratory Animals, and The Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agriculture Research and Teaching. Exceptions must be approved by the IACUC.
- Swine maintained in a laboratory setting should not be fed more than 2% of their body weight daily.
- Should be fed a high quality, nutritionally complete diet.
- Clean water should be available ad libitum.
- Young swine and miniature swine under 45 pounds can be lifted and manually restrained by holding them in your arms. One arm is held under the abdomen or hind quarters, the other arm supports the chest.
- Large swine are often restrained with a nose snare.
- Swine under 110 pounds can be restrained in dorsal recumbency in a V-shaped trough, or on the abdomen in a hammock.
- For more specific species information, including physiologic data, husbandry and breeding requirements, and procedural information, please contact the Office of Laboratory Animal Care (865-974-5634).