

Personal Protection & Training

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In 2017, on-farm best management practices were audited on a total of 24 farms throughout Canada as part of a national project titled From Innovation to Adoption: On-farm Demonstration of Swine Research. This article is part of an eight-part series reporting on these audits.

Ensuring a safe work environment is the responsibility of every employer and one that the Canadian pork industry is committed to. Results in Table 1 indicate pork producers are committed to providing the safest workplace possible for their employees. Audit results indicate that dust masks, hearing protection and hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) monitors are being used to varying degrees in production units across Canada.

While all farms that use H₂S monitors use them for pit pulling, it is very important that they be used in other key day-to-day activities where H₂S could arise. One of these situations would be power washing, as workers may be exposed to H₂S concentrations that exceed acceptable limits. Locations of peak H₂S concentrations vary within the room. It is important that monitors be provided to all swine barn workers at these key times as H₂S may be present in higher than anticipated concentrations.



While approximately 60% of participating farms offer H₂S training, it is very important that recertification does not get lost in day-to-day activities. Training and standard operating procedures should be provided, at least every three years, so workers can learn how to deal with routine operation and emergency situations generating high H₂S concentrations. Low cost training sources are available through Assiniboine Community College and Prairie Swine Centre, with Prairie Swine Centre offering an online version of H₂S Awareness to keep employees aware of dangers associated with H₂S.



Regarding pig handling, research has shown that proper animal handling reduces stress for pigs and people. Strategies that reduce stress and promote ease of loading pigs include pen-walking before loading, minimal prod use, using appropriate handling boards and ensuring that group sizes are manageable. Producers realize the importance that proper pig handling plays in their operations, as audit results indicate a majority of the farms offer pig training to their employees. A number of different training methods were utilized, ranging from in-house training sessions, in addition to pig handling videos developed by various pork councils and organisations throughout Canada.

Table 1. Personal Protection and Training Audit Results

Category	Average Percentage of Farms		
Are dust mask used in the facility? <i>It is recommended to use dust masks in the facility.</i>	83 %	0 %	17 %
Is hearing protection used in the facility? <i>It is recommended to use hearing protection in the barn.</i>	100 %	0 %	0 %
Are hydrogen sulphide monitors used in the facilities? <i>It is recommended to always use hydrogen sulphide monitors in the facility.</i>	0 %	50 %	50 %
Do you provide training on hydrogen sulphide awareness? <i>It is recommended to provide training regarding hydrogen sulphide awareness.</i>	54 %	4 %	42 %
Do you provide animal handling training? <i>It is recommended to provide animal handling training.</i>	75 %	4 %	21 %

Conclusion

Information presented within this article is based on the results of auditing 24 farms across Canada varying in location, size and type of operation. Overall, pork producers are doing a good job of ensuring adequate safety policy and procedures are implemented on -farm. It is important to remember to review policies and procedures annually to ensure the safest work environment possible.

Legend

Meets recommendation	
Partially meets recommendation	
Does not meet recommendation	

For Further Reading

Mask use in swine barns reduces health effects

<http://www.prairieswine.com/mask-use-in-swine-barns-reduces-health-effects-2/> (English)

Hydrogen sulphide concentration while pulling pit plugs and power-washing rooms

<http://www.prairieswine.com/hydrogen-sulphide-concentration-while-pulling-pit-plugs-and-power-washing-rooms-2/> (English)

Engineering controls to reduce hydrogen sulfide exposure of workers in swine buildings

<http://www.prairieswine.com/engineering-controls-to-reduce-hydrogen-sulfide-exposure-of-workers-in-swine-buildings/> (English)

TRAINING

Manitoba Pork

(English) <http://www.manitobapork.com/human-resources/training-opportunities>

Hydrogen Sulphide Awareness Training for Liquid Manure Handling Systems

(English) <http://www.prairieswine.com/training/>

PIG HANDLING

Proper Pig Handling

(English) <http://www.manitobapork.com/animal-care/pig-handling>

Video clips on certain practices during the last 24 hours prior to shipment to the slaughterhouse

(English/Français) <http://www.cdpq.ca/recherche-et-developpement/projets-de-recherche/projet-221.aspx>

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