

# Humane Handling Guidelines for **PIGS**

Standards for the Care of Compromised and Unfit Animals



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## **Standards for the Care of Compromised and Unfit Animals (2016)**

“The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association endorses the standards of humane care practices for pigs as set out in these guidelines.”

– Dr. Darrell Dalton, Registrar,

Alberta Veterinary Medical Association 

“We support the standards of humane care for pigs set out in these guidelines. The standards will be a valuable educational tool for our peace officers to use in their discussions with pig owners and handlers.”

– Terra Johnston, Executive Director, Alberta SPCA



Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (©2014) have been used with permission from the Canadian Pork Council and National Farm Animal Care Council.  
[www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/pig\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](http://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/pig_code_of_practice.pdf)

## **Acknowledgements**

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association  
([afac.ab.ca](http://afac.ab.ca)) and Alberta Pork ([albertapork.com](http://albertapork.com))  
would like to thank those individuals and  
organizations that support this initiative.

Funding for this project was provided through Growing Forward 2,  
a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

# ALERT

**ALERT** is a confidential call line for anyone to report livestock care concerns.

**ALERT** strives to assist before livestock are in distress.

**ALERT** Resource Team includes farmers and other rural community members.  
They offer solutions to improve livestock care.

**ALERT** has an ALERT veterinarian program that provides knowledgeable counsel.

**ALERT** informs members of the public that farmers do care for their animals.

**ALERT** is available for self-reporting to assist those who may be experiencing problems  
in caring for their livestock.

**ALERT** works with the Alberta SPCA and RCMP.

## LIVESTOCK CARE ALERT

Help Line & Resource Team

To report livestock care concerns **CALL 1-800-506-2273**

afac.ab.ca Supported by Alberta's Livestock Industry



To report suspected animal neglect or abuse:

**Alberta SPCA 800-455-9003**



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## Purpose of this Handbook

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This handbook provides producers and farm staff, auction market personnel, transporters and processors with the information needed to make humane handling decisions involving the care and transport of compromised or unfit animals.

The Humane Handling Guidelines are intended to complement existing regulations and standards by highlighting key obligations as it relates to compromised or unfit animals. Consult the regulations for other important animal care obligations. For more information concerning on-farm animal care, consult the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs* (2014) which includes a chapter on pre-transport decision-making and other on-farm requirements and recommendations.

## About the Alberta Farm Animal Care Association

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association (AFAC) was started in 1993 by Alberta livestock producers. AFAC now serves as the collective voice of the Alberta livestock industry on matters of farm animal welfare and provides a coordinated approach for all areas of livestock production to work together to advance and promote responsible livestock care. More information is available at [afac.ab.ca](http://afac.ab.ca).

## About Alberta Pork

As a not-for-profit organization governed by an eight member Board of Directors, Alberta Pork's role is to serve and represent pork producers to enhance prosperity within their communities. As an entity that was created by producers and funded by producers through a levy system, our mandate is to promote the many benefits of Alberta-grown pork to consumers while advocating for producers. For more information, visit [albertapork.com](http://albertapork.com)

## Section 1 – Making Your Decision

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### 1.1 Federal and Provincial Animal Transport Regulations

The federal requirements for animal transport are covered under the Health of Animals Regulations (Part XII: Transportation of Animals), enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Provincial requirements for transport are set out under Alberta's *Animal Protection Regulation* (203/2005), empowered by the *Animal Protection Act*. The Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) enforces this Act and regulation in rural Alberta.

### Who is responsible?

Under federal law, it is the responsibility of the party that is loading or transporting animals (or



causing animals to be loaded or transported) to ensure that all animals are fit for the intended journey. The producer, shipper, transporter, transport company, and/or receiver can all be charged under humane transport laws.

The shipper must assess each animal for transport and is responsible for tendering only animals suitably fit for transport.

Auction market personnel working with animals must be instructed in acceptable, humane handling techniques

The transporter must assess the animals tendered by the shipper and only accept animals suitably fit for transport.

- Discretion must be used when tendering or accepting animals for transport. Use solid judgment based on your knowledge of transporting pigs.
- Rely on your knowledge of the regulations regarding livestock transportation to make a decision.
- Consult an experienced and trustworthy person for assistance.

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*Consult Appendix A of this guide for an overview of other applicable regulations and standards.*

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## 1.2 Determining Fitness for Transport

Each person involved in animal transport must understand the definition of the terms “unfit” and “compromised” animals in order to comply with Canada’s transport regulations:

Federal and provincial regulations prohibit loading or transport of an **unfit animal** – those that would suffer unduly during transport because of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause. Unfit animals must NOT be transported except for veterinary treatment or diagnosis.

An animal that is injured or becomes ill or otherwise unfit for transport while en route must be

taken to the nearest suitable place where it can receive proper care and attention.

A **compromised** animal is an animal with reduced capacity to withstand transportation but where transportation with special provisions will not lead to undue suffering. Compromised animals may ONLY be locally transported with special provisions to receive care, be euthanized or humanely slaughtered.

### *What is meant by Special Provisions?*

- Transport locally and directly to the nearest suitable place (not through an auction or assembly yard)
- Load the compromised animal last and unload it first
- Segregate the compromised animal from other animals

Other special provisions may be required, such as additional bedding. In some cases, it may be appropriate to pen the compromised animal with one familiar animal.

**DO NOT ship animals that may be classified as “unfit to undergo transport.” Use this booklet to help define whether the animal is fit to be transported.**  
**See pages 10-22 for further details.**





## **Section 2 – Conditions that Impact Transport Decisions**

# "Should this Pig be Loaded?" Decision Tree

## SHOULD THIS PIG BE LOADED?

Guidelines for Transporting Pigs

## LOAD HEALTHY PIGS

### Do Not Load Do Not Transport – Unfit

#### Delay Transportation

- Dehydration
- Fever (rectal temperature > 39.5°C)
- Sows that have farrowed within 48 hours, or likely to farrow during transport or upon arrival at destination (100 or more days of gestation)
- Recent surgery (not healed) (e.g. castration)
- Stressed pigs showing any signs of
  - Exhaustion (refuses to move)
  - Heat stress
  - Weakness
  - Trembling
  - Laboured breathing
  - Skin discolouration/blotchy patches



#### Euthanize On-Farm Immediately

- Non-Ambulatory\*
- In shock or dying
- Emaciated (extremely thin)
- Fractured or amputated leg or fractured pelvis
- Other fractures that considerably hamper mobility or are likely to cause severe pain when the animal is manipulated for loading or when it is being transported
- Exposed bone
- Arthritis involving multiple joints
- Prolapsed uterus
- Rectal stenosis with distension and which renders the animal weak or down
- Hernia\*\*
- Suffering from severe nonresponsive disease
- Severe recent injury

#### \* Non-Ambulatory Animals – an animal that cannot walk or that:

- Is unable to rise or remain standing without assistance
- Is unable to move without being helped, lifted, or carried
- Has difficulty rising or needs additional time to rise
- Is reluctant to walk or exhibits halted movement
- After splitting, cannot walk
- Suffers severe pain when walking, or requires assistance to remain standing

#### \*\* Hernia includes at least one of the following criteria:

- Impedes movement
- Painful on palpation
- Touches the ground when the pig is standing in its natural position
- Includes an open skin wound, ulceration, or obvious infection

#### \*\*\* Special Provisions include:

- Extra bedding
- Loading in a rear compartment
- Separation from other animals
- Penning with a familiar companion animal
- Local transport only
- Transport direct to the nearest suitable place where the animal can be properly cared for, slaughtered or euthanized
- Other measures as appropriate

### Do Not Transport to a Sale or an Assembly Yard

#### Transport with Special Provisions\*\*\* Direct to Slaughter

#### Transport As Soon As Possible

- Ambulatory pig: a pig that can walk and rise without assistance, and:
  - Is visibly lame but can keep up with the group
  - Is unable to keep up with other animals; has some difficulty climbing ramps
- Abscess and local infection (no fever)
- Prolapsed vagina or rectum
- Inguinal or umbilical hernias other than those defined under Do Not Transport
- Acute or unhealed penis injury
- Severe dewclaw injury
- First stage anorexia, or weight loss (no fever)
- Open wound (pig may be unfit depending on severity of wound)
- Acute frostbite
- Blindness
- Severe tail bite or vulva bite
- Smoke inhalation

**Pigs with multiple conditions may not be fit for transport**

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE

If an animal has difficulty walking or loading, it is likely that the animal will go down during transport. It is also very likely that it will be subjected to additional suffering and/or injury from trampling as a result of becoming non-ambulatory during the journey. If this is the case, transportation is not recommended.

#### EMERGENCY ON-FARM SLAUGHTER

If an animal is fit for human consumption, but not fit for transport (i.e. injured but not sick) emergency on-farm slaughter may be an option.

For more information, consult page 26 of this handbook.

*Any animal may be loaded for transport for veterinary treatment under veterinary supervision.*



# ABSCESS

An abscess is a localized collection of pus that commonly occurs as a result of infection following trauma to the skin.

## Check Points: Compromised

- Single, minor abscess and the pig is otherwise in good condition.

## Management Options:

- Treat according to your protocol or as prescribed by your veterinarian or transport directly to slaughter as soon as the abscess is visible (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).
- Ensure withdrawal times are followed.

## Check Points: Unfit

- Multiple abscesses.
- The animal may or may not be having difficulty walking.
- Multiple abscesses are often a sign of an infection affecting body tissue, which makes the carcass unfit for consumption

## Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



# **DISTRESSED PIGS**

Pigs can become distressed as a result of many factors, including weather, rough handling, transport and fatigue.

## **Check Points:**

- Difficulty breathing or open-mouth breathing, panting or gasping
- Patchy skin discolouration
- High body temperature >103.1°F (39.5°C)
- Stiffness
- Reluctance to move
- Inability to rise
- Trembling

## **Management Options:**

- Do not load or transport.
- Do not attempt to move the animal unless they are in immediate danger. Allow them to rest for 2-3 hours with minimal human contact, while ensuring they are protected from trampling by other animals. If after this period the animal has not recovered, euthanize on farm.

## **Code of Practice**

**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF PIGS  
(2014)**

*Requirement under Section 5.3*

*Handling During Loading and Unloading*

Pigs showing signs of distress prior to loading must not be loaded.



# EMACIATED

In pigs, body condition score (BCS) is typically assessed using a five-point scale where 1 is “too thin”, 5 is “too fat” and 3 is “ideal.”

## *Check Points:*

- Body condition score of less than 2 (out of 5).
- Thin with hip and backbone very prominent and no fat cover over hips and backbone.
- Pelvic bones – very prominent, deep cavity around tail head.
- Loin – vertebrae are prominent and sharp. Very narrow loin and hollow flank.
- Ribs – individual ribs are very prominent.

## *Management Options:*

- Monitor body condition of each animal – identify animals that are losing condition early, record your corrective actions and continue monitoring to ensure the animal improves.

## *Emaciated Pigs*

- Do not transport.
- Consult a farm manager or veterinarian or euthanize on farm.

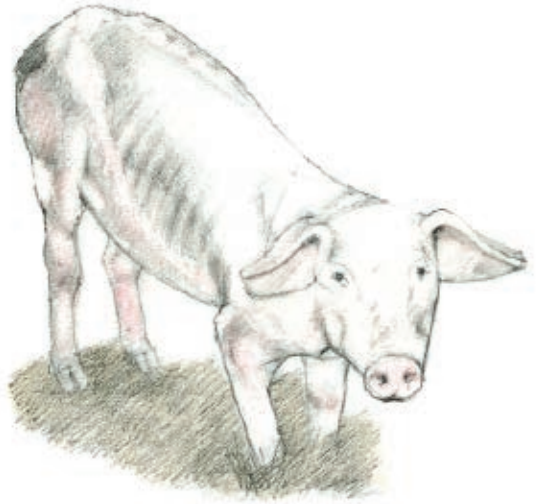
## *Code of Practice*

### *CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF PIGS (2014)*

#### *Requirement under Section 2.2*

#### *Body Condition Scoring for Breeding Stock*

Corrective action must be taken for animals at a BCS of less than 2 or more than 4. (Consult the Code of Practice for guidance on appropriate corrective actions.)



# FRACTURE

## Check Points – Unfit for Transport

- Fractured leg, pelvis or spine or any fracture that considerably hampers mobility or is likely to cause severe pain during loading or transport.
- Reluctance to bear weight on the affected limb.
- Muscles and tissues in the affected area may be swollen and painful.
- Exposed bone or deep or gaping wound, bleeding.

## Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Consult a farm manager or veterinarian or euthanize on farm.



# INJURIES

## Check Points: Compromised

- Severe dew claw injury.
- Acute or unhealed penis injury.
- Severe tail bite or vulva bite.
- Acute frostbite.

## Management Options:

- Treat animal in hospital pen.
- Transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).
- Euthanize on farm.



# HERNIA

A hernia involves the protrusion of an organ or part of an organ through an abnormal opening in the surrounding body wall. The protruding organs or tissues will form an abnormal bulge under the skin. Common sites for hernias include the navel (umbilical hernia) and groin (inguinal and scrotal hernias). Note animals that have a hernia and monitor these animals as they grow.



## Check Points: Compromised

- Inguinal, scrotal, or umbilical hernias
- Pigs with hernias should be dealt with when they are young and hernias are small. However, pigs with small, intact hernias may be transported directly to slaughter. If the size of the hernia is questionable, please refer to the points listed below regarding “Unfit” animals.

## Management Options:

- Consult with farm manager or veterinarian.
- Check with slaughter facility whether they will accept the animal.
- Transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).
- Euthanize on farm.



## Check Points: Unfit

- A hernia renders an animal unfit for transport if it includes one of the following criteria:
  - ⇒ Impedes movement
  - ⇒ Painful on palpation
  - ⇒ Touches the ground when the pig is standing in a natural position
  - ⇒ Includes an open skin wound, ulceration or obvious infection.



## Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.





# LAMENESS

Lameness encompasses a number of conditions that affect the animal's ability to move normally. Lameness is among the most common reasons for culling sows; it can also be prevalent in growing pigs.

## Check Points: Compromised

- Animal has imperfect locomotion, a slight limp; the lame leg may not be immediately identifiable.

## Management Options:

- Transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).

## Check Points: Unfit

- Animal is non-ambulatory
- Cannot rise without assistance and is reluctant to walk, and exhibits halted movement; or
- Unable to rise or remain standing without assistance; or
- Cannot be transported without undue suffering because of lameness (as per Health of Animals Regulations section 138(2)(a)).

## Management Options:

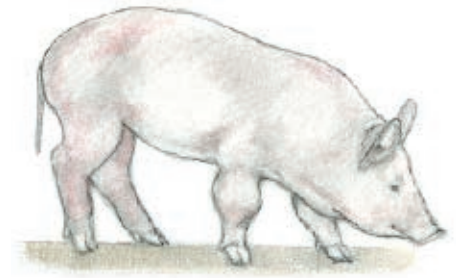
- Do not load or transport.
- Non-ambulatory animals are considered unfit. A non-ambulatory animal can ONLY be transported for veterinary treatment or diagnosis on the advice of a veterinarian. See Regulations in Appendix A.

## Code of Practice

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF PIGS  
(2014)

*Requirements under Section 5.2 Fitness for Transport*

Animals that cannot bear weight on all four legs must not be loaded; these animals will likely become non-ambulatory during transport.



# PROLAPSE

A prolapse is the protrusion of an organ or any part of an organ to the outside of the body from its normal position usually due to inadequate strength of the supportive tissue.

## Check Points: Compromised

### *Prolapsed Vagina or Rectum*

- At onset, red coloured mucosa of the vagina or rectum protrudes.
- After a short period, the prolapse will become swollen and filled with fluid.

### *Management Options:*

- A prolapse must be identified early; if the animal is loose housed, it must be segregated from other animals (to prevent cannibalism).
- Consult the standard operating procedures and, if still in doubt, talk to your farm manager or veterinarian.
- Transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).

## Check Points: Unfit

### *Prolapsed Uterus*

- Usually occurs right after farrowing but can occur up to 24 hours after farrowing.
- Is a life threatening condition.
- Prolapse begins with the appearance of red lining of the uterus and rapidly increases in size.

### *Management Options:*

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.

### *Code of Practice*

#### CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF PIGS (2014)

##### *Requirements under Section 3.6 Farrowing*

Sows must be observed frequently around their expected farrowing times. Upon discovering sows in farrowing difficulty, prompt assistance must be provided.



## RECENT SURGERY (NOT HEALED)

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### *Check Points:*

- Recent castration, tail docking, hernia repair or caesarean section.

### *Management Options:*

- Do not load or transport – delay transport.
- Consult farm manager or standard operating procedures regarding when the animal may be fit for transport.
- Ensure all medication withdrawal times are adhered to.



## RECTAL STENOSIS WITH DISTENSION

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Rectal stenosis can be common in growing pigs and occurs when scar tissue forms a ring inside the rectum which slowly blocks the bowel preventing defecation.

### *Check Points:*

- Abdominal distension (i.e. the abdomen is “pot bellied” or bloated in appearance)
- The animal goes off feed and water
- Loss of body condition.

### *Management Options:*

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



# REPORTABLE DISEASES

## Check Points:

- Signs of reportable diseases vary by disease.
- Signs of concern include fever, lack of coordination, diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, loss of appetite, vomiting, depression, rapid weight loss, blisters in the mouth or on the snout, feet or teats.



## Management Options:

- Do not transport.
- Contact a veterinarian immediately.
- Use caution when handling – some diseases are transmissible from animals to humans.



## REPORTABLE DISEASES REGULATIONS

There are some diseases in pigs that must be reported by law including classical swine fever (hog cholera), swine vesicular disease, foot-and-mouth disease and brucellosis. Consult the federal *Reportable Diseases Regulations*.

In addition, provincially reportable diseases include Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED), Swine Delta Coronavirus (SDCV) and Transmissible Gastroenteritis (TGE). Consult Alberta's *Reportable and Notifiable Diseases Regulation* and the government of Alberta website for complete and up-to-date information.

## Code of Practice

### CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF PIGS (2014)

#### Requirement under Section 3.2.1

#### Reportable/Notifiable Diseases

A veterinarian must be advised of any suspected reportable disease.

# SOWS – RECENTLY FARROWED OR LIKELY TO FARROW



## *Check Points:*

- Sows that have farrowed within the last 48 hours.
- Sows that are likely to farrow during transport or upon arrival at destination (100 or more days of gestation).

**Note:** the stress associated with transport can cause a sow to abort or go into labour early.

## *Management Options:*

- Do not load or transport – delay transport.
- Consult breeding records.

## *Regulations*

### HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS

138 (2) – Subject to subsection (3) No person shall load or cause to be loaded on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no one shall transport or cause to be transported an animal (c) if it is probable that the animal will give birth during the journey.

### ALBERTA'S ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)

12 (2) – No person shall load or transport livestock that is likely to give birth during transport unless the livestock is being transported for health reasons.



# YOUNG OR INCOMPATIBLE ANIMALS



## Check Points:

- Newly weaned piglets
- Animals of different species (e.g. cattle and hogs)
- Animals of substantially different weight (e.g. light hogs and market hogs) or age (e.g. weaned hog and market hogs), or
- Incompatible by nature (e.g. two boars in a compartment).

## Management Options:

- Transport with special provisions.
- Incompatible animals must be segregated.
- By law, a weaned pig that weighs less than 10 kg or any piglet less than 8 days old must not be transported to a livestock market.

## Regulations

### ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)

7(1) The following may not be present at a livestock market (b) a weaned pig that weighs less than 10 kilograms or (c) any other species of weaned livestock less than eight days old.



## Section 3 – Euthanasia

### Acceptable Methods

For any method to be considered acceptable, it must render the animal immediately insensible and the animal must not return to sensibility prior to death. Individuals who euthanize pigs must be trained in the appropriate methods. Refer to page 25 of this guideline for acceptable methods of euthanasia as outlined in the pig Code of Practice (2014).

### Anatomical Landmarks for Euthanasia<sup>1</sup>

Proper positioning of the firearm or penetrating captive bolt is essential in order to ensure a quick death. The pig's brain is small relative to the size of its skull. As a pig ages, the skull continues to grow more relative to the brain. Mature sows have a large sinus cavity located in front of the brain, setting the location of the brain even further back into the skull.

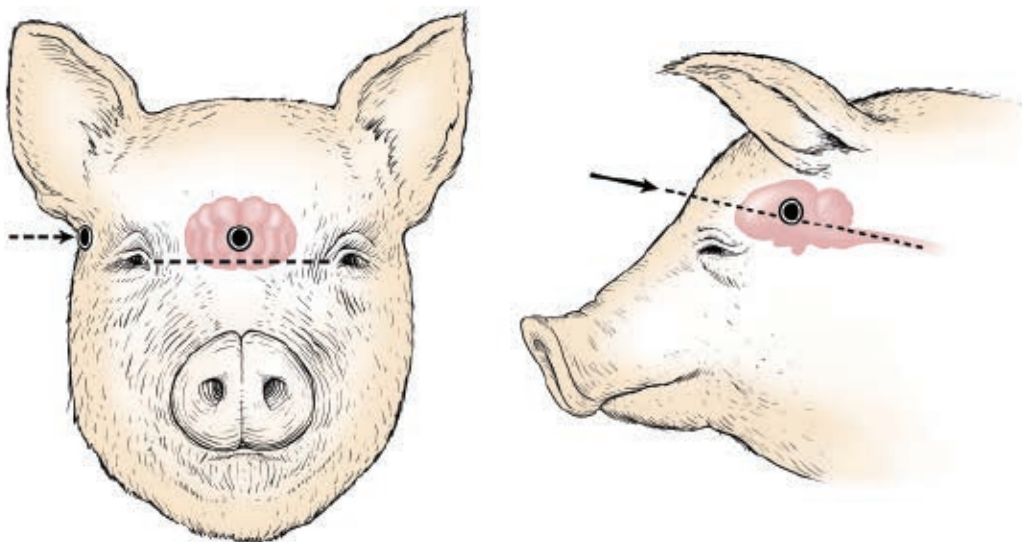
<sup>1</sup> Reference and Image source: J.K. Shearer and A. Ramirez, College of Veterinary Medicine, Iowa State University [www.vetmed.iastate.edu/HumaneEuthanasia](http://www.vetmed.iastate.edu/HumaneEuthanasia). Reprinted with permission.

When using gunshot: There are two possible anatomical sites for conducting euthanasia in pigs: frontal and temporal. When using the frontal site, the correct target is in the centre of the forehead slightly above an imaginary line drawn between the eyes. The projectile should be directed toward the spinal canal. When using the temporal site, the correct target is slightly behind and below the ear.

Muzzle energies of 300 ft-lb or more are required for adult sows, boars and growing-finishing pigs. When the site behind the ear is chosen, a .22 caliber firearm loaded with a solid-point bullet may be used. Shotguns may be used at short range and offer the advantage of less potential for bullet ricochet. Twelve-, 16- or 20-gauge shotguns are recommended for mature pigs. The muzzle should never be held flush to the skull.

**When using a penetrating captive bolt:** The only acceptable site is the frontal location. The penetrating captive bolt must be held in contact with the head in the centre of the forehead slightly above an imaginary line drawn between the eyes.

Proper restraint is generally necessary to facilitate effective euthanasia particularly when using a penetrating captive bolt.







## Code of Practice

*Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (2014)*

*Requirements under Section 6.1*

*On-Farm Euthanasia Plans*

In consultation with a licensed veterinarian, an on-farm written euthanasia plan to facilitate timely on-farm euthanasia must be developed and followed. Consult the Code of Practice for more details.

Individuals who euthanize pigs must be trained in the appropriate euthanasia methods.

*Requirements under Section 6.2*

*Decision-Making around Euthanasia*

Pigs not responding to treatment and pigs with untreatable conditions that compromise welfare, if not fit for transport, must be promptly euthanized or slaughtered on-farm (if fit for human consumption) in accordance with provincial regulations.

*Requirements under Section 6.3*

*Methods of Euthanasia*

An acceptable method for euthanizing pigs must be used.

The method used to euthanize pigs must be administered in a manner that is quick and causes the least possible pain and distress.

Prior to being euthanized, animals must not be dragged, prodded, forced to move on broken limbs, or made to move when pain and suffering will occur.

*Requirements under Section 6.4*

*Confirmation of Death*

Animals must be evaluated for insensibility immediately following the application of the euthanasia method. A backup method of euthanasia must be immediately applied if an animal shows signs of returning to sensibility.

Death must always be confirmed when euthanizing animals before moving or leaving the animal.

## Confirm Insensibility

- Immediately following the application of the euthanasia method, confirm insensibility:
- Absence of rhythmic breathing
- Lack of corneal reflex (blinking response)
- No response to painful stimuli (e.g. nose pinch or prick)

## Confirm death before moving or leaving the animal:

Use multiple indicators to confirm death:

- Absence of all movement for at least 5 minutes
- Absence of a heartbeat and pulse for at least 5 minutes
- No breathing for at least 5 minutes
- Fixed, dilated pupil

## Acceptable Methods of Euthanasia

The following is a list of acceptable and unacceptable methods of euthanasia of individual animals for use on-farm, as well as methods that are only considered acceptable with the noted conditions. The chart is based on the information that was available at the time the pig Code of Practice (2014) was published.<sup>1</sup>

Weight of Pig		< 2.3kg (< 5lbs)	2.3kg to 9kg (5lbs to 19.8lbs)	9kg to 32kg (19.8lbs to 70lbs)	32kg to 68kg (70lbs to 150lbs)	68kg to 120kg (150lbs to 264lbs)	120kg to 200kg (264lbs to 440lbs)	> 200kg Euthanasia (> 440lbs)
EUTHANASIA METHOD	Anesthetic Overdose <sup>2</sup>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Blunt Trauma	Conditional <sup>3</sup>	Conditional <sup>3</sup>	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
	Electrocution	Unacceptable	Conditional <sup>4</sup>	Conditional <sup>4</sup>	Conditional <sup>4</sup>	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
	CO2 and/ or Argon Inhalation	Conditional <sup>5</sup>	Conditional <sup>5</sup>	Conditional <sup>5</sup>	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
	Non- Penetrating Captive Bolt	Acceptable <sup>6</sup>	Acceptable <sup>6</sup>	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
	Penetrating Captive Bolt <sup>7</sup>	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Conditional <sup>8</sup>	Conditional <sup>8</sup>
	Gunshot to the Head <sup>9</sup>	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- 1 Further research under the oversight of a regulated research body may result in new, acceptable equipment and/or euthanasia methods that may be developed and become available during the life of this Code.
- 2 Administered under the direction of a licensed veterinarian only.
- 3 Blunt trauma can be administered by grasping the hind legs of the piglet and striking the top of the cranium firmly and deliberately against a flat, hard surface. Alternatively, a sharp, firm blow with a heavy blunt instrument to the top of the head over the brain can be used. Sufficient force should be used to euthanize the piglet in one attempt. Alternative methods should be actively considered to ensure that criteria for euthanasia can be consistently met.
- 4 Electrocution of animals must be performed using properly-maintained, proven effective, purpose-designed equipment only. The electric current must flow through the brain first, resulting in insensibility and then through the heart which results in cardiac arrest. This can occur either simultaneously in one step, or by using a two-step method with electrocution to the head performed first.
- 5 Animals must be heavily sedated before introduction to gases. This form of euthanasia is acceptable only with properly-maintained, proven effective, purpose-designed equipment.
- 6 Non-penetrating captive bolt euthanasia may not be used unless the manufacturer specifies that the equipment is designed for the animal's weight range. A secondary method of euthanasia may be required depending on the type of equipment used, after the animal becomes insensible. For pigs at the heavier end of this weight range, a penetrating captive bolt will be more effective.
- 7 It is critical to ensure proper placement and aim of the penetrating captive bolt since the brain is relatively small and well protected. When using the captive bolt method, the frontal site is the only acceptable location.
- 8 Pigs  $\geq 120\text{kg}$  ( $\geq 265\text{lbs}$ ) in weight require a secondary method (e.g. reapply the captive bolt, pithing, bleeding) that is performed after the animal becomes insensible.
- 9 Proper placement and aim of the firearm is critical since the brain is relatively small and well protected. Gunshot can be applied to the frontal site, the temporal region, or from behind the ear directed diagonally toward the opposite eye. When performing euthanasia with a firearm, choosing a safe location to ensure that bystanders are safe is critical. All personnel should always be positioned behind the shooter.

Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (©2014) have been used with permission from the Canadian Pork Council and National Farm Animal Care Council. [www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/pig\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](http://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/pig_code_of_practice.pdf)

## Section 4 – Emergency Slaughter: What are the Options in Alberta?

Animals that become acutely unfit for transport, for example, due to a broken leg, may be salvageable by means of on-farm slaughter. There are currently two available options to ensure the humane treatment of animals and alignment with the provincial *Meat Inspection Act*:

### Inspected Meat

The *Meat Inspection Act* empowers the Director to appoint veterinarians or other persons as Inspectors. The appointed individual is responsible for performing an ante-mortem (AM) inspection at the farm or feedlot. Once the animal has had an AM inspection performed, an emergency slaughter (humane stunning and bleeding) can be performed. The carcass must then be transported, in a manner that protects it from contamination or spoilage, to a Provincially Licensed Abattoir for evisceration and further processing. The carcass must be delivered to the abattoir within 2 hours of slaughter and receive a post-mortem (PM) inspection. The PM inspection can be done by either the appointed Inspector or by a Meat Inspection Branch Inspector. Once approved, the product is stamped as inspected and is then legal to sell. Note that the appropriate forms must be completed by the appointed Inspector on farm or feedlot and these forms will need to accompany the carcass to the licensed facility. Professional fees to engage an appointed Inspector are at the discretion of the provider.

### Uninspected Meat

For uninspected meat, which cannot be sold and is for consumption by the animal owner and their household only, the animal can be slaughtered by a licensed mobile butcher or the owner at the farm or feedlot. The carcass can then be transported to a facility to be processed. It must arrive clean and free from contamination. The processor is required to keep the carcass sepa-

rate from any inspected products and mark it as “UNINSPECTED NOT FOR SALE”

For more information about emergency on-farm slaughter, including a list of appointed Inspectors, abattoirs, and mobile butchers in your area, contact the following regional meat inspection offices: **Airdrie 403-948-8514, Edmonton/Grande Prairie 780-427-7011, Vermilion 780-853-8113 and Lethbridge 403-382-4261, or toll free by first dialing 310-0000**

## Section 5 – Disposal Options

The owner of a dead animal must dispose of the animal in accordance with the Alberta’s *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014) (empowered by the Animal Health Act).

According to section 3 of the regulation, the owner of a dead animal must dispose of the animal within 7 days unless the owner stores the dead animal:

- outside during the winter months when the temperature is low enough to keep the dead animal completely frozen,
- in a freezer unit, or
- in accordance with the direction of the chief provincial veterinarian, an inspector appointed under section 6(2) of the Act or a veterinary inspector appointed under the Health of Animals Act (Canada).

The owner of an animal that is euthanized with drugs and other chemical substances must take steps to prevent scavengers from gaining access to the animal from the time the substances are used until final disposal.

On farm disposal methods, including the use of burial, burning, natural disposal, and composting, can only be used if the owner had custody or care and control of the animal immediately before the animal’s death, and only on land owned by the animal owner. Disposal options are highlighted below. Please refer to the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014)

for complete information. All of Alberta's legislation, including this Regulation, can be accessed through Alberta Queen's Printer at [qp.alberta.ca](http://qp.alberta.ca).

### **Burial**

On-farm burial is permitted provided several conditions are met – consult section 8 of the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014).

### **Composting**

Carcasses may be composted on-farm provided the conditions under the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014) are met. Carcasses may also be taken to a Class 1 compost facility. Some landfills accept carcasses for a fee (Class I or Class II landfills).

### **Burning**

May occur if done in accordance with the applicable provisions in the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and in the regulations and codes of practice under the Act relating to burning in an open fire or an incinerator.

### **Rendering**

A dead animal may be transported to a licensed rendering plant for disposal.

### **Natural Disposal**

Disposing of a dead animal to allow for scavenging. There are several conditions that must be met—see section 14 of the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014) for details. Carcasses that have been euthanized with drugs (permitted use by a licensed veterinarian ONLY) cannot be disposed of in this manner as it poses a significant poisoning risk to scavengers (coyotes, birds), pets and drinking water.

*All dead animals must be disposed of in accordance with the Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation. Animals that are known or suspected to have died from a disease that is reportable under the Health of Animals Act (Canada) must also be disposed of in a manner directed by a veterinary inspector appointed under that Act.*



## Contacts and Resources

Questions on the care of compromised or unfit animals: contact your local veterinarian

All of Alberta's legislation can be accessed through Alberta Queen's Printer at <a href="http://www.qp.alberta.ca">www.qp.alberta.ca</a> .	Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) North Region 780-395-6700 South Region 587-230-2468
The Health of Animals Regulations (Canada) are available from: <a href="http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._296/">laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._296/</a>	
	Report suspected animal neglect and abuse: Alberta SPCA 800-455-9003
Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian: 780-427-3448	

## Additional information and resources

Livestock Care ALERT Line – Livestock help line and resource team to report livestock care concerns	800-506-2273	
Alberta Farm Animal Care Association	403-652-5111	<a href="http://afac.ab.ca">afac.ab.ca</a>
Alberta Veterinary Medical Association	780-489-5007	<a href="http://abvma.ca">abvma.ca</a>
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	<a href="http://agriculture.alberta.ca">agriculture.alberta.ca</a> 310-FARM (3276) (Toll free in AB) 403-742-7901 (Out of province)	
Livestock Identification Services	403-509-2088	<a href="http://lis-alberta.com">lis-alberta.com</a>
Alberta Processors (Rendering)	403-279-4441 (Calgary) 403-327-8460 (Lethbridge) 780-472-6750 (Edmonton)	<a href="http://wcrl.com">wcrl.com</a>
Alberta Pork	780-474-8288	<a href="http://albertapork.com">albertapork.com</a>



## **Appendix A**

### **Overview of Applicable Regulations and Standards**



## ***Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals***

Codes of Practice are intended to promote sound management and welfare practices through recommendations and requirements for housing, health management, transport and other animal husbandry practices. Code Requirements refer to either a regulatory requirement or an industry imposed expectation outlining acceptable and unacceptable practices and are fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals.

All Codes of Practice, including the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs* (2014) and the transport Code of Practice, are available at [nfac.ca](http://nfac.ca).

## ***Alberta Animal Protection Act***

Provincial animal protection legislation in Alberta prohibits causing distress to an animal. Under Alberta's *Animal Protection Act*, an animal is in distress if it is 1(2)(a) deprived of adequate shelter, ventilation, space, food, water or veterinary care or reasonable protection from injurious heat or cold; 1(2)(b) injured, sick, in pain or suffering, or; 1(2)(c) abused or subjected to undue hardship, privation or neglect. This does not apply to activities carried out in accordance with "reasonable and generally accepted practices" of animal care. A court may consider the relevant Code of Practice when determining what is reasonable and generally accepted.

## ***Federal and Provincial Transport Regulations***

**Change this to this:** The federal requirements for animal transport are covered under the *Health of Animals Regulations (Part XII: Transportation of Animals)*, enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Provincial requirements for transport are set out under Alberta's *Animal Protection Regulation (203/2005)*, empowered by the *Animal Protection Act*. The Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) enforces this Act and regulation in rural Alberta.

## ***The Criminal Code of Canada***

The *Criminal Code of Canada* prohibits anyone from causing suffering, unnecessary pain or injury to an animal or bird, whether through willful action or neglect. The Criminal Code expressly states that it is an offence to, by wilful neglect, cause damage or injury to animals or birds while they are being driven or conveyed (i.e. transported).

## ***Federal Food and Drugs Act***

Canada's *Food and Drugs Act* prohibits the sale of food that 4(1)(a) has in or on it any poisonous or harmful substance; and/or 4(1)(b) is unfit for human consumption.

Producers and owners will not be paid for animals that are condemned at the plant. A condemned animal may have one or more of the following:

- drug residue from antibiotics or other drug
- a temperature above 104.5°F (40°C)
- a body condition score of 1
- a disease that renders the carcass unfit for human consumption.

## ***Load Healthy Animals Fit for Transport***

Federal and provincial regulations prohibit loading or transporting of animals that because of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause would suffer unduly during transport.

An animal that is injured or becomes ill or otherwise unfit for transport while in route must be taken to the nearest suitable place where it can receive proper care and attention.

## ***Regulations***

### **HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS**

138(2)(a) No person shall load or cause to be loaded on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no one shall transport or cause to be transported an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

138(2.1) For the purpose of paragraph (2)(a), a nonambulatory animal is an animal that cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

138(2.2) Despite paragraph (2)(a), a nonambulatory animal may be transported for veterinary treatment or diagnosis on the advice of a veterinarian.

138(4) No railway company or motor carrier shall continue to transport an animal that is injured or becomes ill or otherwise unfit for transport during a journey beyond the nearest suitable place at which it can receive proper care and attention.

#### **ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION ACT**

2(1) No person shall cause or permit an animal of which the person is the owner or the person in charge to be or to continue to be in distress.

2(1.1) No person shall cause an animal to be in distress.

2.1 A person who owns or is in charge of an animal (b) must provide the animal with adequate care when the animal is wounded or ill.

#### **ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)**

8 No person shall unload any livestock at a livestock market or livestock assembling station that, by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or other cause, is unable to stand or is unduly suffering.

10(1) No person shall load or transport animals that, by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause, would suffer unduly during transport.

10(2) Despite subsection (1), a person may transport animals to or from a veterinary clinic, a designated confinement area or the nearest suitable place to deal with health concerns as long as the animal is loaded and transported humanely.

10(3) No person shall continue to transport an animal that becomes injured, ill or otherwise unfit for transport during a journey beyond the nearest suitable place where it can receive proper care and attention.

12(1) No person shall load or unload livestock in a manner that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.

## **Code of Practice**

### ***Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (2014)***

#### *Requirements under Section 5.2 Fitness for Transport*

Unfit animals must not be loaded.

Compromised animals that are able to be transported under special provisions must be shipped directly to local slaughter, not through auction markets.

Animals that cannot bear weight on all four legs must not be loaded; these animals will likely become nonambulatory during transport.

Fitness for transport in the context of each trip, including relevant factors such as the anticipated total trip duration from farm to final destination, and prevailing weather conditions, must be evaluated.

In addition to federal and provincial regulations, the Code or Practice outlines the following requirements for the onfarm care of sick or injured pigs.

## **Code of Practice**

### ***Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (2014)***

#### *Requirement under Section 1.3*

##### *Facilities for Sick and Injured Pigs*

Every pig production facility must have the ability to segregate sick or injured pigs in a separate area where the necessary treatment can be administered.

#### *Requirement under Section 3.3*

##### *Sick and Injured Animals*

A standard operating procedure that details protocols for the identification, care, and humane treatment of sick or injured pigs must be developed and implemented.

All pigs must be examined daily for sickness and/or injury.

Pigs that are sick, injured, in pain, or suffering must be promptly treated, or be euthanized, or if fit for human consumption, slaughtered onfarm.

#### *Requirement under Section 3.4.1*

##### *Recognizing Sickness Behaviour*

Stockpersons must be knowledgeable of normal pig behaviour and signs of illness, injury and disease; or must work in conjunction with an experienced stockperson.

### ***Handle Pigs in a Manner that Minimizes Injury***

Regulations and Codes of Practice define what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of animal handling. Federal and provincial regulations prohibit handling animals in a way that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering.

## **Regulations**

#### **HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS**

139 (1) No person shall beat an animal being loaded or unloaded in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.

139 (2) No person shall load or unload, or cause to be loaded or unloaded, an animal in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.

#### **ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)**

12 (1) – No person shall load or unload livestock in a manner that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.



12 (3) – No person shall beat or, by use of a prod, goad or other instrument, cause injury to livestock being loaded into or unloaded from a vehicle.

## Code of Practice

### *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (2014)*

#### *Requirements under Section 4.1 Handling, Restraining and Treating Animals*

Use humane moving devices when moving pigs (e.g. chase boards, shakers).

Electric prods must only be used as a last resort and never as the primary driving device. When necessary, use of prods must be restricted to the back and hind quarters on lead pigs, but never used in the anal and genital areas, and only when there is a clear path for them to move forward.

Electric prods must not be used in the finishing pen.

Electric prods must not be used on piglets, nursery, distressed, sick or injured pigs.\*

Pigs must not be handled aggressively (e.g. kicked, walked on top of, picked up or suspended or pulled by one front leg, ears or tail).

#### *Requirement under Section 4.2*

##### *Stockmanship Skills Related to Animal Welfare*

Handlers must be competent in low-stress pig handling methods.

\*Distressed pigs is defined in the Code as follows: Pigs that are stressed beyond what would be deemed normal for a given situation, as evidenced by any one or a combination of the following signs: difficulty breathing/openmouth breathing or gasping; patchy skin discolouration; high body temperature; stiffness; reluctance to move (no other visible abnormalities); inability to rise; trembling.

### *Ensure Appropriate Stocking Densities*

Animals in transit must not be overcrowded. Follow guidelines provided in the transport Code of Practice.

## Regulations

### HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS

140 (1) – No person shall load or cause to be loaded any animal in any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, crate or container if, by so loading, that railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, crate or container is crowded to such an extent as to be likely to cause injury or undue suffering to any animal therein.

140 (2) – No person shall transport or cause to be transported any animal in any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, crate or container that is crowded to such an

extent as to be likely to cause injury or undue suffering to any animal therein.

### ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)

11 – No person shall load or transport animals in a vehicle in a manner that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering to the animals due to crowding.

## Segregate Pigs as Required

Animals of different species, of substantially different weights and ages, or incompatible by nature must be segregated in transit.

## Regulations

### HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS

141 (1) – Subject to this section, no person shall load on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no carrier shall transport animals of different species or of substantially different weight or age unless those animals are segregated.

141 (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to a female animal and its suckling offspring.

141(3) – Every cow, sow or mare with its suckling offspring shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.

141(4) – Animals of the same species that are incompatible by nature shall be segregated during transport.

141(5) – Groups of bulls, detusked boars, rams and goat bucks, if mature, shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.

141(6) – Every mature boar that has not been detusked shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.

### ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)

15 – A person transporting livestock must segregate the livestock during transport as follows: (a) livestock of the same species that are incompatible by nature and livestock of different species are segregated from one another; (b) groups of mature bulls, detusked boars, rams and goat bucks are segregated from all other livestock; (c) cows, sows and mares with suckling offspring are segregated from all other livestock; (d) a mature boar that is not detusked is segregated from all other livestock; (f) livestock of the same species but of substantially different weight or age are segregated from one another.

## Code of Practice

### *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (2014)*

#### Section 5.1 PreTransport Planning

Pigs that are incompatible must not be mixed.

## Disclaimer

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The primary purpose of this handbook is to assist people involved in the handling and transport of pigs to make responsible animal care decisions. It is important to note that while the authors have made every effort to ensure accuracy and completeness this should not be considered the final word on the areas of law and practice. Seek the advice of appropriate professionals and experts as the facts of each situation may differ from those set out here. All information is provided entirely “as is” and the authors make no representations, warranties or conditions, either express or implied, in connection with the use of or reliance upon this information. The information is provided to the recipient entirely at the risk of the recipient and, because the recipient assumes full responsibility, the authors shall not be liable for any claims, damages or losses of any kind based on any theory of liability arising out of the use of reliance upon this information (including omissions, inaccuracies, typographical errors and infringing of third party rights). Expert, professional, legal or veterinary advice should be referenced by the reader on a case-by-case basis. This handbook is subject to updates, revisions and modifications at any time.

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association has developed Humane Handling Guidelines for most farmed animal species. Copies of the guidelines are available from:

Alberta Farm Animal Care Association  
PO Box 5201  
#5 112 Centre St SE  
High River, Alberta T1V 1M4 CANADA  
Tel: 403-652-5111 Fax: 403-663-3035  
Email: [info@afac.ab.ca](mailto:info@afac.ab.ca)  
Web-friendly versions available at [afac.ab.ca](http://afac.ab.ca)





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