Piglet Handling

University of BRISTOL

Year Group: BVSc2 +

Equipment list:
Piglet Handling

Equipment for this station:

- Model piglet

Considerations for this station:

- There are some useful supporting teaching materials in the pig practicals section of Blackboard in Animal Management 2.

Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL_I02 Lab Area Rules'

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.

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1

Approach a piglet quietly and slowly. Catch a piglet by grasping its hind leg just above the hock.

Never pick up a piglet by a front limb or its tail as this is painful and may cause damage.

2

While holding the hindleg with one hand, place the other hand under the chest to provide support as the piglet is lifted.

This technique is only appropriate for small piglets, typically under 10kg.

3

Hold the piglet against your body, with your hand and/or forearm under the piglet's chest to support it.

Examine the piglet while it is in this position.

4

Locate the needle teeth - there are two in each quadrant of the mouth. They are positioned rostrally, in a similar position to where the canine teeth would be found in other animals.

Clipping of needle teeth is a commonly performed procedure, it helps to prevent teats chewing, tails chewing and general fight damage.

5

To return a piglet to the floor, crouch down and gently place the front limbs on the floor first. Then return the hind limbs to the ground and let go.

6

Tail docking is commonly performed on pig farms on piglets usually at 2-3 days old. A cauteriser is used to remove the tail and to prevent blood loss. When tail docking:

- The minimum length of tail remaining after docking must be ≥ 6 cm
- If a tail is short (6cm or less in length), only remove the tip.

Intramuscular injection site:
ham
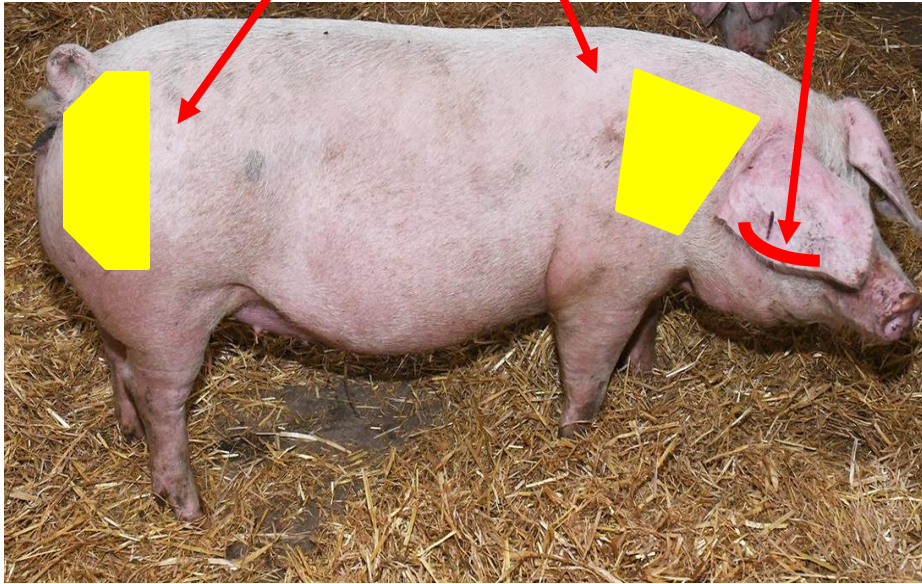*(semitendinosus, semimembranosus and biceps femoris*

Intramuscular injection site:
neck

Blood sampling site:
ear vein

Injection sites

Intramuscular (IM) injection sites - neck or ham. To reduce abscesses and carcass down grading, the neck is the preferred location for IM injections.   Iron injections are typically given IM into the ham young pigs.
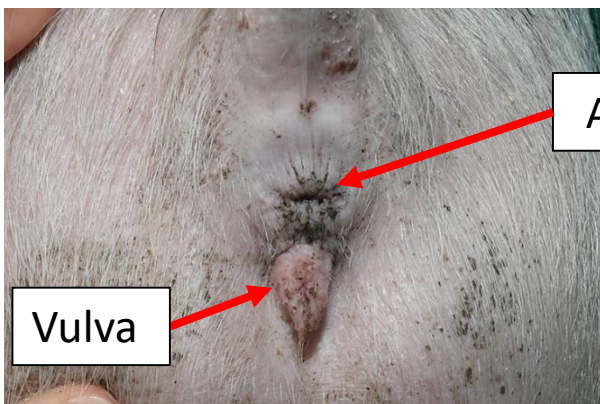
Blood sampling - ear vein is the easiest and most commonly used site. Alternatively the jugular vein or cranial vena cava can be used.

Sexing

- To determine the sex of a piglet - the easiest way is to look for the presence of a vulva in a female and the absence of a vulva in a male. The vulva is located underneath the tail base and below the anus.
- Males have a urogenital opening on the ventral abdomen caudal to the umbilicus but this may not be very obvious in a young piglet. As the piglet grows this will become more apparent and testes will also become visible in the perineal region.
- Both sexes have nipples so this is not a suitable method to determine sex.

Female pig

Male pig

Anus

Testis

Vulva

1. Return the model pig to the exotics handling box ready for the next person.

Station ready for the next person:

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.