Standard Operating Procedures for

Open Castration of Young Boars

Definition and Reason for Procedure:

The surgical removal of both testes at a young age in order to prevent "boar taint" (objectionable odor and flavor in meat) and aggression at maturity.

Facility: REDACTED INFO

Age of pigs: Between 10 and 14 days (pigs)

Equipment: Scalpel handle (No. 3), with a No.12 blade (disinfected)
            Hemostats: 4" Kelly - straight (or similar instrument)
            0.5% Chlorhexidine solution
            Sterile cotton swabs or sponges
            Availability of an approved euthanasia solution

Restraint: Manual, 2-person procedure. One person holding pig while the other person performs the castration. Piglet is held upside-down, waist-high, by its rear legs (metatarsal bone), with the abdomen facing the other person.

Procedure:

1.   Prior to performing castration, ensure that all instruments are either sterile or disinfected and that hands have been thoroughly washed with soap and water. Surgical gloves should be worn, if available.

2.   While holding the piglet in the up-side-down position, the scrotal area is palpated to ensure the presence of both testes. Piglets that are cryptorchid will not be operated on, however, will remain with the litter through weaning.

3a.   Using two fingers, the testes are gently pushed toward the abdomen, **OR**

3b.   Using two fingers move the testicle into the scrotum with two fingers and then firmly grip the scrotum below the testicle between the thumb and index finger.

4a.   While holding the testes forward in the scrotum with one hand, swab the skin covering each testicle with 0.5 Chlorhexidine solution with the other hand, **OR**

4b.   While holding the testes tightly within the scrotum with one hand, swab the skin of the scrotum with 0.5% Chlorhexidine solution with the other hand.

5a.   While still holding the testes in place, use the scalpel to incise the skin and underlying tissues over each testicle, exposing the entire testicle. Length of incision will typically be approximately 1 inch, **OR**

5b.   Make an incision roughly ½ inch long in the bottom of the scrotum over both testicles exposing the testicles.

6. Applying gentle pressure around the sides of the cut scrotum, the testicle should come out of the incision onto the surface of the surrounding skin. Using the hemostat, clamp the spermatic cord at the base of the testicle and gently extract the cord further. Re-attach the hemostat onto the cord where it enters the abdomen. Using the scalpel blade cut the cord on the testicular side of the hemostat, allowing the testicle and attached cord to be discarded. Leave the hemostat clamped to the spermatic cord for an additional 10 seconds to control bleeding. Repeat this procedure for the second testicle. Incisions are not sutured.

7. Any pig which is determined to be cryptorchid or herniates (before or after the castration) should be euthanized immediately, following approved methods of euthanasia. Pigs should be taken to the incinerator located at the State Animal Diagnostic Laboratory for disposal.

8. After castration, the pig should be placed into a clean farrowing pen with its litter mates and sow. Cleaned and disinfected the instruments in a solution of 0.5% Chlorhexidine between processing litters.

Post-treatment:

The general health and attitude of each pig is observed twice daily for the following week. Special attention is made for evidence of herniation during the first 24 hours. Piglets showing evidence of infection (excessive scrotal swelling or drainage, anorexia, depression, etc.) during the first week following this procedure should be treated according to recommendations by a veterinarian. The veterinarian conducts a postoperative physical every day for up to five days or until determined cleared by the veterinarian.

Precautions:

- Person performing the procedure should avoid distractions.

- Do not rush the procedure.

- Only well-trained or well-supervised individuals will perform these procedures. Individuals currently authorized to perform these procedures without supervision are:

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