

RED RIVER HOG PMP GUIDELINES FOR THE TRANSPORT OF RED RIVER HOGS

In 2005/2006 there was cause for concern regarding the safe transport of red river hogs among our institutions. During that period of 23 months five animals died during transit with four of those having taken place within in a 9 month period. Despite these recent problems, it should be pointed out that in the 27 months between 2004/2006 we have moved 50 red river hogs among institutions over short and long distances and overseas to Japan with only these five losses. Thus, overall we have been successful in safely transporting red river hogs. Nevertheless we have evaluated the circumstances surrounding these deaths and are making the following recommendations that will hopefully prevent any further deaths associated with transport.

The common denominator amongst all five transport related deaths was that they were each transported in crates. Four of the five overheated in the last hours of the transport and one was attributed to mishandling by airline cargo staff. Therefore, taking what we know into consideration Curby Simerson, Ann Petric, Penny Kalk, Achim Winkler and I are suggesting that the following guidelines be taken into consideration when transporting red river hogs.

1. Red river hogs have been successfully transported in crates. However it is felt that they do best in crates that are spacious, that they can easily turn around in, and are very well ventilated. The policy in Europe has always been to use spacious crates, in which the animals can easily turn around and they have never experienced any problems. A good guideline for the **Interior dimensions** on an adult red river hog crate could be 36" H x 31" W x 48" L (91 cm H x 79 cm W x 122 cm L) +/- a couple inches with each dimension. Because different individuals will vary in size by a few inches. This will allow each animal to turn around with a minimum space of 6in (15cm) over the highest part of the back of the animal. **Depending on the actual size of the animal, these dimensions can be adjusted. Keep in mind that the exterior dimensions will be larger and could interfere with airline transportation so you will need to adjust accordingly. The primary thought to keep in mind is to provide room to move around and good ventilation.** We realize that this is a large size crate, but the animals seem much more relaxed in them.

2. Each animal should ideally be acclimated to the crate prior to transport to determine if this is the best method of transport for that particular animal. If possible this should include actually closing the animal into the crate for a period of time and moving the crate from one place to another.
3. Food should always be provided for the hogs during transport.
4. Transporting hogs in a trailer may be the safest way to transport. A trailer provides plenty of space for the animal to move around in and they can usually be cared for well in a trailer.
5. Hogs tend to travel better with another cohort than they do by themselves. Therefore, transporting the animals together in a trailer can be beneficial if the situation allows. For young animals it is usually best to transport them together, again in a very spacious crate.
6. Sedation of the animal is not always required and each animal should be evaluated for this need.
7. **Every transport needs to be evaluated separately. The key issue is that as much space as possible ought to be provided. Transporting several animals together, i.e. on a trailer, very much depends on the character of the individual animals. Some animals simply are not compatible with each other, so they should be transported separately. In many cases it is also not advisable to transport an adult male together with adult females. However, again this depends on the character of the animals.**
8. Often the animals are quite stressed from the transport, particularly if they have traveled alone, and it is beneficial to have a second animal available to go through quarantine with them. If you have a second hog on grounds that can go through quarantine with the new arrival every effort should be made to make this possible. Sometimes just the second animal being next door with some visual access is enough to calm the new arrival, but on occasion getting the animals together is what works the best.

It is our hope that if the above guidelines are considered in preparation for the transport of red river hogs any further transport related deaths can be avoided. **It is important to remember that these are guidelines and not fixed procedures.** If anyone has any further questions regarding the transport of their particular red river hogs please feel free to contact anyone of us and we will be glad to assist where we can.

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