BACKGROUND

The Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, 3rd Edition (2010) recommends that pigs used for teaching and research be castrated. Castration causes clear signs of pain and discomfort for pigs, including reduced times spent nursing or feeding, increased vocalization (apart from that induced by handling) as pigs increase in age, inflammation and swelling at the castration site, acute reduction in performance, and hormonal responses. To minimize stress on the pig, castration should be performed as early as possible.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Castration should be performed between 1 and 14 days of age. After 14 days of age, local anesthetic or a combination of local and general anesthetic should be administered before castration under prescription from the attending veterinarian.

For boars of any age, trained personnel should use disinfected instruments, and a pre-castration disinfectant should be applied to the incision site. To allow proper drainage, the incision should be in the ventral scrotum and should not be sutured. Topical anesthetic may be used for short-term pain alleviation.

Swine castration will be considered United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Pain Category “C” and will not require anesthesia as long as performed within 1 to 14 days of birth.

REFERENCES