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## Care and Management of Sow Before and After Farrowing

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### ABSTRACT

*Proper care of the sow during gestation, farrowing, and lactation is a means to reach a goal — a large litter of healthy pigs at birth that will remain healthy and grow rapidly. Care during this time must also prepare the sow for a successful repeat performance at the earliest time within the system of weaning and rebreeding used. The sow must reach farrowing in the best nutritional and microbiological health for herself and the expected litter. Properly balanced rations should be fed in recommended amounts so that newborn pigs are well developed and strong. A herd health program that assures minimal exposure of the sow to disease or disease carriers during gestation is essential for maximal litter survival during the first weeks of life and for effective growth to weaning and market. The sows should be managed in a gentle and confident manner and on a regular daily schedule.*

**Keywords:** *Gestation, Farrowing, Lactation, Care and Management of Sow.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Pig farming constitutes the livelihood of rural poor belonging to the lowest socio-economic strata and they have no means to undertake skillful pig farming with reform foundation stock, suitable housing, feeding and other management. In India pig rearing is very popular amongst the tribal backward and weaker section of the society, especially North Eastern region (NER). Pig production is an important secondary occupation for livelihood and nutritional security of our people, especially in north east region. Pig production systems in tribal areas of north east are based on traditional practices which have not change much over the years. Many pig producers are poor and cannot manage more than 2-3 pigs using their own household labour and feed resources. But this small number of pigs is very important for their livelihood and on many occasions serves the purpose of saving and insurance for the poor families. Although there are considerable opportunities for enhancing the productivity of these systems, they have been often neglected in the past and their contribution to the livelihoods and potential for income generation has been under estimated. This article has clearly identified how to care and manage the farrowing sow to the farmer.

### SIGNS OF FARROWING

- 1) Building its nest, pushing slightly of hurdles, guard rails, walls, flooring
- 2) Restlessness, uneasiness, biting of hurdles and guard rails
- 3) Sow is always in “sitting dog” position
- 4) Enlarged and distended udder. Pink, shiny and pointing outside direction
- 5) Teats produces milk (farrowing in 12-24 hours) but not always
- 6) Small round size manure of sow and frequent urination
- 7) Swollen vulva, mucus discharge and meconium (first feces of piglets). Red and loosen.

- 8) . Signs of labor like muscular spasms, deep and fast breathing
- 9) Duration of farrowing is 30 mins. to 6 hours and an average of 2.5 hours interval between piglets should not be longer than 15 minutes.
- 10) Placenta comes off partially during farrowing but the rest comes out 30 mins. after birth of all piglets
- 11) Piglet interval of 45 minutes with restlessness, and excessive straining is sign of difficult farrowing where assistance is needed.
- 12) With difficult farrowing, check the condition of the sow before injecting with oxytocin. Giving more Oxytocin without checking the sow if problem exists will do more harm. After 10 minutes of injection and no piglet comes out, help the sow thru “dukot system” of piglet.

### **PREPARATIONS FOR FARROWING**

- 1) If using a separate farrowing pen or house, place the sow one week before farrowing. This will allow sufficient time for sow to adjust and be relaxed at farrowing time.
- 2) Clean and disinfect the farrowing pen/house including the feeding and watering trough at least 7 days before transferring the sow.
- 3) Before being moved to the farrowing pen/house, the sow should be thoroughly bathed and scrubbed with soap and water especially at the sides and udder. This is done to remove the parasite eggs and bacteria.
- 4) If possible, the pens should be provided with piglet protection facilities like hurdles or guard rails to prevent crushing.
- 5) Check the pens for presence of sharp edges or protruding part or anything that might hurt the sow or piglets.
- 6) Check the lighting and brooding facilities.
- 7) Clean the udder of the sow with clean cloth soaked in warm water a few hours before farrowing.

### **BROODERS AND HEATERS**

- 1) The right brooder temperature for piglets is shown by their behavior. If piglets stay close to the sow or to the source of heat (bulb) or huddle together, then the temperature is too low. If piglets stay close to the sow but stay away from the source of heat but still huddle together, then the heat source might be too high. If piglets are evenly distributed in the pen and in the brooder, then the temperature is just right.
- 2) A two 75 watt or three 50 watt electric bulb could be used as heaters.
- 3) If there is no electricity, use kerosene lamp or improvised charcoal brooder
- 4) Rough haircoat may indicate sickness or cold temperature
- 5) Always keep the brooder and creep area warm, dry and clean.

### **COLOSTRUM AND FOSTERING OF PIGLETS**

- 1) Allow the piglets to immediately suck colostrum (first milk of newly farrowed sow). Aside from food nutrients, this contains antibodies that will help the piglets fight diseases.
- 2) Fostering is done if sows do not produce enough milk or have given birth to large litter. This is best done to sows which have farrowed 1-2 days earlier or later, if not on the same day. Always transfer the bigger piglets to cope up with the fighting with new littermates.
- 3) Closely observe the sow and its litter a few days after farrowing for any disease condition and inadequate milk production.

## **FEEDING OF PREGNANT ANIMAL**

The pregnancy need for conserving nutrients for ensuing lactation is accelerated during the later stage of pregnancy. It is required proteins, vitamins and minerals. Mature sows gain (30 – 35) kg and gilts (40 – 45) kg throughout pregnancy. Feed should be regulated that sows and gilts are nevermore over fat or thin. Feed lightly with bulky laxative feed immediately before and after farrowing. Bring the sow to full feeding in ten days. Plenty of greens may be provided. Feed allowance may be numerate as (2.5 – 3.0 kg/100 kg) body weight add at the rate of 0.2 kg feed per piglet with the sow Thus, a sow weighing 100 kg with eight piglets should receive 4.6 kg feed per day. The piglets may be supplied with special nourishing diet known as creep feed separately

## **OTHER MANAGEMENT**

- 1) To remove the needle teeth, first remove the piglets from the sow (or she may become aggressive trying to protect them). Then use tooth clippers or side-cutters to snip off the four needle teeth, two on the top jaw and two on the bottom jaw. Replace the piglets with their mother as soon as the removal is over.
- 2) Keep the clippers clean. Wash the clippers with antiseptic or bleach between each piglet.
- 3) Piglets housed in a shed need iron injection to make sure they do not suffer from anemia. The iron helps the piglet to have adequate blood for healthy growth.
- 4) Iron injection shall be give on 4<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> day of birth.
- 5) Vaccinate the piglets and sow with Hog Cholera at 30-35 days,42 days for FMD
- 6) Wean the piglets at 30-42 days depending on health and conditionof the piglets
- 7) Deworm the piglets at 42-45 days old.

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