



Oregon Pork Producers Spring Conference 2012

# CARE OF NEWBORN PIGS AND POST-FARROWING SOWS

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# Healthy pigs start with a healthy sow!

- Good maternal line genetics
- Careful attention to nutrition
- Parasite control
- Manage the environment
  - Reduce stress by acclimating sows to human contact
  - Move to farrowing pen 3-4 days before expected farrowing
  - Temperature and humidity control
    - ventilation
  - Provide nest material and place cover over crate before and after farrowing



# Why do the good die young?

- ◎ 65% of all post-farrowing deaths occur in the first 4 days of life
  - 42% of these are from crushing
- ◎ Baby pigs are born immunologically 'naked'
  - Disinfect farrowing area
  - Make sure they get colostrum
- ◎ Baby pigs have very little body fat
  - Provide heat, eliminate drafts

# The newborn pig has three basic requirements:



- ⦿ A good environment;
- ⦿ Adequate and regular nutrition
- ⦿ Safety from disease and crushing

Individual attention pays off!

# Care of newborn pigs



- Weak pigs get crushed so move them away until they are stronger
- Creep areas on both sides of the sow keeps pig out of the 'danger zone'. Use a 175W radiant heat lamp. Check temp at pig level.
  - Newborns need 90°F
- Lighter, smaller pigs need extra attention
  - Heated creep boxes, carpet, deep shavings

# Evaluation of newborn baby pigs

- ⦿ Was gestation full term?
- ⦿ Is the amniotic fluid clear or meconium stained?
- ⦿ Is the pig trying to breathe?
- ⦿ Is the pig moving with good strength?

If you answered **YES** to all 4 questions, leave the piglet alone!

# Resuscitation of baby pigs

- ⦿ Provide warmth, clear airway, stimulate, dry off
- ⦿ Ventilation, oxygen
  - Manually compress chest
  - Put mouth over snout and blow- yum!
  - Provide oxygen
  - Administer respiratory stimulants – dopram
- ⦿ Stop bleeding from navel cord – tie off 2” from body wall and dip

# Resuscitation of baby pigs

- ⦿ Reevaluate every 30 sec.
  - Respiration
  - Heart rate and strength
  - Mucous membrane color
  - Temperature



# Resuscitation of baby pigs

## ⦿ How to warm a chilled piglet

- Dry pig thoroughly
- Heat lamp
- Heat pad
- Wrap in towels
- Hold close to your body
- Wrap in Saran wrap (not face!) and place under heat lamp
- **DO NOT OVERHEAT!**

# Resuscitation of baby pigs

## ⦿ Respiratory assistance

- Required for a gasping or non-breathing piglet
- Supplement oxygen if gums are purple but piglet is breathing
- Give mouth-to-snout if not breathing
- Administer Dopram – V (about 5 drops)
  - Topical under tongue
  - Inject into base of tongue
- Stimulate breathing by placing 20g needle into base of snout (G25) until it hits bone then ‘peck’ with it.

# Resuscitation of baby pigs

- ◎ Low heart rate but breathing
  - Apply chest compressions (90/min) to chest behind elbows
  - Mouth-to-snout every 2-3 seconds

# Tube feeding pigs



- ◎ It is easy – learn how to do it!
- ◎ Equipment
  - Colostrum (any species but pig is best)
  - Rubber tube (12-14 Fr red rubber)
  - Syringe (20 ml)
- ◎ Procedure
  - Draw up about 10-15 ml 'milk' in a 20 ml syringe
  - Lubricate tube and push end over base of tongue and allow pig to swallow
  - Verify placement
  - Attach syringe and slowly inject 'milk'
  - Pinch tube as it is withdrawn

# First procedures for piglets

- The navel should be disinfected the day pigs are born using tincture of iodine.
- If possible, equalize litter size.
  - If several sows are farrowing within a 24-hour period, pigs can be transferred successfully from one sow to another.
  - Transfer bigger pigs in the litter, not the runts.
  - Best results occur if pigs are transferred the first 3 days of life and have received colostrum before transfer.
- Pig less than 2 lbs are at risk of death

# Cross fostering

- ◎ Piglet weight variability contributes to mortality
- ◎ Foster litters according to piglet weights not just number of pigs in the litter
- ◎ Fostering has it's downside
  - May not suckle
  - Piglets fight more
  - Increase sow aggression
  - Inhibits sow milk let-down



# Cross fostering

## Guidelines

- Even out weights of pigs in litters
- Foster piglets weighing less than 2# to a litter of all small pigs (preferable gilt mothers)
- Try to do it on the first day after birth
- Only fill available teat spaces
- Do not put poor doing pigs back with younger aged pigs
- If a foster mother is not available consider removing largest pigs from the sow for up to 4h/day for 2-3 days





# Heat for pigs

- Heat lamps

- Attracts pigs to light and warmth
- Hover
- Mats
- Heated floor

- Needs to be 85-90°F

- No drafts-solid walls or pens





# What's normal piglet behavior?

- Nurse about 15 times in first 24 hours of life
- Consume 15 mL /feeding
  - $15 \times 15 = 225 \text{ mL}$  (1/2 pint!)
- Cold or a delay to first nursing contribute to death and disease losses



# What's NOT normal piglet behavior?

- Lethargic- does not get up to nurse with rest of litter
- Isolated away from sow or heat source
- Moving from nipple to nipple looking for milk
- Cold, flat, purple
- Vomiting or diarrhea



# Processing baby pigs

- Usually done between 1 and 14 days old
- Less stressful when done at a young age
- Castration, teeth clipping, tail amputation, ear notching, iron injection



# Processing baby pigs

## ⦿ Castration

- To make management easier and prevent boar taint
- Castration at 14 days results in less negative behavior change (reduced nursing, increased lying) and heavier pigs at weaning with better subsequent weight gain compared with pigs castrated at 1 day of age

# Processing baby pigs

## ⦿ Clipping needle teeth

- Done because the sharp teeth can damage the sow's udder and other pigs and prevention of greasy pig disease
  - Pigs fight to establish 'ownership' of a teat
  - Can cause broken teeth, jaw infections, joint infections, poor doing pigs
- Many producers have stopped clipping teeth with no untoward effects – give it a try!
  - Expect more facial injury but usually of no concern
  - Many depend on aggressiveness of your line of genetics

# Processing baby pigs



## ● Tail amputation

- Done to prevent tail biting in growing-finishing pigs especially in confinement
- Tail removed  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from base of tail
  - Emasculator, wire cutters, scalpel, hot docking iron (less stress response)
- Do NOT do on day of birth – wait until pigs have ingested colostrum (do on day 3 with iron shot)

# Processing baby pigs



## ● Iron injections

- An important and essential procedure for confinement raised swine
- Not giving iron and result in anemia, scours, poor health
- Most important for fast growing pigs
- Give 1 cc on day 2-3 and another at day 14 OR give 1.5 cc on day 2-3. Avoid injection on day of birth.
- Oral iron is OK also





# Care of the sow after farrowing

- ◎ Begins with good care before farrowing
  - Comfortable, good feed, plentiful water
  - Sow/gilt vaccinations to protect pig from diarrhea
  - Parasite control
  - 3-4 day adaption period to farrowing facility
  - Too bad we lost gestation crates!
- ◎ Good care at farrowing
  - Comfort is a top priority



# Care of the sow after farrowing

- ⦿ When sow stops straining and shows interest in her litter you can assume she is done
- ⦿ Placentae are passed shortly after last pig or up to 12 h later
  - If you do not see placentae in 12 h there may be another pig so check her
  - If she continues to strain or has a smelly discharge check for another pig

# Care of the sow after farrowing

- Most sows eat very little for up to 48h post farrowing- this is normal
  - Provide no or very little feed the day of farrowing
  - By the day after farrowing increase feed up to 10-12#
  - Expect sow to drink 4-5 gallons/day – check waterer



# Piglet savaging



- More in first litter gilts
- Usually firstborn pig they try to kill
- Separating pigs from sow until farrowing is complete is helpful
  - Check sow's udder for swelling, redness, pain
  - Provide nesting material
  - Sedation (acepromazine, alcohol)
- By 24 h sow should be encouraging pigs to nurse

# Questions???



| + ALLIGATOR MEAT +                   |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1 LB PACKS :                         | \$   |
| TAIL MEAT                            | 8.29 |
| TENDERLOIN & JAW                     | 9.99 |
| 2 LB PACKS :                         |      |
| CAJUN SAUSAGE                        | 8.49 |
| SMOKED CAJUN SAUSAGE                 | 9.49 |
| BODY MEAT                            | 8.99 |
| RECIPES AVAILABLE<br>UPON<br>REQUEST |      |

We have competition!