

CARE OF NEWBORN PIGS

Since baby pigs cannot adjust to temperature fluctuations until they are several days old, extra heat should be provided by a bulb over the brooder or using a heat lamp above an area between two sows where the pigs will be attracted by the light and have extra protection. A temperature of 80°F is adequate for newborn pigs. Heat lamps can be adjusted to the proper height for the right temperature. Heat in the floor also is a satisfactory way of providing sufficient heat; however, a light is good since it attracts little pigs to a protected area. Be sure there are no drafts in the farrowing house. It is best to have solid walls in the pens or stalls to prevent drafts and to have a minimum of disturbance to distract or excite the sow with a new litter. Protect the farrowing house from flies, birds, etc., by screens. Drafts, dampness and chilling are baby pig's worst enemies.

Just as soon as possible after birth crush off the navel cord about 1-1 $\frac{2}{3}$ inches from the abdomen, if it has not already been severed. If the cord bleeds when severed or if found bleeding, tie off the end. Dip in an iodine solution, either tincture of iodine or the stronger iodine solution recommended for livestock. Either one is satisfactory. This will go a long way toward preventing an infection from going up through the navel cord.

At the same time the navels are treated with iodine, clip the needle teeth, keeping the clipper in a mild disinfectant when not in use. The teeth should be clipped far enough above the gums so the clipper does not cut into the flesh.

Observe young pigs several times daily from birth to determine if any signs of scours develop. Some scours are from pigs getting too much milk. However, more cases of scours come from erysipelas or low level infection picked up from the farrowing quarters. In the first stages of scours the excrement is of a watery consistency and the pig's hams and tail are apt to show signs of being wet. Pigs in this condition should be treated with a reliable scour treatment at once. Don't delay. Treat within the hour. There have been cases where pigs were born with an infection, or contacted one within an hour or so after birth, and if not treated, become hopelessly emaciated within a few hours. If sows were vaccinated for erysipelas about a month before farrowing, the scours should not be the result of

erysipelas but from a low level infection picked up in the farrowing quarters.

When pigs are to be finished in confinement it may be desirable to clip off the tail. Do this before the pigs are over one day old, leaving about one fourth inch stub on the body and dipping or painting the stub end with iodine. Be sure whatever is used to clip the tail, or any instrument used on the pigs, is let stand in a good disinfectant when not in use.

If a sow has more pigs than she has good nipples and more than one sow has farrowed within 2 to 4 days of each other, it is a good idea to equalize the litters, giving the pigs to the last sow farrowing. Pigs transferred may be dissatisfied for a few hours, but usually after nursing once, quiet down. Sows that are good mothers usually accept these pigs from other litters. Older pigs should be transferred to the younger litters if possible while the milk flow is good and before any of the nipples have had their milk flow reduced because the nipple has not been consistently nursed.

Pig should be ear notched at birth so each pig can be trace to the litter from which it came, and each pig should have an identical identification mark, so it always possible to check on any one pig in the litter. A sample of the universal system used by eight breed associations is shown on the following page. The value of each notch made with a small ear notcher is labeled in the area where the notch is made. A breeder with a commercial herd can set up his own system of notching. A purebred breeder should use the universal system, if approved by the breed association that he registers his pigs.

Baby pigs should get iron when they are 2 to 4 days old to prevent anemia. Any good standard brand of iron-dextran can be used, according to directions. Disinfect the point where the needle is inserted for the 1 or 2 cc injection. Use an iodine solution to dab on the seat of the injection, using a small piece of cotton or cloth held with a small forceps. The iron shot is necessary when the litter is on concrete, and is beneficial under almost all conditions up until the little pigs start eating a creep ration. The first injection can be given in the ham. If a second shot is given in about two weeks it should be given in the tissue around the neck. Iron given into the ham after about 2 weeks of age may result in a coloring of the flesh at the site of the injection. There are other methods of preventing anemia, like keeping the young pigs on soil or putting some clean sod in the pen or painting the sow's udder daily with an iron sulfate or copperas solution. Giving iron shots is recommended as a more sure way of preventing anemia and usually results

in stronger, healthier pigs.

If castration cannot be done at least 2 weeks before weaning, do not castrate before the pigs are weaned and on feed.

With our present-day methods of swine management, practically all of our swine are castrated as small pigs from a few days of age up to the age of weaning. It is advisable to examine these small pigs for the presence of hernias and cryptorchidism. When castrating a large number at one time, those afflicted with these conditions can be put aside and operated on separately, and the routine for castrating large numbers will not be disrupted.

Wash the scrotum with a disinfectant before making an incision. Place the knife in the disinfectant before each operation.

Distend the scrotum by placing the hand in front of the scrotum and exerting a pushing-back movement while pinching with the thumb and forefinger. The incision is made over the testicle on the somewhat distended and raised scrotum, and is facilitated by the distension. Make the incision low to assure drainage and carry through all tissues into the testicle. This causes the testicles to "pop out" through the incision in the tunica. Grasp the testicle and pull until the cord separates. When castrating a ruptured pig, do not make the first cut through the peritoneum but just down to this membrane. Push back the intestines away from the testicle and by twisting the peritoneum, push the intestines into the body. Tie a cord around the peritoneum next to the body and take a stitch through the peritoneum to prevent the string from slipping off. Make an incision through the peritoneum to expose the testicle and clip off the cord. Cut off some of the peritoneum half an inch above the tie. Take at least 5 or 6 stitches, pulling the two hams together where exposed. Then wind the suture around the stub, stitch through it, push the stub through the remaining opening and stitch the hams together over the last opening. When the hernia is only on one side the other testicle can be removed in a normal manner. In case of a double hernia, remove each testicle in the manner outlined, stitching the hams together after both testicles have been removed.

At about 3 weeks of age an 18 percent pig starter can be fed in a creep area. Pigs probably will be eating some of the sow's feed by that time. Some producers feed pre-starter, which probably is not necessary because at 3 weeks of age, the pigs will begin eating some of the sow's feed and, if weaned or given free access to a creep area, will

begin eating at once. Put a small amount of feed in the creep each time, not more than enough to last the pigs a day, to keep the feed fresh. After pigs are from 7 to 10 days old, two sows and their pigs can be penned together. At about 21 days of age three or four sows may be left together and a creep provided that only the pigs have access to. Some time between 4 and 8 weeks of age pigs should be weaned and kept in groups of about 18 to 20. Weight, vigor and condition pretty well determine if a pig should be weaned; age alone should not be the determining factor. Pigs should weigh at least around 20 pounds when weaned.. Do not wean pigs under 15 pounds. In confinement more pigs can be kept in one pen following weaning. Feed the starter ration, or a similar one, until they weigh about 50 pounds and are ready for the grower-finisher ration. When weaning, leave pigs in litters when possible, rather mixing the pigs from all litters. Take out the smaller pigs and place them in one pen. When pigs of different sizes are placed together, usually the larger pigs keep doing better and gaining faster while the smaller pigs have trouble holding up their gains and may actually go backward. When put into the finishing area, each group should be as near as possible of the same weight for more uniform and better gains.

No hog farm is absolutely free from disease, but good management results in a minimum of trouble. Keep visitors away from contact with baby pigs. Control stray dogs and cats, and eliminate sparrows, pigeons, rats and mice from all swine quarters. Keep livestock trucks and feed trucks off ground to which young pigs have access.

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