

## Season 1, Episode 12: Setting Up for Success

Kendall Weger, technical support at PIC, talks to us about farrowing room preparation, day one pig care, post-farrowing care, and what we as producers can do.



### ***The Farrowing House***

Preparing the farrowing house is extremely important. We want to make sure the farrowing house is clean and safe before loading the sows into the room so our focus can be 100% on the sows and piglets. This can be done by power washing with warm water, a disinfectant, degreaser and then letting the room dry overnight. Before loading the room, scan for broken flooring, waterers, heaters, ventilation, fans, feeders, or crates. Make sure the room is completely set up and ready before bringing in sows. Feeders should be dry and ready for feed, check all water nipples for adequate flow. You also want to set up the creep area to ensure piglets are born into the best environment possible, since sows will farrow on their own overnight. Creep areas should have a mat and heat source. Sometimes two mats and two heat sources could be necessary for piglets to lay comfortably away from the sow, depending on litter size. Before leaving farrowing rooms for the day check room temperature, heat lamps, have towels and drying agents readily available for the next morning.

### ***Day one pig care***

Try to have sows at an ideal body condition score prior to loading them into farrowing rooms. Three critical components of day one pig care: keeping piglets warm and dry, making sure they have udder training and colostrum intake, and making sure the sows are being cared for. Aim to check each sow every 20-30 minutes, sleeving when needed and acting when sows need assistance. Signs you need to assist/sleeve could be: no fresh piglets in the last 30 minutes, seeing stillborns, or seeing a stressed sow. Flag those sows so you get to them even more often, if possible. Piglets need to be warm and dry, make sure they can get themselves to the creep area to stay warm and get to the udder. Udder training is most critical for the smaller piglets, aiding them in getting to the nipple will help decrease the birth to nurse interval.

### ***Labor Allocation***

Staffing is a challenge on most sow farms. Focus on those heavy days, asking each crew to take a break for an hour at a time to check sows and help dry piglets. In the first hour of the day, make sure each sow and piglet is cared for from the night before. Get piglets warm and make sure they are nursing. Extra help during the first hour of the day will get sows set up for the day and the farrowing team off to a good start with consistent rounds.

### ***Post Farrowing Success***

In the first 24 hours post farrowing get sows up and eating. Check each sows rectal temp the day after farrowing, temperature could tell you something before the sow starts showing symptoms of illness. If you wait for the sow to show symptoms, and go off feed, it may be too late for the litter to thrive. Stand up sows twice a day to evaluate overall status, and get her to eat and drink. Once a sow farrows, she should have access to as much fresh feed as she wants. Keep feeders cleaned out and properly adjusted, waterers should be checked daily. Inspect for any piglets that are falling behind, during the 3 to 7 days of age range. Find a quality nurse sow for piglets that are falling behind. Typically, you should look for a sow with a lower parity, smaller teats and a good underline. Be sure not to mix older pigs with younger pigs, just move those piglets that are falling behind. Also, continuously adjust heat lamps and mats as piglets get older and can better regulate their body temperature.

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