

H14 - Supervision of the farrowing facility - of sows, piglets, facility and pen



Staff member inspecting pigs in a farrowing pen

Inspect all farrowing pens every day.

Before inspecting each individual pen, note the climate (hot/cold/draught). Then

1. Stand in front of the farrowing pen and form a general impression of the piglets' lying behaviour and the sow's behaviour.
2. Examine the sow's health.
3. Check feed and water supply for sows and piglets.
4. Lift the roof off the creep area.
5. Check the environment of the creep area.
6. Make all piglets stand up.
7. Examine the health of the piglets and initiate treatment if necessary.
8. Decide what to do with piglets that are not growing.
9. Check whether the farrowing crate needs adjustment.



Piglets that should have been treated

Inadequate inspection in the farrowing facility may result in

- An increase in piglet mortality due to arthritis or other disease.
- An increase in dead and non-uniform piglets due to failure to move piglets with reduced growth in time.
- Insufficient knowledge of where and when to intervene against sick and weak piglets.
- Sick sows not being treated.

Additional comments - Supervisin of the farrowing facility

It is important to inspect **all** piglets every day. Start with the youngest piglets due to infection risks. 0-7-day old piglets can quickly fall behind, and they **must** be moved within ½-1 day to survive. The remaining days up to weaning are also important. A piglet with an acute disease **must** be treated in time and a piglet with incipient arthritis can only be cured if treated in the early stages

1. The first impression of the situation in the pen is often normative. Non-uniform piglets, piglets searching by the sow's udder, piglets "huddling together" or sows lying sternally are among the indications that something is wrong.
2. Examine the sows for reddening on the udder, leg problems, scapula, shoulder lesions, body condition etc. and initiate treatment if necessary. See H25 - Prevention and handling of shoulder lesions and H15 - Disease and treatment of sows.
3. Every day, check if the piglets' trough is empty. Adjust the feed dose - see H23 - Feeding of piglets. Also check the function of the sow's feeder.
4. If there are pigs that do not get up at the time of your inspection, make them stand up and examine them. You can ease inspection considerably by employing a "central opening device" for use in several creep areas at a time. However, do not use this before you have taken a look at the pen without disturbing the pigs.
5. Check whether the creep area is dry, warm, humid or wet. Also check if there is a draught in the pen. See H13 - The environment of the piglets.
6. Even though the piglets lie in one layer under the cover in the creep area and look healthy, it is still important to make all piglets stand up and walk around so that you can see if they have leg problems etc. and to treat them. **Remember: When the piglets lie down, you can see that they are there, but you cannot see if anything is wrong with them.**
7. If you experience high piglet mortality rates, record causes of death for a period of time, see Appendix 17 - Recording of piglet mortality (example). When a piglet has received the recommended number of treatments and does not seem to be responding to the treatment, assess whether to continue the treatment or whether to destroy the piglet (see also H16 - Disease and treatment of piglets).
8. Piglets that are sharp across the back and hollow around the flanks eat too little and should be moved to a foster sow as quickly as possible. See H12 - Foster sow for piglets with reduced growth.

If the sow has stopped, ie. an entire litter is not growing, then find another sow with the same number of piglets that is doing well, and let the two litters switch sows. Thereby the "weak" piglets are placed with a sow that is doing well, and the piglets that are doing well are placed with a sow that has stopped. This may help stimulate the sow that had stopped. See H11 - Exchange of litters.
9. Widen the sides of the crate as soon as the piglets are mobile (3-5 days). Sufficient room by the udder during suckling increases milk letdown by 25%.