

- Keep small ones separate from big ones to reduce fighting.
- During weaning, remove the sow from the piglets and not vice versa to minimise stress.
- Do not mix piglets from different sows since this leads to fighting and loss of weight.
- When mixing piglets from different sows apply used engine oil on their skin to get rid of identification scent.



Improved piglet survival



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Piglet management for improved pig production



Introduction

Piglet deaths reduce the profitability of a pig enterprise by reducing the number of pigs available for sale.

Proper management of piglets can reduce this loss by avoiding the most common causes of piglet deaths which include:

Suffocation

This is death caused when the mother lies on the piglets. This can be reduced by building a creep area for the piglets. Sows should be selected for good mothering ability to enhance high piglet survival rates.

Cold

Piglets are highly affected by cold especially in the first 2 to 3 weeks of life since they have insufficient fat layer to protect them.



Delicate piglets

To keep them warm, provide beddings and artificial heating such as infra-red bulbs.

Management practices of piglets

A sow has the ability to give birth to up to 12 piglets. The following practices will enhance piglet survival:

- Disinfect the umbilical cord with iodine 5% to prevent disease infections.
- Provide bedding (dry grass or wood shavings) in the resting area to keep piglets warm or use infra-red bulb for heating.
- Give iron injection on the third day to reduce incidence of anaemia.
- Clip the teeth within 24 hours to avoid damage of sow's udder when suckling.
- Notch or tag ears for identification and record keeping.
- Weigh piglets at birth and record the weights.
- Castrate the male pigs which are not suitable for breeding on the 3rd week using open method.



Open castration method

- Drench with antihelminths to protect them from internal parasites.
- Wean young pigs on the 8th week when they are 14 – 20 kg.

Weaners

Weaners should be put in groups of 10 – 12 according to weaning weights.



Healthy weaner