



Piglet Cross Fostering Procedures

1. Allow pigs to nurse at least 24 hours to consume colostrum milk.
2. Do cross fostering on day 2 and no later than day 7.
3. Cross foster to new litters the larger barrows if possible. They will be the most aggressive eaters.
4. Cross foster pigs to the new sow that are slightly larger than their litter mates in the new litter.
5. If cross fostering small pigs place them on a young sow with small nipples.
6. When a litter of light weight pigs is put together it may be advisable to stimulate milk flow with Oxytocin.
7. Watch the attitude of the sow that you foster pigs on to. Sows that lay on pigs or exhibit poor mothering ability should never have pigs fostered on to them.
8. Pigs fostered onto new litters at 24 hours of age may require an oral dose of Fastbreak Plus. This is a highly digestible energy source for the baby pig.
9. Use cross fostering to challenge the milking ability of gilts. Gilts should nurse 10 or more pigs in the first litter to fully develop their milking ability.
10. Cross fostering is a Stop – Gap measure. The need to do excessive cross fostering may indicate the need to change management procedures in gestation. Extreme differences in litter size or litter birth weights in an indicator of this.

Goal: Reduce pre-weaning mortality to 12 % or less.



Nurse Sow

1. A nurse sow has already raised and weaned a litter. Use the nurse sow to raise pigs that are 7 days or older and have fallen behind.
2. Use sows that weaned a litter of 10 or more pigs good even pigs.
3. Make sure the nurse sow is still in good body condition.
4. Place 1 pig less on the nurse sow than what she weaned previously. This will reduce the load on her some but should keep her from cycling.
5. Take the pigs to be placed on the nurse sow and separate them for 2 to 4 hours without allowing them to nurse.
6. Make sure pigs placed on the nurse sow are still weaned by 21 days of age.
7. You may also consider using the nurse sow to raise a litter of good week old pigs and use a sow that has only been lactating for 7 days to raise those pigs that are falling behind. This is a judgement call.
8. The advantage of using a sow only one week into lactation for pigs that are falling behind is that she is still passing high levels of antibodies on to the pigs in the milk.
9. One nurse sow for every 20 litters farrowed should be sufficient. If the need is greater than this review farrowing management procedures.