



Gilt Development

1. Gilts should be removed from the finisher at 6 months of age or about 240 lbs.
2. Gilts should then be fed a gestation diet and allowed to develop frame and body until at least 7 ½ months of age before breeding.
3. Remove gilts from finishing or schedule them for delivery 47 days prior to the planned breeding date. This allows them to be bred on the 2nd full estrus cycle after delivery.
4. Gilts should be wormed with Atgard or treated with Dectomax for internal & external parasites 4 to 6 weeks prior to breeding.
5. Make sure gilts are vaccinated twice with pre – breeding vaccines prior to breeding and that the 2nd dose has at least 2 weeks to take effect.
6. Gilts that do not breed at the planned time may need to be vaccinated once more.
7. Gilts as well as sows need light to develop as females. If housed inside make sure lights are left on during the day especially during the time of the year when daylight hours are short.
8. Gilts need boar exposure often to develop sexually. At least 20 minutes every day. Use a boar for stimulation that is at least 10 months of age. Young boars can be ineffective at stimulating puberty. Do NOT allow continuous boar contact as it impairs the efficiency of heat detection.
9. Plan ahead – Increase the normal size of your gilt pool by about 40 % during June, July, & August.
10. Reduce the culling of herd sows to a minimum starting in April each year. You can catch up on culling needs after the weather cools down. For summer breeding needs expect to carry 10 % more sows in inventory than normal.
11. Consider using a vasectomized boar to stimulate estrus in gilts. Gilts show a positive response in farrowing rates when bred initially by teaser boar.
12. Plan your gilt matings so that the older females are bred first. Open gilts above 325 lbs. can be very difficult to get bred.



13. Producers using AI to mate gilts should consider using a boar for the first service. This is likely to improve the timing of the mating as well as farrowing rates.
14. Consider vaccinating gilts once prior to breeding with the prefarrowing vaccine. This will improve the efficacy of the prefarrowing vaccine later.
15. Do NOT allow gilts to become fat during the development period. Overly fat gilts will not perform well later in lactation.
16. If housed in confinement pens place gilts 6 to 12 head per pen. Allow 15 sq. feet per head. If gilts are crowded they will not develop and cycle well.
17. Gilts may require some “good” stress to start cycling. Examples include: mixing pens, relocating to a new pen or barn, hauling, vaccination, etc. However none of these methods can replace the effect of boar exposure.
18. Temperature – gilts housed at temperatures above 85°F will enter puberty later. It is important to provide spray cooling, fans, shade, etc.