



## Managing Group Farrowing Systems

1. Gilt Pool – make sure the gilt pool is large enough to more than adequately meet replacement needs. Use the Gilt Pool Inventory sheet for your individual operation calculations.
2. Breeding Window – maintain at 7 days if at all possible. Absolutely no more than 10 days. Extending the length of the breeding window will cause pig flow problems through out the production system. If the breeding window must be wider to meet breeding needs, then something is not being done properly.
3. Late Gestation Feeding – monitor sow body condition. Keep gilts at a condition score 3.0 to 3.25, sow at a condition score of 3.0 or slightly less. Over conditioned sows will have more farrowing problems, will not eat and milk as well, and probably will not breed back as well.
4. Pregnancy Checking – do this with an ultrasound unit at 30 to 35 days after breeding and do a followup check at 45 days if at all possible. Preg checking with a boar only works if the sow is still cycling. A sow that has gone totally anestrus will not respond to a boar and non – productive days will increase.
5. Heat Checking – begin at 18 days after breeding and go through day 21 after breeding. Run the boar in front of the sows and allow fenceline contact nose to nose for 4 to 5 minutes. Do this 1 to 2 hours after feeding in the A.M. when sows are active. Sows will begin to show estrus at about day 18 if they are recycling.
6. Pre-Farrowing Management – lock sows up in crates 2 to 4 days prior to farrowing. Watch for nesting behavior and milk let-down. Reduce feed intake to 2 to 4 lbs. the last day prior to farrowing. This helps to clean out the GI tract, ease farrowing problems, and leaves the sow hungry and ready to eat after farrowing.
7. Feeding Management – follow feeding recommendations after farrowing on the Lactation Management sheet. Do NOT over feed sows too soon after farrowing as it will cause sow feed intake to roller coaster over the lactation period and cause excessive sow weight loss and rebreeding problems.
8. Lactation Body Condition – make sure lactation feed intakes match the sow's milk production needs. You can top dress up to 1 lb. of 47.5 % soymeal per day to meet the lysine needs of low intake sows and gilts. Sows require 12 to 13 grams of lysine daily to meet basic body requirements. An additional 45 grams of lysine is required to meet the needs of a sow nursing 9 pigs. Use the formula below to figure the ration lysine levels for your particular herd.



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Quality  
Consistency  
Availability

$$\begin{array}{rcccc} \text{Lbs. of feed fed} & \times & \% \text{ lysine in diet} & \times & 454 = \text{Grams of lysine intake/day} \\ 12 & & \times 1.0\% & & \times 454 = 54.48 \text{ grams / day} \end{array}$$

9. Summer Feeding – adjust lactation levels up .10% to compensate for lower intakes during hot summer months. Begin when temperatures reach 75°F and continue until it cools down in late fall.
10. Gestation Length – most herds will average 115 days. However, actual gestation time on an individual basis will range from 112 to 117 days. Identify sows which have not farrowed by Wed., check the breeding date, ( must be 111 to 112 days of gestation) and use Lutalyse to induce farrowing. This will help to keep the sow group together, increase weaning weights, and maintain good pig flow throughout the operation.
11. Lactation Length – try to maintain a minimum of 16 days. Factors involved here are breeding window and induced farrowings. Sows lactating 15 days or less will be slower to return to estrus and will extend the breeding window.
12. Weaning Time – inject sows with 1500 mg. of Vitamin E. this helps to improve the return to estrus percent and improve estrus activity or response. Also those sows lactating 14 days or less inject with PG – 600 to help stimulate estrus as sows are weaned.
13. Animal Health Issues – make sure pre-breeding vaccines are given to gilts 6 and 2 weeks prior to breeding to stimulate adequate immunity. Weaned sows need to be vaccinated with the pre-breeding booster at least 7 days prior to weaning to allow time for immune response. Pull blood for diagnostic work a minimum of 1 to 2 times annually and do a disease profile on reproductive and respiratory diseases.
14. Pre-Breeding Feed – full feed sows during the return to estrus and breeding period. Usually they will only eat 6 to 8 lbs. daily. Also increase lysine to .80 % and use Aureomycin @ 400 grams per ton during the breeding week. If you cannot use a separate breeding diet then use the gestation diet and flush the whole herd once each month with Aureomycin.
15. Gestation Feeding – feed early in the morning. Make sure grain is top quality with no molds or discoloration. Feed sows to body condition # 3. Feed only one time daily, preferably in the morning. For sows in buildings that are not temperature controlled adjust the feeding rate to compensate for cold weather. Consider using fiber in the gestation diet such as dehy alfalfa, wheat midds, soy hulls, etc. This will help keep sows more comfortable and reduce ulcer issues. Feed sows as quickly as possible as this is a stressful time for limit fed animals.



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16. Breeding – begin breeding 1 to 2 hours after the morning feeding. Sows should be the most active at this time. Service all sows and gilts that have not previously been bred first before doing second matings.
17. Housing – Watch building temperature and follow temp chart to maintain animal comfort. Move bred animals to their “home” pen or stall immediately after the second mating. Any mixing or socialization issues need to be over before embryo implantation. Moving sows after 7 days post breeding will cause a reduction in both litter size and farrowing rate. Pen sows based upon body condition, weight, age, etc. I.E. gilts with gilts or first parity females.
18. Estrus cycle – Sows should be actively cycling by Day 4 after weaning. However, most herds are not ready to begin breeding until Day 5. For this reason weaning on Wednesday afternoon to begin breeding on Monday morning works well. Approximately 60 to 65 % of wet sows should breed on Day 5 (Monday), on Day 6 (Tuesday) the next 20 to 25 %, and on Day 7 (Wednesday) the last 10 to 20 %. Any sows not mated after the Wednesday morning breeding time should be injected with PG – 600 to stimulate estrus. Often these sows are in a silent heat and will mate on Thursday A.M. Your goal should be to have a minimum of 90 to 95 % of the wet sows bred by Day 7/ If this is an issue review the other details here. Also take a look at your herd’s genetic base.
19. Breeding / Gestation Records – take note of sows that are slow to cycle after weaning as well as those that come up open on pregnancy checks or recycle. They likely will establish a pattern of doing this from parity to parity. Sows with a history of this should not be given more than one extra chance.
20. Management – take time each day to walk the gestation facilities after feeding and look for any unusual activity. Look for sows that don’t eat, vomit, have vaginal discharge, estrus activity, abortions, etc. A few minutes each day can save a lot of time, anxiety, and financial loss later.