


## Importance of care in the farrowing unit and during the first 24 hours of piglets' lives

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### ABSTRACT

Pork is among the most consumed sources of animal protein not only in Brazil, but also in the world, which generates a progressive intensification of this activity, to meet the demand and requirements of the consumer market. Brazil occupies the fourth position in the world ranking of pork production, which reveals the importance of this activity in the country's livestock sector. The indices indicate an even more gradual growth for the following years and in order for this to actually occur, it is of paramount importance to carry out the proper management of the animals, especially in the farrowing and piglet phase.

**Keywords:** Maternity care, Piglets.



## INTRODUCTION

Pork is among the most consumed sources of animal protein not only in Brazil, but also in the world, which generates a progressive intensification of this activity, to meet the demand and requirements of the consumer market. Brazil occupies the fourth position in the world ranking of pork production, which reveals the importance of this activity in the country's livestock sector. The indices indicate an even more gradual growth for the following years and in order for this to actually occur, it is of paramount importance to carry out the proper management of the animals, especially in the farrowing and piglet phase. The maternity unit comprises the period from pre-calving to weaning of the animals, which varies from 21 to 28 days. Once a good number of weaned piglets per sow each year is guaranteed, it corresponds to a favourable performance of the pig activity.

## DEVELOPMENT

The management of pregnant sows should begin in the final third of gestation, when the gestation or pre-calving feed is provided, for better development of the fetuses and mammary glands. Sows should be raised twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon to stimulate water consumption, reduce the risk of urinary infection and locomotor injuries. At the time of calving, the environment should be calm to ease the female's stress. In a pig farm with ideal results, the mortality rate of piglets in the farrowing unit should not exceed 5% for them to achieve good productive performance. Most piglet deaths occur within 48 hours of life, mainly due to lack of food and hypothermia. To avoid situations like these and obtain the largest number of live piglets at weaning, management measures can be adopted to ensure animal health and good performance. Piglets are born weighing an average of one kilogram, and are animals dependent on care, especially in the first 24 hours of life. Some of the management that should be carried out during this period are drying the piglets with paper towels or drying powder, to clean, unclog the airways and not lose body temperature. While the ideal temperature for the sow is 23°C, for piglets it is 32°C, so it is essential to provide them with a warm place, otherwise they may die. Heating can be achieved by the scoop, with lamps or thermal flooring, which also protects the piglets from crushing. In addition, the tie of string with iodine in the umbilical cord should be performed and cut with surgical scissors to heal, avoid bleeding and infections. One of the most important management is to ensure that all piglets suckle colostrum, preferably until the first six hours of life, as they guarantee passive immunity to newborns, being a source of energy and nutrients, in addition to the initial colonization of the digestive tract. It is from six hours postpartum that the absorption capacity of the intestinal epithelium begins to decrease, so it is essential to help newborns with their first feeding. In addition to these practices, up to 24 hours of life of the piglets, the animals should also be weighed. This



management can be done together with tooth wear, which aims to prevent piglets from getting injured among themselves and causing injuries to the sow's breasts.

However, this management should not be performed before the first feeding, as it causes gingival sensitivity. Caudectomy of the final third of the tail may also be performed, which is intended to prevent cannibalism. This practice should be done with a cutting device and cauterizer, to avoid bleeding and a possible opening for infectious agents. However, this practice can be replaced by other environmental enrichment measures, such as adequate density in stalls, feeders and drinkers in adequate numbers, which prevent aggressive behavior that triggers cannibalism.

## CONCLUSION

It is analyzed that the management practices in the farrowing and piglet are easy to be carried out and guarantee a good productive performance. The best production rates are achieved when pig farmers understand the importance and need of sows and litters, working together with professionals specialized in the area, who aim to serve the consumer market efficiently.



## REFERENCES

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