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THIRTY IMPORTANT DAYS IN THE FARROWING SEASON

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THIRTY IMPORTANT DAYS IN THE FARROWING SEASON.

Necessary care will save many pigs.

It is at this time that very careful feeding and management will save most of the pigs which are farrowed. However, most people do not realize that proper feeding and management, during the breeding season and pregnancy, are great factors in not only raising the pigs after farrowing, but also in increasing the number of pigs which are farrowed.

Advantages of proper management and feeding before farrowing.

1. More pigs to the litter.
2. Pigs more vigorous, consequently more easily raised.
3. Sow has less difficulty in farrowing.
4. Sow is in condition to give a good supply of milk for her pigs.
5. Sow has less tendency to eat her pigs.

Type of brood sow also a factor.

The brood sows to select are the new type, roomy, stretchy, and feminine. They usually have more pigs and are more motherly than the old-fashioned type.

The week before farrowing.

In order to get away from worm troubles and many of the diseases infesting the little pigs, the farrowing pen should be thoroughly cleaned of manure, straw, etc. The walls and floors of the pen should then be sprayed with Crude Oil or Kreso Dip. A good thorough scrubbing with scalding hot water and lye will do the work satisfactorily.

The guard rail and pig nest.

Some form of protection for the little pigs is thought advisable by most good hog men. Guard rails 2 by 10 nailed to the sides of the pen 8 or 9 inches above the floor will furnish a certain amount of protection in case the sow should lie close to the walls and crush her pigs. In case of very cold weather, boards may be placed across the guard rails in the corner. On these boards some straw should be placed to hold the heat and thus make a warm nest for the little pigs.

The Bedding: Essentials to good bedding:

1. Must be slow conductor of heat so as to retain the warmth of sow and pigs.
2. Must be clean so as to be free from dust and infection from parasites and diseases.
3. Must be dry and absorbing in nature.
4. Must lie close to the floor so as not to impede the pig in getting to its mother's teat.

Wheat or Rye straw, when not coarse or chaffy, make very good bedding materials. Shredded corn-stover or fine hay likewise

are good. The bedding should be in such quantity as to not make it difficult for the little pigs to get around in the bed.

Feeding and Care.

It is considered a good practice by most of the hog men to put the sow in her farrowing quarters a week before farrowing. This will get her acquainted with her new quarters as well as get her accustomed to being handled. A little time spent daily in brushing and being with her, will be spent to good advantage. With the difficulty, caused by the various diseases and parasites which are taking a great number of pigs each spring, and are runting many of the remainder, it would appear to be important to practice the McLean County system which has been worked out in Illinois with good results. In the case of the McLean County system, the pens are properly cleaned and washed with lye water, and the sow is also washed with soap and water.

The practice of cleaning up the sow and quarters, keeps out the infection from worms, and likewise many of the diseases which cause heavy losses of pigs through death or becoming runt-ed. From the pens the sows and pigs are taken to clean alfalfa, clover, etc., pastures or to fields which have been rotated and thus kept sanitary.

Sanitary Lots Necessary.

Our large central hog houses usually have small lots which as a rule are quite unsanitary. Where these lots have become filthy and there are signs of approaching sickness and worm troubles, they should be thoroughly cleaned of manure and plowed quite deeply. This feature will involve the expense in many cases of taking down the fences, but if it results in renewing the health of the hogs it is a most practical investment. In the case of our central hog houses, we will at some future time, pay more attention to planning for better drainage and a better type of hog lot, one that can be gotten into with the plow and thus with greater ease of plowing, a rotation will be made possible. It is doubtful from a standpoint of swine diseases whether hog lots should ever go two years without plowing.

Exercise continued

Exercise of the brood sow after she is in her pen should be maintained. The sow which has remained hardened by proper exercise all winter should not suddenly be confined to a space the size of the farrowing pen, but she should be let out each day for exercise, and should run to a place which has not been infested with disease or parasites. If no such place is available the future management of the farm should be changed so as to provide clean lots, both for the sow about to farrow and the sow and pigs after farrowing.

Management and Feeding immediately before farrowing.

After the sow is placed in a pen a few days before farrowing, she should have some laxative feeds. Due to her condition

she has a tendency to be constipated. By feeding bran as one-half of her grain ration, by bulk, this tendency may be overcome, and her recovery from farrowing may be assisted. Feeding of a little oil meal gives the same result. On the third day before farrowing her ration may be cut nearly to one-half of what she has been getting. The reason for this practice, in the first place, is to make farrowing easier through having less fill in the digestive system and secondly to cut down on the flow of milk after farrowing.

Too much milk secretion after farrowing may overload the stomach of the little pigs and give them scours or it may cause milk fever or caked udder on the part of the sow.

Care of pigs during farrowing.

In the case of the hog house being cold enough to endanger the little pigs, they should be taken as fast as they are born and removed to a warm place. A covered basket, bedded with clean straw, heated with a couple of wrapped bricks or a jug of warm water, makes quite a desirable bed to keep the pigs in until they are all farrowed and dry. This practice of removing the pigs as soon as farrowed, should also be resorted to in case the sow is having difficulty in farrowing so that in her uneasiness she will not endanger the pigs.

Ward against pig eating.

The after-birth as well as dead pigs should be taken from the pen as soon as possible because if the sow gets started to eat this material she may get in the habit of eating her pigs.

Needle teeth (wolf teeth)

There is a great difference of opinion regarding the removal of needle teeth in new born pigs. Whenever there are bad sores about the heads as a result of fighting, or sores on the sow's teats caused by the needle teeth, there is no question as to the wisdom of removing these teeth. The majority of good hog men believe in removing needle teeth immediately after the birth of the pigs. In this case the thing to do is to shear them off even with the gums with an instrument designed for that purpose. Breaking off the teeth in such a way as to produce sharp extending points or so as to injure the gums makes a source of infection which is more injurious than the results which the teeth themselves cause.

Bringing the sow to full feed after farrowing.

After farrowing the sow is feverish for several days. She should, therefore, be given as much water with the chill removed as she cares to take. She should have no feed for at least 24 hours. Many hog men wait 36 hours before feeding. The great fundamental in early feeding is to gradually get the sow on full

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feed in about a twenty day period, but never to over-feed which practice will produce more milk than the pigs will take. Many a herdsman in the goodness of his heart gives the eager sow enough feed to satisfy her and consequently finds that the sow has developed a fever which results in the losing of her milk. These same sows, by receiving a restricted ration, have been often brought back to milk production. One very successful man is so concerned over sows producing too much milk that on the second day after farrowing he gives one ear of corn as sole ration for that day (corn not being a good milk stimulator). A schedule similar to the following may prove helpful in getting the sow on full feed: The first day plenty of fresh water with the chill removed; second day, one ear of corn; third day, 2 pounds of grain ration similar to the ration which was given just before farrowing; fourth day, three pounds of grain ration, and fifth day, four pounds and from then on increasing the ration a little each day until the twentieth day when the sow is ready to take the full ration.