



BREEDING

Preparing the Farrowing Crate

Providing the correct environment for both sows and piglets in the farrowing house will help to minimise mortality and maximise growth rate of the piglets and maintain the sow in good condition for the next cycle. A well prepared and organised farrowing room will make your role easier and more productive.

Equipment required	Personal safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farrowing kit Sow cards Min/max thermometer 	<p>Sows can be unpredictable. Only competent staff should move sows/gilts into the farrowing house</p>

Initial checks

- Ensure pressure washing, disinfection and drying of the entire room taken place
- Ensure pressure washing, disinfection and drying of all extra equipment such as scrapers and creep feeders taken place
- Ensure all fixtures in good condition including the crates, drinkers troughs and flooring – repair or report damage to your manager
- Ensure all sow and piglet drinkers working and providing the relevant flow rate
- Ensure all automatic feeders working
- Ensure the wiring on the creep lights been checked
- Ensure the lights, fans and heat mats working effectively
- Ensure the farrowing kit is replenished and readily available in the farrowing house
- Ensure the room is warm, dry, draught free and effectively ventilated

- Move bedding from storage area to farrowing room
- Check that the medicines store has adequate store of relevant drugs
- Check availability of liquid colostrums, supplementary milk etc
- Remove faeces from the crate at least once a day

When the sow or gilt shows signs of starting to nest or farrow:

- Place enough bedding around the back of the sow to eliminate drafts and provide a comfortable, dry area for newborn piglets
- Place a heat source towards the back and or side of each sow
- Place the heat source in a position so that it cannot be reached by the sow and will not hinder your access to the sow
- If using heat mats, turn on and check temperature with infrared thermometer
- Place bedding in creep, switch on lamps (creep, side and or rear) and check temperatures –

Should be 30°C on the surface in the creep area

Outline of the work

- Move all required equipment into farrowing room
 - Replace all equipment in the correct place
 - Check creep lamps and heat mats are working
 - Move sow into crate and adjust crate to correct size for individual animal
- Ideally the sow/gilt should be put in the crate at least three days prior to farrowing**
- Place the history of each sow above/near the relevant farrowing crate



Sow records next to pen



Cleaned house with boards removed



Bedding behind/to side of sow



Creep area

Additional Information

The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007 has specific requirements for farrowing including:

- Pregnant sows and gilts must be thoroughly cleaned before being placed in farrowing crates
- In the week before the expected farrowing time, sows and gilts must be given suitable nesting material in sufficient quantity unless it is not technically feasible for the slurry system used
- During farrowing, an unobstructed area behind the sow or gilt must be available for the ease of natural or assisted farrowing
- Farrowing pens where sows or gilts are kept loose must have some means of protecting the piglets, such as farrowing rails

Reference documents

The Welfare of Farmed Animals 2007, Defra
The Farrowing House Tool Kit, BPEX

www.defra.gov.uk
www.bpex.co.uk