

H15 - Disease and treatment of sows



A healthy sow being examined

A healthy sow

1. Has a sound appetite.
2. Has no signs of flux.
3. Has mammary glands that are not hard or red.
4. Has a normal temperature.
5. Gets up and lies down without problems.
6. Produces enough milk.
7. Urinates clear or light yellow urine.

Examine the sows daily, particularly the first 4 days after farrowing.



This sow is sick - it has not eaten, and the piglets are cold and get no milk

Observe the sow thoroughly at least once a day 25-35 minutes after feeding. It may be sick if

- It does not get up.
- It is lying sternally.
- It has not eaten all its feed.
- It fails to support evenly on all four legs.
- The piglets are agitated.
- The piglets do not grow.
- The piglets suffer from diarrhoea.



This sow excretes vast amounts of flux from the uterus

	Additional comments - Disease and treatment of sows
	It is important to check daily that the sow is healthy or whether it needs treatment of some kind. Farrowing puts a great strain on the sow; the most common disorder post-farrowing is M.M.A., which is triggered by infection in the uterus or the udder.
1.	If a sow does not eat as expected, it may be unwell, but it can also indicate imminent weight loss if the sow continues not to eat all its feed. The sow should have eaten up 25 minutes after feeding. If it does not eat up, check the water supply. See H1 - Preparing the farrowing facility and farrowing pens. Check the adjustment of the feed box and the composition of the feed. Consult your feed advisor in such cases. Lack of appetite may be an indication of constipation.
2.	Flux is often seen on the rear part and tail of the sow or on the floor. Flux is an indication of infection in the uterus or vagina. However, note that brownish, white or clear flux (without pus) is normal for the first 48 hours. Treatment must take place according to the instructions from the herd vet.
3.	Hard mammary glands, reddish udder or spots on the udder indicate incipient mastitis. Treat infections according to instructions from the vet. Treatment for mastitis should be supplemented with pain relief. If all mammary glands are equally hard, the problem is probably oedemas caused by accumulation of fluid in the udder tissue. Antibiotics will have no effect whereas pain relief may help the sow. Pain relief increases the well-being of the sow and increases the chances of allowing the piglets nurse.
4.	If the sow's temperature is above 40°C on the day of farrowing and above 39.5°C the remaining days, it has a fever and should be treated according to the vet's instructions. Treatment should include pain relief. It is essential to establish the cause of the fever. The drawback of treating with antibiotics is that they are excreted with the sow milk and will thereby destroy the bacteria balance in the piglets' intestines. This increases the risk of diarrhoea among the piglets.
5.	If the sow does not get up, help the sow to get up and check if it supports evenly on all four legs. Examine the sow for leg and hoof injuries and treat according to the vet's instructions - including pain relief. Inspect pen conditions. Does the crate need adjustment, is the floor slippery? Incorrect leg position and tenderness: Relieve a sow with leg injuries by placing a rubber mat on the floor, moving the sow to a farrowing pen with deep litter or to a hospital pen. In case of swellings or if the sow does not support on all four legs, distinguish between fractures (destruction), sprains (pain relief and relief) and infection (antibiotic treatment, pain relief and relief).
6.	If the piglets are agitated or do not thrive, it may be an indication that the sow does not produce enough milk.
7.	If a sow drinks too little, the urine turns dark. Compare urine from the sows when they get up in the morning. Pay special attention to sows that do not urinate as they are the sows that drink the least. Urine must not contain blood, pus or other impurities. Pus or impurities are often found on the pen floor in small lumps as they have been excreted with the urine. Impurities in the urine indicate infections in the urinary tract. Check the sow's water supply - H1 - Preparing the farrowing facility and farrowing pens.