

H28 – Capacity of farrowing pens



The number of farrowing pens must match the number of sows

Design of the farrowing facility

1. There must be room for making nurse sows or foster sows in the section.
2. It must be possible to wash and dry the facility between batches - see H1 - Preparing the farrowing facility and farrowing pens.
3. It must be possible to transfer all sows one week before farrowing. See H4 - Preparation for farrowing.



Farrowing in the gestation facility is extremely unfortunate and may drastically increase piglet mortality

If the capacity of the farrowing facility is too low, risks are

- Weaning piglets that are too small for weaning.
- Insufficient space for nurse sows and foster sows.
- Inadequate space - even with minor variations in production levels.
- Sows farrowing in the gestation facility.
- Some sows are moved to wet pens.
- Wasting time making more room in the farrowing facility.
- Stressing the sows, this will increase the percentage of stillborn.

Additional comments - Capacity of farrowing pens	
	The capacity of farrowing pens depends on batch operation system, weaning age and need for nurse sows. Below an example is shown based on weekly batch operation and five weeks' weaning. When dimensioning the system in connection with modifications or extensions, base the calculations on the herd in question, possibly with the help of a pig advisor or construction advisor.
1.	The piglets with the intermediate sow are weaned at the same time as the other piglets in the section (see also H9 - Nurse sows).
2.	If the pens are wet at transfer, both sow and piglets get a bad start to the nursing period (see also H1 - Preparation of the farrowing facility and farrowing pens).
3.	If the sows are transferred to the farrowing facility one week before weaning, they will adapt to the environment and the feed before farrowing. This will result in less stressed sows, a higher energy level among the sows during farrowing and thereby fewer stillborn piglets. Moving sows to the farrowing facility too late will stress them and as a result piglet mortality. Too much time is spent on moving sows and piglets to make room for, for instance, nurse sows.

Example of capacity - guidelines per 100 sows and at five weeks' weaning

Prerequisites:

1. Sows are transferred the week before farrowing
2. Room for approx. 20 % nurse sows
3. Each sow has 2.25 litters a year

Calculation per 100 sows:

- 100 sows x 2.25 litters a year = 225 litters a year
- 225 litters/52 weeks = approx. 4.3 litters a week
- 4.3 litters + 20 % nurse litters = 5.2 litters a week
- **Space required:** Five batches of lactating sows + batch of gestating sows (the week up to farrowing) = six batches
- Six batches x 5.2 litters per batch = **approx. 32 farrowing pens**

Farrowings	11	13	15	<p>The table shows an example of the profit achieved with 11 or 13 piglets per litter after crossfostering.</p> <p>The prerequisites are 14 farrowing pens/week and 14 liveborn piglets/litter.</p> <p>If you cross-foster to 11, you will need more nurse sows than if you cross-foster to 15. As a result, you can only have farrowings in 11 of the 14 farrowing pens. The overall production (in the example in the table) will thus be 142 piglets weighing 7.7 kg from 14 farrowing pens when you cross-foster to 11 piglets or 164 piglets weighing 7.1 kg from 14 farrowing pens when you cross-foster to 13 piglets.</p>
Nurse sows	3	1	0	
Piglets/litter	11	13	15	
Mortality, %	8	10	12	
Weaning weight, kg	7.7	7.1	7.2	
Weaned piglets	142	164	198	
Foster sows	0.5	1	2	