

H6 - Obstetric aid



Obstetric aid performed at the right time



Obstetric snare

Obstetric aid ensures prompt intervention, which saves both the sow, the piglet stuck and the piglets yet to be delivered:

1. Only perform obstetric aid if it is necessary.
2. There must be no pen partition/equipment between your arm and the sow. The sow must not be able to inflict injury to the arm by lying down.
3. Wash the sow's genital opening with soap and lukewarm water.
4. Squat behind the sow, put on a glove and gel on the arm.
5. Only put the gel on the top of your hand – it will even out as you move your hand into the sow.
6. Do not touch anything with the glove and lead your hand into the sow's vagina.
7. Grab pigs born head first you by the neck or lower jaw.
8. Grab pigs born tail first by both hind legs. One hind leg between index finger and long finger, one hind leg between long finger and ring finger.
9. Pull out the piglets in an even pull.
10. Swing the piglets back and forth once to empty their respiratory tracts.
11. If the sow is standing, place the piglets in safety in the creep area.
12. If the sow is lying down, place the piglets by the udder.
13. Pull out all the piglets that can be reached.
14. Following obstetric aid, the sow needs to rest for an hour. If no more piglets are born within ½ hour, re-examine the sow.



Inadequate farrowing course – failure to provide obstetric aid

Examples of inadequate farrowing courses:

No contractions

- Perform obstetric aid.
- Pull out as many piglets as possible.
- Re-examine the sow after ½ hour if no more piglets have been born.

Piglet is blocking the birth canal

- Perform obstetric aid.
- Pull put as many piglets as possible.
- Re-examine the sow after an hour.

Piglet is lying in incorrect position

- Perform obstetric aid.
- Push the piglet inwards.
- Take hold of the piglet's head or hind legs and pull out the piglet.

	Additional comments - Obstetric aid
1.	Only perform obstetric aid if it is believed to be necessary (see H5 - Supervision of farrowing). Obstetric aid damages the uterus mucosa and introduces bacteria into the uterus. Sows receiving obstetric aid have an increased risk of subsequently contracting metritis, which will affect the sow's well-being, milk yield and fertility. A high level of hygiene is therefore essential to the health of the sow.
2.	Make sure that you are able to perform obstetric aid without first having to open pen sides or move buckets or bottles. If the sow is standing up, and you lean your arm across the pen partition and into the vagina, you may hurt your arm if the sow suddenly lies down.
3.	Wash the sow's genital opening with soap and lukewarm water to avoid introducing faeces into the uterus.
4.	Wear a glove to avoid allergic reactions to uterus fluid. Artificial uterus mucus protects the uterus mucosa against damage and swelling. This also reduces the risk of metritis. Use the other hand for handling the piglets that have been delivered. Change gloves if the glove touches anything other than the birth canal and the newborn piglets.
5.	You risk introducing bacteria into the uterus, which may lead to infection. The greatest risks are touching the pen equipment, the sow's back of the floor with the glove before you perform obstetric aid. Apply gel on top of your hand and do not use the other (dirty) hand to smooth it into an even layer.
7.	Grab piglets born head first by their neck. If this is not possible, take hold of the lower jaw of the piglets. If this is also impossible, take hold of one front leg between index finger and long finger, and one front leg between long finger and ring finger. Use a tool if this is impossible (see below).
8.	Grab piglets born tail first by both hind legs: One hind leg between index finger and long finger, one hind leg between long finger and ring finger.
9.	Pull the piglets out in an even pull to be in control of how much force is used otherwise the sow might get hurt.
10.	Piglets born during obstetric aid often have mucus in their lungs. With the hand that was not used for obstetric aid, take hold of the piglet by its hind legs and swing it back and forth once to clear out the mucus.
11.	Piglets born during obstetric aid are often weak. If the sow is standing, there is a risk that it will lie down on the piglets. It is therefore better if the piglets are placed in the creep area where they are warm and safe.
12.	If the sow is lying down, place the piglet you pulled out by the sow's udder. Move litter mates so that the piglet can get to a teat.
13.	Obstetric aid is complete when all the piglets that could be reached are pulled out.
14.	Obstetric aid will stress the sow, which causes the contractions to stop for the next hour. Examine the sow an hour after having performed obstetric aid. If piglets are felt inside the sow that cannot be reached, examine the sow once more 30 minutes later.

Tools: It may be impossible to get a proper hold of a piglet during obstetric aid. Therefore, always have a clean tool ready for obstetric aid in the farrowing facility:

- An **obstetric snare** is a pipe with a string. The pipe directs the string to the piglet. Place the string behind the piglet's head, lower jaw or around the hind legs to get a good hold of the piglet.