

## 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 artificial uterus mucus on the arm.
5. Take hold of piglets facing by the neck or lower jaw.
6. Take hold of piglets facing away from you – by the hind legs.
7. Pull out the piglets in an even pull.
8. Swing the piglets back and forth once to empty their respiratory tracts, and dry them.
9. If the sow is standing, place the piglets in safety in the creep area.
10. If the sow is lying down, place the piglets by the udder.
11. Pull out all the piglets that can be reached.
12. Following obstetric aid, the sow needs to rest for an hour. If no more piglets are born, re-examine the sow.



Inadequate farrowing course – failure to provide obstetric aid

**Examples of incorrect farrowing courses:**

### No contractions

- Perform obstetric aid.
- Pull out as many piglets as possible.
- Re-examine the sow after 1 hour if no more piglets have been born.

### Piglet is blocking the birth canal

- Perform obstetric aid.
- Pull out 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.

	<b>Additional comments - Obstetric aid</b>
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 lead 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 so it does not swell. 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.	Take hold of piglets facing you by their neck. If this is not possible, take hold of the lower jaw of the piglets. If this is also impossible, take the middle finger and ring finger. Use a tool if this is impossible (see below).
6.	Take hold of piglets facing away from you around their hind legs above the hollow of the knee. Take hold of the legs between the index finger and middle finger and between the middle finger and ring finger to have a leg between two fingers.
7.	Pull the piglets out in an even pull to be in control of how much force is used otherwise the sow might get hurt.
8.	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.
9.	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.
10.	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.
11.	Obstetric aid is complete when all the piglets that could be reached are pulled out. In cattle, the risk of metritis increases if the placenta is pulled out.
12.	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 leads the string to the piglet. Place the string behind the piglet's head, lower jaw or around the hind legs to have a good hold of the piglet. See [svineproduktion.dk](http://svineproduktion.dk) for information on how to use an obstetric snare.
- Buy a pair of **gloves** with a string welded to the fingers of the gloves. It is thereby easy to place the string around the piglet and pull it out.