

H11 - Exchange of litters



Successful exchange of an entire litter with reduced growth

A litter of vigorous piglets can start lactation of a sow that has stopped.

1. If an entire litter is showing signs of reduced growth, move them to a sow with a good milking capacity.
2. The sow receiving the litter must have nursed large, uniform piglets.
3. The sow receiving the litter should be a young sow.
4. Exchange litters directly, i.e. make sure that neither sow is without piglets at any time.
5. The sows exchanging litters must have an equal number of piglets.
6. After the exchange, pay special attention to the litter with reduced growth, for instance install a heat lamp.
7. Do not adjust the feed dose of the sows in connection with the exchange of litters.



This litter was moved too late, and the piglets are too weak to manage, which will increase mortality

Exchange failed if

- The exchange took place too late, and the piglets with reduced growth are too weak to nurse.
- The sow whose litter had reduced growth has become sick.
- Piglets in the litter with reduced growth have become sick.
- The sow lies sternally much of the time or stands up a lot so that the piglets are kept from nursing.
- The piglets are agitated - possibly because the sow refuses to let them nurse.

	Additional comments - Exchange of litters
	Before exchanging litters, make sure that all other conditions are in order (see, for instance, H14 - Supervision of the farrowing facility; H15 - Disease and treatment of sows; and H16 - Disease and treatment of piglets).
1.	Often, exchange of litters is only necessary in the first or second week after farrowing. Two litters are exchanged when the entire litter/the majority of the litter is suffering from reduced growth. If only few piglets in a litter suffer from reduced growth, see H12 - Foster sow for piglets with reduced growth.
2.	It is essential that the sow given the litter with reduced growth has a high milk yield so that the weak piglets are offered milk quickly. Consequently, the large uniform piglets that are moved to the sow with reduced milk yield start nursing quickly and thereby stimulate the milk production of the sow.
3.	Young sows are quick to accept a new litter.
4.	Time is essential as piglets with reduced growth cannot manage further setbacks. Check that they start nursing as they are not always strong enough to stimulate the new sow to a high milk yield.
5.	The entire litter is moved - the piglets will then not have to form a new hierarchy. It is therefore important that the two sows exchanging litters have an equal number of functional teats.
6.	It is vital that the piglets have an optimum environment. See H13 - The environment of the piglets; H23 - Feeding of piglets.
7.	Do not reduce the feed dose of the two sows exchanging litters on the day of the exchange. Keep an eye on the feed intake of the sows - especially the first two days after the exchange. If the sow that gave up the litter with reduced growth fails to start lactating, it may be necessary to move the litter to a foster sow. See H12 - Foster sow for piglets with reduced growth.