

H16 - Disease and treatment of piglets



Treatment of a piglet

A healthy piglet

1. Is round and has a smooth and shining coat of hair.
2. Has normal faeces.
3. Holds its head and ears normally.
4. Has untroubled breathing.
5. Is not lame.
6. Lies normally in the creep area.
7. Comes to the teat when lactation is initiated.

It is important to inspect the piglets daily and this is particularly important in the first week after farrowing, as immediate intervention will save lives.



Piglets that were not treated

Piglets may be sick if

- They do not come to the udder.
- They isolate themselves from their litter mates.
- They have spiky fur.
- They walk with their head tilted.
- Their ears point backwards.
- They are lame.
- Diarrhoea is observed in the pen or on the piglets.

	Additional comments - Disease and treatment of piglets
	<p>During the daily supervision of the piglets, it is important to assess whether to treat or destroy a sick pig. If a pig is still sick after the recommended treatment, re-assess whether further treatment is likely to cure the piglet. If not, destroy the piglet. Piglets suffering from paralysis or a broken leg should be killed immediately.</p> <p>Sick piglets need a warm environment and easy access to water.</p>
1.	<p>A piglet with spiky hair or greasy skin is sick and it may be weakened by hunger. Treat the piglet if it is sick. A pale piglet may be deficient in iron or be sick. Check the strategy for supplying iron - is the need of all piglets covered? See H17 - Iron, castration, tail docking and tooth grinding.</p>
2.	<p>If you observe diarrhoea in a pen, check if only one piglet is sick or the entire litter is affected. If all piglets are sick, the sow may not provide enough milk or the temperature of their environment may be too low. Do not move sick piglets and do not walk directly from one pen with diarrhoea into other pens as diarrhoea is highly contagious. Piglets suffering from diarrhoea need a lot of fluid quickly; provide extra water and possibly an electrolyte solution or A38. See H23 - Feeding of piglets.</p> <p>Treat the piglets according to the instructions of the herd vet.</p>
3.	<p>A piglet that hangs its head probably suffers from cerebrospinal meningitis or otitis media. Both infections can be treated with antibiotics and, if necessary, pain relief. A swollen ear may be an ear haematoma, which is caused by a burst vein and cannot be treated.</p>
4.	<p>A normal breathing is calm, untroubled and has no murmurs.</p>
5.	<p>If a piglet is lame, it may suffer from arthritis, a hoof abscess or it may have been crushed or stepped on. Arthritis and hoof abscesses are treated according to the instructions of the herd vet.</p>
6.	<p>If a piglet does not lie normally in the creep area, it may be sick. However, the creep area may also be too warm or too cold. See H13 - The environment of the piglets.</p>
7.	<p>If a piglet does not come to the teat when the sow lactates, it may be sick or there may not be sufficient room by the udder, or the piglet may simply not be hungry. See H2 - Functional requirements to the farrowing pen.</p>
	<p>Once a sick piglet has been located and treated during your inspection of the pens, it is important to be able to easily identify the piglet for treatment the following day, for instance by marking it with a colour spray. Different colour codes or different places for a coloured line on the piglet can be used for identifying different types of medication or disorders. Put a clothes-peg on the sow card / gate of the pen, so that a certain location of a clothes-peg signals treatment of a piglet the following day. Remove the clothes-peg when treatment is complete.</p>