

H12 - Foster sow for piglets with reduced growth



Hungry piglet that should be moved to a foster sow

It is inevitable that some piglets do not grow as well as the rest of the litter. It is an advantage to move these to a foster sow.

1. A foster sow rears piglets that cannot manage in their own litter.
2. A foster sow is a well-functioning sow that has weaned uniform thriving piglets that have been moved to the weaner facility.
3. A foster sow may be a sow about to be culled.
4. Reduce the feed dose of the foster sow by 2 FU-sow.
5. Move the piglets to a foster sow before they stop growing.
6. Make sure that the foster sow accepts the piglets.
7. Do not use a foster sow for small, but healthy, piglets.



Sick piglet that should not be moved

Do not move

- A sick piglet as it will infect other piglets. Instead, treat the piglets and provide colostrum.
- Healthy piglets if they are small, but still growing. That disturbs the teat order in the litter they are moved from and in the litter they are moved to.
- A piglet to yet another foster sow if the piglet is not ready to be weaned at the same time as the other piglets of the foster sow.

Additional comments - Foster sow for piglets with reduced growth

- 1.** Form a general idea of when to prepare a foster sow. Place a clothes-peg on the sow cards where piglets are showing signs of reduced growth. Make the foster sow when you have used up the number of clothes-pegs corresponding to the number of piglets she can manage. Pay close attention to piglets with reduced growth to make sure you make the foster sow in time. See Appendix 14 - Foster sow.
- 2.** A foster sow must be healthy, have an appropriate body condition score, no shoulder lesions and no leg injuries.
- 3.** A foster sow can also be a sow in appropriate body condition about to be culled. A foster sow may come on heat in the farrowing facility, which is of no importance for batch management if the foster sow is about to be culled. In terms of productivity, it is an advantage to use young sows as nurse sows, and you will therefore rarely have enough young sows to be able to use them as foster sows also.
- 4.** Reduce the sow's feed dose by 2 feed units to prevent her from coming on heat and from stopping eating. Pay close attention to the feed intake of the foster sow and examine for mastitis the first days after making the foster litter.
- 5.** Starvation is often the cause of reduced growth among piglets, and you must therefore make the foster sow quickly, particularly in the first week after farrowing. After the first week, disease or malfunctioning teats are the main causes for moving piglets to a foster sow.
- 6.** If the piglets are agitated, and the sow stands up or lies sternally a lot of the time after 24 hours, it could be that the foster sow has not accepted the litter. It is also a possibility that the foster sow has stopped. Consider exchanging litters. See H11 - Exchange of litters.
- 7.** The piglets in a litter may be of differing sizes. Do not move the piglets if they thrive and grow in the original litter, but are just smaller than the rest of the litter.