

Raising pigs 1: farrowing

Before farrowing, piglets undergo through different stages during the gestation period.

In the late gestation, piglet weight gain and memory development occur. Most sows farrow between 110 and 117 days however the size of the litter and the weight of the piglets influence the timing ie sows with smaller litters tend to be born earlier and the piglets usually have a higher birth weight while larger litters have small piglets and farrowing is delayed.

Events during farrowing

When farrowing day finally comes, the sow exhibit some behaviour ie restlessness, pawing the ground and rooting, quickened breathing, muscle tremors and fluid discharge from the vulva. Many of these signs may occur a couple of minutes to hours before farrowing.

Sows are moved to specific farrowing pens 10 days prior to their due date of expected delivery.

In smooth farrowing, the sow needs little help and the piglets emerge every 10 to 15 minutes. Gilts can have difficulties in farrowing and it is important to be around to offer help.

Care for piglets

Once the piglets arrive, it is important to turn your attention to them as soon as possible because piglets are born wet and hungry. Sometimes piglets might not make it because of getting chilled, not getting enough colostrum, getting stepped on or lied on or due to exhaustion.

Those attending to the piglets should be sure to dry the piglets as soon as they are born and should also ensure that

every piglets gets colostrum.

A farmer is the number one pillar for the success of furrowing in pigs.