



Ask the VMD

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Keep sows cycling

A reader asks:

What do you recommend to keep sows cycling properly in order to keep group farrowing schedules running smoothly?

Dr. Trayer comments:

One of the major problems in total confinement operations is the continuing active cycling of breeding stock after the weaning period.

We often find individual problems in herds that can be identified as management problems and corrected.

And, we do know a three week wean puts more pressure on the individual sow as far as getting the

animal cycled back, than a four week wean, that is waiting four weeks before weaning the sow.

My general recommendations in any intensified farrowing operation is that every objective should be made in the farrowing room to keep the animal in as good physical shape as possible. If she has farrowing problems, correct them and get them under control before she is brought back into the breeding area.

If she has MMA problems, a discharge, if she is low in body weight, increase her feed so she is consuming all she will eat and is putting on weight. If she is a thin sow and has a small litter, you may

consider transferring the pigs to another sow, weaning the sow early, and giving her extra feed in the farrowing area or gestation area so she can rejoin the group at a later time in good body condition.

My philosophy in weaning is enough stress to bring an animal into a good heat cycle three to five days after weaning. It has been questioned but not proven that a three week wean is possibly too early for the reproductive cycle of the sow.

Other methods used to make animals cycle include hormone shots, not the ideal situation.

In any given operation, you may have ten percent of the animals

Del. slates two swine health meetings

DOVER, Del. — Eight Delaware pork producers recently participated in a herd health survey aimed at helping local hog farmers improve profits. Three pigs from each farm were slaughtered and the carcasses examined for problems that affect production costs and performance.

The pigs were all healthy-looking specimens with plenty of muscle and low fat, but some cost more to produce than others. Where were these extra hidden costs and what

giving you problems. So when you're weaning a group of twenty, you can expect two to give you trouble by not cycling back properly. With that in mind, keep replacement gilts or previously non-cycling gilts available to make up the difference and work them into your schedule.

caused them? And how can producers prevent such losses?

Just one disease, atrophic rhinitis, can raise a grower's costs by \$16 to \$18 per pig.

How much AR was found during the survey?

State veterinarian Dr. H.W. Towers, who examined the slaughter hogs, will report his findings at two meetings early next month. The first will take place April 1 at 7 p.m. at the State Highway Department on route 113 in Dover.

Also on the program at both meetings will be Dr. Paul Meckley, university department of animal science veterinarian, and extension livestock specialist Richard Fowler.



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