

# Manage sows for top production

NEWARK, Dela. — Early weaning is sometimes suggested as a way to get more pigs per sow each year.

The assumption is the period between weaning and estrus and the conception rate aren't affected by weaning age. This isn't true, according to a University of Delaware spokesman.

Lactation periods of less than three weeks may result in poor return to estrus or low conception rates, says Extension Livestock Specialist Richard Fowler. "The sooner after farrowing one tries to mate the sow, the lower the conception rate," he states. "Attempts to make the sow into an incubator by weaning at one or two weeks have caused problems in getting her rebred."

Research shows that early weaning has a negative effect on litter size. Weaning earlier than four weeks cannot be recommended, according to one report.

Producers can increase litters per sow per year, but litter size will be smaller. Total numbers of pigs produced per year will also decline," he notes.

"The point to remember is that weaning at ages below three to four weeks may do more harm than good because it reduces litter size. The reproductive tract of the sow must return to normal before rebreeding, and this process requires about four weeks," Fowler explains.

Energy has a definite effect on farrowing rate. Increasing feed energy levels for gilts 10 to 14 days before mating increases the number of eggs shed.

Though sow starvation for a 24 to 72 hour period after weaning is used by some producers to help dry up lactating sows before rebreeding, recent studies show

this has an adverse effect on return to estrus and conception rate, says Fowler.

Instead, feed gilts an additional two pounds of feed one to two weeks before breeding and feed sows six pounds daily after weaning, through rebreeding.

The greatest pig losses occur during the first three weeks of pregnancy, so reduce stress on sows and gilts during this period. Groups of six sows or less usually result in fewer fights and more uniform litter sizes within each group.

"Sows vary in their eating habits. Some consume feed slowly, while others seem to handle it with one big whuff. Feed stalls allow each pig to get her share," Fowler says.

Stress affects the process of implantation—the process during which the fetus becomes attached to the uterine wall. Hot weather, fighting and insufficient feed in-

take are three stresses that can hamper implantation.

"Hot weather is approaching. Once it gets here, plan to keep sows and boars cool," recommends Fowler.

The loss of eggs and fetuses can be reduced by improving herd health and by avoiding virus infections at critical stages. Antibiotics or other feed additives have improved fertility on some farms. Constant use is not recommended, but feeding one-half gram daily during the breeding season can help certain situations.

This half gram can be supplied by feeding five pounds of a ration containing 200 grams of additive per ton. Limit the use of such products to 10 days before and 10 days after breeding. Chlorotetracycline is a product reported by one study to improve farrowing rates when used as

described.

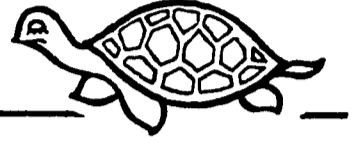
New boars arrive on most hog farms at least once a year. Proper management of them can also help litter size. Isolate the new boar and observe him for three to four weeks. Before breeding, expose sows to boar feces and vice versa. Do this three weeks before breeding so immunity to new viruses can be established, cautions Fowler.

Twenty percent of all live pigs

die within the first eight weeks of life. Mortality increases with litter size since large litters tend to have smaller pigs. Farrow sows in tightly scheduled groups so pigs can be transferred to sows with smaller litters. All pigs must receive colostrum in order to have maximum resistance to stress.

A tight farrowing schedule should permit all in-all out farrowing house management, Fowler concludes.

**DON'T  
BE  
SLOW**



**Call Now To Place Your  
CLASSIFIED AD**

Ph: 717-394-3047 or 717-626-1164



**MR. LIVESTOCK  
PRODUCER...**



**The Auction Market Way Is Still  
The Best - Here's Why!**

★ **COMPETITIVE BIDDING** ★

There is a difference between what livestock might sell for and what they are actually worth under conditions of competitive bidding. Your auction works at getting you the best return!

★ **PROMOTION** ★

Your auction not only works at getting you the highest bid . . . They promote their sale to get you the little extra return. And that little extra could be the difference between profit and loss in your operation!

CHECK WITH YOUR NEAREST LIVESTOCK AUCTION NOW...

Belleville Livestock Market, Inc.  
Chesley's Sales, Inc.  
Danville Cattle Co., Inc.  
Dewart Livestock Market  
Four States Livestock Market  
Green Dragon Livestock Sales  
Kesster's Middleburg Auction Sales, Inc.  
Lancaster Stockyards, Inc.  
Lebanon Valley Livestock Market, Inc.

Leesport Market & Auction, Inc.  
Morrison's Cove Livestock Market  
New Holland Sales Stables, Inc.  
Pennsylvania Livestock Auction, Inc.  
Quakertown Livestock Sale  
Troy Sales Cooperative  
Valley Stockyards, Inc.  
Vintage Sales Stables, Inc.  
Wyalusing Livestock Market

**ACTION THROUGH AUCTION...  
THE PROVEN WAY TO SELL LIVESTOCK!**

This Message Sponsored By:



**PENNSYLVANIA  
LIVESTOCK AUCTION ASSOCIATION, INC.**

We Specialize In Aerial Work Using Our Twin Bucket Boom Truck

Extends To 55 Ft

**ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING**

Specializing In **AGRICULTURAL WIRING**

Also Residential, Industrial And Commercial Work  
Free Estimates

**C. M. HIGH CO.**  
320 King St.  
Myerstown, PA 17067  
Phone 717-866-7544

We Have Poles In Stock 25, 30, 35' & 45'

**IS SHE OR ISN'T SHE?**

**NOW YOU WILL KNOW FOR SURE!  
REVOLUTIONARY NEW MILK  
TEST FOR PREGNANCY**

- 1 Earlier testing for pregnancy will save valuable time and money
- 2 Provides early warning of breeding problems
- 3 Test is 99% accurate for non-pregnancy.
- 4 Every cow that is open over 90 days costs you at least \$10.00 per cow per day
- 5 A milk sample taken 22-24 days after breeding is all you need
- 6 NO stress on the cow.
- 7 Complete instructions with each kit
- 8 1 kit tests 10 cows.

For More Information, Write:

**Xtra Factors, Inc.**  
99 Locust Bend Rd., Ephrata, Pa. 17522  
717-859-1166  
Dealer Inquiries Invited

