

## Pig Improver

### Farrowing Room Preparation

#### Six Steps to Start the Best Farrowing Room Environment



A well-prepared farrowing room is critical to the success of a sow farm. Unfortunately, a proper set up is often deemed less important than other daily tasks on the farm. There are rules that everyone can follow to get the best environment for sows to deliver their piglets. Here they are, we call it the **BRIGHT**-method; six steps to get the best results:

1. **Bring the water**

Cleanliness and proper disinfection are major factors that contribute to disease prevention in a sow farm. A good wash starts with a complete breakdown of the room and stalls. Once that is done all surfaces can be easily power washed using hot water

with maximum pressure. Wash all components of the stall and room including feeder parts, both sides of mats, floors, walls, ceiling and feed lines. It is important that all organic material, such as placentas, feed and manure, is removed during power washing. Inspect farrowing stalls after washing and touch up any area that was missed.

## 2. Remove germs

Once the room is clean, you must get rid of invisible germs that can make pigs sick. Ensure disinfectant is diluted properly according to the instructions on the label. Too diluted will provide a lack of effectiveness and too strong will provide no positive increase and increased cost. Use a foamer or a gilmour with a foaming tip to apply disinfectant and make sure every surface is covered. Wash both sides of mat, flooring and alleyways, stall, panels, etc. Make sure no feeders have disinfectant pooled in the bottom. Dump these so sows do not ingest disinfectant.

## 3. Inspect the room

After steps 1 and 2, all visible and invisible dirt and germs should be gone. Allow enough time for the farrowing room to dry to ensure any pathogens are killed before filling the room. In the meantime, you can inspect all of the stalls and repair any damage before loading with sows. Maintenance and repairs must be managed on a regular basis each time a room gets set up to ensure animal welfare and prevention of injuries. Regular maintenance also prevents wear and tear on equipment.

Inspect all ventilation/environmental components. Ensure that equipment such as fans, heaters, inlets, baffles, curtains, drippers and cool cells are working properly. Repair damaged flooring before loading room. Broken stalls can injure sows or piglets and create animal welfare concerns. Check all feeders and waterers to ensure there are no leaking nipples/pipes, split or broken feeders, broken feed tubes, boxes or feedlines.

## 4. Get it fixed

After the room has been inspected it is time to make the room comfortable for the sows and piglets soon to be born. Make sure ad-lib feeders are set properly. Piglets must have an effective safe area (mat and heat source) prepared before farrowing in order to prevent chilling and piglet crushing. Put creep mats 12 inches (30 cm) from the back of the stall. Make sure there are no holes, tears and worn mats. Do not put powder on the mats before farrowing, as it can reduce the mat temperature.

All heat lamps or electric mats must work properly; set heat lamps at correct height, centered above the mat. Make sure bulbs and shades are clean to achieve proper temperature. Again, mats must be clean on both sides and repair any damage or broken cords.

#### 5. Heat it

Set room temperature at 72 to 74°F (22 to 23°C), according to the farm protocol. Target 90 to 95°F (32 to 35°C) for the temperature of the mat. Check the temperature with a heat gun before farrowing starts.

#### 6. Timing is everything

Farrowing rooms must be set up before farrowing begins. Do not leave the task until it's too late. Remember that every minute preparing the room correctly will save time during farrowing, which is the most critical time period.

Applying the BRIGHT method results in a clean, safe and comfortable room where sows can give their litter the best start possible. Together we can maximize the long-term health and productivity of your herd.

Our future – and yours – has never looked so bright, as PIC continues to deliver on our promise to Never Stop Improving.