

Doors for Piglets

Point of Production: Sow farm

Country of Origin: France



Aggressive behaviour is a common problem in intensive pig production. The level of aggression is higher during certain periods such as the mixing of unfamiliar pigs which normally occurs for the first time post weaning. Early socialisation may reduce aggression later in life, but methods need to be

established in order to determine how to do so without compromising the health or performance of the piglets.

The Solution - Best Practice

A farm in France set out to reduce aggression in pigs by introducing the early socialisation of piglets from different litters during the lactation period.

Openings (20 cm X 30 cm) were made in the divides between pens in the farrowing house. Doors were placed over these openings during the first week of lactation in order to keep the piglets with their maternal sow and then the doors were removed enabling the piglets to move between the pens.

This enabled piglets from five different pens to mix freely and thus facilitated a smooth transition to mixing at weaning. It also provided the piglets with more space to explore. The piglets could be easily separated if needed by adding the doors back on.

Additional Information

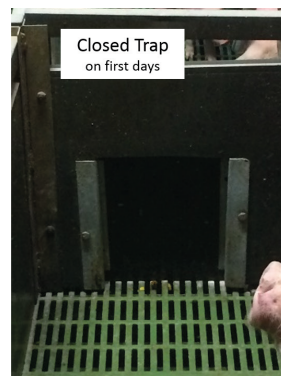
The behaviour and health of the piglets should be closely monitored as diseases may spread quickly. Thorough cleaning of farrowing pens to prevent the spread of disease may take a little longer and diseases may spread more easily.



Piglets using the openings to move between pens



The doors are closed during the first week of lactation



Cost/Benefit Analysis

Benefits:

- ✓ The growth rate of piglets increased by 25%.
- ✓ Piglets were 1 kg heavier 12 days post weaning.
- ✓ Piglets were 1.7 kg heavier at slaughter.
- ✓ The percentage of piglets with scratches 48 hours post weaning had reduced from 98% to 26%.
- ✓ The total costs of producing one piglet were reduced by 1.9%.

Costs:

- The costs for the farmer are very low.
- The famers may need to spend time getting used to the new system but costs of labour will not change.

Further Research & Project Links

<https://eupig.eu/>
 Link to technical report
 Contact RPiG (France):
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