

Reducing Pig Mortality Through High Care

Point of Production: Sow farm

Country of Origin: Netherlands



Sow farmers aimed to reduce piglet mortality. A checklist was developed after extensive research following best practice from across 84 farms. Farm staff and veterinarians completed a questionnaire looking at factors that led to a reduced piglet mortality. The questionnaires were analysed and the most relevant factors linked to the loss of piglets were identified and turned into a checklist and supporting protocols.

The Solution - Best Practice

Theo invests in good animal orientated management on his farm. He spends a lot of time monitoring the condition, housing and feed of the sows. Good feed during pregnancy is the basis of a successful litter. A lot of time is spent taking care of the piglets after birth. The employees follow the checklist, and all work is based on the standardised practice described in the protocols. These are available [here](#).

This management improves the chances of survival. Birthing's take place every week so care can be effectively concentrated on individuals. Theo installed extra heat lamps for the piglets and also provides better feed.

Additional Information

The checklist used in this best practice was based on the Pig Vitality project completed by Wageningen University. This checklist is accompanied by a range of standardised procedures (protocols), examples of these can be found [here](#). Further examples can be acquired from [Wageningen](#).



Theo Vernooij

Cost/Benefit Analysis

Benefits:

- ✓ Piglet mortality decreased and as a result 2% more piglets were weaned per sow. This increased from 15.5 to 15.8.
- ✓ Variable production costs reduced by 1.5% per piglet.
- ✓ The entire cost of piglet production was 0.4% lower per piglet.
- ✓ Public opinion is shifting towards higher welfare standards, this system increases piglet welfare.

Costs:

- The cost of an extra employee was €600 a week.
- Increased labour costs resulted in an increase in fixed cost of 2.8% per piglet.
- The cost for the feed remains the same.
- Additional bedding and nesting material costs €1 per sow per year.

Further Research & Project Links

<https://eupig.eu/>

[Link to technical report](#)

[Link to protocols](#)

Contact RPiG (Netherlands):

Jos Peerlings

