

Piglet Survival – The First 24 Hours

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What's a Piglet Worth?



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Is this what your 4* farrowing house feels like ?

- Cold
- Wet
- Windy
- Colostrum
- Birth Weight



Annual Cost

- National Ave 9.8% pre weaning mort
 - Teagasc PigSys Analysis 2009
- 303,000 piglet deaths per year
- 290,000 born dead piglets per year

= €30 million





Colostrum is King

■ First 24 hours:

- Piglet energy demand = 1 MJ
- Arrives with = 0.42 MJ
- Colostrum must provide = 0.58 MJ



Colostrum Facts

- Not just antibodies
- Power Pack energy provider
- 6MJ energy per litre
 - =18MJ energy per kg DM
- Production lasts 24 hours
- Sow produces 3,570g first 24 hours
- Production varies...Records!!



S.A.L.T.

- S uckling

- A bility

- L ast

- T ime



Colostrum Intake

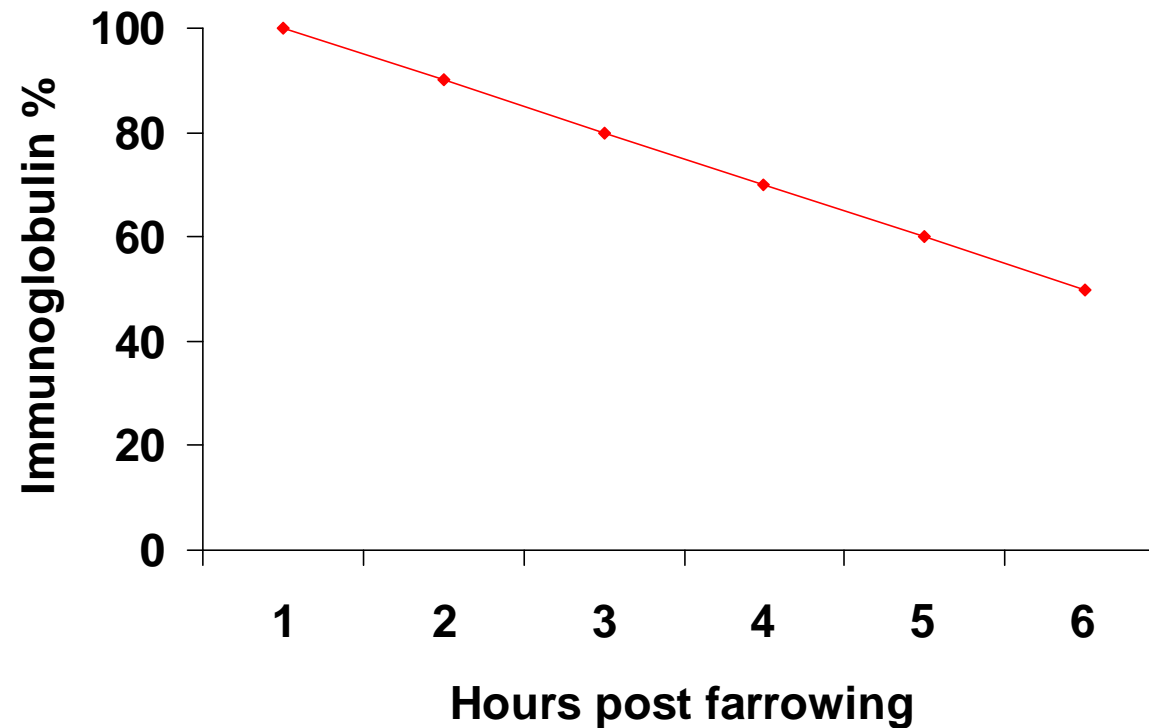
- Variable: 200 - 360g
- 1.5kg piglet could consume 450g
 - Less for the rest!
 - Prioritise small weak piglets
- Sow suckles less than once per hour
- Milk flow lasts 10-20 seconds
 - Small chilled lethargic piglets miss out



Colostrum & Disease

- Antibodies = defence against disease
- Sow does not share her antibodies with unborn piglet
- Colostrum is the only source of antibodies

Colostrum & Disease contd



Early suckled pig gets most

Public Enemy Number One!!

Squashability ratio



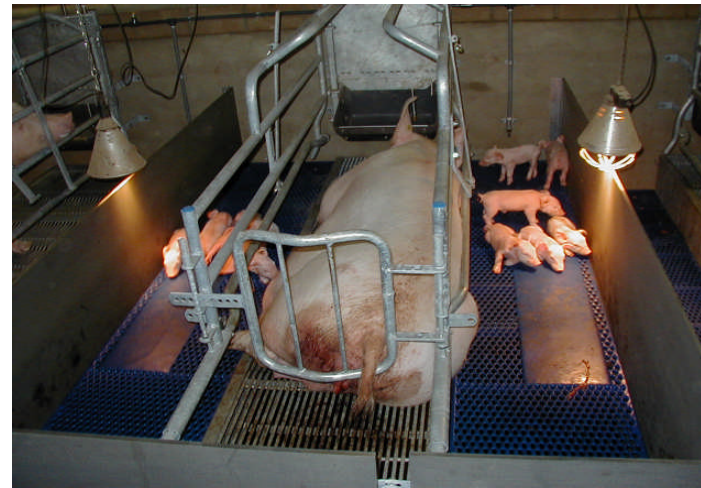
250kg : 1kg



Must provide the correct environment for the weakest piglet born

Successful Farrowing House Management 1

- **Crate design & management**
- **Slat surface temperature**
- **Air temperature**
- **Air movement**
- **Heat provision**






Successful Farrowing House Management 2

- Sow health, gut & body condition
- Sow hoof care
- Teeth clipping
- Assist smallest piglets
- Lock up first 6 born piglets 3 hours after start of farrowing (for 1 hour)



Successful Farrowing House Management 3

- Initiate milk let down
- Speed up farrowing (oxytocin)
- Iodine spray on navels



Influence of Birth Weight

No. Piglets	94	196	237	96
Birth Wt kg	1	1.3	1.6	1.8
Mortality %	41	14	10	7
Wt at Death kg	0.8	1.4	2.0	2.0

Source: le Dividich & Rooke, 2006



Birth Weight Facts

- Increased litter sizes mean ↓ birth wt
- 20% of litter < 1kg at birth
- Increase 2 pigs = 4-5% increase in mortality
i.e. 9% increase to 13-14%
- Colostrum intake ↓ 30g per 100g ↓ in birth wt



Inducing Farrowing

- Inducing farrowing too early:
 - Know your herd gestation length
 - Premature farrowing
 - Lighter piglet at birth
 - Sow may produce 40% less colostrum



What's it worth?

- €30 million per year
- Pigs over 0.9kg worth saving!
- Think of today's labour & feed costs
- "Saved piglet" justifies 3 hours time
- Re-visit (visit) the Questionnaire!