Breeding Pigs...Is It Right for you Operation???
What About Boar Taint???
Pre-breeding Management

- Must decide on a breeding system
  - Crossbreeding hogs for slaughter is recommended
- Crossbred pigs generally grow faster and use feed more efficiently, and sows produce larger litters if hybridized

Your Production must match your marketing needs and season
## Multiple Farrowing vs. Seasonal Farrowing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple</th>
<th>Seasonal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor needed all year</td>
<td>Labor needs condensed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product all year</td>
<td>Seasonal or highly managed product</td>
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<td>Breeding out of season</td>
<td>Breeding with nature</td>
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<td>Less intensive Processing Issues</td>
<td>Processing Issues</td>
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Replacement Gilts

- Select at 4-5 months of age
- Separate from finishing hogs and feed separately
- Worm gilts and sows before first breeding
- Spray for external parasites

- Most producers do not buy in gilts since litters are so large

Systems Map
Boars

- Purchase at least 45-60 days before use
- Buy only from healthy, purebred herds with good performance records (Check out the rest of the farm)
- Isolate the boar when he is first brought to the farm to help prevent disease
- Treat for internal and external parasites

- 1 boar for 20 sows....eh more like 15
Increasing conception and litter size

- Can be done by using more than one boar on each female
- This is easier when hand-mating or using artificial insemination
- Can also be accomplished with pen breeding
  - Rotate the boars once a day between pens
Artificial Insemination

- Not widely used in the past
- Improvements in technology are trending toward more use of AI in commercial herds

**Advantages**
- Increases the ability to bring preferred genetics to the herd
- Reduces the risk of disease transmission
- Makes it possible to bring new bloodlines into the herd

**Disadvantages**
- Costs and expertise
- Slowest sperm wins
- Inducing heat and decreased success
Breeding-Gestation Period

- Breed gilts at 7-8 months of age and a weight of 250-300 pounds
- Breed during the second heat for larger litters
- Boars should be 7 ½ months of age before breeding

**Production cycle**
Breeding

- Check for standing heat at least 1 X day
  - Checking 2 X’s day increases conception rate
- Breed gilts at least twice at 12 hour intervals after standing heat is detected
- Breed sows at least twice at 24 hour intervals after standing heat is detected
Gestation

- Keep gilts and sows separate
- Boars of the same size and age can be run together during the off-breeding season
  - Do not run boars of different ages together
- Provide shade to animals on pasture
- Avoid overheating
- Supply plenty of fresh water
- Keep the breeding separate from the other hogs to avoid disease
Farrowing Period

- Behavior determines when a sow is about to farrow

- Most sows farrow within about six hours after they begin a period of intensive activity
  - Intensive activity is when a sow stands up and lies down more often than once per minute

- Sows will also root and paw at the pen floor when they are ready to begin farrowing

- 3 Months 3 Weeks 3 Days and 3 AM

- Pig Nesting Behavior
Farrowing Period

- Farrowing can be induced by giving the sow commercially available drugs 111-113 days after breeding, the sow will farrow 18-36 hours later.
- Why would we do this?
Crate or No Crate??
Farrowing Facilities

- Guard rails and artificial heat are used to protect the baby pigs after birth
- For newborn pigs the temperature should be 90-95 degrees F under the heat lamp
- Heat maps are placed 18” above the pigs
- After 4-5 days the temperature is lowered to 80-85 degrees F by raising the heat lamp
Caring for Baby Pigs

- Many are saved by the operator being present at farrowing time
  - Sows need assistance
  - Piglets trapped in after-birth can be saved
- Baby pigs must be kept warm and dry
- This is where your vet kit comes in handy!

Video
Caring for Baby Pigs

- Clip needle teeth
- Done with disinfected clippers
- Pigs less than 2 days old, clip needle teeth at the gum line
- Pigs over 2 days old, clip 1/3 to ½ of the tooth
- Avoid injuring the gum
- The navel cord should also be clipped shortly after birth to 1-1.5” and disinfected with tincture of iodine
- Are these steps necessary....depends on your management style
Ear Notching

- Used for identification
- Required for registration in purebred associations
- Determination of right and left ear is made from the rear
Caring for Baby Pigs

- **Efforts should be made to save runts**
  - Use milk replacer or other methods
  - Feed orally once or twice a day

- **Litter size should equalized**
  - Move pigs from large litters to small in order to make them equal.
  - Be sure that pigs nurse colostrums milk before moving them.
  - Make sure the sow has the nursing ability and the number of teats necessary for the number of pigs that are in the litter.
Farrowing to Weaning Period

- Several important management practices
- Tail docking
  - Cutting the pigs tail ¼-1/2 inch from the body
  - Done when pigs are 1-3 days old
  - Use side cutting pliers or chicken debeaker
  - Disinfect the tail stub with iodine spray and disinfect the cutter between pigs.
  - Producers of feeder pigs should always
  - Do not dock tail while pigs have scours
  - Docking the tail prevents tail biting among pigs in confinement so this procedure depends on your system
Farrowing to weaning period

- Give iron injections or oral iron doses
- Should be done at 2-4 days old
- Injections should be given in the neck or forearm
- Iron-dextran shots are given at the rate of 100-150 mg per pig
- Give a second dose at 2 wks of age
  - Iron can be added to feed or water at this time.
- Use care when giving iron shots as an overdose may cause shock
Injections

- 3 types of injections
  - Subcutaneous
  - Intramuscular
  - Intravenous

- Two sites to give an injection
  - Neck
  - Ham
Farrowing to Weaning Period

- Watch closely for scours
  - Treatments with oral drugs work better.
- Castrate male pigs that will be raised for slaughter
  - Best done when young, before 2 weeks of age is best
- Do not castrate, vaccinate and wean all in the same period of time as it overstresses the animal.
Weaning

- Trend towards earlier weaning
- Earlier weaning requires higher levels of management and nutrition
- Usually means pigs are weaned before 5 weeks of age
  - Average is between 5 and 8 weeks
- Pigs should weigh at least 12 pounds at the time of weaning
- Avoid drafts and great temperature change when weaning pigs
- Group pigs according to size
- Groups should be no more than 30 pigs if possible
Weaning to Market

- Most management centers around feeding and facilities
- Hogs are raised either in confinement or on pasture
HATERS GONNA HATE