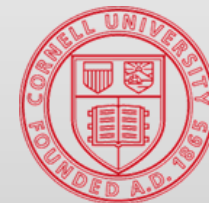


Swine 101: Farrowing Systems and Piglet Management



Jake Ledoux
Dairy and Livestock Educator
CCE Jefferson County
jtl224@cornell.edu



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County

Your Operation's Goals

- Size, type of operation, market, budget all play a part
- Factors to take into consideration
 - Customers?
 - Turns per year?
 - Breed?
 - Facilities?
 - Climate?
 - What is manageable?



Overview

- **Types of Farrowing Systems**
- **Farrowing on Pasture**
- **Universal Laws of Farrowing**
- **Preparing for, During and Post Farrowing**
- **Ear Notching**
- **Useful References**
- **Key Takeaways**



Types of Farrowing Systems

- **Commercial:** Farrowing crate, barn based
- **Pastured Based:** Hutch on pasture based
- **Hybrid:** No crate but a pen with potential access to pasture

There is no right answer but there is a system that best fits your farm.

The goal of any system is piglet survival and keeping the sow healthy.

Farrowing Systems Continued



Crate



Hybrid

Pasture



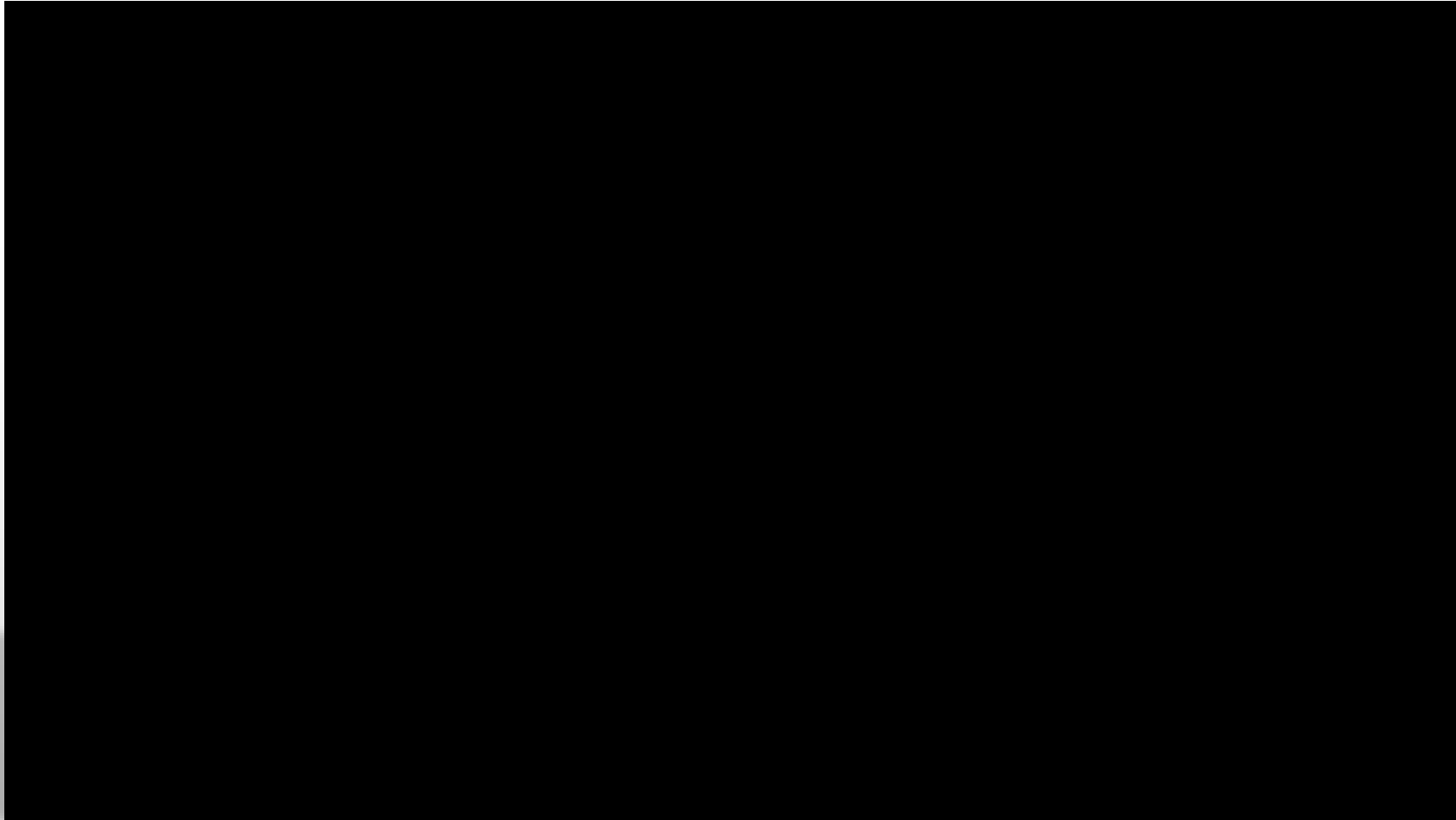
Pros and cons of each system?

Special Considerations for Pasture Farrowing

- Growing interest in this practice for niche markets.
- Pen Design: Seasonal or year round?
- Wind, snow, rain, heat and the cold should be taken into consideration.
- Food and water access? Human access into pen?
- Accessible in all types of weather?
- Microbial dangers, cleaning protocol



Farrowing: What is it?



The Universal Laws of Farrowing

- **Clean** (physically and on microbe level to the best of your ability)
- **Dry** with ample bedding
- **Well Lit** (sunlight or lamps) and heated/protected from the cold/wind
- Ability for the piglets to **Escape** being crushed by a sow laying down is a must
- **Access** to feed/water for sow

Clean, Dry, Well lit, Escape, Access



Piglet escape area, sows cannot come in here.

Preparing For Farrowing

- Rough due date for timely admittance into system
- Gestation is 3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days (114 days).
- Clean and disinfect pen and allow for nesting of bedding materials (in pen and pasture systems)
- Space to get away from the sow after the piglets are born
- Keep moisture at bay
- Formula, dry bedding, towels, bottles and heat lamps should be available
- Ventilation (air exchange)
- Gestation feed should be fed



What do you see?

During Farrowing

- **Check regularly**
- **Assist as needed** (gilts may require more help than sows) Being calm is key.
- **Drying off piglets** and **applying iodine** to their navel is critical as well as assisting them in **finding a nipple to nurse**
- **Guiding piglets to safety** after nursing
- Sows will be stressed, **safety** for both humans and pigs must be brought into account
- Gestation feed to Lactation feed

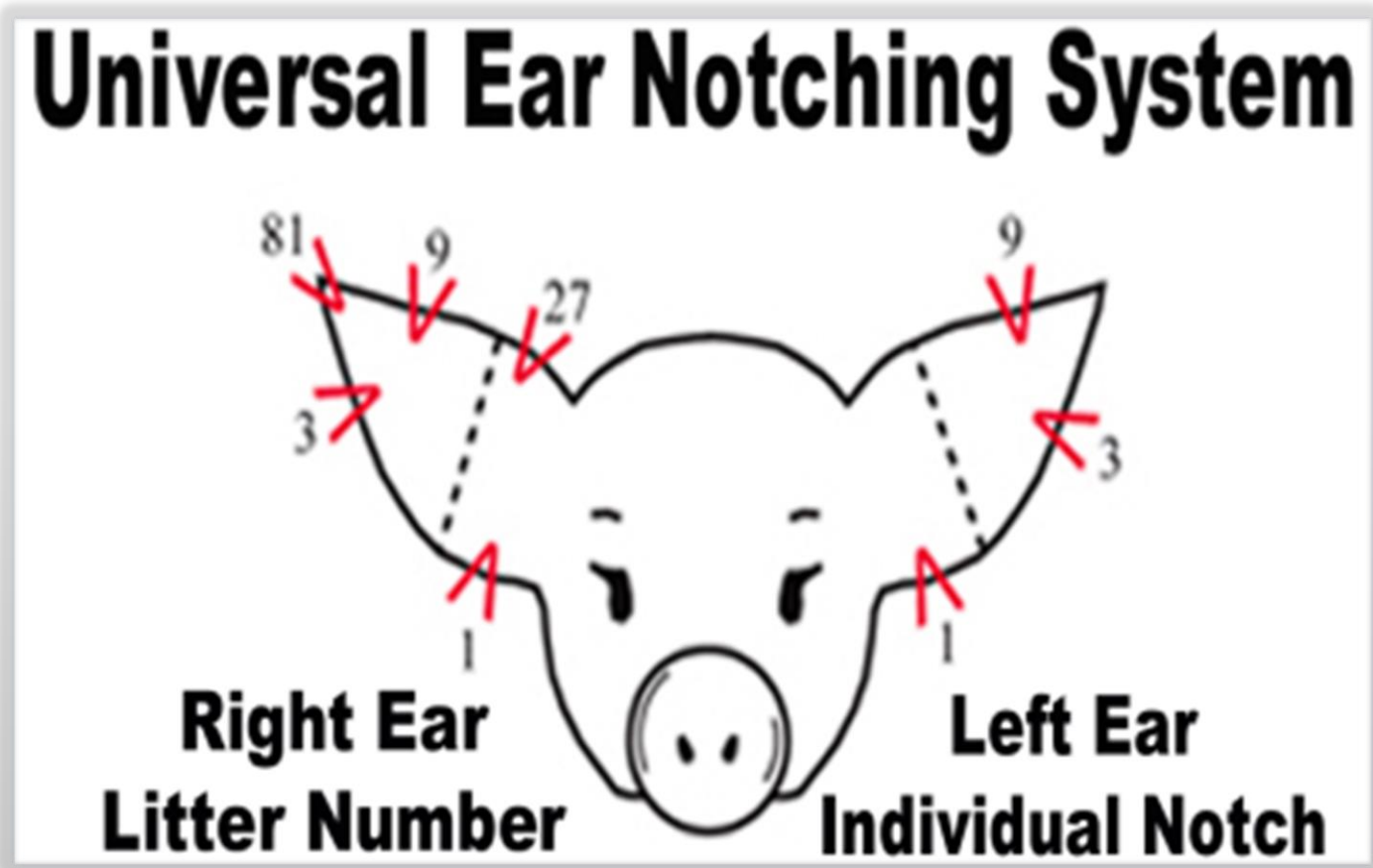


Post Farrowing Piglet Management

- Iron shots (3-5 days after birth) to prevent anemia
- Trimming Wolf teeth (quickly after birth), not all do this but it has many benefits
- Adequate nutrition and water for the sow
- Consistent cleaning of farrowing area
- Ear notches to identify piglet litter and number
- Castrating boars before two weeks of age (some recommend 3 days)
- Group housing after a few weeks, then piglet weaning
- Record keeping of litters

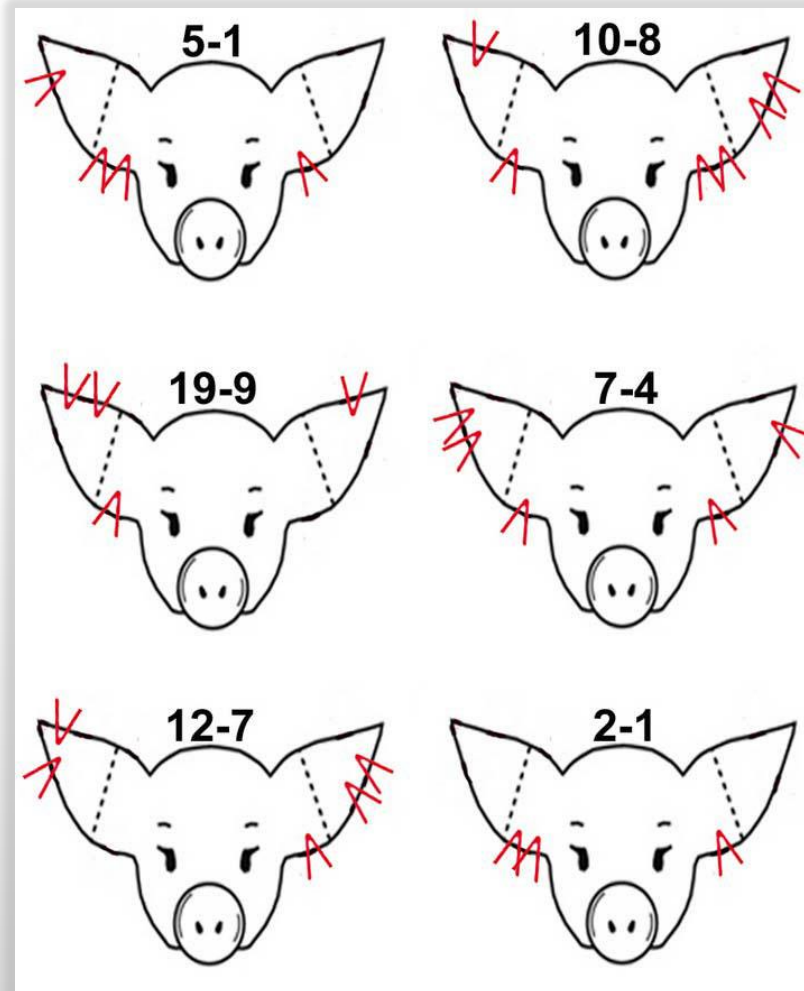


Ear Notching Chart



Ear Notching Continued

Ear notching allows for greater ease in identifying litters and individuals in piglet management.



Useful Links and References

PQA Certification

<https://www.pork.org/certifications/pork-quality-assurance-plus/>

Swine Farrowing Barns for Beginners

<https://www.hobbyfarms.com/swine-farrowing-barns/>

Sow Resource from Extension

<https://articles.extension.org/pages/31077/care-of-the-sow-during-farrowing-and-lactation>

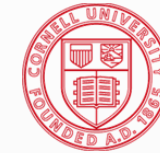
Key Takeaways

1. Know before you grow (market served and style of farrowing)
2. Universal Laws of Farrowing = **Clean, Dry, Well lit, Escape, Access**
3. During Farrowing: dry off, iodine, help nurse, move to safety
4. Post Farrowing: teeth trimming, iron shots, castration, ear notching
5. Good record keeping is critical



Thank you! Any Questions?

Jake Ledoux
Dairy and Livestock Educator
CCE Jefferson County
jtl224@cornell.edu
315-788-8450 ext. 234



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County

Farrowing your own pigs can happen before pigs fly!