Four Star Veterinarian Stoney Creek Newsletter

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From the Desk of Dr. Daniel:

Proper Vaccine Storage and Administration

The improper storage and administration of vaccine can cause a number of problems when vaccinating pigs.

Potential problems include: injection site abscesses, vomiting, and anaphylactic shock leading to death. Listed below are some key things to help prevent adverse reactions:

- ☐ Store vaccine in a refrigerator 35°-40° F.
- ☐ Make sure the vaccine has not been frozen or has gotten too warm.
- ☐ Allow vaccine to warm up to room temperature prior to use.
- ☐ Gently shake the bottle before use.
- ☐ Use a **clean needle** to draw out the number of doses needed for the number of pigs.
  - *Using a dirty needle will contaminate the vaccine with bacteria leading to reactions*.
- ☐ Return unused vaccine to the refrigerator.
- ☐ Use the correct needle size and length for the size of the pig:
  - Pre-weaned pigs- 20 x ½”
  - Weaned pigs 12-30 lbs- 18 x 5/8”
  - Pigs 30 to 80 lbs- 16 x ¾”
  - Finisher pigs- 16 x 1”
  - Breeding Stock- 16 x 1 ½”
- ☐ Change to a new needle every 15 pigs.
- ☐ Change any bent needle immediately because it is more likely to break.
- ☐ When vaccination is completed remove the needle and then clean and disinfect the vaccination equipment.

Dr. Daniel Hendrickson

From the Desk of Dr. Daren:

Sow Farrowing

As the farrowing season begins it is important to review farrowing procedures and the necessary supplies for the task.

The supplies needed for farrowing are as follows:

- **Oxytocin:** This is a medication that should be used to help deliver baby pigs by stimulating rhythmic uterine contractions. No more than a 1/2 ml should be used at a time and only if a pig is not present at the canal. Too much oxytocin given either too frequently or too much can cause the uterus to spasm.
- **Lutalyse:** This medication is used to induce sows into labor. This should never be given prior to 113 days of gestation as the piglets may not be fully formed.
- **Pig pulling snare:** This is used to help pull baby pigs that are stuck in the pelvic canal.
- **OB Lube and OB gloves:** The use of lube and gloves is important because the hair and skin of the arm is abrasive. This causes damage to the vaginal walls and can lead to increased infections/bleeding.

Common issues that arise during farrowing are pigs that are positioned poorly at birth and pigs that are too big for the pelvis. In the case of malposition, most commonly the pigs are coming toward the pelvic canal with back legs folded forward and the tail-end/back against the pelvic wall. This can be fixed by pushing the animal back into the uterus and the back legs unfolded to be easily pulled out. A pig that is too large for the pelvis of the animal is much more difficult and typically has a less favorable outcome. It may be required to have a veterinarian and a caesarean section may need to be performed.

In the case of a potential c-section it is extremely important to decide to do this before there is too much internal damage from trying to pull the pigs. Damage to the uterus can make a potential c-section far less likely to save both the sow and babies. A good rule of thumb is that if you can't get your hand through the pelvis and a pig is too large **stop and call your vet.**
After farrowing, if assistance is needed an antibiotic treatment may be required. The babies should be hand dried with a towel and placed under the heat lamp. If farrowing on shavings be sure to tie the umbilical cord about an inch from the navel to prevent the animal from bleeding out.

The most common complication for the sow post-farrowing is a uterine infection (metrits). This can be determined by monitoring the sows feed intake and observing her vulva for signs of discharge. If the sow goes off feed or starts having discharge within 5 days of farrowing she should be treated with an antibiotic and an anti-inflammatory.
The baby pigs should be treated with 100 mg of iron and an antibiotic within the first 24 hours and then again 1 week later. This treats infection in the umbilical cords which could ultimately lead to umbilical hernias. The iron provides a necessary supplement enabling healthy blood cell formation in fast-growing pigs.

Daren Miller

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