

SoLiv 2.0

Soen længe Leve



Daily monitoring of the gestation unit

The purpose of monitoring the gestation unit every day is to ensure the quick detection and proper treatment of unhealthy sows. Lameness or hoof problems are the most common reasons for medical treatment, relocation to a hospital pen and/or being culled in the gestation unit.

To ensure the best possible result of daily monitoring, unhealthy sows must be detected as soon as possible. Practical instructions for the daily monitoring of the unit are provided below.

Agreements and strategy in place

There must be a clear and agreed strategy for the herd concerning the monitoring and treatment of unhealthy sows. The

herd veterinarian and all employees working in the gestation unit should be involved in this preliminary task.

The monitoring and treatment of the sows must be coordinated with the other tasks in the unit. Unhealthy sows will in many instances be noticed during sow feeding and pen cleaning. These sows should be spray-marked and noted down to make it easy to relocate and re-assess them.

Afterwards, make a more deliberate health round for the primary purpose of inspecting the sows. In other words, do not combine this monitoring with the cleaning of lying areas, but possibly combine it with the spreading of straw bedding. It would be good if two employees – one of whom is experienced – make the inspection round.

Clinical signs: what to look for

Do the following on a daily basis:

- Go through all pens and check on each sow every day.
- All sows must be assessed while they are moving so that any lame sows are found early in the course of a disease.
- Focus particularly on:
 - sows that are lying outside lying areas
 - sows lying isolated from others
 - gilts and young sows
 - sows recently added to the unit
- Then activate the sows (by scattering straw for instance).
- Check whether it is easy for a sow to stand up. If the sow screeches when it gets up, this can indicate that it is unhealthy and/or injured.
- Examine the sow thoroughly. If the sow is dull and uninterested, not eating, has withdrawn from the others or is lame, you must react.



Look for the following lameness symptoms

1. Are any areas around the hooves swollen?
2. Are any joints swollen?
3. Does the sow walk normally?
4. How serious is the lameness?
5. Does activating the sow improve or worsen any of the symptoms?

What should you do?

In relation to lameness, it is important to react as quickly as possible.

The sows' medical treatment must be agreed with the herd veterinarian. Similarly, every time the veterinarian visits, he/she should enter the pens where sows are grouped and make the 'rounds' in the hospital pens.

Many of the sows that become lame can be soothed with pain treatment. The use of antibiotics is only necessary/relevant in cases of outright infection.

If a sow refuses to get up or cannot support itself on one leg, this could indicate a fracture. The sow must be more carefully examined, and culling must be considered.

Fighting infection in and around hooves is difficult due to the low supply of blood to these areas. Prevention and prompt intervention are therefore crucial.



When should a sow be moved to a hospital pen?

Upon detecting an unhealthy sow in the gestation unit that will not eat or cannot find space in straw bedding or similar symptoms, it must be moved to a hospital pen.

Hospital pens for sows must have a soft lying area made up of a drained floor and sufficient straw bedding.

Each sow in the hospital pen must have its own medical record for noting down any treatment and possible improvement. Agree with the herd veterinarian on which criteria must be met for re-treatment and culling.

