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## Hog Farrowing Systems

Richard Hollandbeck

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Pigs to Pork

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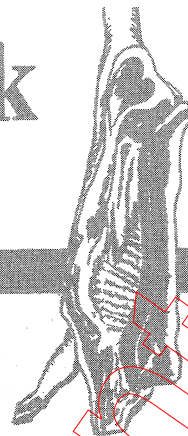
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# Pigs to Pork

BREEDING



Cooperative Extension Service PURDUE UNIVERSITY Lafayette, Indiana

## Hog Farrowing Systems

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### Two Litter System

Most Indiana farmers farrow two litters of hogs per year. When suitable housing is available, spring pigs should be farrowed during January, February and March. This is a time when work is slack and more labor is available. Early farrowed pigs can be marketed during the fall peak price period.

Fall litters should be farrowed during August and September to give the pigs time to get a good start before winter.

Prices received for hogs produced under the two litter system are normally about five percent higher than hogs sold under the one litter system. More pork can be produced on a given acreage. And the marketing risk is less because it is spread over two seasons instead of one. The two litter system requires more capital for buildings and equipment; and, greater managerial ability is necessary to care for pigs during periods of poor weather.

### One Litter System

Farmers using the one litter system usually breed gilts in February for late May or June pigs. Weather conditions are ideal for farrowing and little housing is needed. Gilts are fattened for market after the pigs are weaned and replacement gilts are saved to farrow the following year.

The one litter system requires less labor and has about a three percent lower production cost. June pigs are big enough to

hog down corn, glean corn fields, and to follow winter-fed cattle.

### Three Litter System

Some farmers are combining the one and two litter programs to make a three litter system. Sows are farrowed in the spring and fall and gilts are bred to farrow in late May or June. Gilts that produce outstanding summer litters can be rebred to farrow the following spring and replace older breeding stock. The rest of the gilts are marketed after producing one litter.

This system is best adapted to large farms. Labor can be spread over three seasons and more hogs can be produced during the year. Another advantage of this system is that the June pigs can glean a large acreage of corn. Fall pigs are too small to do this job efficiently.

### Multiple Farrowing System

For greater specialization many Indiana farmers have adopted multiple farrowing. They can intensify their enterprise to the limits of their own managerial ability and to the limits of available capital and labor with little extra equipment.

Usually two or more sets of sows farrow two litters per year each. As an example, one set of sows will farrow in February and August while another will farrow in May and November. Still another set might farrow

midway between these two.

This system makes maximum use of specialized farrowing and finishing buildings and equipment; yet, permits time for thorough cleaning and disinfecting between each period of use. A further advantage is more orderly and uniform marketing with less risk from price fluctuation.

Also, when another drove of shoats is ready to move into the feedlot there is less tendency to feed hogs to heavier weights and gamble on a possible stronger market.

Multiple farrowing requires more managerial ability than any other system and should not be entered into lightly.

Historic Document