Induction of Farrowing

1. Induction of farrowing is a management practice that is usually implemented in order to decrease the number of stillborns while improving preweaning mortality. This is accomplished by having the animals farrow during the regular working hours.
   a. Stillborns can be reduced because animals farrow during normal working hours. This enables farm labor to recognize and assist with problems at farrowing i.e. pull pigs if needed
   b. Preweaning mortality can also be reduced, since it makes it very easy to also provide additional labor to intensify management of newborn pigs and make sure they get off to a proper start
   c. Inducing can finish out a room farrowing, which gives more options for cross fostering and maximizes lactation length
   d. Potential Problems
      • Inducing animals too early increases the incidence of small, weak, non-viable pigs that have trouble getting started and stimulating the sow to start milking
      • This leads to an increase in preweaning mortality (as little as 1 day difference can cause this)

2. Protocol
   a. Establish the average gestation length (using database tally report or performance monitor in PigCHAMP®)
   b. Induce animals to farrow on that day –if you have a high rate of stillborn pigs and can attend the farrowings
   c. If stillborns are in the normal range (4-5% or less) consider injecting on the average gestation length or 1 day later
   d. Give the injection intramuscularly using a 1.5 inch 18 (or 20) gauge needle. The needle should be inserted next to the vulva at a 30 degree angle toward the ham
   e. LutalyseTM or Prostamate (Dinoprost tromethamine) - give 2 cc (10 mg) intramuscularly to induce farrowing
   f. EstrumateTM (Cloprostenol) - give 0.7-1.0 cc (175-250 micrograms) intramuscularly (Extra Label)

***Pregnant women, asthmatics, or other people with bronchial diseases should avoid use or handle these products with caution. All personnel administering these products should wear gloves and wash immediately after any contact with these drugs and the skin.

3. Expectations
   a. Sows should begin farrowing 20-30 hours after induction
   b. It can be expected that 75% of induced animals will respond by the next day
c. 1 cc Oxytocin can be used on the animals not responding in order to “jump start” the labor process

d. Oxytocin should only be used if the gilt or sow is showing signs that she is ready to farrow (milk let down and mucus drainage from vagina)

e. If there is no response do not re-dose

4. Summary

f. If done properly and at the right time, induction can improve stillborn and preweaning mortality numbers, however always consider induction as a possible factor in elevated preweaning mortality

g. Balance the economic effects of decreased stillborns versus increases preweaning mortality-your goal is to end up weaning more pigs

h. Only induce if someone is committed to attending farrowings and working on day 1 pig care to reduce preweaning mortality