

# HANDLING THE SOW

Once delivery begins pigs can be expected to arrive about every 15 minutes. Sometimes delivery timing is slower and sometimes two pigs will arrive at the same time. It is ideal management to attend and monitor farrowing's and to know when to handle sows if required.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU HANDLE THE SOW?

- Blood and/or mucus discharge from the vulva
- Low hormone levels in sick or old sows
- Persistent contractions but no pig born
- More than 40 minutes since the last pig was born
- Obvious pain, straining or panting
- Sow has history of stillbirths

## PROCEDURE

- Plan ahead, have all equipment ready
- Use a plastic sleeve to reduce contamination from the hands
- Wash the hands and arm well with a mild antiseptic and make sure the fingernails are short
- If not using a plastic sleeve, apply a special obstetrical lubricant to the arm and hand – never use soap solution

- Examine the sow as she lies on her side using right hand if she is on her right side and vice versa
- Hold the fingers of the hand together and introduce the arm into the vagina in an arcing movement
- Continue to insert the arm to the cervix and beyond so that the entrance to the uterine horns can be felt
- Remove any piglet found, with a gentle pull after catching securely
- When farrowing is completed administer an antibiotic as prescribed by the veterinary surgeon

## CAUTION

There are always risks related to any job that involves hands-on interaction with animals. Sows can be unpredictable when they are under stress.

- Take your time
- Move calmly, quietly & smartly

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Clean disposable plastic sleeve
- Obstetrical lubricant
- Mild antiseptic

