

## Pig Improver

### Brushing Up on Early Pig Care Making Sure Every Weaned Pig Thrives



To maximize the profitability of a pork operation, we must optimize the health and performance of every weaned pig.

**A good start is critical for optimal lifetime performance.**

Good Early Pig Care means:

1. minimizing stress at reception
2. minimizing health challenges to the pigs
3. assuring each pig has a good start in the first 10 days

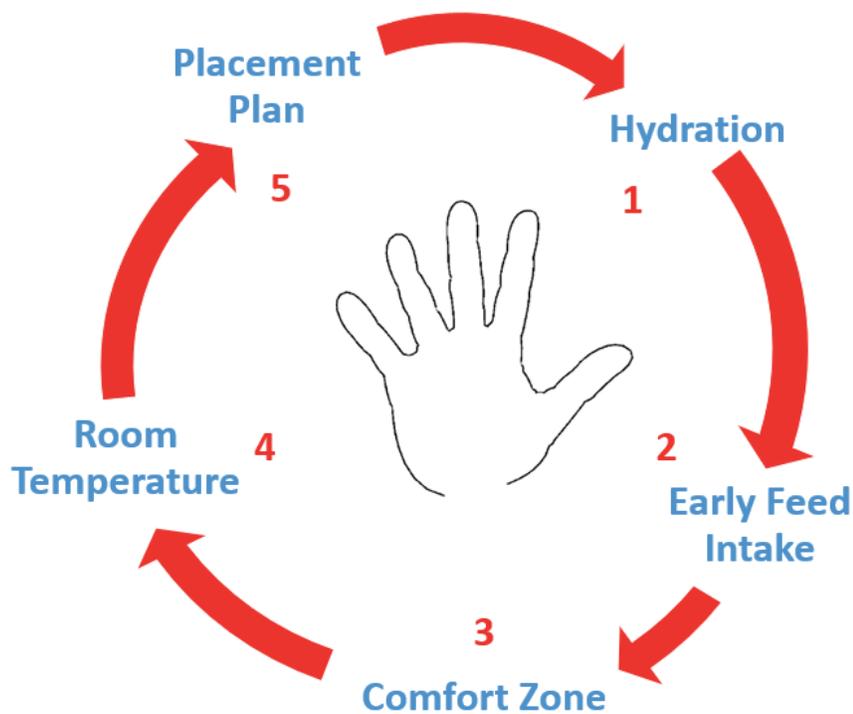
With superior Early Pig Care, we provide **the best opportunity to assure a correct start in the nursery or wean-to-finish facility. This allows for robust performance and reduces the direct and indirect (labor) costs** associated with fallback pigs, disease treatment and extra care.

To review the latest on providing the best quality Early Pig Care, read this exciting new edition of PIC Pig Improver.

## Early Pig Care Success – A Five-Point Plan:

### How Can We Ensure Success in the First Ten Days?

Five Points



#### Hydration

Hydration is important for early feed intake and good health. Newly-arrived pigs should therefore find water easily.

Remember that risk of scours increases when young pigs cannot easily access water. In addition, feed intake is dependent on water consumption, and younger pigs have higher water:feed ratio needs. Place swinging nipple or bowl drinkers at the proper angles and height, based on the smallest pig in the pen.

## Early Feed Intake

The transition from 24-hour feed availability with the sow to an ad-lib environment sometimes stalls piglet feed intake. The goal of mat feeding is to stimulate feed intake of the pigs and act as a “dinner bell” to get them up and eat. Mat training is an effective way to ensure proper early feed intake and identify poor feeders. (If mat training is not available, follow the same principles of mat feed training using feeder troughs.)

Provide 1 lb. of feed per 40 pigs, 4 to 6 times a day for three to seven days post-weaning. Use proper mat space of at least 0.4 ft<sup>2</sup> per pig.



## Room Temperature and Comfort Zone

It is important that young pigs arrive to a dry and warm barn that is at least 70 to 80°F. The exact desired room temperature depends on pig weight, as well as the floor type and insulation in the barn.

Some operations provide a ‘comfort zone’ with a brooder and/or mats. This allows the room temperature to be anywhere from 2 to 9°F lower than that of the comfort zone.

Make sure there are enough mats and brooder capacity and ensure the barn temperature is adjusted once comfort zones are removed.

## Placement Plan

Management through categorizing pigs and placing them in separate pens avoids competition and ensures quick treatment of pigs, when required.

Some examples of pen categories are:

- Normal population
- Poor competitors from normal pens
- Hospital pen
- Graduated recovered pigs from hospital pen
- Bottom pigs (smallest 15 to 20% of pigs)

Note: Bottom pigs and hospital pigs should be placed in pens with a warmer temperature and gruel feed. Ensure that all pigs can eat at the same time by providing 3 inches of linear feeder space per pig and 2-4 feedings/day.

Minimizing health challenges –

The other critical key to proper Early Pig Care

**To minimize risk of disease, ensure proper barn cleaning and disinfection before pig arrival:**

Follow All-in All-out Procedures

- ✓ Scrape and remove all large organic material
- ✓ Remove as much equipment as possible
- ✓ Soak the room with sprinkler system
- ✓ Apply acid wash with foaming gun
- ✓ Power wash with hot water
- ✓ Have 3rd party inspection
- ✓ Apply disinfectant with sprinkler system

**Then, completely dry the barn to** ensure disinfection has occurred and to maximize comfort, health and welfare of the arriving pigs.

**Ensure adherence to proper biosecurity protocols**, through shower in/out, Danish Entry, change of clothes/boots or the use of disposable coveralls.

**Lastly, training -**

**Early Pig Care success will not be achieved without proper initial staff training and regular review.**

**Complete adherence to these basics by well-trained staff will ensure your pigs are on the road to optimal lifetime performance.**

**For more guidance on proper Early Pig Care please reach out to your PIC account manager.**

**Our future – and yours – has never looked so bright, as PIC continues to deliver on our promise to Never Stop Improving.**

*In the next Pig Improver: Six Steps to Start the Best Farrowing Room Environment*