

Sow breeding program checklist

Program area	Criteria	Check
1. Pre-breeding feed intake	Wean-to-estrus intake >10 pounds per day of a high-carbohydrates diet.	
2. Semen storage/transport	Store semen at 61 to 64 degrees F and rotate twice daily.	
3. Signs of estrus	Only breed healthy, sound, well-conditioned sows that show strong signs of heat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing reflex to back pressure (most important) • Vaginal mucus • Dark red color on inside of vulva • Ears and tail head facing up, body quivers 	
4. Boar criteria	Utilize mature boars at least 9 months old and 300 pounds. Have one boar for every 250 females in inventory.	
5. Heat detection and timing	Check weaned sows before rebreeds and leftovers. Boar must be within 3 feet of sows and provided for at least 30 seconds per sow. Always start boar on fan end of the barn. Expose the sows to the boar every day post-weaning.	
6. Technician skills	Understand the order of natural sow stimulation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grab the flank area. 2. Rub the underline and individual teats. 3. Slowly rub the back while pressing down. 	
7. Insemination	Clean the vulva with a dry, clean tissue (use a new tissue for each sow). Separate the vulva with your fingers while inserting the catheter. Only breed if the sow is showing strong signs of heat. One good breeding is better than two or three marginal breedings.	
8. Environment	Know and understand the time of year/season. Room temperature should be no greater than 68 degrees F. Maintain a calm, quiet environment at the time of breeding.	
9. Sow and gilt movement	Only move sows within five days of insemination or 25 days after insemination.	
10. Gilt development	Only breed if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 300 pounds; more than 30 weeks old; • On their third heat cycle 	

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