

Title: A prospective observational study of periparturient sow mortality - **NPB #02-087**

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Abstract: Sow mortality continues to be a major concern in the industry, with rates continuing to rise in the major benchmarking databases. In this project we focused on the major time of risk, namely the periparturient period. The periparturient period is defined as the time around farrowing, including five days before the due date and 21 days after that due date. In this study of approximately 20,000 farrowings, we found that 61% of mortality occurred during this time period. This resulted in a rate of mortality per day that was approximately seven times higher, when compared with the rest of the sow's farrowing interval.

For those sows that died to the major risk factors identified included:

- ⊕ Low feed intake post farrowing, with 2 or more days of insignificant feed intake in the first week resulting in more dead sows
- ⊕ gestation length, with shorter gestation length having higher risk of mortality
- ⊕ summer and heat, with summer having a higher rate of mortality than other seasons
- ⊕ sows induced with prostaglandins had a higher rate of mortality
- ⊕ age was also protective, with sows less than 4 parities of age having higher rates of mortality than those four parities or older

In addition, problem sows, those that enter the farrowing crate lame, or produce more than one stillbirth, or are reluctant to rise and drink after farrowing have a very high risk of mortality during this period and need more thorough treatment protocols.

These research results were submitted in fulfillment of checkoff funded research projects. This report is published directly as submitted by the project's principal investigator. This report has not been peer reviewed

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