Title: Analysis of periparturient factors affecting sow longevity in breeding herds” – NPB #05-100

Investigator: John Deen

Institution: University of Minnesota

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of periparturient sow factors on the longevity of sows. This study followed sows from time of entry into the farrowing crate until a subsequent farrowing event or removal from the herd. We focused on younger parity sows (1 through 3) as inaccurate or improper culling is of the highest cost in these parities.

As a generalization, three four of sows can be considered for retention in early parities. The first is sows with no problems in reproductive performance or physical condition. The second is sows with problems of physical condition. The third is sows with historically poor reproductive performance. The fourth class are sows with a combination of for reproductive performance and problems in physical condition. This latter class of sounds is large and culling is too often simply attributed to problems in reproductive performance.

The recommendations of this study are twofold. The first is to recognize causative factors for poor physical condition. We saw a great deal of lameness, and particularly claw lesions, leading to poor feed intake and subsequent poor reproductive performance. Secondly, historic reproductive performance is poor predictor of subsequent performance and should not drive culling decisions.