

Rare Breed Pig Keeping

In 2003, the GOSPBC published the above titled book which was very successful with the entire print run of 1,000 selling out. There had been plans to update and republish but it is surprising how quickly things change and how much is now out of date. Furthermore, when it was produced there were virtually no other titles on the market geared for small-scale pig keeping enterprises but today that has changed and the budding pig keeper has a wide selection to choose from. So, instead of risking substantial funds on a revision and reprint, we shall reproduce the book over a number of issues of Spot Press and hope that members will find the enterprise to be helpful to them. Incidentally, the GOSPBC is the only such organisation to publish a book intended to help novice pig keepers demonstrating its commitment and leadership in the field.

A GUIDE TO ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

by Guy Kiddy

Introduction

Artificial Insemination (AI) is an excellent means of introducing new blood into your herd, or as an alternative to owning a boar. It is cost effective compared to natural service, with a success rate that should be almost equal to that of the boar, with the added bonus that disease will be unlikely to enter your unit which could happen if you are sharing a boar with someone else.

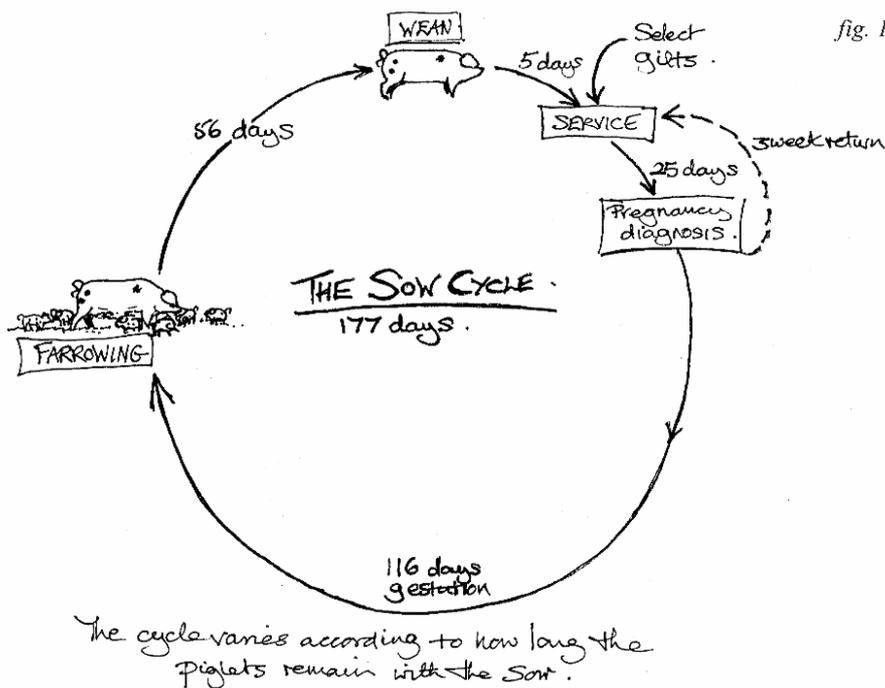
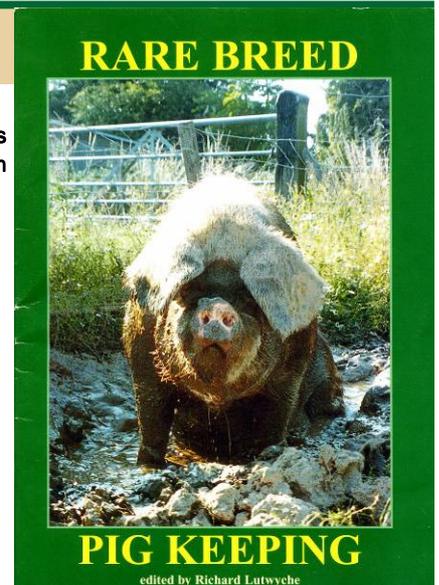


fig. 1

Heat Detection

This is obviously vital to successful AI. A typical sow cycle is shown in fig.1. If inseminating a gilt watch out for her first heat, record it and watch for the second 21 days later. Keep recording heats until she is ready to be inseminated at about 9 months. With a sow, heat detection is usually much easier because she will normally come on heat about 5 days after weaning.

Heat detection needs to be carried out twice a day to ensure it is not missed. The usual sign is a swelling and reddening of the vulva although this is more pronounced in some animals than others. She should also stand when pressure is applied to her back, (figs. 2 &

3). Insemination should be performed about 24 hours after the sow stands to the 'back pressure' test.

Method

When your sow or gilt shows signs of heat, order your semen - it will take 24 hours to arrive. The semen will be delivered in a polystyrene box and it should be left in this container and stored at room temperature of around 20° C until needed. Each tube or bottle of semen will contain about 1 - 1.5 billion sperm. There will be three bottles or tubes so that the sow or gilt can be inseminated three times in total. This should help to ensure successful insemination, (fig.3).

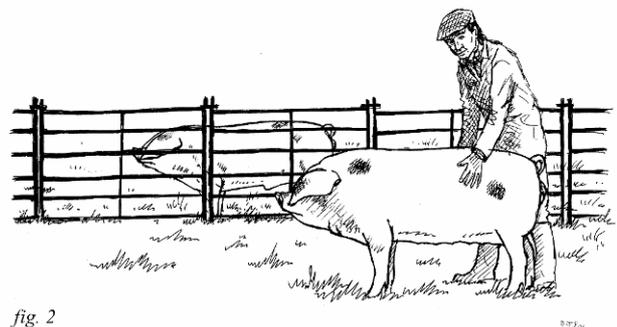


fig. 2

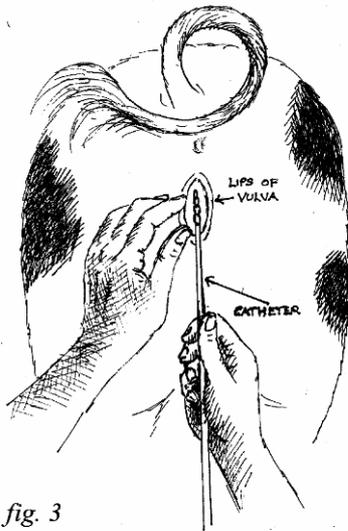


fig. 3

If the semen is in a tube, it will be ready to use. However, if it is in a bottle then it will need mixing with the diluent supplied before use. Mixing should be carried out by gently shaking the semen (small bottle) and then mixing with the diluent (clear fluid). Replace the cap and check for leaks around the thread. Only mix just before insemination. With either type of semen container, place it in your pocket to warm the semen just before use. Cut the end off the bottle or tube ready to place it on the end of the catheter.

Apply a little liquid paraffin or KY jelly to the spiral end of a new catheter. Hold the catheter in the middle with a bend, so that when it is pushed into the sow, the tendency is for it to travel upward and so miss the bladder entrance (fig. 4).

Clean the sow's vulva with tissue paper. Hold the sow's tail with the middle, fourth, and little fingers, using the thumb and index finger to open the vulva. Insert the catheter firmly, but with care. It is necessary to maintain an upward angle as the catheter enters the vagina. This ensures that the catheter misses the bladder (fig. 4).

When the catheter reaches the entrance to the cervix an obstruction will be felt. Using the thumb and index finger to control the catheter, turn it an anti-clockwise direction (towards the left side of the sow) until it is locked into the cervix. This means that if you let go of the catheter it would spring back. If you cannot gain a lock, gently remove the catheter by turning clockwise, and try again.

Hold catheter with thumb and index finger making sure that it is well locked into the cervix. This **lock** provides a seal, preventing the semen from flowing back to the vulva. Take the disposable insemination bottle from your pocket and place on the catheter. Apply **GENTLE** finger pressure until all the semen is discharged into the uterus. It might be necessary to remove the bottle and allow it to fill with air once or twice during insemination.

When both the bottle and catheter are empty, first remove the bottle from the catheter, then wait a few seconds before removing the catheter from the sow. Remove it by turning it in a clockwise direction. A suitable method of environmentally-friendly disposal should be adopted discarded disposable catheters and plastic insemination bottles.

Never use disinfectant, soap or detergent to lubricate the catheter before insertion into the sow as this may affect the fertility of the semen. Remember to watch the sow for return of service 21 days after insemination. If this does not happen, you may assume that the insemination was successful.

Any unused semen should be disposed of by washing it down the drain; it should not be kept for the next sow that needs serving. The shelf life at room temperature is about 5 days; refrigeration does not extend this.

Remember to get the registration details of the boar in question from the AI station so that you can successfully register your pigs when the time comes.

AI for pedigree GOS is only available from Deerpark Pedigree pigs in Northern Ireland who send out three straws plus a catheter and instructions on receipt of your order. Tel: 028 7938 6287. The charge is around £20 + P&P which will be invoiced retrospectively.

Boars currently on station:

Windmill Patrick 6 HCR1348

Alsa Gerald 451 KCE451

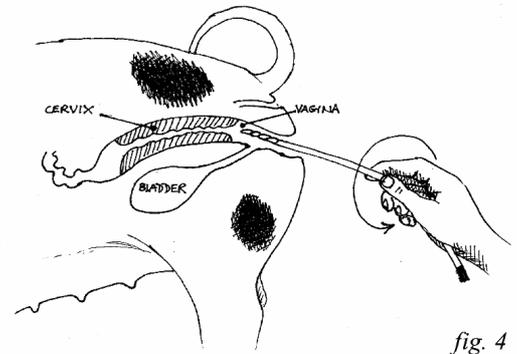


fig. 4

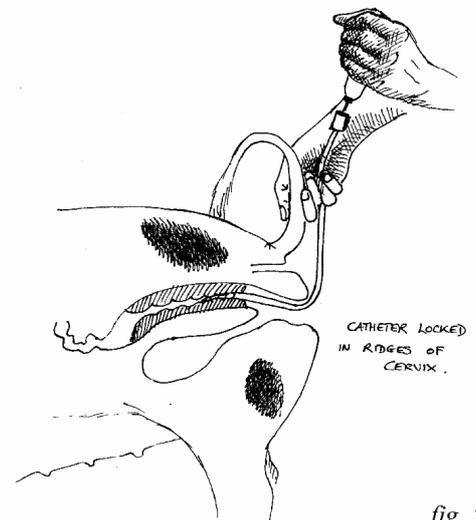


fig. 5