

## Pig Case Study Brazil 6

# Intensive deep-bedded educational pig production system, Technical School, Concordia

### Farrowing sows and growing pigs

Concordia Technical School provides its pupils with an education that has a strong agricultural component. The school has a range of facilities for livestock including pigs, broilers, laying hens, dairy cows, sheep and rabbits. For educational purposes, a range of intensive and semi-intensive systems are used.

It has a small pig unit that is experimenting with less intensive methods of production.

The farrowing sows are first kept in farrowing crates. Although this practice cannot be condoned, they only remain there until the piglets are six days of age. Piglets are most at risk of being accidentally crushed by their mothers for the first 2-3 days after which there is much less reason for keeping the sow closely confined.

In intensive production, sows that go on to be closely confined for 3-4 weeks become chronically stressed because they are unable to get away from the constant attention of the piglets.



Deep litter encourages foraging behaviour

After six days they are moved to a multi-suckling system that houses six sows and all their piglets. The system offers the pigs plenty of space to move around and the sows are able to get away from their piglets from time to time. In a natural environment, sows and piglets will normally congregate back into groups, once the piglets are several days old. The sows are familiar with each other since they were kept together during gestation so there is no fighting when they are re-grouped. The piglets are able to socialise with other litters from an early age. This means that there is less stress at weaning because they are not mixed with unfamiliar pigs. The system is deep bedded with straw so that both sows and piglets are able to perform rooting and foraging behaviour. The building has open windows with shutters for good ventilation. The piglets are provided with a heated creep area to keep warm.



Growing pigs on deep litter

The piglets are weaned onto a deep litter system. The ground wood litter provides both comfort and a source of enrichment. The pigs remain on litter systems throughout their life. The risk of abnormal behaviour such as tail-biting is therefore much reduced.



Piglets begin rooting at an early age



Deep bedding provides comfort

The sows are returned to sow pens and kept in their original groups. Although there is no bedding, the sows at least have the freedom to move around. Aggression, which can be a particular problem when it comes to feeding sows in groups, is eliminated by feeding them separately in stalls. Once the sows have finished feeding they are released from the stalls.

<b>Educational deep-bed system for farrowing sows</b> (unfortunately, key information was not recorded)	
Date of visit	15 July 2003
Breed	Large White x Landrace
Mutilations	Clearly includes tail-docking; probably includes castration
Other welfare issues identified	Sows are confined in farrowing crates until the piglets are 6 days old. The dry sows have no access to bedding. Some pigs (not referred to in above account) kept in intensive systems without enrichment. Mutilations