

Scotland Pig Farrowing Crate Discussion

Wednesday 16 December

2100 – 2230

Date:	Wednesday 16 December 2020
Time:	09:00pm – 10:30pm
Location	Teams Meeting

Members:	NAWAC Subcommittee (Chair included)
Attendees:	MPI Representatives
Invited Speakers:	Scotland's Rural College Representative (SRUC)

Meeting Summary:

On December 16, NAWAC, MPI and an SRUC representative engaged in an online meeting. The SRUC representative spoke of the many new farrowing crate alternatives, and the science and research around these. The pros and cons for each system were discussed, and no one alternative could be recommended. The SRUC representative strongly recommended that, if any temporary crating systems were used, sows are not restricted in farrowing crates in the prefarrow period. The following points were noted:

- Nest building behaviours were seen more regularly when plentiful substrate and space was provided. Other flow on benefits noted were shorter farrowing periods, longer suckling – to do with udder access – piglets stimulating for longer, better maternal behaviours throughout nursing, and heavier weaning weights observed.
- Enriched neonatal environments improved piglet welfare, growth, and health – and improved piglet resilience.
- The 'triangle of needs' should be assessed with the primary focus being the occupant. Designs should satisfy the biological needs (both physiological and behavioural) of the sow and piglets, as well as the needs and safety of the staff.
- There has been an increased market uptake of farrowing crate alternatives, with several countries regulating the shift away from the use of farrowing crates. Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland have systems designed with zero confinement options in mind. Austria intend to use temporary crating options for a few days around farrowing and have regulations about minimum space per farrowing place.
- Farrowing pen details, design, and installation are very important to ensure the system is successfully implemented.