

danger of injury to the little pigs, which often find the space under the guard rail a very convenient refuge. A little cut straw or chaff makes the best bedding, as the little pigs are apt to become entangled in long straw, and find difficulty in keeping out of the way of the sow when she moves about. The sow should be handled, more or less, before she farrows, so that she may become accustomed to the presence of the attendant in the pen. A sow treated in this way, is less likely to become irritable and excited when the attendant enters the pen after farrowing. If everything goes well, she will require but little attention after farrowing, and the less she is interfered with, the better, except when it is absolutely necessary.

Many sows will take the boar a few days after farrowing. To breed a sow at such a time is a bad practice. No sow can do justice to herself and two litters of pigs at the same time. The sow usually comes in heat a few days after her pigs are weaned, and may then be bred again, if not too much pulled down by nursing. If she has raised a large litter and is very much emaciated, the chances are that she will produce a very small litter the next time, if she is bred immediately after her pigs are weaned. In such instances, she should be given three weeks or a month of liberal feeding to enable her to regain her lost strength and vitality before she is bred. Many a man has been puzzled to know why his sow, which had raised a fine, large litter, should drop down to only four or five puny pigs the next time. The reason is not far to seek. To produce a large, vigorous litter, the sow must be strong and full of vitality at the time of service.

In feeding the breeding sow during the period of gestation, the feeder should aim to keep her in good, strong condition, without having her become extremely fat. Many go to the other extreme, and keep their sows thin; and the thin sow either will not do justice to her pigs, or will become a mere wreck herself during the time she is nursing her litter—in fact, the chances are that both these things will happen. A sow may be kept in pretty high condition and still produce satisfactorily, provided she takes plenty of exercise.

When on good pasture, particularly clover pasture, sows require very little meal. As a rule, however, it is well to give them a light ration of ground oats and bran or middlings. It is well to avoid the heavier and more heating kinds of grain. If used at all, they should be used very sparingly. In winter, roots should take the place of the green food; and when the sows are fed outdoors as recommended, it is best to feed the meal dry. They will require little water outside of that supplied by the roots, during cold weather. In cold weather, a little corn, wheat, or rye may be added to the oats and bran ration when the sows are fed outside, as they can stand rather more heating food under these conditions. It is, perhaps, just as well to omit barley from the ration of a breeding sow.

When the sow goes into the warm farrowing pen, it is advisable to feed the meal in the form of a thick slop, and a moderate ration of roots should be continued. This system tends to prevent constipation, and a more or less fevered condition, which may result from changing from outdoor life to confinement. After she farrows, there should be no hurry about feeding her. If she lies quiet for ten or twelve hours, so much the better. At first, she should have little more than a drink. A very thin slop of bran and middlings, given in small quantities, will answer very well. The food may be gradually increased, and in the course of a week or ten days she will be on full feed. A good mother with a large litter requires very liberal feeding. If the litter is small, it may be necessary to reduce the quantity of food.

Many different rations are used for nursing sows. A very good ration can be made by mixing two parts of finely ground oats with one part of bran and one part of wheat middlings, and allowing the food to soak between feeds. A few roots should also be fed. Sweet skim-milk is good. Some feed