

It is usually better to allow somewhat more than six months between the first and second litter. For that reason, if it is possible to keep the sow in fair condition the first litter had better be allowed to run with her for three months or longer. In this way she will be prevented from coming into heat. Sows if allowed to come into heat once or twice without being served are very frequently quite difficult to get safe in young when it is finally decided to breed them. Sows giving only one litter a year are usually unsatisfactory breeders for the above reason, and although fall litters may not be so profitable as spring litters, the breeder anxious to have his spring litters at a certain time, or desirous of making the most money possible out of his feeding operations would most likely find it more satisfactory and profitable in the long run to have two litters in the year.

FEEDING.

Before being bred and during the early weeks of pregnancy a succulent ration, pasture in summer and roots in winter, will be found the most satisfactory and economical. Rape, clover, blue grass, brome, alfalfa, vetches or pease and oats all make excellent pasturage, and but a small amount of meal will be required in addition until the sow is ten or twelve weeks gone in young when the addition of a small amount of chopped oats or barley, bran, shorts or whole pease will be advisable. In winter, pasture may be replaced to a large extent by roots, &c., as sugar beets, mangels, turnips, kohl rabi, cabbage, carrots, ensilage, clover or alfalfa hay dry or steamed. The chief considerations are to keep the sow in good flesh by means of flesh forming rather than fat forming foods to let her have lots of exercise and to keep her digestive organs in nice condition. Keep the sow in good flesh, half starved breeding sows are certain to give inferior young, but by all means avoid getting them too fat. Over fat sows are likely to have small weakly litters.

FARROWING TIME.

For a week or ten days before farrowing or parturition which should occur about 112 days after service, the sow should receive a rather more liberal ration of milk producing food such as bran mashes, chopped oats, skim milk, shorts, a little oil meal, &c., being careful always to see that there are no signs of constipation, that the bowels are quite loose.

The attendant should always be on good terms with every sow, but this should very particularly be the case for a few weeks before, during the time of, and for a few weeks after parturition. By a little petting and a few kindnesses that appeal to her sense of what is nice the attendant can win the confidence of almost any sow, provided of course, that he has not previously won her dislike.

Parturition should take place in a pen specially prepared for the event and for the accommodation of the mother and her new family during the first few weeks of their lives. Only a small amount of cut straw or chaff should be given for bedding, thus no opportunity being offered the little ones to get lost or tangled up and so exposed to danger of death from cold, hunger or crushing by the sow. As a further protection, a board, about 8 inches wide placed flat horizontally about 8 inches from the floor along the wall to which it should be firmly attached will be found of considerable value, affording a space where the little ones can run or be shoved when the mother lies down.

Generally speaking, the less interference at parturition the better. If the weather be cold, a good plan is to have some clean dry straw in a box or barrel into which the little ones may be placed as they are born being first dried with a cloth. If parturition is slow in cold weather it is sometimes wise to put some warm bricks or flat stones in the box with the youngsters. They should be allowed to suck as soon as possible after birth.