

INFORMATION RE 4 WEEK OLD PIGLET

Traditionally piglets are weaned from their mother at 7-9 weeks old but they are able to be weaned younger as long as they are eating adequate solid food. The best food to feed would be a commercial pig food. These are a balanced diet and are available for different age groups e.g. weaners, growing pigs, adults etc. If you feed just food scraps etc. then mineral and vitamin deficiencies can occur. It is important to avoid feeding fermented food especially fats or oils e.g. cheese as this can cause Vit E and selenium deficiency. You can still feed scraps but it would be best if at least half the diet was a specific pig feed. Plenty of fresh water should be available at all times too.

As far as housing is concerned, it depends what facilities you have available. You need to provide a sheltered area that offers protection from sun, rain and wind. Soft bedding such as hay or straw is a good idea. The most important thing is good hygiene to help avoid disease. Regular cleaning of the area is important. Also feeding from a trough rather than on the ground.

Pigs can carry both internal and external parasites. Lice and fleas should be easily seen especially on white pigs, but mites are smaller and won't be seen.

Ivomec injectable for pigs will kill both internal and external parasites. The dose rate is 1ml per 33 kg so an accurate weight is needed for dosing small pigs. It is injected under the skin in the neck. A second treatment should be given around 2-3 weeks later to kill any new lice that have hatched. Pigs should be treated periodically throughout the year, especially if they have access to outside. 3-4 times a year should be adequate.

There are many diseases that pigs can be vaccinated against but most of these are only a problem in intensive pig farming situations. However, all pigs should be vaccinated against leptospirosis for public health reasons.

Lepto is a disease that pigs (and many other animals) can carry without showing signs of illness. If people become infected then it can cause severe flu like symptoms. Lepto is mainly spread by contact with urine from infected animals.

Vaccination of pigs involves an initial dose followed by a booster in 4-6 weeks time. This is repeated annually or 6-monthly if being kept in a herd situation. Piglets should be at least 6 weeks old before their first vaccination. If young piglets are done, they may require another booster before they are 6 months old.