



Some tips to successfully introduce breeding stock to
your pig farm

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Why should I introduce new breeding stock into my farm?

Farms producing weanling piglets need to maintain a well-managed breeding herd. **New replacement gilts** frequently need to be introduced to **increase the size of a herd** and maintain balance between sows of different parity numbers. Replacement gilts can be selected from weanlings born on the farm. However, farmers frequently chose to introduce new gilts from other breeding farms. This is particularly true for farmers wishing to **introduce new genetic material to improve the performance of their herds**.

What should I be aware of when introducing new animals to my herd?

- **The health status of my herd:** before introducing new animals into your herd, you must have a clear **understanding of the health status of your own animals**. Work together with your **veterinarian** to understand which **infectious diseases** you are already dealing with on your farm and which diseases your pigs are vaccinated for. You will need this information to **assure that you don't introduce any new pathogens** which could bring about disease among your herd and to ensure that new animals are able to cope with the disease load in their new setting.
- **The health status of the herd of origin of new gilts:** in a similar



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vein, it is essential to know the health status of the herd of origin of any replacement stock before introducing them into your herd. This will protect your herd as well as new entries. You should request information such as vaccination records and serological and molecular test results for important infectious diseases before purchasing any replacement animals.

How should I manage the arrival of new pigs onto my farm?

- **Isolation period:** all new entries to your farm must undergo an isolation or quarantine period before being introduced into the herd. **This has the aim of protecting your herd from any [diseases](#) brought in with the newly acquired animals.** The isolation period can range in time but should have a **duration of at least 4 weeks.** You should isolate new animals on a site sufficiently far away from your main farm, and, if possible, separate staff should care for pigs at the two sites.
- **Acclimation Period:** after the isolation period, new arrivals should undergo a period during which they become acclimatized and develop immunity to the diseases already present in your herd. **This has the objective of protecting the new animals from endemic pathogens in your herd.** This can be achieved through well managed contact between new arrivals and selected animals from your herd before they are fully introduced to the group. **Vaccination can also play an important role in protecting new arrivals.**

Conclusions

New breeding stock represent the future of a reproduction herd.



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However, the introduction of new animals onto your farm represents a health risk both for the replacement animals, and for the herd itself. Farmers must be aware of such health risks and adopt appropriate strategies to mitigate them.

References

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