

Charlee Jo Teague

*The Effect of Sow Disposition on Litter Size and Number Weaned*

The purpose of this project was to test if the disposition of a pregnant sow had an effect on the number of pigs born, the number of pigs born alive, and the number of pigs weaned. I hypothesized that sows with good dispositions would have larger litters and wean more pigs than sows with bad dispositions. To test my hypothesis I measured the disposition of 191 sows as they came into the farrowing crate and at farrowing. I developed a disposition scoring scale that ranged from one to five, with one being the calmest and most docile and five being the most nervous and agitated. The data collected included the number of pigs born, the number of pigs born alive, and the number of pigs weaned from the litter. The data collected supported my hypothesis. Sows with a disposition score of 1 at farrowing had, on the average, 10.3 pigs born alive, while sows with a disposition score of 5 at farrowing had 6.6 pigs born alive. Similarly, sows with a disposition score of 1 at farrowing weaned 9.4 pigs per litter, while sows with a disposition score of 5 weaned only 6.5 pigs. The results of this study indicate that sows with good dispositions farrow and wean a larger number of pigs than sows with bad dispositions. Because the number of pigs that a pig producer produces from each sow is so important to the profitability of his operation, he should select for sows with good dispositions.