



FACT SHEET

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

Use of artificial insemination (AI) is common in the pig industry. It gives producers access to new genetics while reducing the need to bring in boars with the inherent risk of introducing disease.

Advantages of AI

- Semen from a range of top-performing tested boars of several breeds is available from AI centres.
- The genetic influence of good boars can be spread more widely.
- AI is a safe, cheap method of introducing new genes into pig herds, especially from those herds classified as specific pathogen-free, minimal disease or high health status, compared with bringing in live pigs.
- There is less risk of introducing exotic diseases into Australia with AI than in the importation of live pigs.
- AI overcomes size differences between boars and sows.
- It may be used during temporary shortages of boars from death, lameness, infertility or failure to work.

Biosecurity

Semen can transmit viruses; however these are mainly exotic to Australia. The major disease risk with semen is leptospirosis, so producers need to check that their semen suppliers add an antibiotic (e.g. Neomycin) to the semen extender against this bacterium. Ensure that the withholding period of any antibiotics used in semen extenders is adhered to when inseminating sows. Only purchase semen from a registered supplier of semen that will supply a vendor declaration. This ensures that boar health is maintained and that semen quality is controlled.

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