

The healthy sow for farrowing and lactation

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STØTTET AF

Svineafgiftsfonden



We are

- **Inger Morthorst Møller**

- Trained farmer at the Agroskole in 2008
- Qualified veterinarian in 2017
- Employed at Ø-vet
 - Sow health
 - Piglet survival



- **Ann Freja Mørch Jensen**

- Has worked in the pig industry since 2003
- Qualified agrarian economist in 2008
- Employed at SEGES since 2020
- Besides pig production, I also got a huge passion for speed



Healthy farrowing and lactating sows

- a prerequisite for a good start in life for the piglets



- The farrowing unit is always busy (especially on main farrowing days)
- 1 million sows vs 40 million piglets
- Focus on the sow in the farrowing unit
 - Before
 - During
 - After
- Work efficiently! – Use the right tools



How do we identify those 20% sows that need treatment?

- Identify sows that need treatment
 - Many farmers measure the sows temperature – ‘easy, objective and uniform’
- Is there an easier way?
- Is skin temperature accurate enough?

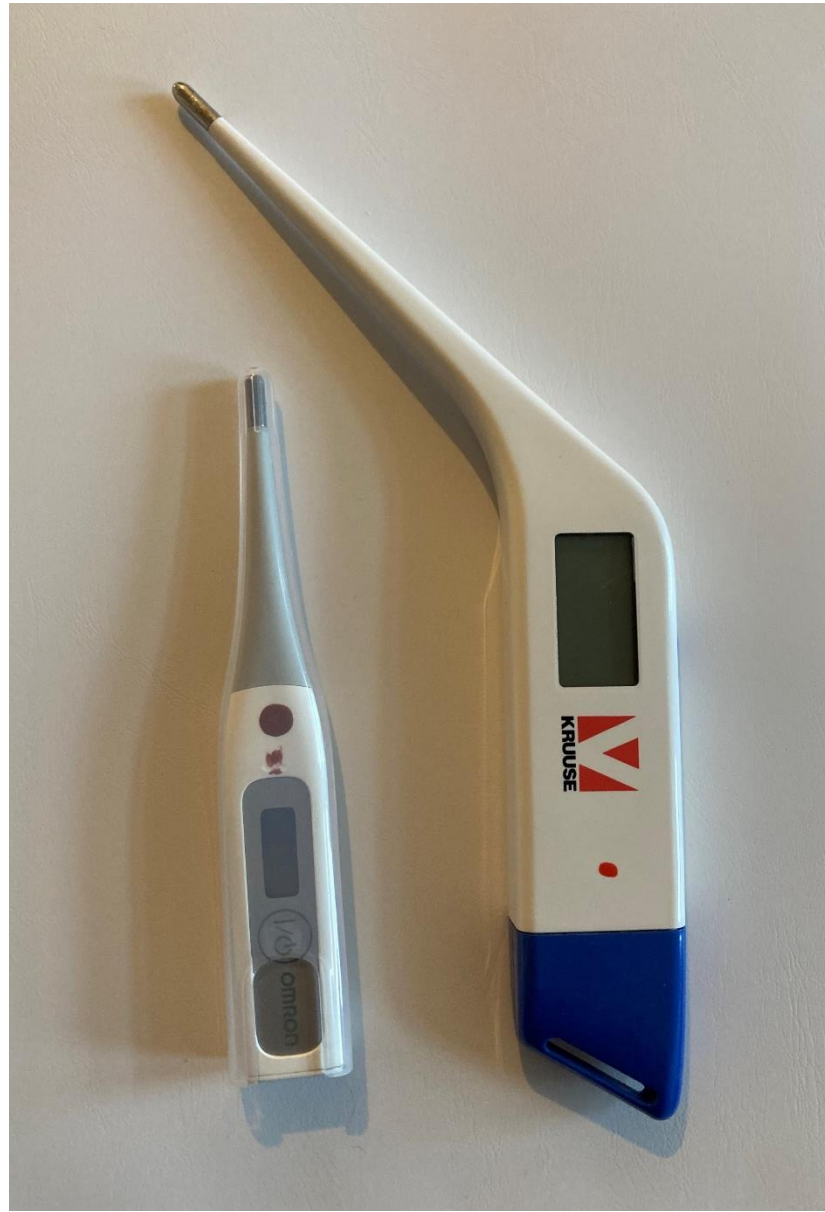
Statement from farmer with loose, lactating sows:

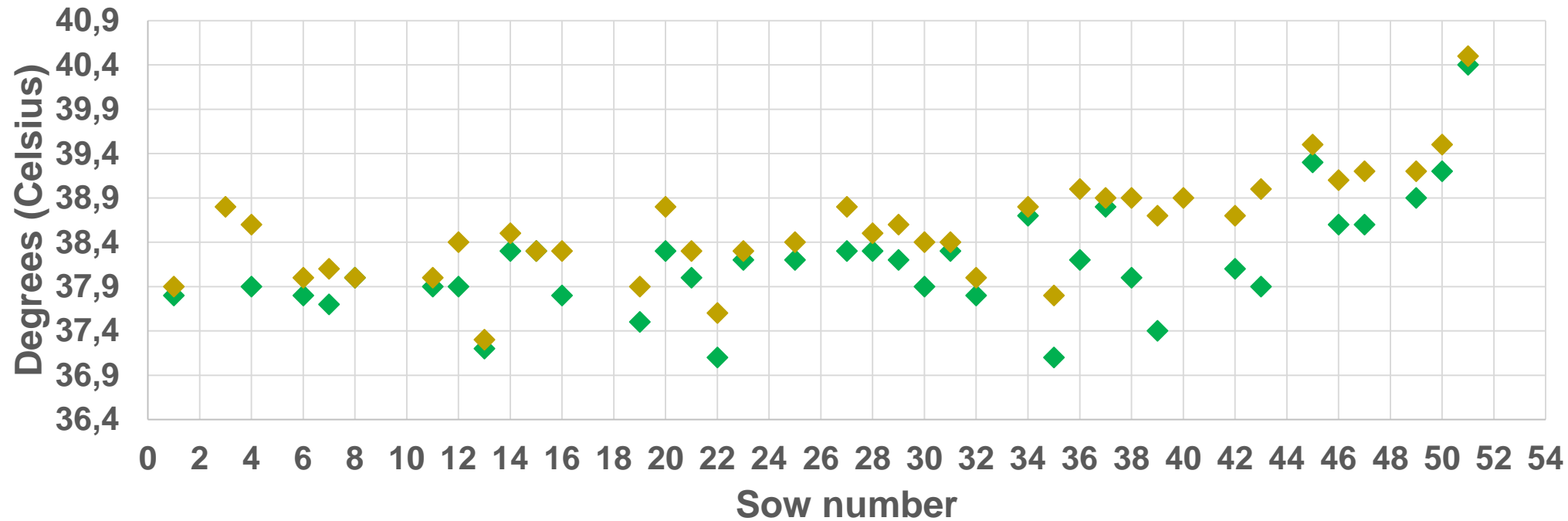
1. Temperature is measured on all sows after farrowing
 - Takes avg. 1 min./sow
2. Action
 - If 39.4 → 15 ml ‘X’ + 5 ml painkiller
 - If 39.5 → 15 ml ‘Y’ + 5 ml painkiller
 - If 40+ → 20 ml ‘Y’ + 5 ml painkiller
3. Approx. 5-10% of sows have increased temperature



What did we do?

- Regular vs deep rectal thermometer

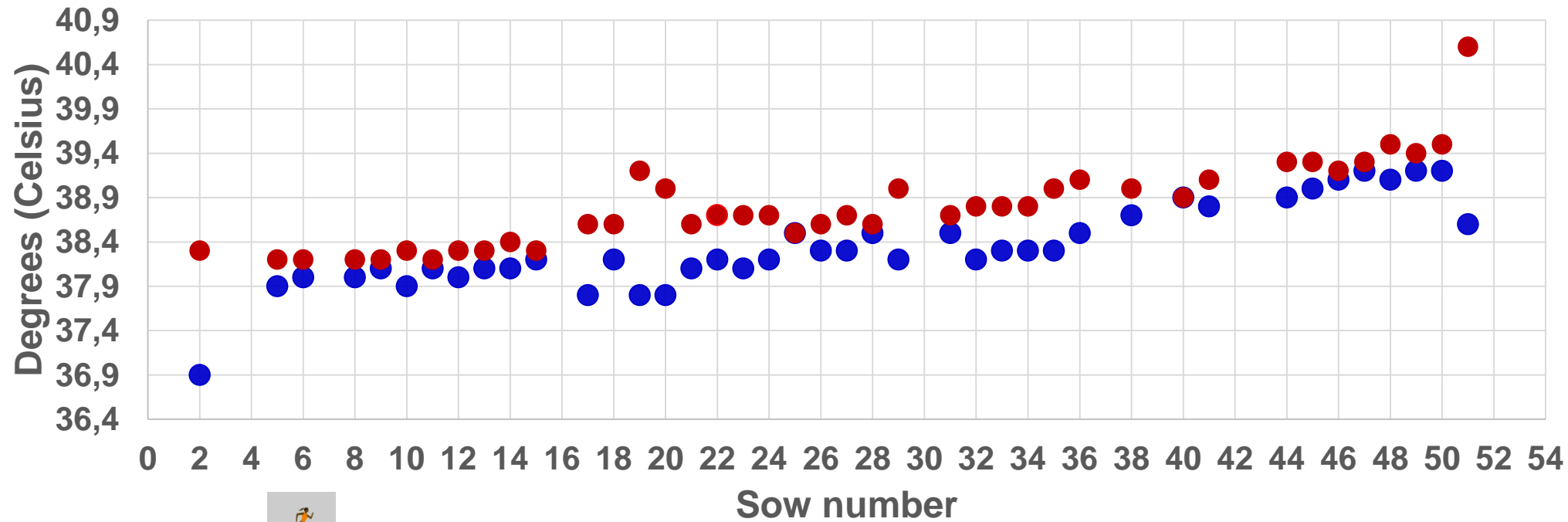




◆ Alm_RT_min
◆ Alm_RT_max



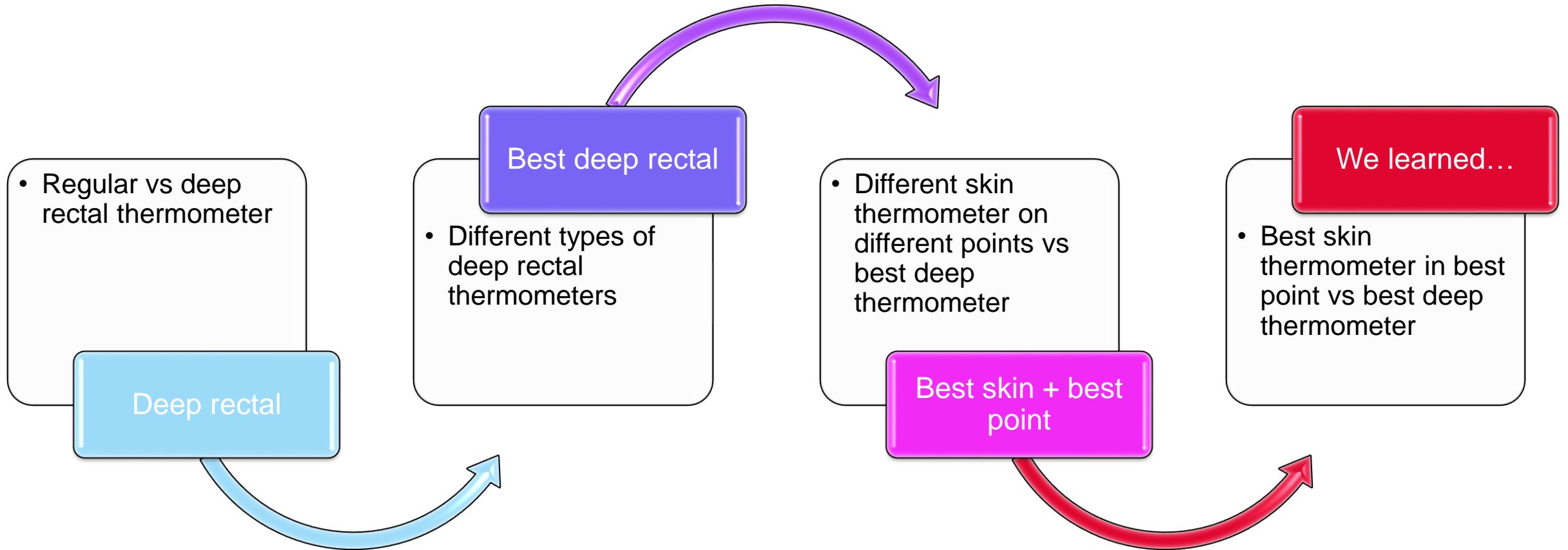
Min = Lowest temp rec
Max = Highest temp rec



● Dyb_RT_min
● Dyb_RT_max

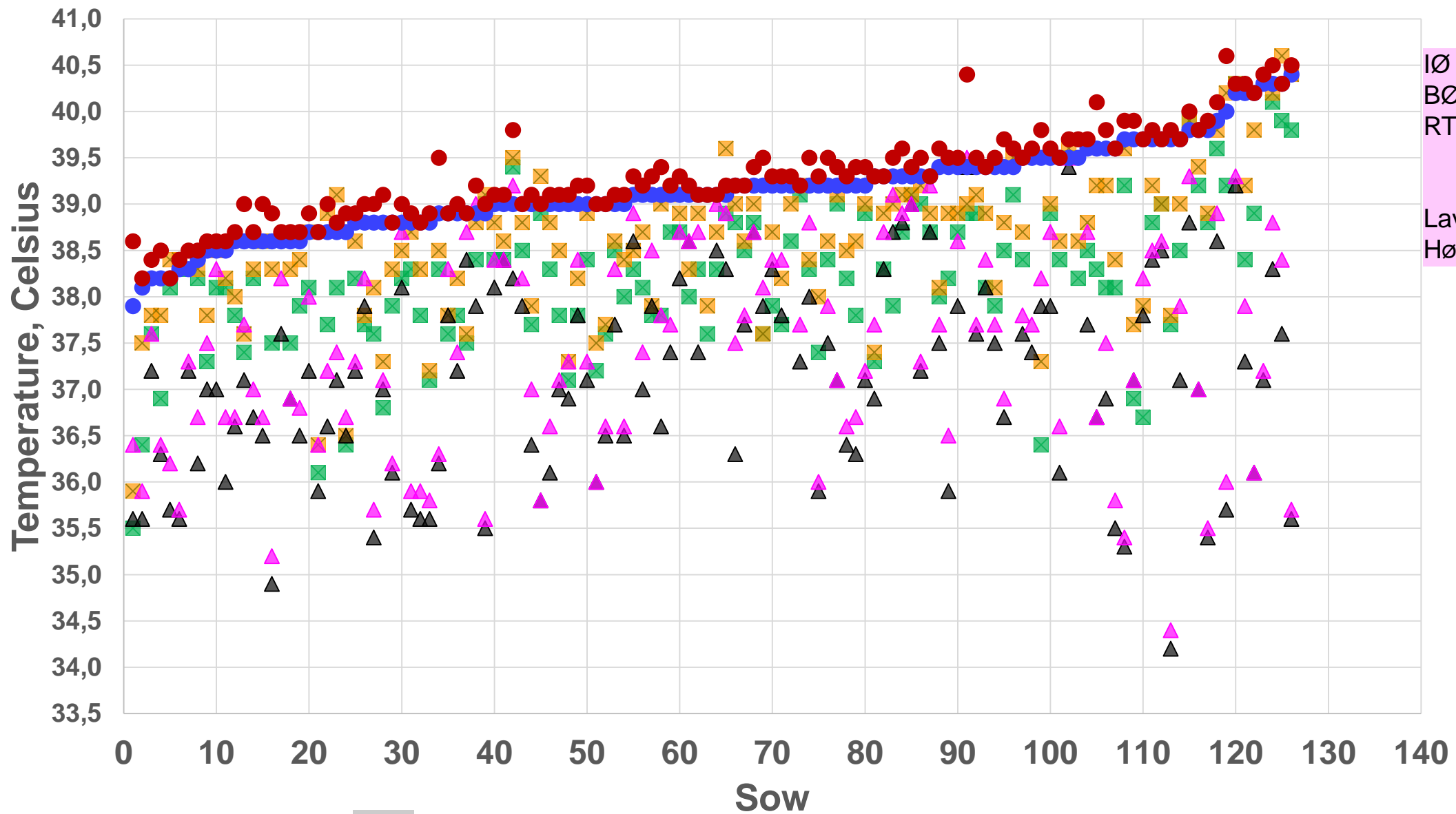


What did we do and what did we learn?



Best skin in best point vs deep rectal

■ IØ_lav ■ IØ_høj ▲ BØ_lav ▲ BØ_høj ● RT_lav ● RT_høj



IØ = In ear
BØ = Behind ear
RT = Rectal (deep)

Lav = Lowest temp rec
Høj = Highest temp rec



Use the right 'tool' for the job

- We did our very best
 - 2,424 recordings
 - Of these 669 deep rectal
- First: Regular rectal vs deep rectal
 - Deep was best!
- Then: Deep rectal vs skin
 - Deep was best!
- Though deep rectal was best – still huge difference


Even the thermometer with the **smallest** difference showed variations **greater** than the limits set in practice as criteria for antibiotic treatment.



Be careful to measure temperature correctly and preferably twice



If we cannot trust the thermometer, then what do we do?



Well, what
do you say,
vet?

- Focus on sow conditions
- Focus on sow wellbeing

Clinical examination

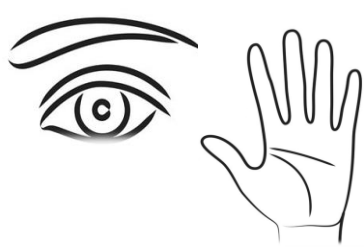
- **OBSERVE!**

- Look
- Feel
- Smell
- Listen

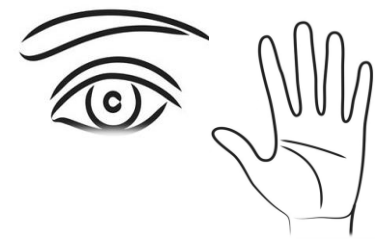


Before farrowing

- Is the farrowing pen ready?
 - Clean and dry
 - Warm
 - Clear the troughs
 - Check water valves
- Guidelines available in Guidelines for Farrowing Units (<https://svineproduktion.dk/viden/i-stalden/management/manualer/far-estald>)

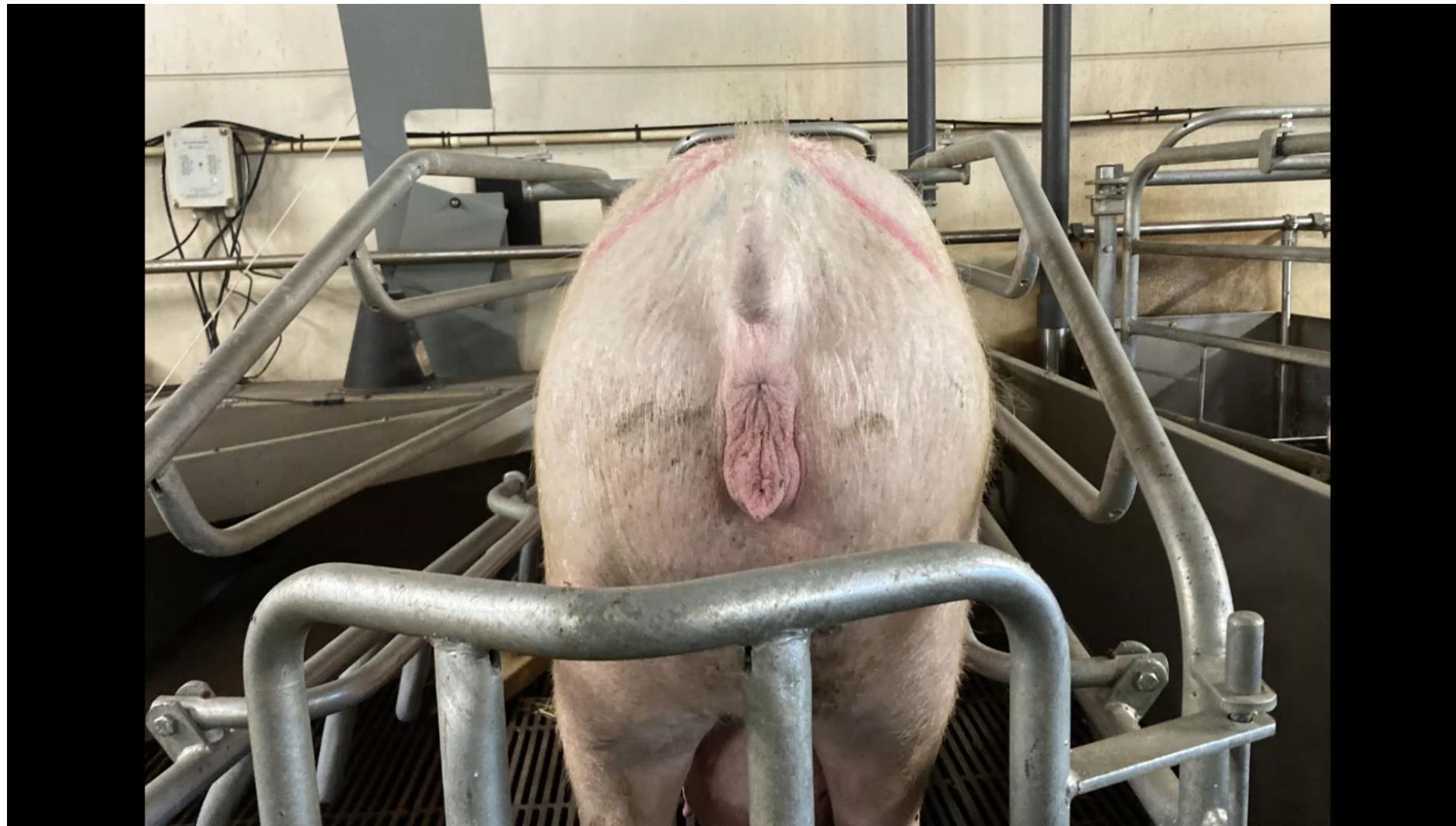


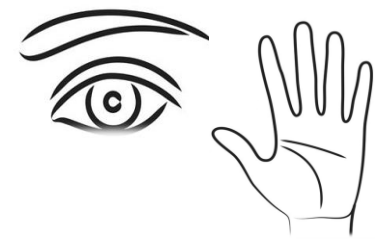
§ 70 – In the week leading up to expected farrowing, sows and gilts must have **sufficient amounts of appropriate nesting material**, unless this is technically impossible due to the slurry system used in the herd.



Assessment of body condition

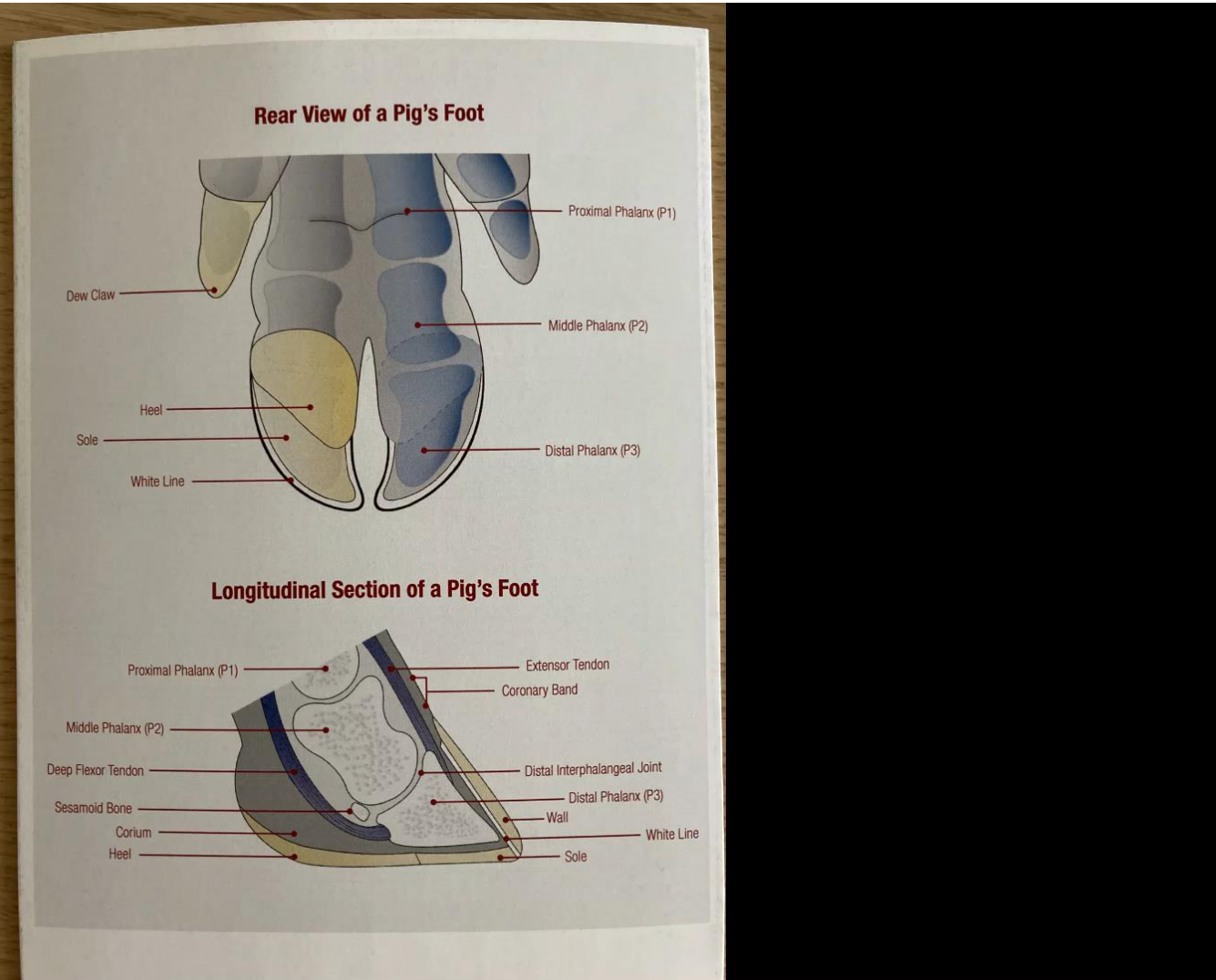
- Is the sow ready for farrowing and lactation?
 - SEGES recommends 14-17 mm backfat





Hooves and leg health

- Check all 4 legs visually, when the sow is standing and walking
- Check both hind hooves visually and physically, when the sows is lying down



Urine



Water supply

- Check water valves
 - Ø-vet recommends 6-8 L/min.
 - High-prolific sows need 30-50 l water a day!

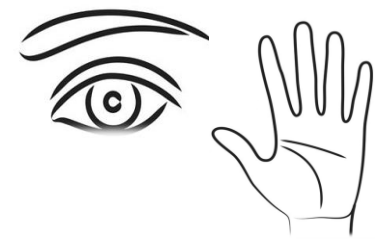


Feed

- Feed hygiene
- Feed curve
- Feed composition



Faeces



During farrowing – QUIET, PLEASE!

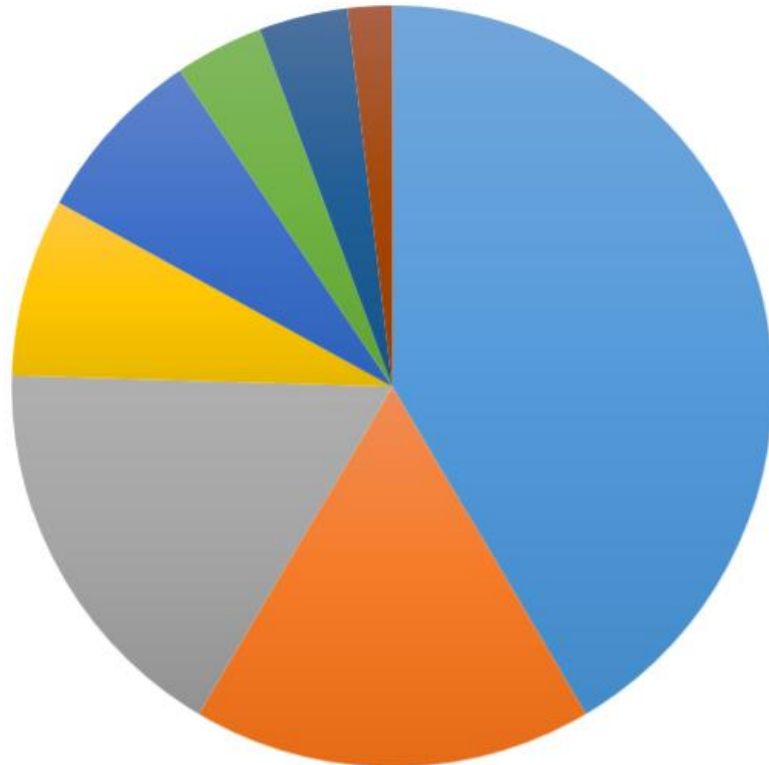


Obstetric aid



**Rule of thumb:
Start obstetric aid if all pigs
in the pen are dry**

- Farrowing log, if several people work in the unit
 - Download the electronic F-skive (available for both iOS and android – Search "F-skiven")



- Leverdrejning (n=22)
- Faringskompliakationer (n=9)
- Infektion (n=9)
- Tarmdrejning (n=4)
- Overbelastning af kredsløb (n=4)
- Bristning af blodkar (n=2)
- Blødende mavesår (n=2)
- Milt drejning (n=1)



After farrowing Clinical examination



- Respond to clear signs
 - Discomfort
 - Discharge
 - Hard/red udder
 - Lies sternally
 - Piglets move around the sow despite no milk letdown
 - Feed in trough
 - Etc.



NOTE: Antibiotics are not the only option



Take your time to help the sow



The vet recommends

WAIT WITH ANTIBIOTICS IF:

1. Reduced appetite
 - I. Painkiller
2. Gilt with hard udder
 - I. Painkiller
 - II. Udder massage
 - III. QUIET

ALWAYS ANTIBIOTICS WHEN:

1. Retained foetuses/malodorous discharge
 - I. Antibiotics (Norodine/Borgal)
 - II. Painkiller
 - III. Water + feed
 - IV. Weaning?!
2. One hot, swollen and red gland



Take home message

- Take care of the sow, then the sow will take care of the piglets
- Work efficiently! – Use the right tools
 - Use several tools
 - Focus before, during and after farrowing
 - Temperature should not stand alone
 - Treatment is not necessarily medical treatment
- <https://faestaldsguide.dk>



A photograph of a pig in a farrowing crate, surrounded by its piglets. The crate is made of metal bars and has a slatted floor. The pig is lying down, and the piglets are clustered around it. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid.

Thanks for your attention.

Questions?

