# Free Farrowing Pen: Key Features for Success

Compassion strongly encourages producers and food companies to invest in future-proofed free farrowing systems and to consider breeding, management and pen design features highlighted below for a successful transition, improving the lives of sows and their piglets.

### 4 Worker safety:

- Safe access to sow and piglets
- Creep access from passageway
- Easy observation of sow and piglets
- Possibility to fix the sow

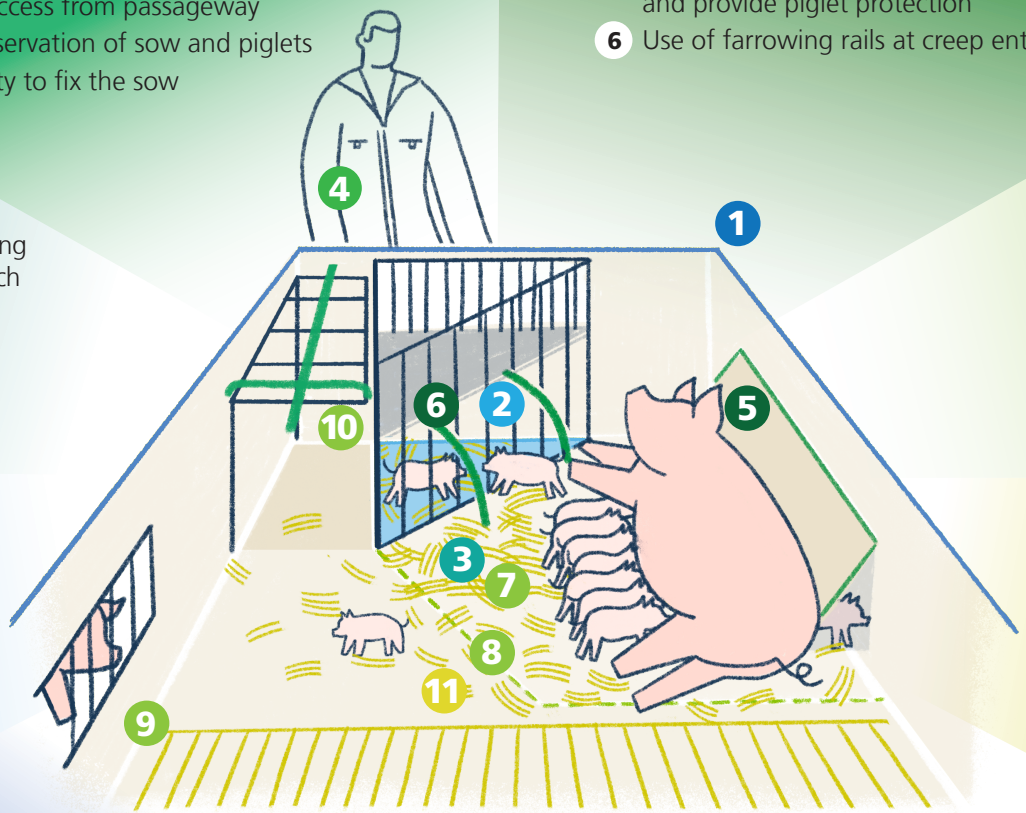
### Anti-crushing features at nest site:

5 Sloped walls to aid sow postural changes and provide piglet protection

6 Use of farrowing rails at creep entrance

### 3 Nesting and bedding material:

- Sufficient nesting substrate prior to farrowing (≥ 2 kg/sow/day, long structure material such as long cut straw)
- Bedding (straw or equivalent) provided at all times post farrowing




### Separate functional areas:

7 **Nesting area:** solid floor, 3 solid walls, easy access to teats

8 Option to enclose nest site using movable partitions

9 **Dunging area:** slatted floors & barred walls for sow-neighbour interactions

10 **Feeding area:** ideally a feeding stall with possibility to fix the sow

### 2 Attractive and safe creep area:

- Size ≥ 1-1.2m²
- Suitable microclimate (e.g. heat lamps, heated floor, cover)
- Bedding
- Inaccessible to the sow
- Easily accessible by staff

### 11 Comfortable flooring:

- 50% solid floor
- Non-slip & non-abrasive
- Allowing for hygiene maintenance (e.g. slatted dunging area, sloped flooring, perforated floors)
- Adequate waste management

### 1 Space allowance:

- Total pen size ≥ 7.8m²
- Sow space allowance ≥ 6.6m²
- Creep space allowance ≥ 1-1.2m²

### Additional considerations:

- Breeding goals with free farrowing in mind
  - Selection for good maternal behaviour
  - Reduced litter size
- Sow training and habituation to the system
- Staff training

References: pen design based on PigSAFE; Baxter et al., 2011; Baxter & Edwards, 2021; EFSA, 2022

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