**Caring For an Orphaned Piglet**

**NOTE: Piglets should remain with mom, and all attempts should be made to ensure that happens. But in the event that it is not possible due to an unsafe environment for the piglet, it may be necessary to intervene.**

Very young piglets cannot maintain their own body heat so they require a heat source. They need to be kept at 85-90 degrees, and away from drafts and vents. A heat lamp is usually used to provide the necessary heat. A heating pad can also be used.

Colostrum is essential for the piglet. It is the first milk that the piglet will get from the mom in the first 24 hours of life. It is vital to provide the piglet with protection from bacteria and viruses. If the mother is not able or available to provide this, colostrum replacer is available. Also goats colostrum is a good replacement. This should be fed to the piglet for the first 24 hours of life.

Feeding will need to be every hour or 2 for the first couple of days at least. Possibly longer. This is very time consuming, and exhausting for the caretaker, rest when your piglet is.

Bottle feeding is NEVER recommended. Rather we recommend syringe or pan feeding is. These methods decrease the risk of aspiration then pneumonia, which can be fatal.

If syringe feeding, take it slow and gentle. Do not force things, a drop at a time if necessary. Keeping track of how much is taken in and how often will help you know how the piglet is doing.

If pan feeding, which is the preferred method of feeding a very young piglet, it takes some time for them to get the idea, be patient and keep trying. It is so much safer for them to eat this way. To start, you put your finger in the milk then to the piglets mouth. Do this over and over, each time getting the piglet closer and closer to the milk in the pan, which should be a shallow dish.

After 1-2 days of the colostrum or colostrum replacer you can move to goats milk. Fresh is best, but you can easily buy it canned or powered at most grocery stores. There is a milk replacer available at most farm and feed stores like Tractor Supply, it is for all species, not specifically for a pig. You will slowly be able to move to feeding every 2-3 hours.

Baby cereal should be added to the milk slowly to thicken it a bit. It will add extra nutrients and calories. Around 4 weeks of pan feeding you can thicken the milk to an oatmeal or pudding consistency, then start adding pellets to the mix. Eventually decreasing the milk and cereal until your piglet is eating only pellets by week 6-8.