

# Caesareans on sows help hog production

BY ROBIN STANOSHECK

Inside a large, clear plastic bubble, black-gloved hands work skillfully. A cylinder of white light illuminates the side of a large, pink sow. A pig is giving birth by caesarean section.

Dr. Richard Porter, the surgeon, is working in a sterile environment, prepared by Chuck New, coordinator for the Specific Pathogen Free Lab.

The SPF Laboratory, housed in the Veterinary Animal Research Building on East Campus, works to isolate and treat hog diseases. Through their findings they are improving hog production statewide.

As part of their program SPF employees do caesarean sections in sterile environments for area hog producers. This process keeps the piglets away from the mother and her diseases. The hog producers use these pathogen-free animals for breeding purposes. Although the initial cost is high so are the potential profits.

New prepared the 12-foot plastic bubble by ironing shut the ends of a long, plastic cylinder. Inside the bubble he placed surgical instruments and germ-free boxes to house piglets. He attached four sets of rubber gloves to the bubble with the use of metal rings and heavy tape. The bubble was then filled with formaldehyde gas to kill any germs.

Before surgery the bubble is glued to the sow's side with surgical adhesive. When the veterinarian makes his incision the piglets are delivered into a sterile world.

Piglets delivered in this manner are free of diseases common to pigs: pseudorabies, swine dysentery, mycoplasma pneumonia, atrophic rhinitis, mange and lice.

Earlier the sow was tied to the operating table. It is now given a local anesthetic. The veterinarian makes an incision in the sow's side. The uterus is pulled out complete with piglets. Porter makes a short incision in the uterus and pulls out the piglets one at a time, shaking each and cutting their umbilical cords. The sow has two uteruses. Only one incision in each is needed to pull pigs through.

As he pulls each piglet out he hands them through the bubble to Chris Oltman, a certified veterinary technician. Porter repeated this procedure 11 times. The black-gloved hands of assistants, Chuck New and Lori Grammer took the pigs from Oltman, cleaned them and clamped their umbilical cords. While still in the bubble the cords were trimmed, tied and dipped in iodine.

"Ears are notched for identification and teats counted," Grammer said. The piglets were then put into sterile boxes for transfer back to the farm.

After the piglets were delivered, the plastic sack attached to the sow was tied off from the rest of the bubble. Porter then began sewing up the uterus and the animal's side.

The operation took one-and-a-half hours. "The farmer needed only three boars,"

New said, "the rest will be used for research."

Those that the farmer takes home will be kept in a germ-free environment for about a month. "Most pigs weigh 10 to 20 pounds by the time they go home," New said.

Francis Kreifel from Dunbar, Neb., hired the SPF lab to perform the caesarean operation so he could start a germ-free herd. The animals will be kept in a clean environment and he will not have to repopulate for five to ten years.

By keeping these special pigs out of contact with those who have chronic diseases, he will be able to reduce disease in his herd.

Although the initial investment in SPF animals is high, Kreifel will be able to sell his pigs as breeding stock for about \$100 more a head than conventional animals.

"It costs the farmer \$200 for the caesarean and \$110 for all animals he takes home," New said.

Dr. Porter said caesareans are also done on cows, sheep and goats at the SPF lab.



Photo by A.J. Kunce

Lori Grammer, Chuck New and Chris Oltman assist Dr. Richard Porter in C-section surgery on a sow.

## Death penalty same after court ruling

BY LARRY SPARKS

A recent Supreme Court ruling allowing federal appeals courts to expedite execution procedures for death-row inmates will not have an immediate impact in Nebraska, according to a state official.

In a 6-3 decision July 6, the justices said federal courts do not have to postpone executions of inmates pushing appeals.

Those on death row must make a substantial showing that they have been deprived of some federally ensured right before being granted a postponement, the high court said.

Nebraska Assistant Attorney General Kirk Brown said death-penalty appeals go through three major stages. Although he has not read the court's ruling, he said it apparently will apply only when cases are being appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Brown, who handles all of the state's death-penalty cases, said four or five of them are in the federal courts now, but none has reached the Circuit Court of Appeals. The first one to reach that stage, he said, may be Harold Otey, convicted in 1977 of murder and sexual assault in Omaha. U.S. District Court might rule on the case by the end of the year, Brown said.

"If district court denies him a writ of habeas corpus, I would assume that he would take it to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals," Brown said.

While the ruling will not immediately affect Nebraska, it could have a big impact in several states where the death rows are much larger, Brown said.

"While we have 12 on death row," he said,

"some states literally have hundreds condemned to die."

States in the 5th and 11th U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals have especially large death rows, he said, and some of the inmates there are beginning to run out of appeals.

Brown said the three steps of death-penalty cases are a direct appeal, an appeal through the state court system and one through the federal court system.

Once an inmate is convicted of murder and is given the death sentence, he has an automatic appeal to the state supreme court. If he loses there, he may apply to the U.S. Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari.

The high court usually won't hear a case at this stage, Brown said, so it returns to the state district court for post-conviction action.

In this appeal, he said, the defense presents new constitutional matters. If the state district court does not grant a writ of habeas corpus, the defendant again has the right to apply for certiorari from the U.S. Supreme Court.

If the justices still refuse to hear the case, the appeal enters its final stage, Brown said. The defendant applies for a writ of habeas corpus from U.S. District Court. If he fails, he may appeal to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and finally, to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Nebraska will not be affected by another part of the Supreme Court's ruling which allows states to use psychiatrists to testify about a convicted murderer's future dangerousness before sentencing, Brown said.

He said Nebraska is consistent with most states in that it does not use predictions in

its sentencings. Many people consider the process unreliable, he said.

"It's not always predictable what a person will do in the future," Brown said. "But we know what a person's past history has been."

Five states — Idaho, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia and Washington — currently use psychiatric predictions. The court's decision allows the states to continue the practice.

## Imperial man killed in accident on farm

IMPERIAL (AP) — An Imperial man, Albert Bremer, was killed Tuesday in an accident on his farm just west of here, Chase County Attorney Guy Curtis said Wednesday.

Curtis said that the accident involved a combine.

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