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4 must-have products for show pig producers

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Dr. Genova practices at her clinic, [Red Dirt Veterinary Services](#), in Stillwater, Oklahoma. She has established a reputation for herself in the show industry as a valuable and knowledgeable resource for producers to lean on and learn from.

Farrowing season is fast-approaching, and now is the time to start gathering your supplies and products to make it smooth and successful. The four products I will talk about here are ones that we use ourselves on our show pig operation and are also ones that I recommend that my clients have on-hand before every farrowing season. It doesn't matter if you are farrowing out one or 1,000 sows; these products play an essential role in the process.

1. **Transrite Sow Ultra:** This product is simple to use and makes a world of difference. Simply top-dress the gilts' and sows' feed once a day with Transrite, starting three days before they are due. Transrite is formulated to provide the proper cation-anion balance for these girls. We hear about dietary cation-anion difference (DCAD) more commonly with dairy cows and milk fever, but guess what the primary cause of uterine inertia is in pigs? You got it: hypocalcemia, just like in cows. Proper cation-anion balance decreases farrowing time, so they will continue to push and won't tire out towards the end of the farrowing. The babies that are born to females on Transrite are born lively and ready to nurse — even those born last. I've heard people recommend feeding sows Tums® instead of this, but it's not the same at all. One bag of Transrite is enough for 20 sows, and it's inexpensive. In my experience, when assisting deliveries, if gilts are on Transrite and one gets hung up, I am usually there for a much shorter amount of time than if they weren't, because they continue to push piglets back to the birth canal. Plus, I absolutely hate — let me repeat that — I hate to give injectable calcium in the crate; sows also hate it and fight it. Those that have to receive calcium in the crate are usually the ones that weren't started on Transrite.

2. **Seco-Sorb:** Save the trees with Seco-Sorb by using fewer paper towels to dry off pigs. This stuff gets them dry quick, fast and in a hurry. No matter how many paper towels you use to dry pigs off, they will still be damp. It doesn't matter what season it is — piglets not dried thoroughly enough will become chilled and seek heat rather than nurse after they are born. This becomes especially important in the winter months, when we are struggling to keep the farrowing house above 50–60 degrees. Piglets dried with Seco-Sorb nurse sooner than those that are not, because they aren't hanging out under the heat lamp trying to get warm. This, in turn, leads to more colostrum ingested and healthier piglets in the long run. Seco-Sorb helps to dry navels faster, so they aren't wicking bacteria from the environment into their system, which decreases the incidence of navel infections and umbilical hernias or belly bumps. I also use Seco-Sorb on mats in the crate for the first few days to keep them dry and to keep the piglets comfortable.

3. **Show-Rite Pig Milk Replacer:** Yes, there are other milk replacers out there, but here's the main reason we like this one: it's acidified. That means that it doesn't spoil and remains usable for up to 24 hours. Acidified milk means less bacterial contamination if the pigs don't drink it all and it sits out. It's also easy to mix and stays..



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in solution when it gets cool. Ultimately, we almost always have a bucket of this product around because it's also the fat supplement that we use on our show-pigs, but don't tell anyone I said that because it's top-secret. Don't get stuck trying to find milk replacer in the middle of the night; keep a bucket of this on-hand.

4. **Kickoff:** Begin using this pre-starter on the mats at seven days of age in order to bypass that ugly weaning stage. Babies go to this in less than a minute and start eating. Just be warned: they like this stuff so much, they will be standing on the edge of the crate waiting for you to toss it onto the mat. This product works well as a supplemental feed for those litters where the sow is not milking enough for the entire litter, and it can be mixed with water and fed as a gruel, if desired. Kickoff allows babies to transition to [Show-Rite baby pig starter](#) faster and easier when weaning time comes around. I also occasionally use Kickoff top-dressed with Show-Rite Milk Replacer for those sows that go off feed in the crate.

To find these great products and others, visit your [local Show-Rite dealer](#). Place your orders — and place them early — to have this on-hand before you start farrowing. Have questions? [Contact any seasoned Show-Rite representative](#).



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