Pork Checkoff Report
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ELIMINATING PRRS THROUGH HERD CLOSURE

Depopulation and repopulation with negative pigs is the best way to eliminate PRRS virus from an all-in-all-out grow/finish unit, but the most common method for eliminating PRRS virus from a farrowing unit is through "herd closure and rollover." In some chronically infected herds, herd closure alone may be enough to eventually eliminate the virus, but most herds require a systematic protocol.

Think of "Load, Close, and Expose" to understand the process of eliminating PRRS virus through herd closure and rollover:
Step 1. **Load** the unit with as many replacement gilts as possible because there can be no new entries until virus is no longer being shed within the herd.
Step 2. **Close** the herd to new arrivals—usually for 210 days or more.
Step 3. **Expose** all animals to PRRS virus through modified live vaccination (MLV) or live virus inoculation (LVI). The goal is to homogenize the herd's immunity so that all pigs on the farm have immunity to the resident strain of virus.
Step 4. **Test** weaned pigs to determine when the sows are no longer passing virus to their piglets. Most veterinarians recommend PCR testing 30 piglets at four week intervals. After four consecutive negative tests, there is a high level of confidence that virus is no longer being shed within the breeding herd. Dr. Daniel Linhares, in a University of Minnesota study, has found that this "total time to negative" takes approximately 27 weeks, but can range from 12 to 43 weeks.
Step 5. **Rollover** the breeding herd to a negative status by introducing naïve replacement gilts. These gilts will act as sentinel pigs because they will be serologically negative on arrival and can be tested a month later to see if they have become positive. Repeated negative tests will confirm that PRRS virus has been eliminated from the herd.

Your veterinarian can guide you through the process of herd closure and rollover as you take your herd to negative PRRS status.