Tons of Pigs

Each year we pasture raise around 150 pigs for our customers.
That is a lot of pigs to process, so we stretch the harvest season from late July until December.
That means we need pigs of different ages.
Normally we buy most of the piglets from other farmers.
In the future, Juan and Janelle, with help from Samantha and Gail, want to farrow all the pigs here.
So, this year we have a blended solution.
Some are born here and some we purchased from an organic farm.
Gail is attending the last of our sows as she births little pigs today.
The bigger-older pigs are each in separate pastures.
There is a group of 35 pigs that average 150 pounds.
A second herd averages 100 pounds and a third group at 50 pounds.

The pigs born here during the last couple of weeks will be raised in a fourth pasture.
Separating into small, isolated groups has several advantages.

1. Isolation protects them from contagious diseases.
2. Grouping according to size minimizes bullying or pecking order problems.
3. Limiting group size to around 30 to 35, produces a calmer, more compatible, easier to manage herd. Just like for humans, if pigs can know every individual personally, there are no “outsiders”.

I have included photos of all four groups in this posting.
The first photo is of today’s piglets nursing. One more was born later.
The second photo is of them doing what newborns do after a warm meal, dozing.

Gail spent most of today with the newborns seeing that they all got off to a good start.
The third photo is of a recently born litter.
The fourth and fifth photos are of two different litters.
The sixth photo is of Juan setting up a new watering station.
He built a new watering station for all four paddocks.
The seventh, eighth, and ninth photos are of the 50, 100, and 150 pound groups.
Four recent litters are half siblings as they have the same father.
A very good-natured purebred Hereford hog.
Juan, Janelle, and Samantha took turns seeing to their safe birth of those litters.
The Hereford pig is an American breed that was developed in Iowa a hundred years ago.
It is named for its color and pattern, which is like that of the Hereford breed of cattle: red with a white face.
Herefords hogs are known for their quiet and docile disposition, and for their ability to prosper outdoors.

Best regards,
Tom