Batch farrowing place
Cost of changing the weaning age

On many farms (outside the EU), 3 week weaning is practiced because it "reduces" the cost of production by increasing the number of pigs produced per sow. But does it?
Using the batch farrowing place concept, analysis of the cost of production from each batch can be achieved.
Varying the parameters, the cost of nursery space and especially the cost of creep feed, can make weaning at 3 weeks of age a very expensive option.

What is the cost downside and advantage between 3 and 4 week weaning?
Cost - Difference between weaning ages
The yellow boxes can be customised to suit your own farm

Batch time	1	week	
Farrowing places per batch	20		
Pigs weaned per farrowing place	10	10	
Farrowing rate %	85	85	
Weaning age week	3	4	
Weaning weight	6	7.5	kg
Number bred per batch	24	24	
Approximate sow/gilt herd size	424	434	
Cost of sow feed	200	per tonne	£
Cost of sow feed per year	93280	95480	£
Post weaning finishing rate	95	95	%
Food conversion rate	2.6	2.6	
Finishing feed costs	174	per tonne	£
Live weight	100	kg	
Total finishing feed	420153	413448	£
Other fixed costs	276464	assuming feed is	65 % of total costs
Killing out %	76	%	
Dead weight	76	kg	
Total dead weight per year	750880	750880	kg
Total feed feed and general fixed costs	789897	785392	£
Difference		4505	£ in favour of the older weaner
Costs	1.05	1.05	£ kg dead weight
kg Income	1.55	£	dead weight
kg Profit sold	373967	373967	£ Difference 0 £

Building difference

Cost per farrowing place		2500	£ per farrowing place
Cost per nursery place	75		£ per nursery place
Extra costs per year	1500	5000	£ over 10 years
Difference in costs		1005	£ annually in favour of the older weaner

Note the default model, does not assume any improvement in performance in terms of farrowing rate, litter size, finishing rate or growth rate, which are commonly found when 4 week weaning is compared to 3 week weaning.
But note your pigs/sow/year will be lower with 4 week weaning - but your profits can be higher!