

MFA Hog Feeding and Management Suggestions

Management of the Breeding Herd

Management of the Boar

The boar is the most important part in genetically improving the sow herd since most swine producers often select their herd replacements from their own gilt. The following are some important factors in correctly managing the boar:

1. Purchase boars from reputable breeders. Herd health is of primary consideration. Performance data is also important.
2. Isolate, acclimate and test the boars before they enter the herd.
3. A good guideline to follow is one adult boar to each 10 sows, or one young boar for each seven. Always have plenty of boar power to get the sows settled.
4. Feed boars a MFA sow diet at about 6 lbs. per day or to condition.

Selection and Management of Gilts

The primary concern in a gilt-growing program should be to select females with a large frame, good underlines, soundness of feet and legs and from sows with a good reproductive history. Here are a few points to consider with herd replacement:

1. Select gilts from the finishing floor at about 5.5 months or 180 to 200 lbs.
2. Change the gilt-finishing ration to a gilt-developer ration fortified with additional vitamins and minerals. It's important to feed gilts a ration with adequate calcium/phosphorus supplementation. Finishing rations would deprive the gilt of needed vitamins and mineral when fed at restricted levels.
3. Gilts should cycle at least 2-3 times before breeding. Do this by running the boar next to developing gilts, by stress, or by moving them from one location to another. High-lean gilts should have 0.9 to 1.0 inches back fat before breeding.
4. Gilts should be 7-8 months of age and weigh 250 lbs. before breeding.
5. Follow a suggested vaccination schedule.

Feeding and Management of Sows and Gilts

Strong, healthy sows in the right condition will produce larger litter of fast-growing pigs. Here are some helpful hints in successful care of the sow herd.

Important nutrient requirements for a high-lean breeding female are:

Gestation

Body wt. at breeding	275 lbs.	385 lbs.
Nutrient:		
Lysine g/d	11.4	10.3
Threonine g/d	8.6	8.3
Meth & Cystine g/d	7.3	6.9
Tryptophan g/d	2.2	2.0
Calcium g/d	14.7	14.1
Phosphorus g/d	11.8	11.3
ME, Kcal/d	6,395	6,150

Lactation

Daily wt. gain of pigs	.44 lb.	.55 lb.
Nutrient:		
Lysine g/d	48.6	61.9
Threonine g/d	31.1	39.1
Meth & Cystine g/d	23.4	29.4
Tryptophan g/d	8.6	11.0
Calcium g/d	40.1	48.0
Phosphorus g/d	32.1	38.4
ME, Kcal/d	17,475	20,895

*Assumes 10 pigs per litter and 21-day lactation. For additional recommendations, contact the MFA Swine Specialist.

1. Flush sows (if sows are in poor condition due to extended lactation) and gilts about two weeks before breeding so they are in a gaining condition. Feed at least 6-8 lbs. per head daily of MFA Sow Ration.
2. Follow all suggested vaccinations.

After Breeding

1. Observe sows' general health and condition during daily feedings. Individual feeding stalls are helpful to insure each sow gets proper feed. A guideline of 5 lbs. of feed per day for gilts and 4 lbs. for sows is suggested. Weather conditions, housing facilities and sow conditions may dictate a need to increase or decrease feeding levels.
2. Avoid overfeeding females. Over conditioning is detrimental to farrowing, lactation and rebreeding.
3. Deworm sows before farrowing if needed.
4. Increase level of feeding in the last 30 days to improve livability of pigs at farrowing.
5. Follow a suggested vaccination schedule.

Farrowing Management

Farrowing time is critical in getting pigs off to a fast, healthy start. There is no substitute for close attention during this time. Management actually begins about one week before the sow farrows. Good records with accurate breeding dates are essential in management during farrowing time.

The following are some feeding and management tips to follow:

1. Clean and disinfect farrowing quarters prior to farrowing. Allow time for thorough drying.
2. One week before farrowing, deworm the sow again to prevent parasites from stealing the nutrients needed for pig development and lactation.
3. Move sows into the farrowing area at least five days prior to farrowing. Wash the sow and her udder to remove all mud and manure. Apply external parasite control if needed.
4. Avoid constipation at farrowing. Add bulk to the sow ration only if needed and do so at least 3 days before and after farrowing.
5. Be there when sows farrow. Provide supplemental heat since the baby pig cannot regulate its own body temperature for a few days. It is important for baby pigs to receive colostrum in the first few hours after birth.
6. Feed the sow only 1 to 2 lbs. on the day she farrows. Increase feed gradually to full feed by the seventh day.

Feeding and Managing the Baby Pig

The pig is very vulnerable to disease during the first four weeks of life. They must get all of their immunity from disease through their mother's milk. The following are some tips to follow in getting pigs through their first few weeks alive and healthy.

First Day

1. Provide supplemental heat. The baby pig cannot regulate its own temperature; therefore, keep the pig dry, warm and draft-free.
2. Clip and disinfect the umbilical cord with iodine.
3. Clip all 8 needle teeth and ear notch. Clip tails and disinfect with iodine.
4. Provide a separate waterer for the baby pigs.
5. Inject 1 cc of iron (200 mg).
6. Equalize litter size if desired by moving extra pigs within 48 hours of farrowing.
7. Boar pigs may be castrated at 1-3 day. There is less stress on the pig when castrated at an early age.

One Week

1. Place baby pig creep feeder in crates. Put a small amount of feed in the creep feeder 2-3 times each day to keep the feed fresh. Clean out the feeder daily.
2. Depending upon which iron source was used and upon pig growth rate, additional iron supplementation may be needed at 7-14 days.

Weaning (3-6 weeks of age)

1. Remove the sow from the crate. There is less stress on the pigs by leaving them in the environment to which they are accustomed.
2. Do not change any feeding or management practices for one week before or one week after weaning.
3. It is advisable to vaccinate pigs for erysipelas. Deworming may be necessary.

Growing and Finishing Management

Since the greatest expense for feed is realized during the growing and finishing period, this is also where the producer has the most opportunity to influence costs of production. Cutting costs by using inferior quality feeds will only result in pigs taking longer to reach market weights on more total feed with detrimental carcass effects.

Through research and on-farm experience, MFA has developed nutritionally sound feeding programs for growing and finishing hogs. Here are management tips to follow:

1. Finishing hogs should be checked often for signs of disease.
2. Make sure feeders and waters are adjusted so there's no waste but pigs can still get adequate amount of both.
3. Select growing/finishing diets based upon what is optimum for your genetics.