

Lancaster Farming

THIRD SECTION

County Man Feeds Less

Are Sows Being Overfed?

How much should sows be fed and what should be fed? said recently at the Farm and Home Center.

"We don't know enough about sow feeding," Dwight Younkin, Penn State livestock specialist, Meeting with county pork breeders in the third of three educational sessions, Younkin

repeatedly said more research needs to be done on swine in general and sow feeding in particular.

"We know we're overfeeding in energy," he said, "We may be overfeeding in other things, including protein."

Farmers generally are overfeeding corn to make up for deficiencies in corn of three particular amino acids, including lysine, he said.

Research Needed

But he added that more research is needed to determine just what to do about the problem.

Younkin described research which shows that sows can be successfully fed every third day "It sounds unhumanitarian, but it works"

He said the third day feeding system is a real boon in feed saving, and studies show that sows have healthier litters, lay on less of the pigs and have less mastitis problems

The group fed every three days was the quietest and they had just as good a farrowing record as sows fed every day. The sows fed every day clamored to be fed every time anyone approached, but the three-day group was quiet, he said

In questioning his Lancaster County audience, Younkin revealed that most local hog growers feed the recommended four to five pounds of feed per

sow with a 15 per cent protein ratio

One Different

One who's different is Ivan Glick of Lampeter, who said he doesn't feed any protein or vitamin supplement.

"If there's grass to eat, I don't feed them anything," Glick said. After they're 100 pounds, I put them on clover"

This apparently surprised Younkin and other area hog men, who questioned if Glick could get good results from such a program

Glick assured them he has been getting good results for several years. During the questioning, he said, "I always figure something bad should happen but it never does"

Two Dozen Sows

He said he now has about two dozen sows. His litters average eight to nine, he said

Younkin explained that research shows that sows which don't get a proper diet often are able to draw on their body resources to produce one good litter, but then have small litters or none at all after that.

Glick said he has not run into difficulties under his feeding program. But he said he only raises two to four litters, then sells the sows when prices are good in the summer

Covering a wide range of subjects, Younkin advised the use of intrazine or atgard for

worms. The products should be used about four times at six-week intervals to insure elimination of worms, he said.

Some research shows atgard will reduce stillborn pigs when used a week or so before farrowing

Cleaning Pens

High pressure water was urged as a good way to clean out farrowing pens. The clean-up should be done twice a year.

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