

## High criteria set in Feeser's purebred swine operation



Frank Feeser opens the hutch extension in his farrowing room. With a special control, he is able

to keep the hutch heat between 70 and 80 Degrees F.

By JOAN LIESAU

TANEYTOWN, Md. — "In our business, we're not just showing hogs, we're showing our time" explained Frank Feeser, a Taneytown, Md., purebred swine breeder. Feeser's criteria in raising hogs is "honesty, herd health, productivity, and soundness." "If you follow this criteria, you can sell all the breeding stock you can raise." He also travels around the country quite a bit looking for new ideas to incorporate into his operation. He always has economics and the commercial breeders in mind.

Feeser, who raises purebred Hampshire and Yorkshire swine, has 85 sows. He used to farrow in crates, but he didn't feel he could care for the sows properly in them. "I travel around the country a fair amount. Others liked the farrowing crates but wished the sow could have more exercise. Feeser explained that as soon as the sow gets cooped up in a crate, she gets constipated and her udder gets hard. Keeping these problems in mind, Feeser tried the free stall farrowing pens. "We really like it, although it does take a little more time."

He explained that this type of pen is "the closest to nature I can get, but it is by no means the answer for everybody."

Feeser presently has two farrowing rooms with four pens each. He plans to expand to 36 pens this year. The pens are seven feet long with a hutch extension of two feet for the baby pigs. Feeser said he may extend the hutch to three feet. He uses a 2000 BTU heater to heat the rooms 50 to 60 degrees. He also just installed a 5000 BTU air-conditioner in each room. A heat pad is utilized in the hutch, keeping it between 70 and 80 degrees for the baby

pigs. A heat sensor, placed one foot off the ground, goes up into the control, automatically controlling the hutch heat. A lid over the hutch keeps the heat from escaping. Feeser explained that this type of system only draws 1½ watts. He also uses conveyor belt rubber to cover the floors of the farrowing pens. The bedding he uses is half shavings and half peanut hulls. "When it's all said and done, it's economics that counts," he affirmed.

"We're having super luck getting our sows bred" Feeser said. Last Fall, Feeser had six Hampshire gilts farrow, which were bred to a Yorkshire boar. The result was 59 baby pigs weaned. Feeser likes to breed his Hampshire gilts to York boars the first time to get a few extra pigs. "This is to make sure all the udder sections are utilized and working the first time" Feeser explained.

Feeser had a few problems getting those gilts bred back right away. He found that "there's a disease called Eppe, but this was just the reverse of it." He began using the Big Three (Furrox, Terramycin, and Three Nitro) and Swinacall 600, an iron supplement (which is in all of the swine rations he feeds). Feeser explained this helps get the hemoglobin up and the blood flowing better. It also increased the uniformity of litter with both birth weight and size. "And, I think it increases farrowing ease. It really solved a lot of problems and helped us a long ways," he said. The hair coats are much shinier after using the Big Three and "to me this means a healthy animal."

What is his secret for a good farrowing ration? Feeser maintained that "keeping the protein down to what is in the grain is the secret to keeping the udders loose." Feeser feeds 200 pounds of ground oats, 200 pounds of golden bulky (soybean hulls, wheat bran, vitamins and minerals), 50 pounds of animal fat, 100 pounds of soybean meal and the rest in shell corn to make up one ton. "You have to find the ration that works for you" added his wife Julie, who is very involved with the hog operation.

Their success in saving pigs mainly comes from trying to be with the sows while they are farrowing. Another important factor is to have the sows comfortable and

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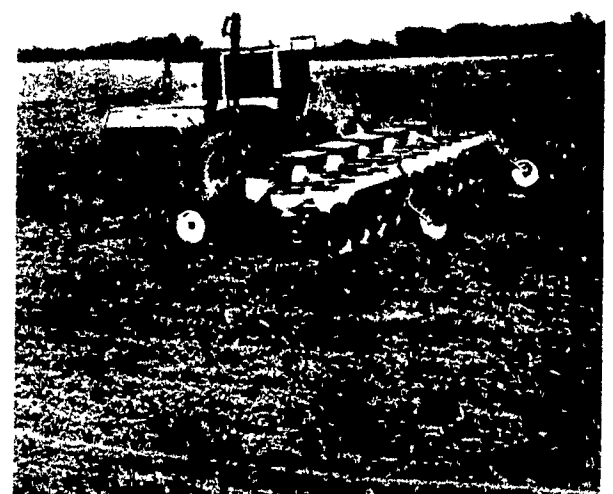
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