

Economics, management should rule high moisture corn feeding

LANCASTER — Hog producers who consider feeding high moisture corn should base their decisions on economics and management, rather than on nutrition.

"Rate of gain and feed efficiency are similar on high moisture and dry corn says J.C. Russett.

"So, the economics of alternative feeding programs and the producer's ability to manage high moisture corn feeding and more important factors to consider when making a decision about high moisture corn," the swine specialist says.

Economics generally favor wet over dry corn, since drying costs are eliminated with high moisture corn. Wet corn can be harvested sooner, minimizing field losses and permitting fall plowing. And, harvesting high moisture corn cuts down handling time, since the grain can be harvested and loaded into storage without delay for drying.

"High moisture corn does pose some additional management considerations, one of the most important of which is spoilage," Russett says.

Since wet corn is high in moisture, it's more susceptible to mold damage when exposed to oxygen, especially in warm weather. As a

result, high moisture corn must be stored in an oxygen-limiting structure and feed must be mixed daily or on alternate days to prevent spoilage before consumption.

"Propionic or other organic acids can be added to high moisture corn to delay spoilage and prevent germination and mold growth," Russett says. University researchers recommend treatment of wet corn with 1.2 to 1.5 percent acid before storing to allow storage in most conventional structures.

Treating a mixed ration containing high moisture corn with two ounces of acid per bushel or about four lbs. (two quarts) per ton of feed will delay mold formation from 7 to 14 days.

By acid-treating high moisture corn, hog producers can take advantage of existing storage facilities, the research points out. However, according to university reports, when storing wet corn for more than nine months, drying is a less expensive alternative.

Russett, of Master Mix Swine division, cautions producers against feeding acid-treated wet corn sooner than three weeks after storage, since hogs may find the feed unpalatable until the acid has time to disperse.

He also warns that acids are corrosive to metals and

may reduce the life of storage bins and mixing equipment.

Wet corn feeding also requires that special attention be paid to ration formulation, Russett continues.

"University researchers have observed reduced levels of Vitamin E in acid-treated wet corn, and lowered carotene content in untreated wet corn," he explains.

"Feeders should be careful to choose concentrates that are Vitamin E and A fortified to meet the needs of hogs on high moisture corn diets."

Producers who choose to feed high moisture corn free choice with a concentrate should be aware that this feeding method increases feed required per pound of gain and increases the time needed to reach market weight.

"Since wet corn is highly palatable, pigs over-consume corn and neglect the concentrate, reducing the diet's protein content," Russett says.

"Optimum pig performance occurs when high moisture corn is rolled or cracked and then mixed with a meal-type or crumbled concentrate," he says, explaining that the corn processing prevents separation of feed ingredients. Diets mixed with whole wet corn and pelleted concentrates

will result in slightly lower performance.

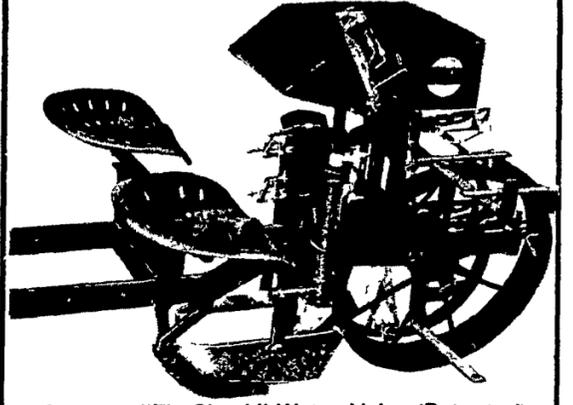
Moisture levels above 28 to 30 per cent also tend to reduce performance. The high water content increases the bulk of the ration, and reduces the amount of dry matter the pig can consume. For this reason, any wet corn ration should be balanced on a dry matter basis.

Because of the lower dry matter content in high moisture corn, overall nutrient density is less than with dry corn. Since swine eat to satisfy energy requirements, they will consume more of a high moisture corn diet. As a result, a lowered level of concentrate can be used with high moisture diets.

"Exceptions to this are young pigs from weaning to 60 lbs. who do not have enough digestive tract capacity to increase intake on wet corn rations," Russett says.

"Breeding herd diets need not be adjusted when using high moisture corn. Since gestating and lactating sows are fed according to body condition and production demands, the energy level is not as critical as with growing-finishing rations."

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Berks Co. has funds to get rid of multi-flora rose

LEESPORT — Mark S. Balthaser, chairman of the Berks County Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Committee, announced that funds have been made available for multiflora rose control under the 1980 Agricultural Conservation Program, in Berks County.

Although funds for all other ACP practices have been allocated, farmers may make a request in cas-

additional funds would become available or if someone cancels their practice.

Balthaser points out, however, that should the practice be started before being notified of approval, the producers would not be eligible for the cost shares.

For 1980 Multiflora Rose Control ACP benefits are up to 50% of the cost of the chemicals, not to exceed an

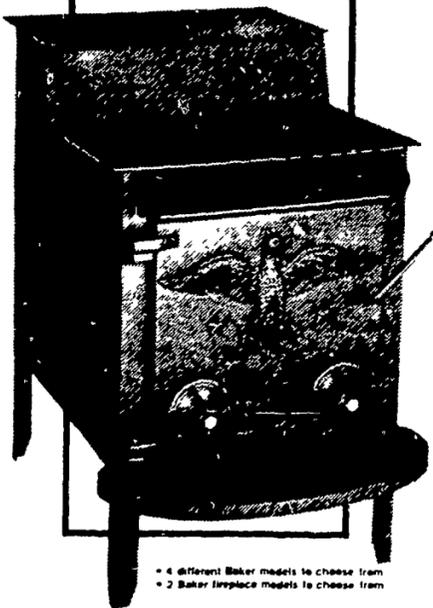
amount specified by the county ASC committee.

Special Tordon 10K or other training classes are no longer needed. All this is required is a regular applicators license which can be received after an open book test.

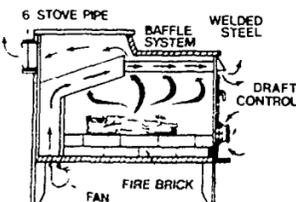
Applications for cost share help from ASCS are being taken at the ASCS office in the Berks County Agricultural Center in Bern Township.

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