

Faber advises lower sow stress for better litters

FORT WAYNE, Ind. — Minimizing sow stresses before and during lactation can help wean more pigs per litter, says Jerry Faber, swine research specialist, for Master Mix.

"Stress factors at farrowing, including changes in surroundings and feed, increased environmental temperature, and reduced

activity trigger hormonal reactions in the sow's system," Faber explains. "These reactions reduce resistance to infection, depress protein metabolism and interfere with the sow's ability to utilize certain nutrients. The end results are poorer health, decreased milk production and reduced weaning percentages."

Faber suggests that hog producers begin stress-minimizing practices during the gestation period. To cut down fighting and injury, and insure adequate feed intake, he recommends that gestation pens be limited to ten or fewer sows per pen, with a minimum floor area of 14 to 20 square feet.

Ideally, gestating sows should be housed in individual crates or stalls to eliminate fighting and to control feed intake, Faber says. Even if individual gestation pens are not practical, the researcher recommends that provisions be made for gestating sows to be fed individually.

"Eight years of work at the Master Mix Swine Research Farm has shown that individually-fed sows stay in the breeding herd at least one litter longer than group-fed sows," Faber explains.

"Proper body conditioning and weight gains (gilts 70 to 100 lbs. and sows of 30 to 60 lbs.) are critical for minimizing stress of farrowing. Producers should feed a nutritionally balanced ration which will build adequate body stores of all nutrients without excessive fat building," he continues. In cold weather it may be necessary to increase feed intake by one to two pounds per day, however."

In addition, an external parasite eradication program should be followed during gestation, and sows

should be wormed at least two weeks before entering the farrowing house.

The sow should be moved to the farrowing environment at least four days before her due date, to allow her to adjust to the new environment.

"Constipation is one of the biggest stress symptoms in the farrowing house," Faber says. When sows are constipated prior to farrowing, they'll be restless, won't eat properly, and will be susceptible to fever and infections after farrowing."

To avoid constipation, Faber recommends feeding a highly palatable, laxative ration at a moderate level of six lbs., fed at two equal feedings per day. A medicated feed will further combat infection and disease organisms.

"The farrowing room should be maintained at a temperature comfortable for the sow, between 60 and 75 degrees, and kept free of drafts. Warmer temperatures will depress feed intake and milk production," Faber continues.

At farrowing, room noise and activity should be kept to a minimum. The area should be kept clean and dry for general comfort and sure footing.

"Woven wire flooring, because of the clean environment and sure footing it provides, has been shown to decrease sow stress during lactation. Since baby pigs are more healthy and nurse

USDA begins purchase of grain

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland today announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture will buy wheat and corn suspended from shipment to the Soviet Union.

On Friday, March 7, the Commodity Credit Corporation first offered to buy wheat. Purchases will continue until a quantity equal to that suspended from shipment to the USSR has been removed from the market.

The classes of wheat purchased will be based on P.L. 480 program needs. Offers will be accepted at prevailing market prices.

"Our plan is to use the wheat bought by CCC for overseas food assistance programs. To this end it is

more vigorously and because of the clean environment, sow MMA symptoms are reduced," Faber says.

After farrowing, the sow feeding level should be increased gradually to a level of 4 lbs. per sow plus one lb. per nursing pig. If sows are extremely restless, however, full feed may be offered immediately.

To further reduce stress during lactation, pig needle teeth should be clipped on the first day after farrowing, Faber concludes.

essential Congress approve legislation requested by the administration to establish a food security reserve so the quantities acquired can be transferred to that special food reserve," Bergland said.

Bergland said a direct purchase program would also be implemented for corn. This will complement the incentives already announced to encourage increased participation in the farmer-owned reserve, he said.

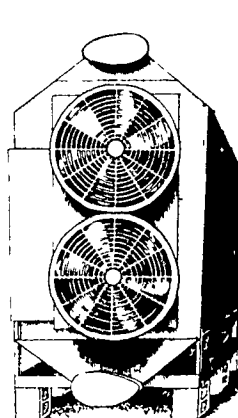
"Since January 7, an additional 3.3 million tons of corn have entered our farmer-owned reserve program and thereby have been isolated from the market. We are continuing to encourage farmers to place additional quantities of corn in the reserve program.

"However, to achieve our goal of removing all of the corn once destined for the USSR from the market, we will begin making offers to directly purchase corn. The first offer will be made by the middle of this month and bids will continue on a regular basis. Acceptances will be made based on prevailing market prices," Bergland said.


Offers to buy the grain will be made by the Kansas City Commodity Office of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

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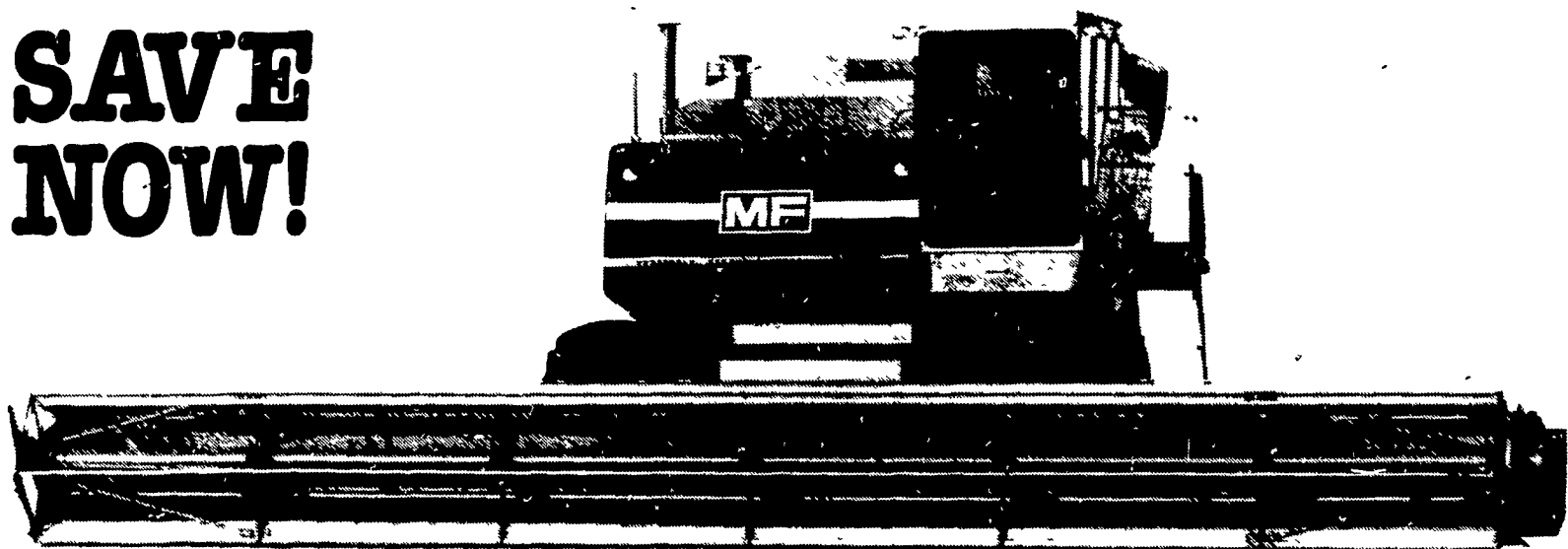
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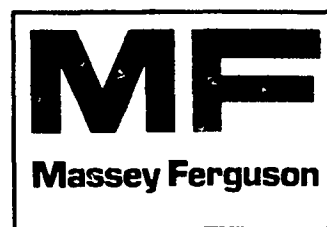
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