

Boost sow productivity to stay afloat in hog business

NEWARK, Del. — Have you heard the story about the farmer who heard a disturbance in his hog house one night and took his gun along to investigate? He found a thief had loaded a few pigs on a truck and was ready to leave. He held the gun on the thief and made him take the whole herd.

Tell swine producers they need to raise more pigs per sow to stay in business today and some will laugh at the suggestion they feed

more animals when they're already losing money. But there are other farmers who say even though they lose money on a per-head basis, they make up for it in volume.

Right not the greatest single factor in staying in business for the commercial sow herd owner is the number of pigs produced per sow per year, says University of Delaware Extension livestock specialist Richard Fowler. Gross

returns double when the annual number of pigs weaned per sow increases from 12 to 20.

Most producers who can afford to stay in business are weaning enough pigs to break even.

It takes 83 sows weaning 12 pigs each a year to produce 1000 head of hogs. The number of sows drops to 50 if each one produces 20 pigs a year. The 33 sow difference means about 33 tons of feed at approximately \$200 per ton or \$6000 a year in sow feed savings.

How can producers increase litter size? One way is to reduce the interval between farrowing and conception. This can be done by reducing lactation length and the period between weaning and conception, says Fowler.

In theory, the number of litters per sow per year can be increased 0.1 percent by shortening the lactation period by one week. Lactation periods of less than three weeks may cause inconsistent post weaning estrus. Conception rates will also be lower.

Very early weaning also affects subsequent litter size. Three-week weaning works best with a cage or deck system, but baby pigs often have a lag in growth when weaned that soon. Recent research suggests four-week weaning is best for both the sow and her pigs.

The period between weaning and conception affects sow productivity. Sow anestrus is a serious problem — especially during late summer. Although all the reasons for summer infertility aren't clear, boar presence has a stimulating effect on sow breeding activity, so housing systems should take into account the effect of sow and gilt

proximity to boars. Fence line contact is important for both developing gilts and newly weaned sows.

Ovulation rate or the number of eggs available for fertilizing also affects productivity. A sow ovulates about 17 eggs. Gilts increased in ovulation rate when fed an additional pound of feed 10 to 14 days before mating.

Some producers withhold feed from sows on the day of weaning to get better drying off. But research now shows that such starvation has a harmful effect on conception rate and the amount of time from weaning to estrus.

Instead, feed about six pounds per sow daily during the first week after weaning. Ovulation rate increases from the first to second heat and from the second to third heat. Gilts studied averaged 9.8 and 10.2 pigs respectively on their first, second and third heats.

Selection is another way to maintain high reproductive efficiency in the sow herd. Identify replacement gilts from sows that have a good record. Cull sows that don't cycle 4-7 days after weaning or gilts that don't show estrus at eight months. Good records are important in accomplishing these goals.

Unique greenhouse

(Continued from Page D15)

the floriculture market.

Commercial greenhouses use about two gallons of fuel a year to heat each square foot of growing area. At today's oil prices, heating a 120,000-square-foot greenhouse with power-plant reject heat could save the owner between \$100,000 and \$125,000 annually.

The research project is designed to make use of an inexpensive, abundant, reliable and underutilized heating source, PP&L has been interested in using this heat for many years, and has in the past engaged in other research projects designed to use power-plant discharge heat.

If power-plant reject heat is harnessed and used on a large scale, it could help to limit PP&L's systemwide load growth and thereby tend to reduce the utility's need to add new generating capacity.

In addition, many energy-saving concepts will be experimented with in the greenhouse for possible adaptation by residential, industrial and commercial customers.

Several agencies and PP&L worked with Bryfogle in

developing a financing package for the \$1.2 million commercial greenhouse project.

Recognizing the significance of the project in finding new ways to conserve fossil fuels, the Appalachian Regional Commission approved a \$350,000 federal grant for the project through SEDACOG, a Lewisburg-based regional development organization.

The Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority approved a \$316,650 loan through the Greater Danville Development Corp. for the project. The remainder of the money was borrowed through the Lycoming County Industrial Development Authority and Northern Central Bank of Williamsport. PP&L received permission from the Public Utility Commission to guarantee a portion of the loans, with Bryfogle himself backing the remainder of the loans.

PP&L constructed the \$700,000 pipeline system from the plant to the greenhouse. Bryfogle is leasing the land from PP&L, and after a two-year test period, he will pay PP&L for the warm water supplied by the plant.

State's cattle up

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania cattle feeders had 70,000 cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market April 1, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. This total was up three percent from last year's 68,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during the January-March quarter, at 17,000, was 19 percent below the 21,000 marketed the same quarter a year earlier. Placements of cattle and calves on feed during the first quarter totaled 11,000, eight percent below the same period a year ago. Expected marketings during the April-June 1981 quarter, if realized at 30,000 would be up three percent from the same period in 1980.

In the 23 major cattle feeding states, cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market April 1 totaled 76 million head, down four

percent from a year ago and 12 percent less than two years ago. This is the lowest April 1 number on feed since 1975.

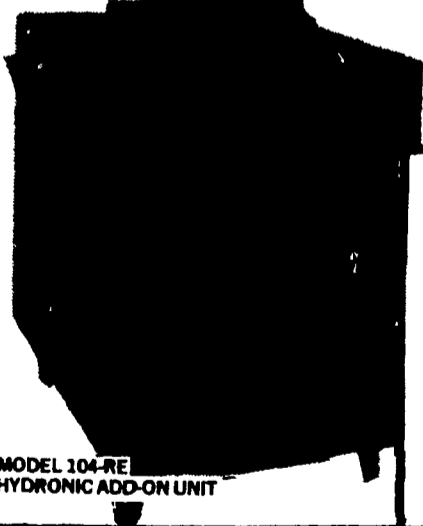
Placements of cattle and calves on feed during the January-March quarter were 5.15 million, one percent fewer than in the corresponding quarter in 1980 and 12 percent less than the first quarter of 1979. Other disappearance, at 502 thousand head, leaves net placements of 4.65 million.

Marketings of fed cattle for slaughter during January-March totaled 6 million, down two percent from the same period last year and 11 percent from January-March 1979. Marketings and placements for the 23 states during the January-March quarter were the smallest since 1975.

TIMBER EZE

The Ingenious Wood/Coal Heating System

TESTED TO UL 1102 STANDARD
FOR RADIANT HEAT
BY AN INDEPENDENT LABORATORY



MODEL 104-RE
HYDRONIC ADD-ON UNIT

WOOD & COAL BURNING ENERGY SAVERS



MODEL 103A - HOT AIR ADD-ON

The TIMBER EZE is especially designed to hook up with your central hot water or hot air heating systems thus eliminating the need to burn costly fuel. Simply install the TIMBER EZE beside your furnace and connect the water pipes to the boiler and let the TIMBER EZE heat your water system.

FEATURES:

- Automatic Temperature Control
- Heavy Duty Cast Iron Rocking Grates
- Cast Iron Doors
- Fire Brick Lined

Four Models To Choose From

- Burns Logs up to 28"
- Weight 710 lbs
- Constructed of 3/16" and 1/4" steel
- Available in 8 1/2 or 3 1/2 gal water jackets

A.R. FLAUD SALES

Timbereze Distributor & Sales

RD #2, Rock Road, Honey Brook, Pa. 19344
For More Information Call 215-273-3211
DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

FISHER AND STOLTZFUS TRAILER SALES

Call 717-768-3832 between 7 a.m. & 9 a.m.
or call 717-354-0723 after 6 p.m. East of New Holland, Pa.



STANDARD LIVESTOCK TRAILERS WITH
METAL TOPS IN FRONT
COMES IN 14, 16, 20, 24' LENGTHS



SPECIALS - 6x16 BUMPER TRAILER
w/CANVAS — \$2395
Small Trailers For Tractors

Sealcrete can paint your farm
buildings quickly and
inexpensively...

Call for Free
estimate.



Contact
Allen B. Shirk



HYDRAULIC AERIAL EQUIPMENT

Seal Crete, Inc.
RD2, Ephrata, PA
717-859-1127