

So. Central Pork Producers hear feed economics advice

GETTYSBURG — A meeting of the South Central Pork Producers Association was held last Wednesday evening here at the Adams County Extension Office. Featured speaker was Matt Parsons, Penn State Extension swine specialist, who spoke on formulating rations and the economics of feeding alternative feeds.

Parsons advised the group to change their feed rations when it necessary and economically sound. He has determined that 62.4 percent of the cost of finishing a farrow can be attributed to feed costs.

"Use of alternative feedstuff in swine diets has the greatest potential to alter profitability if incorporated into the finishers' diet...The next largest consumption of feed occurs in the grower phase followed by gestation and lactation," he stated.

When considering altering feedstuffs, it is important to consider what feed handling method you are utilizing, noted Parsons. "Buying a complete feed or mixing grain and supplement pretty much locks the producer into a feeding program. Mixing grain, soybean meal, and a base mix or the necessary mineral blend allows for more alternatives in the feeding program, but is also a more complex approach."

Parsons stated that to determine the replacement value of a feed

ingredient, first balance a diet with the ingredient in question such as wheat, oats, barley, etc., and then compare it to a corn-soybean meal diet. It is important to balance the diets so that the energy and lysine values are equal. With given dollar values per hundred weight for the replacement feedstuff factored in against the amount of replacement ingredient required compared to the cost of a nutritiously equal corn-soybean meal ration, the economic feasibility of changing to that alternative feedstuff is revealed.

When questioned on the advantages of adding fat to the diet, Parsons said that researchers have found that when fat intake reaches more than 8 percent of the diet, weight gains go down and intake decreases.

However, he does recommend feeding fat to sows prior to farrowing if herd survival rates are below 80 percent. He has found that feeding 2.2 pounds of fat the last 3 to 5 days of gestation may increase survival by 5 percent units.

Also feeding fat during lactation is recommended when environmental temperatures are high or for heavy milking sows. In these cases, sow weight loss may be decreased and weaning to rebreeding interval may be reduced, he noted. As to the result

of heavier pigs at weaning, that is still questionable, he said.

Some other areas to balance in sow feeding programs include adequate energy and protein levels, a calcium phosphorus ratio of 1:1 - 1:5 : 1, and her Vitamin E and selenium needs. The greatest problem in lactating sows is meeting their energy needs and this must have primary consideration in any alternative feedstuff, said Parsons. Protein requirements also are high but this depends on the sow's stage of lactation.

Speaking briefly on the topic of antibiotic feeding, Parsons presented figures for percentage of improvement for average daily gain and feed over grain for the starter, grower, and finisher, with the greatest results being in the starters. He pointed out there have been better results with antibiotic feeding in the field trials than in experimental station trials.

Besides adjusting feed rations to lower production costs, Parsons

outlined the effects of management on those feed costs.

"Adjust your feeders. By being only 3 percent off a feeder can waste up to a ton of feed per feeder per year," he admonished. "Consider the weight at which you market your hogs. Heavier hogs are often less efficient.

"Keep a constant control of the environmental temperature of your buildings. A hog will expend energy to keep its body temperature constant. And finally, consider your genetic base. Look for feed efficient boars and gilts, those who gain rapidly yet remain lean."

Association President Robert Hays conducted the business meeting which included a discussion of the Association's Spring Feeder Pig Sale and an

announcement that their annual spring banquet would be held in Cumberland County this year.

Of primary importance was the call for an increase in the Association's membership. The State Association is offering a \$100.00 cash incentive to any local chapter that can double its membership before Keystone Pork Congress which is to be held February 18, 1982 at the Penn Harris Motor Inn, Harrisburg.

The South Central Pork Producers annual dues are \$5. Further information concerning membership may be obtained from Harry Hilbert, R2, Box 488, Littlestown, Pa., 17340. Any pork producer or interested persons in the Adams, Franklin, or Cumberland County areas are welcome to join.

Apply 'N' during growing season for maximum potatoes

ATLANTA, Ga. — Applying nitrogen fertilizer to potatoes during the growing season maximizes production and quality while reducing energy requirements, said a U.S. Department of Agriculture soil scientist.

Dale T. Westermann, of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Kimberly Idaho, said that application during, rather than prior, to the growing season of Russet Burbank potatoes is the most efficient way to use costly nitrogen fertilizers.

Speaking in Atlanta before the 73rd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Agronomy, Westermann discussed a study to determine how potato plant growth is affected by different nitrogen

concentrations and how to monitor the crop's nitrogen status at different stages of growth.

"Our tests indicated that 60 to 80 percent of the nitrogen fertilizer should be applied during tuber growth for maximum fertilizer-use efficiency. The rates of fertilization during this growth stage depend upon tuber growth rate," said Westermann. Plants that need more nitrogen receive it.

To successfully fertilize during the growing season, Westermann said, "A grower should know and coordinate the amount of residual soil nitrogen, the rate and amount of nitrogen mineralized from soil organic sources and the nitrogen-use efficiencies with the nitrogen requirements at different crop growth stages."

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