

# Lactation ration controls sow performance

NEWARK, Del. — Nothing is more depressing in a sow operation than an empty farrowing crate. It's a signal that profit potential down the road will suffer. And it's a grim reminder that feed was wasted on a non-productive sow.

One factor leading to the empty farrowing crate syndrome, says University of Delaware extension livestock specialist Ken Kephart, is the failure of sows to return to heat. This usually is considered a first-litter gilt problem. But it occurs in older sows, too.

Why does it happen? Kephart says researchers at the University of Nebraska have come up with some answers.

Suspecting that low energy intake during lactation was at the root of the problem, scientists there began looking at different food energy levels for nursing sows to see how these affect both sow and pig performance.

In one series of experiments, researchers D. Reese and E. R.

Peo, Jr. fed three groups of sows low, medium and high energy levels during lactation. These levels corresponded to a daily intake of 6, 9 or 12 pounds of a normal corn-soybean meal lactation diet. After weaning, sows in all groups were fed 4 pounds per day.

As the researchers expected, reports Kephart, sows getting only 6 pounds a day lost a lot of weight during lactation - almost 52 pounds. Those eating 12 pounds a day lost only 4 pounds. Those on the low energy level lost .3 inches of backfat compared to only a .1-inch loss in the high energy group.

By seven days post weaning, 97 percent of the sows on the high energy diet had come into heat. And 91 percent of those on the medium energy level (9 pounds per day) were in heat within the first week. But sows restricted to 6 pounds were slow. After seven days only 60 percent had shown signs of estrus. And even after 70 days, 14 percent of these sows still

weren't in heat.

When Reese and Peo took a closer look at the low energy group to find out why this happened, they discovered two things. First, sows in the nonreturn group had less backfat at weaning. Second, blood analysis indicated that the non-cycling sows had overactive thyroid glands. "The trouble is," says Kephart, "we don't know if these sows were hyper at the start, or if the restricted feeding made them hyper. That's a brand new can of worms for future research."

What about the effects of different lactation diets on baby pigs? In another series of experiments at Nebraska, scientists J.L. Nelssen and A.J. Lewis fed three different energy levels to sows to get a handle on the relationship of calorie intake to sow and litter performance. These levels corresponded to a feed intake of 7, 8.5 or 10 pounds of a corn-soybean diet. Pigs received no creep feed.

Reporting on the published results of the study, Kephart says baby pigs in all groups had similar survival rates - about 93 percent. But feeding sows either 8.5 or 10 pounds each day during lactation produced heavier pigs at 28 days than feeding 7 pounds. For example, feeding 8.5 pounds produced a litter weight of 135.6 pounds compared to 127.4 pounds with the 7-pound feeding level. So the extra 42 pounds of sow feed produced more than 8 pounds of additional litter weight. "That \$4.20 invested in sow feed returned at least \$7 in extra production," Kephart notes. "It was money well spent."

In other words, there is a real plus to feeding 8.5 pounds rather than 7 pounds per day during lactation. But in this study, sow and litter performance in the 10-pound group was almost identical to that of sows getting 8.5 pounds.

"Where does that leave swine producers?" Kephart asks. "To be sure that sows come into heat quickly, they ought to be getting 12 pounds of feed a day (16,000 kcal) during lactation. On the other hand, milk production (at least in first-litter sows) may plateau at a daily feeding level of around 8.5

pounds.

"So," he concludes, "full feeding may be more than is necessary. But if you restrict the feed too much for a nursing sow, sooner or later it will cost you - either in milk production or in return to heat."

## Price drops at Md. tobacco auctions

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland tobacco auctions opened last week with a significant drop in both the amounts sold and the price being paid.

During the first three sale days, March 13-15, a total of 1,668,380 pounds of Maryland Type 32 tobacco had been sold at an average price of \$1.38 per pound.

By contrast, the first three days of sales in 1983 recorded a total of 2,992,296 pounds at an average price of \$1.58 per pound.

The drop in price and sales volume at the opening of the auctions prompted Md. Secretary of Agriculture, Wayne A. Cawley Jr., to send a message to major tobacco companies showing his concerns on behalf of Maryland tobacco growers.

Cawley's message said:

"The Maryland Type 32 tobacco auctions began on March 13 with a very negative tone. After three days of sales, we have experienced auction floors that have completely closed and others that have stopped sales due to the overwhelming number of farmers rejecting bids on their tobacco.

"We realize that the drought of 1983 left us with much less than desirable quality in our Type 32 tobacco. At this point, we are faced

with the dilemma that could easily result in total disaster for the Southern Maryland economy which is based mainly on income from tobacco sales.

"Although good quality tobacco appears to be bringing what would be a reasonable price considering worldwide tobacco stocks, much of our poorer quality tobacco is being passed over entirely by the buyers or being bid on by the warehousemen at rates such as ten and twenty cents per pound.

"Needless to say, the quantity of tobacco to be resold is causing a real backup for the warehousemen and, therefore, preventing what could be better quality tobacco from being delivered for sale.

"We appreciate your interest in Type 32 and ask that you give this matter your immediate attention."



## Dauphin conservation directors



Three new members of the board of directors of the Dauphin County Conservation District include, from the left, Gerald F. Wiest, Lykens Township, farmer director; Jay R. Book, Londonderry Township, urban director; and Dauphin County Commissioner Larry Hochendoner as commissioner/director. Wiest and Book were appointed by county commissioners to four-year terms.

## OPEN HOUSE

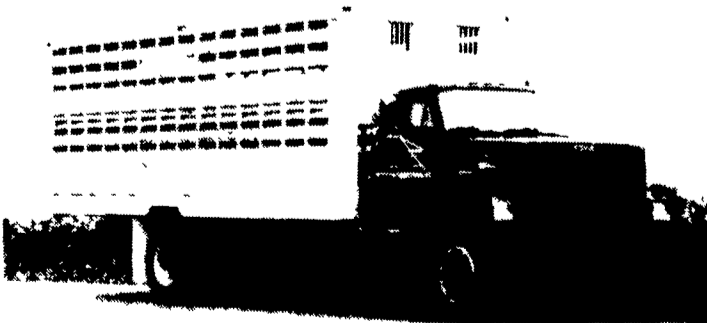
FRI., APRIL 6th 2-8 PM SAT., APRIL 7th 8 AM - 1 PM

Visit Our New Expanded Facilities  
RT. 23, BLUE BALL, PA



ON DISPLAY  
Eby All-Aluminum

- Cattle Bodies
- Gooseneck Trailer
- Possum Belly Trailer
- Bulk Feed Body



On Friday, April 6th, Factory Representatives Will Be On Hand To Answer Questions About Their Products

Blue Ball, Pa.

717-354-4971

## nature packs your haylage with nutrition.

By the time your haylage gets to the bunk, much of the nutritive value may be lost. That's why innovative farmers use CROP-SILE. It's a low-cost combination of stabilizers, antioxidants and flavors that locks in the fresh-cut benefits of high-moisture crops. Besides the added feed value and greater palatability, CROP-SILE also works to curb excessive fermentation, oxidation, waste, shrink and heat build-up. CROP-SILE can make a big difference in your returns.

The results are in terms of added feed appeal, greater feed value at feeding time and higher feed efficiency.

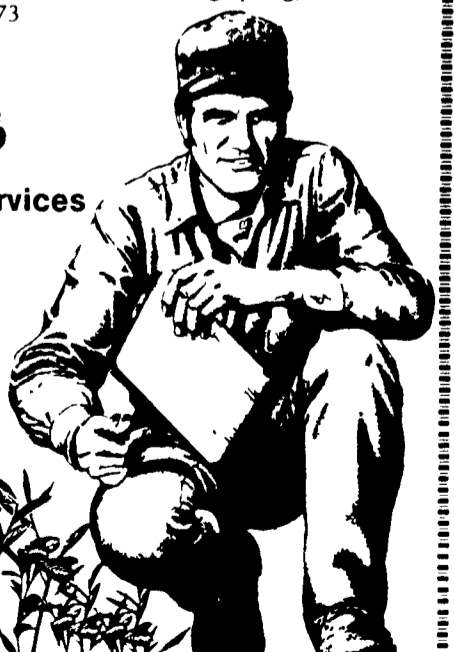
Make sure you save the nutritious crop you worked so hard to grow. Get CROP-SILE. It will help keep nature's nutrients in your haylage.

For more information about CROP-SILE, contact your young's Feed Management Representative or write to young's, R D #1, Box 71, Roaring Spring, PA 16673.



young's

Livestock Nutritional Services



Crop-Sile keeps it there.