

Hog feeding tips outlined

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The high price, scarce supply and sometimes poor quality of corn this summer have prompted many hog producers to search for cost-efficient, top-performing alternative rations in their finishing units, where about 80 percent of all feed in a typical farrow-to-finish operation is consumed.

Dr. Gawain Willis, senior swine nutritionist for Ralston Purina Company, offers producers several tips on how to cope with this summer's grain situation, without sacrificing performance.

Feed Wheat

High corn prices and scarce supplies this summer have made wheat a viable, economical alternative to corn-based rations. In wheat-rich areas, when corn is 90 percent or more than the per bushel price of wheat, take advantage of this edge. Wheat may be used to supply 100 percent of the grain portion of hog rations.

To attain optimal feed efficiency with wheat-based rations, grind or roll the grain to a coarse to medium particle size. Finely ground wheat is powdery, and may cause pigs to reduce feed intake. Wheat should also be mixed with a supplement specifically formulated to take advantage of wheat's higher levels of lysine and available phosphorus.

Feed Completes

If both corn and wheat are

unavailable, or of poor quality, a top-performing complete feed may be a viable option. To compare the cost-effectiveness of completes, calculate the actual grind and mix manufacturing cost, (including producing, storing, grinding and mixing) as well as performance from grind and mix corn-based rations, versus the cost and performance of a given complete. Especially in grain-deficit areas, or where corn is of poor quality and high priced, completes may be more efficient and less costly.

A complete ration that outperforms traditional corn-based grind and mix rations like Purina's Super High Octane Completes for grower and finisher hogs, may be more cost-effective overall. In one test, this ration delivered average daily gain of 2.17 lbs., and a 2.12 feed conservation ratio for one group of boars and raised in total confinement. The most feed needed to produce a pound of gain on this ration so far was 2.87 lbs., with a set of market hogs raised on dirt lots.

Monitor Feed Waste

It's critical to control direct feed waste. Self feeders waste 10 percent of rations if not regularly adjusted. That loss — almost imperceptible to the eye — can wipe out a performance gain. Regularly lift feeder lids to check

for leakage and for clogged feeder holes.

Let feeders run empty periodically to prevent stale or moldy feed. Between groups of hogs, feeders should be emptied, cleaned and refilled with fresh rations.

Sell Feeder Pigs

Depending on the market, and corn price and supply, producing feeder pigs may be an economical alternative to a farrow-to-finish operation. Pigs weighing up to 40 lbs. consume a fraction of total feed in such operations, and thus require less grain.

Ship Lighter Hogs

Depending on the packer, lighter hogs may be in order. Hogs weighing over 220 lbs. don't experience the same growth rate as those under that weight. However, some packers dock for lighter hogs, so be sure to check their policy before shipping animals under 220 lbs.



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Delaware dairymen to tour Pennsylvania farms

NEWARK, DEL. — Delaware dairy farmers will have a chance to pick up some useful new management and housing ideas when they visit Pennsylvania Aug. 14 and 15 on an overnight bus trip. The tour, which is sponsored by the Delaware Cooperative Extension Service, will stop by dairy farms in Lebanon, Dauphin and York counties.

Among other things, participants will visit a new maternity barn, a farm which is managed by computer, several manure management systems, and a unique stanchion barn in which

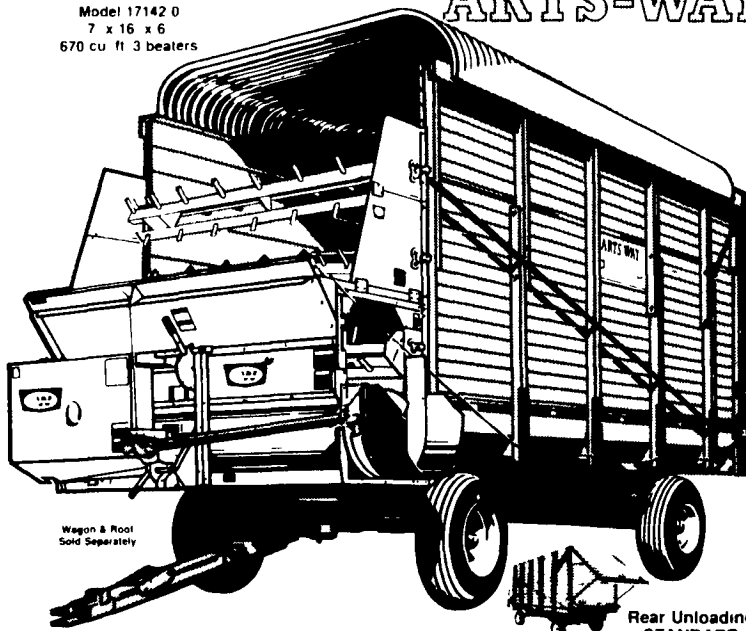
cows are raised six to eight inches higher than normal in a herringbone arrangement. One of the farms on the tour uses only trench silos for storage.

Tour members will spend the night at the Sheraton Harrisburg East. Cost of the trip is \$55 per person for transportation and a double occupancy room, not including meals.

Registration deadline is Tuesday, Aug. 7. For further information contact Dave Woodward or Mary Lou Perry at the Kent County, Delaware, extension office, (302) 736-1448.

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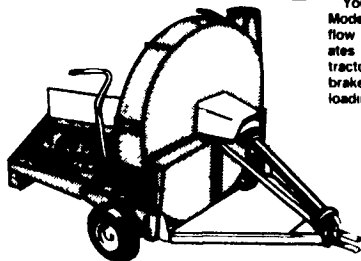
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