

Hog Producers Need Better Records For Bigger Profit

BY PAT PURCELL

"A big mistake with hog producers is that they don't encourage genetic planning. Go home and write up a genetic program for your farm. Know what you are buying. Reproduction is the key to profit. If you have reproduction problems get them corrected now. It affects next year's profit."

That was part of the message Dr. Conrad Schmidt, a Minnesota Swine Veterinarian, had for nearly 200 hog farmers gathered at the Rothsville firehall last week at a dinner meeting arranged by Dr. Timothy Trayer.

Dr. Schmidt discussed the possible changes that may occur in the swine industry in the near future. Only the top 50 percent of the farmers in not only the swine industry but also in the dairy farming and crop farming will survive into the 21st century due to the changes from an equity based economy to a cash flow economy for these industries. If the hog farmer is to succeed, management will be the key.

Many factors other than the economy will affect the survival of the hog producer. The government is examining the environment and health of laborers in hog production. Liabilities for the after results will be in question. Schmidt urged farmers to be more conscious of the environment and predicted that in this area hog farmers will see more government interference

with the hog producers. Family farmers may pay the consequence of prolonged exposure to these environments.

OSHA may impose standards. In the end, the hog producer will be responsible for laborers in the buildings and will pay for the quality of the environment in the form of more dollars in utility bills and also in the liabilities for the after effects.

"If we don't clean up our act, the government will do it for us and I don't think we want that," said Dr. Schmidt.

Paper Work--A Vital Function
Dr. Lawrence Reuff, Indiana swine veterinarian, also speaking to the group and Dr. Schmidt stressed the importance of good record keeping as a vital function of every hog producer. Both agreed that in order for the hog farmer to survive profit record keeping was essential.

"I can't impress upon you enough the importance of shuffling papers," said Dr. Reuff. "We all have a tendency to think that when you are pushing papers that you are not really working, but it is one of the most important jobs to be done. Records for reproduction, growth and finishing and not just financial records.

"What you think is the case and what the numbers show are often two different things," said Dr. Reuff. "It is an important part of your business. It is the only way to

collect info to make correct decisions."

The only way to make sound evaluations and to analyze problems in all areas of hog production is to base decisions on a sound record keeping system. To be able to reduce losses to disease the producer has to know the frequency of disease in his herd.

In determining the proper and affordable feed mix the producer needs to calculate the money spent on additives in proportion to what is spent on the whole ration. Spend no more than eight percent of what is spent on the whole ration, according to Dr. Schmidt.

Another area of concern for the hog producer in the near future will be the production of residue free pork. The producer needs consumption of the product so the consumer needs to feel safe about buying it. Proper use of medicine is essential because even the slightest amount of residue can be detected.

Dr. Schmidt urged producers to work closely with veterinarians and extension agents to create a safe and healthy environment and to utilize the advancements made in hog production. For instance, in the very near future a diagnostic test will be available which producers can use on the farm. Dr. Schmidt urges the farmer to consult the veterinarian to confirm a diagnosis.

He also encouraged producers to put more emphasis on the sows.

"Sows are herd's disease reservoir. Protect your piglets from diseases from the sow through proper scheduling of vaccinations. That is why it is very important to keep records to be able to make disease predictions. We need good records to see the frequency of disease in the herd to learn how to prevent it. Because the more disease in a herd, the more severe the disease will be," said Dr. Schmidt.

He noted that pigs weaned at three weeks will have greater susceptibility to disease than piglets weaned at five weeks and that this

pattern becomes apparent when recorded. This determines the immunity of the piglet.

A bio-technological development, Paline which breaks down fat and increases leanness and thereby increases the dressing percentage is predicted will improve gains by 10-15 percent, may be approved within the next 12 to 18 months, according to Dr. Schmidt. Schmidt warns that it is very important not to feed this to reproductive gilts and boars, because not enough is known about it yet.

Atlantic Blue Mountain Local Meeting

SOUTHAMPTON, (BUCKS CO.)—The Blue Mountain Local of Atlantic Dairy Cooperative District 31 will hold its annual dinner meeting Oct. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Stockerton Memorial Hall.

Robert M. Dever, Atlantic's assistant general manager, will be the guest speaker. Dever will report on the cooperative's fiscal year and will review the Atlantic merger.

In other business, Robert R. Gehman of Coopersburg, District 31 director, will present 25- and 50-year membership awards.

Atlantic Dairy Cooperative represents 4,100 dairy farm families

in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

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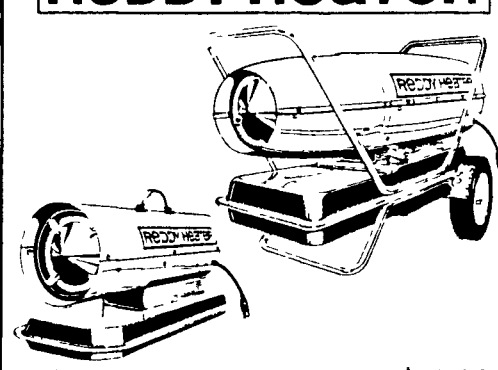
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