

# Changing Hog Feed Formula

(Continued from Page A1)

that can be switched in feed rations are the protein, fat, and vitamins. Or, substitutions can be made.

Kephart doesn't recommend changing the protein level. "Stay pat with the recommended levels," he said. "Don't follow your urge to lower protein. Reducing protein levels will cause the cost per pound to rise because you'll have less feed conversion."

Because fat prices follow the price of corn, Kephart doesn't advise adding extra fat to the feed, unless it is to be used to keep dust down. "Using it in small amounts will help keep dust down and improve feed conversion slightly," he commented.

Vitamins are provided in sufficient amounts in pre-mixes, so a farmer adding vitamins would be spending more money.

Substituting ingredients is the fourth way to change the feed. Kephart recommends before doing so to ask three questions: What are my feed costs now? What will the new feed ration cost? and What will be the change in performance?

For example, a farmer wishing to substitute the corn in his grower diet should look at the price of corn per ton versus the price of wheat,

oats, ear corn, or by-products and how much the feed conversion would change. (See table 1) Replacing corn at \$172 per ton for wheat isn't advisable because wheat would cost about \$15 per ton more and the performance is about the same, said Kephart.

Oats only cost about \$4 per ton more than corn, but the feed conversion is poorer, so a farmer would pay much more for the same performance.

Ear corn would cost about \$156, but according to Kephart, feed efficiency drops when it is fed.

By-products can cost a substantial amount less, but feed conversion changes depend on the by-products. "If you can find a relatively dry by-product that's not too different than corn, it would be worth looking at," Kephart stated. Two by-products that one farmer is feeding are granola and pizza, although the pizza dough has to be watched carefully as it grows mold easily.

"Does it pay to fool with the formula?" Kephart asked. "Sometimes. Local hay may help reduce prices as can by-products. Look at your starter ration, particularly if your feeders are weaned quickly. Try to get them off the starter feed

as soon as possible and get them on feed."

Protein levels can be cut in the middle of gestation. "For those that can (separate group feedings), you can pull your soybean meal out of the sow's feed during the middle of gestation so long as you take care of her at the end of gestation and during lactation," he said. **Changing management practices**

Farmers can cut feed costs by practicing careful feed management. For instance, much feed is lost through waste such as in the farrowing house floor. When you feed the sow, have something under the feeder to catch spills rather than let it fall into the manure pit.

Keeping the proper temperature helps feed conversion. The colder the temperature, the lower the feed conversion, and the hotter the temperature, the lower the feed conversion. The optimum temperature for finishing hogs is 60 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit. When the temperature is at 32 degrees, the cost for feeding increases \$53 per hog. When the temperature is between 85 and 95 degrees, the cost of feeding goes up \$10 per hog.

For hogs finished in an outdoor lot during cold weather, bedding and hovers can keep hogs comfortable, while drip coolers and shade work in the summer.

"Antibiotics are a better idea as the price of feed goes up," said Kephart. Normally antibiotics don't help a great deal if the herd is healthy, but when feed prices are high, they help decrease costs.

Pelleting feed can help eliminate waste and reduce feed costs. "It's a good deal," stated Kephart. "It improves feed efficiency about 5 percent, and you could save about \$1.50 per hog."

Changing your hogs' feed formula to cut production costs may be tempting, but is not always the right answer. Many farmers would be better off looking at their management practices first. Cutting corners doesn't always cut costs.

Product	Cost
Corn	\$172
Wheat	\$187
Oats	\$179
Ear Corn	\$156
By-Products	\$143

## Potato Production Meeting Scheduled

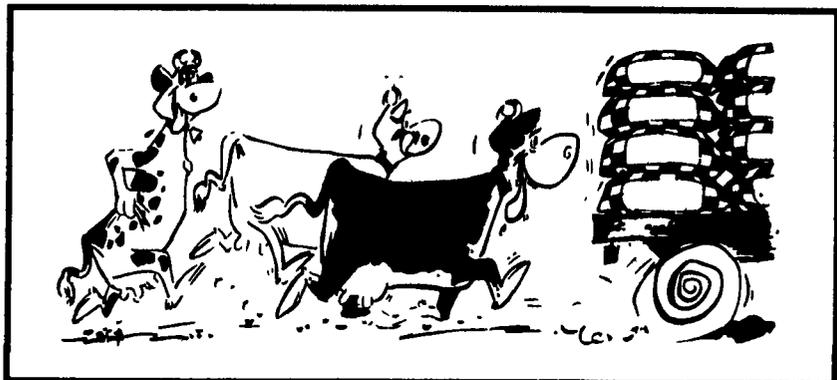
**CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin)** — Farmers from southcentral Pennsylvania and Washington County in Maryland will be gathering together February 3 to explore the feasibility of increasing the area's agricultural economy through commercial potato production. The exploratory meeting, to be held at the Franklin County Administration Building on Franklin Farms Lane, is being co-sponsored by Penn State Cooperative extensions of Franklin County and the Greater Chambersburg Chamber

of Commerce. The meeting, "Potatoes—An Alternative Crop", will start at 10:00 a.m. and conclude at noon.

Dr. Richard Cole, Penn State potato specialist, will discuss key requirements for commercial potato production. David Rank and William Dougherty of Nibble With Gibbles Inc. will talk about the market for chipping potatoes. Paul Leinbach of Leinbach's Produce Auction in Shippensburg will speak on wholesale marketing opportunities for table-stock potatoes.

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**Place: Solanco Sr. Citizens Center** - next to the Hoffman building at the Solanco fairgrounds

**Time: Friday, Feb. 3, 7:30 PM**

There will also be information presented on the use of "natural" hay and silage preservatives in place of the commonly used "acid" preservatives.

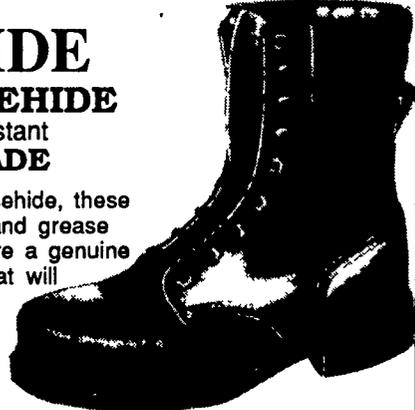
Speakers: Ron Buffington, Dublin, Ohio  
Boone Logan, Harrodsburg, KY  
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