

Keep Pigs Cool, Boost Productivity

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — High temperatures take their toll on the performance of hogs and sows and can reduce the fertility of boars. Keeping your pigs cool in hot weather can boost productivity and save you money, said a swine expert in Penn State's College of Agriculture.

"Pigs in a typical confinement building are at your mercy to stay comfortable," said Kenneth Kephart, associate professor of animal science. "When the temperature is too high, a pig usually finds a wet spot in the pen. If there is none, the best it can do is lie on its side and pant."

When pigs experience heat stress, they eat less and their growth slows. Sows that are too hot can have trouble conceiving,

and heat hampers sperm development and fertility in boars. "When any of these things happen, it costs you money," Kephart said. "The bottom line is we need to do whatever we can to keep the pigs comfortable."

Getting them wet is the most effective way to cool hogs. "Spray nozzles are good for finishing houses or breeding areas because they make the animal wet and cool without adding significant moisture to the air," Kephart said.

"Choose a nozzle size and regulate the spraying time so that each hog receives at least .02 gallons per hour. For example, if you have 25 hogs per pen and one nozzle that puts out three gallons per hour, the nozzle should run about two

minutes out of 10."

Kephart notes that spray nozzles shouldn't be used in farrowing houses because they can chill baby pigs.

"Drip coolers are a better alternative for farrowing houses, since you can wet the neck and shoulders of the sows without affecting the baby pigs," he said. "Use nozzles rated between one-half and one gallon per hour, and run them one minute out of 10."

Foggers that spray a fine mist and evaporative coolers that draw incoming air through wet pads can help, but Kephart said that they add to the humidity and are least effective on the hot, muggy days when pigs need cooling the most.

850 Diesel John Deere tractor, Woods RM59 Mower, Log Splitter. 215/489-9102.

89 Ford F-250 XLT Lariat, 460 automatic, air, 29,000 miles, \$10,600, Somerset Co. 814-893-5589.

986 International 20.8x38 dual remotes, dual PTO, excellent CAH; MF 1105 cab; MF 1105 duals; JD 7700 combine, rebuilt motor; N.C. 5T spreader, Stoltzfus 5T spreader; 717 chopper corn head F700 Ford. 301-257-7054.

99 high throw blower, good condition. \$600 OBO - Elizabeth town (717)367-7190

AC 7040 Cab, air, power-shift, clean tractor, AC 200 WF nice 717-529-2204.

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