

# Swine Management News

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## LIMIT SELECTION TRAITS FOR FASTEST RESULTS

Whether to keep or cull an animal should be based on objective, well thought-out criteria. Too often, though, culling decisions are made in haste and without regard to the long-term goals of a livestock enterprise.

Producers need to determine these goals first. For example, if you are in the business of producing feeder pigs, you may want to consider placing emphasis on selection for litter size. Or if you produce market hogs under an incentive program, you may want to select for carcass traits that will profit you most.

The key to successful selection and culling decisions is to limit the number of traits for which you select. Other factors to be considered include the potential for a given trait to be passed on to an animal's offspring (heritability), the variation that is naturally occurring in your herd, and the amount of money you are willing to invest in improving your herd.

The number of traits you select for makes a difference in ease and speed of genetic improvement. If you are interested in encouraging

more than one trait, progress will be much slower since parent stock who excel in several different traits are harder to find than individual animals who excel in only one. Genetic improvement is faster if you select for only one trait at a time.

The rate at which improvements can be expected for a particular trait must be considered as well. Heritability (percent variation in performance as the result of genetic effects) varies, depending on the trait for which you are selecting.

You can expect to make less progress with reproductive traits than performance traits. Similarly, performance traits are not as heritable as carcass traits. Simply put, reproductive traits (such as litter size and number of pigs weaned) are influenced less by selection than performance traits (such as growth rate or feed efficiency) or carcass traits (such as backfat and loin-eye area).

Another factor that affects herd improvement potential is the genetic variation that occurs within the herd. For example, if all animals in your herd have a backfat measurement of 1.0 inch at the last rib at 230 pounds, then you cannot expect to make improvements in

backfat at the last rib by selecting individuals from this herd. On the other hand, if a wide variation exists for backfat within your herd (let's say 0.75 inch to 1.5 inches at 230 pounds), then improvements can be made by selecting the leaner animals in your breeding program. You need variations to make genetic improvements.

If you have a herd with little variation, you may have to select breeding stock from other herds to make improvements. This is where financial commitment enters into genetic improvement. And selecting animals who excel in a particular trait can be expensive. Boars

with exceptional growth rates, feed efficiencies, backfat measurements, or loin-eye areas are usually worth more since these traits are sought after by many producers.

Often the decision to purchase a particular boar to use in your replacement female breeding program will be dictated by the cost. Many producers can't or won't spend a lot of money to secure an outstanding boar to use in their breeding program. The decision on how much to spend on a boar should be based on the potential return that boar can make to your operation.

These figures can be calculated based on several factors: the specific trait for which you are selecting, the heritability of that trait, the economic return for a specific improvement, and the number of females you intend to breed to this boar.

Genetic betterment in any herd is attainable if producers are willing to make improvement an objective of their selection, breeding, and culling decisions.

For more information, consult the Pork Industry Handbook Fact Sheet #106 on "Genetic Principles and their Applications for Swine Producers."

## PFU Meets With Ag Secretary

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Allen Deiter, president of Pennsylvania Farmers Union (PFU), was among the 24 members of the National Farmers Union who told U.S. Agriculture Secretary Edward Madigan that the Bush Administration needs to begin focusing attention on the immediate needs of American farmers in addition to activities in the international arena.

The Farmers Union delegation, headed by NFU President Leland Swenson, told Madigan that "sensible, reasonable, and significant changes" in U.S. farm policies are necessary for the survival of family farm producers.

"I agree with Senator Robert Dole (R-KS) when he calls the farm economy a 'house of cards,'" Swenson said in reference to a letter Dole sent to the White House last week.

President Allen Deiter, in Washington lobbying as part of a

NFU legislative fly-in, told Madigan that immediate action is needed to reform federal dairy policy and to provide disaster assistance to farmers whose crops were hurt by weather disasters this year.

"We have dairy and livestock farmers in Pennsylvania that must purchase hay by December or January to replace the roughage lost on their farm because of drought. Corn and soybean losses vary from minor to 100 percent," said Allen Deiter.

The farmers union members articulated the hardships they are facing because of low prices for milk, grain, and livestock. They believe policies that would provide incentives for production management are the key to their survival

on the farm.

A proposed two-tier dairy program, under which farmers would be discouraged from overproducing as a way to stabilize market forces, is an example of the kind of program the farmers say they want. Although a version of the two-tier proposal did not make it through Congress before the August recess is still pending, NFU is pushing to have it considered again before lawmakers adjourn for the year.

But, the farmers said Madigan was intransigent about the dairy bill.

"He expressed no willingness whatsoever to negotiate or compromise at all on a supply management program for dairy," said Swenson.

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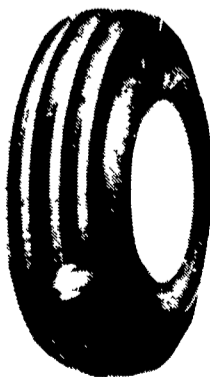


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16.9-28 Dyna Torque II	6	\$259
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6.00-16	6 TT	\$46.00
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1	14.9-24	BF G-Rich Power Grp	15	\$30.00
2	16.9-38	Firestone Deep Tread	15	\$50.00
1	14.9R28	G-Year Dyna Torque Radial	43	\$250.00
1	16.9-38	Safemark Multi-Angle	30	\$150.00
2	18.4-34	BF G-Rich Power Grp	15	\$75.00
1	18.4-34	G-Year Dynatorque II	40	\$200.00
2	18.4-38	G-Year Traction Torque	15	\$50.00
1	18.4-34	Firestone Traction F&R	30	\$150.00
2	18.4-38	G-Year Dynatorque II	51	\$310.00
1	18.4R38	Armstrong High Power	53	\$200.00
1	18.4R38	G-Year Dynatorque Rad	35	\$200.00
1	18.4R38	G-Year Dynatorque Rad	35	\$200.00
1	18.4R38	Armstrong High Power	45	\$250.00
1	18.4-38	Armstrong Hi-Traction	55	\$225.00
1	18.4-38	Safemark Multi-Angle	30	\$100.00

### NEW TIRE CLEARANCE FIRST COME FIRST SERVE MOUNTING ADDITIONAL

Quantity	Size	Make	Price Each
4	11.2-24	6 Galaxy Bias	\$118.00
2	13.6-28	6 Galaxy Bias	\$130.00
4	9.5-32	6 Galaxy Bias	\$100.00
2	16.9-28	6 Galaxy Bias	\$189.00
4	16.9-34	8 Galaxy Bias	\$236.00
4	18.4R 34	8 Galaxy Radial	\$330.00
1	9.5-36	6 Galaxy Bias	\$118.00
2	20.8-38	8 Galaxy Bias	\$400.00

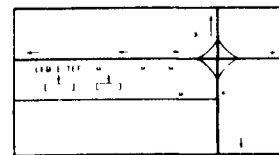


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