

# Pork Prose

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meal. Some researchers even suggest that the change in the grunting pattern serves as a signal for the pigs to "get ready" for the milk flow.

When the milk let down ceases, the pigs often massage the udder again. We're not sure why they do this, because the milk flow has stopped. But there is evidence that the duration and intensity of massage on a teat can influence the milk production from the two glands supplying that teat.

## Hormonal Changes In The Sow

The stimulation of nursing creates a hormonal shift which, in turn, brings on a cascade of physiological changes in the sow.

The digestive tract is adapted for an increase in feed intake. Fat stores throughout the body are mobilized for the monumental increase in energy that the sow will need to crank out milk. The blood flow and metabolism in the mammary gland change in a way that help the udder mop up every scrap of energy and nutrients that happen to pass by in the blood stream. And all of this, which affects the life of the pig and the money in your pocket, is intensified as pigs spend more time massaging the udder.

## Can The Sow And Pig Understand Each Other?

Any producer that's farrowed at least one sow will agree that as

soon as a sow starts the grunting (barking) routine, pigs will stop what they're doing and line up at the dinner table.

But Dr. Algiers takes it a step farther. He has found that when sows and litters are exposed to 85 decibels of fan noise, the grunting of the sow is masked. As a result, fewer pigs are attracted to the front of the udder. The systematic routine of massage-suckle-massage is disrupted. Total time spent nursing and massaging is reduced. Fights occur more frequently. And not surprisingly, milk production is lower.

Now stop and think about the last time you had a conversation with someone in your farrowing house, especially during the summer months when the fans were rolling. You have to shout to be heard. And if you're more than 10 feet apart, you can't even understand each other.

Now, add to that the sound of a radio, played loud enough that you can hear it over the noise of the ventilation system. It should make you wonder if we're doing the sows any favors by adding even more clutter to a place that already is not very peaceful.

Is it important for a pig to hear the sow's voice? One study has shown that at one day of age, 46 percent of the pigs tested in three litters responded to the voice of their own sow when it was tested against the voice of another sow. By day two, 88 percent responded exclusively to their own sow. If nature has built in that recognition ability, I think it's fair to assume there must be a reason.

## Using What We Know

Scott Hoffer and a crew of five who manage a 1,200-sow farrow-to-feeder unit in Lebanon County make an art of cross fostering. I say this, because in the two years that the unit has been farrowing sows, preweaning mortality has averaged less than five percent.

Admittedly, the large farrowing groups present more opportunities for cross-fostering, but the following practices obviously go a long way toward reducing death loss.

As a farrowing room fills with newborn pigs, litters are first equalized for number and size of pigs. From there on, sows and litters are carefully observed, and the best and poorest milking sows are quickly identified. The small, weak pigs are moved to the best nursing sows (especially those with slender nipples that are easily to nurse). The largest, most robust pigs are placed on sows that seem to be struggling.

Often entire litters are moved, and sometimes more than once. This cross-fostering process continues throughout lactation, terminated only 4-5 days prior to weaning. The increased massage brought on by big hungry pigs, as well as some well-timed injections of oxytocin, usually bring the poorer milking sows around. And if you haven't already noticed, what Scott is doing fits well with the theories suggested by research.

## Summary

1. The delicate process of nursing and milk production is one that has much to do with whether we make or lose money in the hog business.
2. Improving our understanding of the metabolic changes brought

on by lactation, the behavioral patterns of the sow and the pig, and the elusive signals of communication will clearly help us maximize sow productivity.

3. Hearing and recognizing sounds made by the sow appear to be important for the piglet in stimulating milk production. Given that, we should try harder to make our farrowing rooms a little more like the spot a sow would choose in the wild, and a little less like a bus station.

station.

## References

- Algiers, B. 1993. Nursing in pigs: Communicating needs and distributing resources. *J. Anim. Sci.* 71:2826-2831.
- Elmore, R. G. and C. R. Martin. 1986. IN A. D.
- Leman et al. (Ed.) *Diseases of Swine*. Sixth Edition. p168-174.
- Hartsock, T. G. and H. B. Graves. 1976. Neonatal behavior and nutrition-related mortality in domestic swine. *J. Anim. Sci.* 42: 235-241.
- Hoffer, S. 1993. Personal Communication.

# Ohio Breeders Do Well With Jerseys

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — The eighth annual Guernsey Gold Futurity was held on Nov. 7, 1993, in Louisville, Kentucky, at the North American International Livestock Exposition. Judge Dave Kjome of Rochester, Minnesota, presided over the 3-year-old royalty participating in the show.

The winner of the 1993 Guernsey Gold Futurity was Raemelon Prime Majestic, an 89 point Geo Mars Andy Prime daughter owned by Ralph Turley of Mansfield, Ohio. "Majestic" has production records to 18,200M 4.6% 835F 3.5% 634P at 2-00 in 365 days, earning her a cheese try sponsored by Tri-State Milk Cooperative for the high protein award.

She was presented with a champagne collar donated by Ed and Shirley Wright of Saginaw, Michigan, and the first place banner sponsored by E.R. Berousek of Yukon, Oklahoma. "Majestic" also received the best udder award a footed silver tray donated by Four Winds Farm of Hartland, Wisconsin, and the Russell Wenger Memorial Award, a silver tray sponsored by Calton Wenger of

Goshen, Indiana, for the best bred and owned animal.

The first runner-up was Sande Hill Jeans Jewel, an 87 point Shenmont Telestar Sarge-ET daughter. Her owner, Leroy Lindley of Oxford, Ohio, was presented with a silver reverse bowl donated by R-Way Farm, Southington, Ohio, for placing second.

Winning the high milk, high butterfat and high cow performance index awards was Twin Brook Fayette Taffy, an 87 point Fayette daughter owned by Jonathan McMurray of Eighty Four. "Taffy" has production records to 16,240M 4.6% 752F 3.3% 535P at 2-05 in 319 days.

American Breeders Service, DeForest, Wisconsin, donated the silver water picher for the high milk production award to McMurray. Marfred Farm, Saluda, South Carolina, sponsored the silver bread basket for the high butterfat production award. The octagonal wall clock for the high cow performance index award was sponsored by Bay Meadow Farms, Galt, California.

## Public Auction Register

Closing Date Monday 5:00 P.M. of each week's publication

### DECEMBER

TUES., WED., THURS.  
DEC. 14, 15, 16 - 10AM  
Fairhills NJ, Manalapan NJ, Haverstraw NY. Tues. L.V. Ludlow Bldg. Supplies, Rte. 202 Fairhills, NJ. Wed. Millhurst Business Park, Manalapan, NJ. Thurs. Rt. 9W & Westside Ave. Equipment & Store Fixtures, Paint, Household Items, Hardware, Tools, Plumbing Supplies, Garden Supplies, Elec. Dept. Pool Supplies, Lumber, Kitchen Cabinets, Doors & Windows, Misc. Peter Costanzo, Aucts.

THURS. DEC. 16 - 12Noon, Bob's Big Boy Restaurant. Located Colonial Park, Rt. 22 East, Harrisburg, Pa. Directions: I-81 To I-83 Exit Colonial Park, Directly Across From Colonial Park Mall. Mark Baranowski, Auct.

FRI. DEC. 17 - 11AM Mt. Rock Farm Christmas Cow Sale, 100 Holsteins.

Located South of Carlisle, Pa., off Rt. 81 at Plainfield Exit to Rt. 11, S. 2 miles to Cumberland Golf Course, turn right, go 1 mile to Clay Rd., left to stop sign, left to 2nd farm on left. Bill & Cynthia McKeehan, owners. Rick Foreman, auct.

FRI. DEC. 17 - 11:30AM 2 Complete Holstein Herd Dispersals at Shady Lane Dairy Sales, Inc., 1/4 Mile West of Quarryville, Pa. off Rt. 372 onto Oak Bottom Rd. Managed by Shady Lane Dairy Sales, Inc.

SAT. DEC. 18 - 1:30PM Personal Property. From Reading take Rt. 183 N. to Fairview Rd. turn right to White Oak Rd. turn right to property. Bern Township, Berks Co. By Martha Peters. Horning Farm Agency, Inc.

MON. DEC. 20 - 3:30 PM Leesport Farmers Market. Toys and games, antiques. Dave Boyer, auct.

## PUBLIC AUCTION MONDAY, DEC. 20th 3:30 P.M.

### LEESPORT FARMERS MARKET

Early washtub stand, copper wash boiler, Griswold fry pans, occupied Japan, sterling silver, kitchen items, mixing bowls, molasses pump, old match packs, Depression glass, glassware, etc.

Lots of Toys and Games: Childs sad iron, dolls, 16MM cartoons, Roy Rogers guitar & cup, Pez's, Gi Joe items, racing sets, car & airplane models, lunch pails, cartoon glasses, Hot Wheel sets, books, McDonald's items, Ideal motorific boats, Wiley E. Coyote figures, Fort Apache, lots of games, etc.

THIS AUCTION CONTAINS MANY TOYS, GAMES & ANTIQUES NOT ADVERTISED, DON'T MISS IT!  
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