FEEDING OF PIGS

OBJECTIVE:

To precisely control weight gain and body condition while supporting optimal foetal development. To achieve this the following should be done:

- Sound feeding practices that provide for adequate nutrient needs that are integral to health and well-being of pigs in all stages of production.
- Feeding pigs for optimal growth and production will also provide for their nutritional welfare.
- Feeding systems consistent with the health and welfare of pigs are: feeding for ad libitum intake (feed always available) or timed (restricted) feedings.
- Automated feeding systems should allow animal’s access to feeders in a manner that minimizes intimidation, bullying and aggression from other pigs.
- Feed provided should be fresh palatable and free of any gross contaminants, or physical or toxic substances or micro-organisms that could cause harm.
- Feed may be placed on a clean floor, in a trough, in individual feeders or in a self-feeder.
- Boars and Gestating Females - Restriction of feed intake is recommended to prevent them becoming overweight. Nutritional requirements may be met by feeding sows and boars measured amounts once or twice (preferably twice) for the day.
  1. If fed once per day, feeding during the hottest part of the day should be avoided.
  2. Feeding time should be the same each day.
  3. Amount of feed given should vary according to condition, size and reproductive stage of the pigs. Adequate levels of nutrition for pregnant sows are needed to ensure normal development of the foetuses.
  4. Feeding space should be adequate in group-house sows so that all have access to feed.
  5. Consideration may be given to installing feeding stalls which will reduce the feed competition for feed among the group-housed sows.
THE REPRODUCTIVE HERD- For Gestating Females:

1. Number of pigs born alive greater than 10
2. Birth weight greater than 1.5 kg
3. Pre-weaning mortality less than 10%
4. Number of piglets weaned per sow more than 9
5. Number of piglets produced per sow per year greater than 20.
6. Weaning weight depending on age
   a. At 21 days - 4.5kg
   b. At 28 days - 6.8kg
   c. At 35 days - 9.0kg
   d. At 42 days - 11kg
7. Number of litter per year greater than 2.2
8. Conception rate at first heat greater than 80%

AN EFFICIENT AND PROFITABLE FEEDING PROGRAMME DEPEND ON:
   a. GENETICS
   b. ENVIRONMENT
   c. HERD HEALTH
   d. MANAGEMENT
   e. NUTRITION
SOW’S BODY CONDITION

- BODY CONDITION AT FARROWING - 3 TO 3.5
- BACKFAT THICKNESS GAIN - 3 TO 5mm
Body condition is essential for the performance of the sow; if the sow does not have a good body condition you will have reproductive problems such as:

1. low number of piglets at birth
2. low birth weight
3. low weaning weight
4. low number of weaning piglets
5. high mortality
6. low conception rate
7. high number of open days
8. A farm with some or all of the above must go under.

THE REPRODUCTIVE HERD

1. **Boar**
   **Objective:** To precisely control the weight gain and body condition while supporting optimal semen development.

   **ENERGY REQUIREMENT FOR SEXUALLY-ACTIVE BOAR for**

   - **Maintenance**
   - **Growth**
   - **Mating activity**
   - **Semen production**

   **NB. Never allow a boar to gain more than 0.5-1.0lb. (0.25-0.45kg)/day**

2. **Lactating Sows**
   **Objective:** To maximize milk production whilst maintaining body condition.

3. **Weaners & Finishers**
   **Objective:** To maximize daily lean tissue gain in order to reach market weight in the shortest possible time.

   **NB. Lactating Sows, Weaners, Growing Pigs/Finishers** should be fed *ad libitum* or free choice.