

Feed management in the farrowing house

Feeding in the farrow house is the engine that drives the whole farm, as the proper feeding of the sow and maintenance of her body condition is critical to achieving a high level of productivity in the production unit.

A well balanced nutrient intake during lactation is important as this will assist the sows in producing more milk and therefore larger pigs at weaning, as well as limiting the loss of sow body condition. In addition, sow conception rate after weaning and subsequent litter size are highly dependent on the amount of feed the sow consumes within the farrowing house.

The feeding program in the farrow house should be designed to prevent pre- and post-farrow complications, whilst maximising feed intakes to supply the sow with her high nutrient requirements. Younger sows also generally eat less than older sows in the farrowing house and the limited amount of body reserves available in the genetically leaner modern sow makes the nutrient intake to support her needs of increasing importance.

The feeding requirement during the transition period from gestation to lactation is also a vital step in the farrow process, colostrum production and the onset of milk yield. If a specialised transition diet cannot be fed, the feeding level during the transition period should be discussed with a nutritionist.

Feed intake

Feed intake in the farrow house is correlated to environmental and management conditions and the following points should be considered when feed intake in the farrow house is a concern:

- Heat stressed and environmentally stressed sows do not eat well.
- Sows have an excellent sense of smell and therefore feeders need to be cleaned out regularly as the sows will not eat stale moldy feed, even if it is buried beneath fresh feed.
- The more sows stand, the more they eat, which also helps to identify



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sows that are not feeling well.

- Promptly treat sows that are not eating or are feverish. The normal temperature of a gestating sow is 38.3°C, although in warmer weather, the normal body temperature may be as high as 39.7°C.
- Feed lactating sows a minimum of three times a day. Unrestricted feeders can assist with the provision of smaller more frequent meals to help the feed stay fresh.
- Feed intake is directly correlated with water intake. Check each nipple drinker for proper water flow before each group of sows is placed into the farrowing house. Each sow needs 40-60 litres of clean water per day to achieve a high milk yield.

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daily feed intake of all sows so that those that have poor appetites can be identified and monitored.

The nutrient profile of a lactation diet should therefore be based on the performance data, lactation length and the feeding program in the farrowing house which Meadow Feeds takes into account in the formulation of our product range with the professional technical support from Cargill's animal nutrition.

Product specific

The Meadow Feeds lactating sow diet, MILKYWAY, has been formulated to address the specific needs of the lactating sow in order to maximise milk production and subsequent weaning weight. Feed intake during lactation will peak at 7 to 14 kg per sow per day, depending on the sow's appetite.

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