

Collecting information on feed intake will help you to identify areas where you are not meeting targets for your barn. By tracking this data you will also be able to calculate an optimal shipping weight for your farm based on cost of keeping animals the extra day(s). If your feed intake is not up to target...go through the following checklist and see what you can change to help improve your feed intake. Discussing your data results with your veterinarian or nutritionist may also prove helpful.

**FEED INTAKE MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST****Grower-Finisher Barn**

- Do you have a feed intake target?
  - How serious is the problem?
  - Where in the growth period does the problem exist?
- Do the pigs have continuous access to feed?
  - Does the feed system ensure a continuous supply of feed to the feeder?
  - Is there adequate feeder space given the number of pigs in a pen?
  - Are feeders properly adjusted to easy access, while preventing excessive wastage?
  - Are the feeders designed to maximize feed intake?
  - Are the feeders properly placed within the pen (room)?
- Do the pigs have a continuous supply of fresh water?
  - Are drinkers functioning properly?
  - Is the flow rate adequate for nipple drinkers?
  - Are the drinkers accessible to the pigs?
  - Are there sufficient drinkers in the pen?
- Is the barn environment supporting maximum intake?
  - Is room temperature too high, even in cool weather?
  - Is humidity too high?
  - Is air movement high and or mist coolers used during warm weather?
  - Are you using a nocturnal cooling strategy to reduce barn temperatures?
- Is the health status affecting feed intake?
  - Is immune system function minimized?
  - Is AIAO or age segregated rearing practiced or possible?
  - Is depop-repop practical?
- Has the feeding program been reviewed?
  - Are there nutrient imbalances that could affect feed intake?
  - Is the mixed diet consistent with the formulation?
  - Are unpalatable ingredients present?
  - Is feed separation a problem?
  - Is the diet contaminated with mycotoxins?
  - Is the diet contaminated with noxious weed seeds?
  - Has the diet been formulated to offset summer heat stress?

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE MONITORING AND ANALYZING FEED INTAKE GROWER-FINISHER**

*PROVIDED COURTESY OF: Lee Whittington; Prairie Swine Centre Inc.  
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### **Scope:**

This SOP is applicable to commercial farms with growing and/or finishing pigs using all-in all-out strategies.

### **Purpose:**

To describe the procedure for identifying pens of pigs within a grower finisher barn that will serve as test pens, collecting and weighing feed to determine feed disappearance within the pen, weighing pigs at critical points, and the procedure used to analyze feed and growth data collected.

### **Selecting the test pen**

1. Select pens that are representative of the room conditions within both grower and finisher rooms. Note: pens should be easy to access for personnel, close proximity to animal weigh scales would be advantageous. Care should be used in selecting pens that are not at an obvious disadvantage. For example, pens that are frequently dirty, experience drafts from inlets or located near exhaust fans should be avoided.
2. Test pens should be separated by at least one pen not on test.
3. A minimum of two data collection points are required per room. Note: if fence-line feeders are supplying feed to more than one pen, there must be a minimum of two feeders from which feed data is collected (ie. two feeders and four pens of pigs).

### **Equipment installation**

1. A suspended feed capture and weighing device is located above the feeder of each test pen. This device is to be large enough to hold a full day's allocation of feed for the pen. This may need to be quite large for large finisher pens or alternatively the unit will need to be operated several times per day. NOTE: the feeder should never run out of feed.
2. Install feed capture container so that it swings freely from scale mounted to ceiling when empty and when full. NOTE: when full the unit will hang lower and must not contact the feeder or any other obstruction or accurate feed weights may not be obtained.

### **Pig weighing procedure**

1. Select a starting date, typically one week after pigs arrive in the pen.
2. Weigh all pigs and record total pen weight.
3. Record average age of pigs at start of test (requires this information to be provided by the nursery barn)

### **Feed weighing procedure**

1. Ensure feeders are empty at start of test.
2. Ensure feed weigh hopper is functioning and scale is accurate.
3. Fill feed hopper, record weight of feed, trip mechanism and fill feeder.
4. Reset feed weigh hopper and allow automatic feed system to refill for day two.
5. Record daily feed usage for 14 days.

REPEAT PIG WEIGHING AND FEED WEIGHING PROCEDURES so that data is obtained for a minimum of three discreet observations. Typically observations can start at the following average pig weights; 25-30 kg , 45-50kg, 75-80kg.

Enter data in program like GrowthMaster or PorkMaster; or plot graphs using a spreadsheet or manually

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