

Perspective

Note on the effects of growth rate on grower pigs

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Accepted 21 March, 2022

DESCRIPTION

Grower or finisher ration management

Producers can increase profit margins by increasing the growth rate of their pigs. The rate of stock turnover increases as the growth rate improves, cutting the cost per pig raised and increasing the total kilogrammes of pork produced.

Lean beef is highly valued in today's market. Pig enterprises must focus on establishing the most cost-effective rate of gain and the optimum lean pork yield to fulfil market demands.

This entails giving pigs meals that are tailored to their needs for maximal lean tissue development without overfeeding protein or energy. With the development of herds selected for enhanced lean meat output during the last ten years, nutritional requirements have changed dramatically.

During the pre-weaning and nursery barn phases, some of the feeder pig's performance is built-in. Health status plays a major role. The body of a pig can route dietary resources in one of two directions: maintenance or growth. A proper vaccination programme combined with strict bio-security would assure the best possible health, reducing the amount of energy spent fighting diseases and freeing up more for growth.

Previously, genetic potential was classified as low, medium, or high growth potential. In Manitoba, all popular pig genetic variations are capable of generating high carcass lean yields and great growth rates.

The shape of the growth curve is what differs. The most significant changes occur when growth reaches a halt. The weight range varies depending on the variety, but it is normally between 75 kg and 90 kg. Energy and amino acid requirements decrease after this time. Excess energy will be stored as fat if it

is provided after the growth plateau has been reached. Excess amino acids can lower total intake, but they are also broken down and expelled by the body, elevating nitrogen levels in the excrement. Any excesses will raise the overall cost of growing the pig in the long term.

Improved soil and manure monitoring has shifted focus to nutrient levels in feed and manure. Nitrogen in excess of growth requirements is excreted, posing a problem for waste management. Nitrogen excretion can be reduced by carefully preparing meals. Feed costs may be reduced as a result of this.

Finisher rations with low energy content, such as all barley, are no longer as common as they once were. When the energy levels in the finisher ration get too low, many modern pig hybrids stall.

In 1998, the National Research Council (NRC) increased the nutritional needs for pigs. These parameters have shown to be quite helpful in predicting amino acid and energy levels for age-appropriate rationing.

According to the NRC recommendations, a 20 kilogramme pig will require 17.5 grammes of lysine per day from 1.85 kilos of feed to achieve maximal lean tissue accretion. Pigs eat far more than this on a daily basis, and unless their diet is reformed to contain less protein, they will consume far more protein than they require for maximum growth. The pigs consume what they require to maximum growth while lowering feed expenses and the cost of dealing with excess nitrogen in faeces.

There are a few different techniques to keep track of feed intake by consulting the feed company's representatives or look through on-farm milling destination sheets. Manitoba Agriculture and Food or animal nutrition professional can help talk about feed rations.

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