

FEED MANAGEMENT IN THE NURSERY



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THE MOST CHALLENGING TIME FOR BOTH THE PIG AND BARN TEAMS IN A NURSERY ENVIRONMENT IS STARTING PIGS POST WEANING.

The first 14 days post weaning are critical in this stage of production. Effective feed and fallback management will help producers and their teams ensure a successful start and ultimately a great market pig. These recommendations are based on a 21 day wean age and average health status. Management may need to be adjusted if your farm production is significantly different. Help can be provided by consulting your DNA Genetics Technical Service Representative.

MAT FEEDING

A critical step for wean pigs to get started properly is to mat feed so pigs can find the dry feed and it's easier to consume. The recommendation is to feed 3 oz. of dry feed on the mat per 10 pigs. Many producers find success by mat feeding up to four times daily, especially when nurseries are overstocked. A measuring cup can be used or approximated by using your hands. Two handfuls are approximately 12-16 oz. of feed. Mat feeding allows the pigs to establish their rooting behavior and lick the feed off of their noses. Pelleted feed or a crumble may also be used when mat feeding.



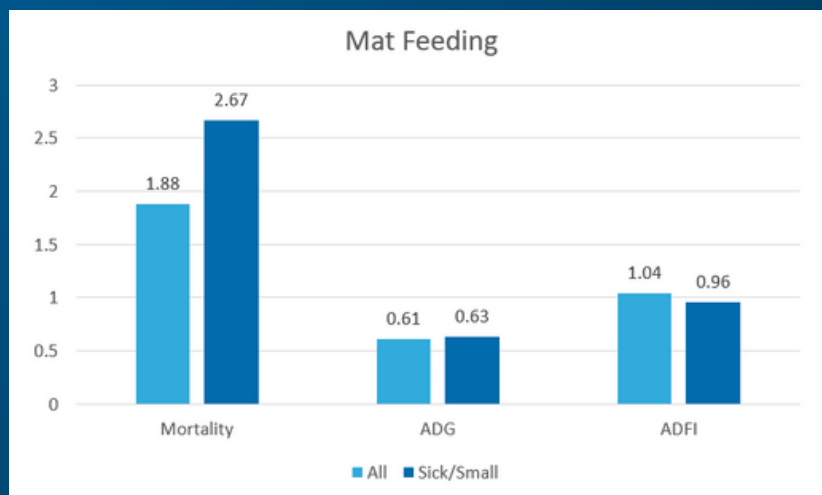
THIS TRIAL OF ALMOST 6,000 PIGS MEASURED THE IMPACT OF CREEP FEED WHILE ON THE SOW THE LAST 7 DAYS OF LACTATION.

While not statistically different, the results show a positive trend in all measured areas vs the control group; especially increased feed intake which drove down mortality by .89%.

	Control	Creep
# Reps	3	3
# Pigs	2,941	3,047
Start Wt	13.1	13.3
End Wt	37	40
Mortality	3.79%	3.08%
ADG	0.59	0.65
FC	1.63	1.69
ADFI	0.96	1.1
DOF	39.5	40.4
Feed Cost per Lb Gain	\$0.25	\$0.25
Pigs to Sick Pen	56	36

MAT FEEDING STUDY RESULTS.

The results showed no statistical difference for ADG or ADFI; however, **there is a clear mortality advantage of making sure teams utilize mat feeding on all pigs to help pigs get to feed right away and to not fall behind.** This study included 24K nursery pigs with the control group only mat feeding sick/recovery and small pens.



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STARVEOUTS

Producers should budget 10-15% post wean flow as starve out pigs to be able to pulled to another pen for extra care. Even if gruel and mat feeding protocols are followed, many pigs may not eat well and non-eaters should be pulled needed into a sick pen. Starve outs can be spotted visually. When visually identifying starve outs or fallback pigs, look for pigs that are gaunt with their head down.



GRUEL FEEDING

Most pigs find feed within 12 hours post weaning. There is a small population that may get past 24 hours without finding feed and should be identified and pulled into the sick and small pens. When these pigs are pulled to the sick or small pens, gruel should be a key part of their diet to ensure they get the best start. Gruel should first be mixed to a watery "soup" consistency (3 parts water/1-part dry feed) so that as the pigs drink, they will also ingest the nutrients from the feed. The first nursery diet typically has milk products and animal bi-products so gruel should be consumed within 30-45 minutes to prevent spoilage. To keep pigs dry and warm, grueling pans should be kept away from sleeping areas and the pans should be cleaned in alleyways. The recommendation would be to utilize the red feeders with the grated covering. This prevents the pigs from walking through the gruel which also helps to keep them dry.

FEED PAN COVERAGE

The initial diet should be in the feeder before pigs arrive with proper feeder settings. Because the first diet contains a lot of milk products, the feed can become sticky from pigs' noses or from humidity in the room. For this diet, the feed pan coverage should be 85-100% to help the feed be free-flowing and avoid runout. Over time, coverage can be reduced to 50% over the nursery period to prevent feed wastage and maximize performance.

