BEYOND THE HELIX

THE IMPACTS OF LOWER ENERGY RATIONS ON FINISHING PIG PERFORMANCE

WITH ETHAN STEPHENSON

As soy crush facilities expand, they bring with them the anticipation that soy hulls could become a valuable feed product. However, we first must understand the impacts of lower energy rations before using these in diets. Researchers at DNA Genetics recently performed a study to understand the effect of lowering energy in the diets of finishing pigs. The study was accomplished by starting with a control diet formulated as a corn-soy ration and then titrating energy down using a blend of DDGS and soy hulls to create five different treatments.

As expected, when the energy decreased, the treatments also resulted in a lower average daily gain. The research team also observed a quadratic response for intake. It peaked at the -120 ME kcal/lbs. treatment and then dropped back down for the highest fiber diet. Based on these results, the feed/gain ratio was best with a corn-soy blend and linearly increasing to the highest fiber diet. This reduction in gain throughout the trial drove a significant difference in body weight, with the animals on the corn-soy ration having the heaviest weights.

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