

Starting Nursery Pigs on Feed

Author:

Palmer Holden, Iowa State University

Reviewers:

Eric van Heugten, North Carolina State University
Joel DeRouchey, Kansas State University

1. Sort pigs by weight to minimize dominance at feeders and waterers.

- Put smallest 10-15% of the pigs in separate pens.
- Put small pigs toward the middle of the barn for intensive management.

2. Use feeding mats along with self-feeders.

- Mats should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Place only small amounts of nursery diet on mat as nursery feed is expensive and easily wasted on the mats.
- Use mats only until pigs begin eating from a self-feeder.



3. Self-feeders.

- For the first few days add several small feedings per day of fresh feed.
- Remove feed contaminated with feces or urine.
- Do not limit feed at any time.
- Monitor feed consumed daily until pigs are readily consuming feed.
- Allow one foot of feeder space per four or five pigs.

4. Fresh water.

- If pigs do not have adequate clean, fresh water they will not eat.
- Adjust height of nipple waterers to shoulder height of smallest piglets.
- Adjust water pressure to less than 20 psi.
- One cup waterer per 20 pigs or one nipple waterer per 10 to 15 pigs.



5. Pig level environment.

- Ensure piglets are not subjected to drafts or too warm or too cold conditions.
- Observe piglets for shivering or excessive piling to keep warm.

6. Observe pigs to ensure all have found feed and water.

- Watch for sunken bellies, rough hair coats, etc., as indicators of poor feed intake.
- Piglets not eating need individual feeding. Gently place a small amount of moist pellets in each pig's mouth. Then place the piglet next to the feeder so it associates the feed with the feeder.

References:

Management of Newly Received SEW and Feeder Pigs, PIH 111. August, 2000.