

Should I Purchase or Make My Own Feed?

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Compare the quantity of ingredients available on the farm versus what needs to be delivered.

- Do I grow sufficient corn to feed my pigs or must I purchase additional corn?
- If all ingredients are purchased, it may be more economical to purchase complete feeds.
- What is the cost of transporting ingredients to the farm?
- Do you have the ability to receive soybean meal in bulk (24 ton)?



What quantity of feed must be prepared annually?

Tons/year	System
200-1,000	Portable grinder-mixer
1,000-2,500	Stationary computerized batching/mixing system with a separate grinding system
> 2,500	Feed mill with grinding, computerized batching, and overhead load-out bins

Quality Assurance and Formulation

- Do you have access to a nutritionist to least cost diets that optimize animal performance?
- Do you have access to extension services or willing to pay a consultant to develop a quality assurance program that evaluates ingredient and finished feed quality and monitors the manufacturing process?
- Do you understand the FDA’s current Good Manufacturing Practices for medicated feeds?
- Can you follow the cGMP’s to properly sequence mixing of diets to eliminate cross-contamination?
- What is the current particle size of the ground corn in the purchased feed and can you produce a comparable particle size?
- What is the estimated ingredient shrinkage?
 - Feed mills may experience a 0.5-1% shrinkage.



Labor

- Do you have sufficient labor to purchase ingredients, manufacture feed, and maintain the necessary records?
- Do you have the time and skills required to purchase ingredients, monitor feed additives, and manage quality control?

Delivery Sites

- What is the cost of delivering diets to the sites?
- Does feed need to be delivered to multiple sites or just one or two?
 - If feed is required at multiple sites it may be more economical to purchase diets delivered to each site.

Biosecurity

- What is the risk of feed delivery trucks moving from farm to farm?

Investment in mixing facilities

- Will potential feed savings of on-feed mixing be realized?
- How long do you want to raise pigs and mix feed?
 - A major investment must be depreciated over many years.
- Money invested in a feed facility may have a greater rate of return compared to money invested in pig production facilities.

Operational Cost

- What are the estimated utility costs to operate the feed manufacturing equipment?
- How much will analytical services for ingredients, feed, particle size, etc., cost?
- What are the estimated repair and maintenance costs associated with the equipment?
 - Routine maintenance will be required for roller re-corrugation, hammermill hammers and screens, scale calibration, and general repairs.



Other Considerations

- What are your other time commitments during spring planting and fall harvest, do you have sufficient time to commit to the process?
- Nursery diets often require special ingredients, e.g., dried whey, feed additives, and fat, which must be kept fresh and may be difficult to handle. You may wish to purchase diets used in small quantities.
- Roller mills produce a more uniform free flowing product in comparison to hammermill ground grain.

Other Options

- Purchase a used feed truck and develop an arrangement with a local feed mill to deliver corn and back-haul feed.
- Discuss options with your current feed supplier to lower manufacturing cost or improve animal performance.

References:

- On Farm Feed Processing, PIH-4. 1976.
- Herrman, Tim. 1997. Quality Assurance for On-farm Feed Manufacturing. Kansas State University. MF-2033.