

Feeding For 30: Reproduction Considerations

Monitoring Body Condition

Monitoring and managing sow condition can help determine the appropriate feeding program adjustments during gestation, and lactation. Best management practices include routine body condition scoring by production staff with appropriate changes in feed allowance to maintain ideal body condition.

- Early to mid-gestation is the most appropriate time period to get sows back to the correct body condition. A body condition score of 3 is desirable¹.
- Sow nutrition and feed intake should not be overlooked even in late lactation (just prior to weaning). Even though the energy demands on a lactating sow are reducing, her reproductive system needs to be supported by proper nutrition to ensure adequate rebreeding within a few days and future gestation needs.
- Contrary to the myth that backing a sow off feed the last week of lactation will help her transition to weaning, this practice can have negative effects on the next lactation. Nutrition at this stage influences consistency and maturation of oocytes in the next ovulation, thus impacting the size of the next litter.²
- To keep sows at their peak rebreeding performance, weight loss in lactation should be minimized. Doing so will positively influence their return to estrus after weaning and enhance their reproductive fertility.

Recovery and Nutrition Needed to Achieve 30+ P/S/Y

Beyond the demands for milk production, lactation is also a time of recovery and resumption for a sow. On average, a sow's uterus needs 14 to 16 days before it is capable of supporting another pregnancy³ – which assumes enough nutrients are available to meet the demand of lactation as well as those needed for the reproductive system to recover – void of any other environmental stresses. Nutritional and health management of the sow herd cannot be compromised in herds expecting to produce 30+ P/S/Y.

Did You Know?

Sow reproductive performance and culling research has shown statistically significant advantages when supplementing the diet with organic trace minerals, as compared to inorganic⁴:

- Higher percentage returned to farrow (+1.5%)
- Returned to estrous in less than 10 days (+1.3%)
- Culled or rebred after 10 days (-1.3%)
- Wean-to-estrus interval (-4.9%)

¹ Patience, J. F., and P. A. Thacker. 1989. Swine nutrition guide. Prairie Swine Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, pp. 149-171

² Goodband, Bob; Kansas State University. "Foundation for Achieving 30 P/MF/Y." National Hog Farmer. 15 Oct. 2011.

³ Flowers, Billy; North Carolina State University. "Understanding the Physiology of 30+ Pigs/Sow/Year." National Hog Farmer. 15 Oct. 2011: 12.

⁴ Wilson, Mark E.; Ph.D. Zinpro; Presentation. "How Do We Solve Lameness Problems"; June 2011.

For further information, please see your local feed sales representative at a Land O'Lakes Feed Co-op or Purina Mills Dealer. Visit us on-line at www.LOLFeed.com, www.PurinaMills.com

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