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Feeding and Care of the Brood Sow



Good breeding is no more than half the essentials of profitable hog-raising. Proper feeding and care are fully 50 per cent of the total requirements.

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Feeding and Care of the Brood Sow

The size, health, and vigor of pigs when farrowed depends on the feed and care of the brood sow through the gestation period, which is about 112 days.

The sow should have enough feed to provide heat and energy and to make bone, muscle, and blood for her own body needs as well as to supply nourishment for her coming litter. If underfed, the sow will utilize feed for the nourishment of her unborn pigs at the expense of her own body needs. As a result she will be undersized and weak. Too much feed will make a sow lazy and fat. Such a sow will produce weak pigs.

Exercise is necessary to insure the farrowing of strong, healthy pigs. To induce this, a sow should be fed some distance from her sleeping quarters.

Rations are suggested

The following rations have given satisfactory results for wintering brood sows.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| I. 50 per cent ground
oats | II. 50 per cent ground
barley |
| 50 per cent corn | 50 per cent ground
oats |
| Skim milk | Alfalfa hay |
| Alfalfa hay | Skim milk |

III. 30 per cent corn	IV. 33 per cent corn
30 per cent ground barley	33 per cent oats
30 per cent ground oats	33 per cent shorts or middlings
10 per cent tankage or skimmilk	Alfalfa hay
Alfalfa hay	Skimmilk or tank- age

Amount to feed depends on condition of sows. From 1 to 2 per cent of live weight is usually sufficient. A good type brood sow may gain up to 1½ pounds a day. Young gilts require far more feed than old and mature sows. A good plan is to feed just enough corn or barley to keep sows in desired condition. Other growth-producing feeds may be given dry or in slop. Some oats may be fed whole, scattered on the ground, thus increasing exercise. Three pounds of skimmilk should be fed for each one pound of grain. Some legume roughage should be fed. Good quality alfalfa or clover hay furnishes bulk and contains large amounts of protein (muscle building food) and minerals.

Mineral mixture needed

A mineral mixture should be kept before sows at all times. The following mixture is satisfactory: 40 parts steamed bone meal, 40 parts air-slaked lime or ground limestone, and 20 parts common salt.

Hairless pigs or goiter in pigs may be prevented to a large degree by feeding

sows one ounce of potassium iodide for each 100 pounds of mineral mixture.

Sows will eat more feed which will taste better, if the chill is taken off the water or sloppy feeds. They should be kept free from lice with crude oil or oil from the crank cases of cars or tractors, applied with a stiff brush.

Preparation for farrowing

Place each sow in a pen of her own, which has been cleaned and disinfected with strong coal tar disinfectant or boiling lye water several days before farrowing. A fender placed ten inches above the ground and eight inches from the wall saves many pigs from being injured or crushed by sows. Pens should have enough fresh air, and be dry, and comfortable. Just before farrowing less grain, especially corn and barley, should be fed. Slop of one-half ground oats and one-half bran is a good ration. A small handfull of oilmeal helps to regulate the bowels.

Do not feed sows for 24 to 36 hours after farrowing, tho they should have water with the chill taken off. Ground oats and bran is good feed after farrowing.

For further information consult your county agent or write to the Extension Division, University Farm, St. Paul.