

MN 2000 EF 90

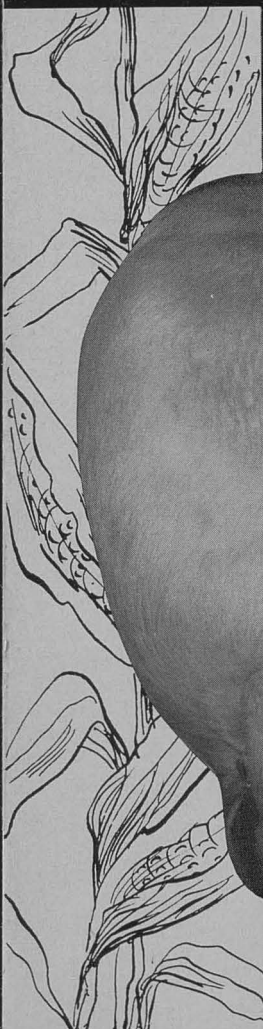
Extension Folder 90

2

Revised December 1954

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
AGRICULTURE

CARE AND FEEDING OF BROOD SOWS



H. G. ZAVORAL

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Agricultural Extension Service
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Care and Feeding of Brood Sows

H. G. Zavoral

HEREDITY is the most important consideration in selecting brood sows. Choose sows that came from large, uniform, and heavy-producing litters that were also heavy at weaning. Study the records of performance for a number of years in order to select a sow that will inherit the ability to produce large litters, make efficient gains, and grow fast.

Good inheritance is not the only factor that makes a good sow. She must be in good health in order to produce strong pigs. And if she has good inheritance and is in good health, proper feeding also will have an influence on the litter she produces.

Too Many Pigs Are Lost

The average farmer loses one-third of the pigs farrowed before they are weaned and altogether saves only about 6.5 pigs per sow. Yet in recent years, Minnesota Swine Honor Roll farmers saved 9 pigs per sow.

Why this big increase over the average? There is sufficient evidence to show that proper feeding of the sows during gestation has an influence on size and vigor of pigs at birth. The bigger the pigs at birth, the bigger the weight at weaning and the higher percentage saved.

Care Before Breeding

Gilts and sows should be thrifty but not too fat at breeding time. Gilts should be removed from the fattening lot early—between four and five months of age—and fed a growing ration.

For two or three weeks just before breeding, sows should receive a good ration and be gaining in weight. This results in what is known as flushing and means that larger litters are started.

Record the date each sow is bred so you will know when she is ready to farrow. If you do not use ear tags then clip her hair to identify her until farrowing time.

- **GOOD INHERITANCE**
- **GOOD HEALTH**
- **GOOD FEEDING**

The brood sow that has these three advantages is the one that will farrow and raise large litters of strong, vigorous pigs for you.

The Gestation Period

The gestation period may vary a few days. For gilts it is usually 106 to 114 days, for sows 112 to 118 days.

During this period when the sow is carrying her pigs, feeding is very important. Provide her with plenty of good feed so that she will not have to starve her own body to nourish the unborn pigs. Just as important as the quantity is the quality of the ration. Use as wide a variety of rations as cost and availability will permit. The results will tell you if the brood sows are getting enough protein of good quality, water, minerals, and vitamins.

A few rations that have given good results are as follows:

FOR SELF-FEEDING SOWS DURING GESTATION

Ration No. 1

- 34 lbs. ground shelled corn
- 30 lbs. ground oats
- 28 lbs. good-quality ground alfalfa hay
- 4 lbs. tankage or meat scraps
- 4 lbs. soybean oil meal
- ½ lb. bonemeal
- ½ lb. trace element salt (iodized)
- ½ mg. vitamin B₁₂

Ration No. 2

- 46 lbs. ground corn
- 45 lbs. good-quality ground alfalfa hay
- 4 lbs. tankage
- 4 lbs. soybean oil meal
- ½ lb. bonemeal
- ½ lb. trace element salt
- ½ mg. vitamin B₁₂

Ration No. 3

- 40 lbs. ground oats
- 40 lbs. good-quality ground alfalfa hay
- 10 lbs. soybean oil meal
- 10 lbs. tankage or meat scraps
- ½ lb. trace element salt
- 1 lb. minerals
- 1 mg. vitamin B₁₂

Corn—either on the cob or shelled—should be hand fed according to the condition you want.

FOR HAND FEEDING SOWS DURING GESTATION

Ration No. 4

Feed 1 to 1½ lbs. of Ration No. 3 and 1 lb. of corn per hundred lbs. liveweight per day per sow.

Ration No. 5

Feed 2 lbs. per hundred lbs. liveweight of the following:

- 42 lbs. ground corn or barley or both
- 42 lbs. ground oats
- 16 lbs. good-quality ground alfalfa hay
- ½ lb. trace element salt
- ½ to 1 gal. skim milk or buttermilk per day per sow

FOR SELF-FEEDING SOWS DURING LACTATION

Ration No. 6

Give no feed except water the first day. The first four or five days feed the same ration as given during gestation, then *gradually* change to the following:

- 49 lbs. ground corn
- 25 lbs. ground oats
- 10 lbs. good-quality ground alfalfa hay
- 7 lbs. tankage
- 7 lbs. soybean oil meal
- ½ lb. trace element salt
- 1 lb. bonemeal
- ½ mg. vitamin B₁₂

FOR HAND-FEEDING SOWS DURING LACTATION

Ration No. 7

Hand feed all of Ration No. 6 that the sows will eat when the pigs are 10 to 14 days old.

OR

Feed the sows all they will eat of the following:

- 45 lbs. ground corn
- 25 lbs. ground oats
- 20 lbs. 35-42% commercial protein supplement
- 10 lbs. ground alfalfa hay

To save labor and expense, ear corn may be ground, cob and all. Use coarsely ground grains for best results.

Provide Good-Quality Hay

Good-quality fresh leafy alfalfa or clover hay should be a must when sows are not on pasture, for these hays are excellent sources of needed vitamins, proteins, minerals, and bulk. The proportion of hay to total ration may vary according to the condition of the sows. It may run from 15 to 30 per cent of the weight of the total ration.

Self-Feeding of Sows

To save time and labor both gilts and sows may be self-fed. The suggested rations will keep the sows in the desired condition if you regulate the amounts of alfalfa and oats.

Minerals

Minerals are supplied in the mixed rations but it is advisable to keep a self-feeder of minerals in front of all hogs at all times. If you do not use commercial minerals, try the following mixture.

- 40 lbs. steamed bonemeal
- 40 lbs. calcium limestone or oystershell flour
- 20 lbs. trace element salt
- 2 lbs. iron oxide

Water Is Needed

Water should be available at all times. And here is a point to remember for winter: Sows will not drink enough water if it is near the freezing point. Thus, heated self-waterers are a good investment for winter watering.

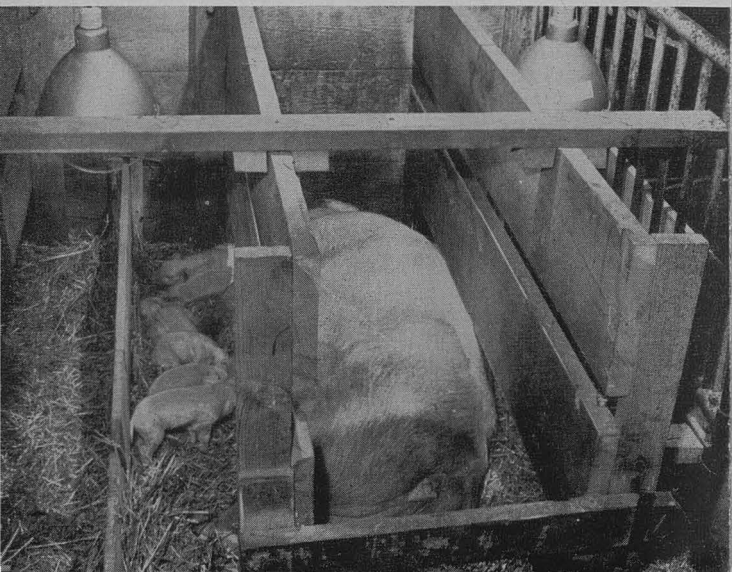
Exercise Important

Pregnant sows need exercise. You can encourage them best to exercise by placing the feeders some distance from the sleeping quarters.

Preparation for Farrowing

You can prevent filth-borne diseases by cleaning and disinfecting the pens with one can of lye to 20 gallons of boiling water. Live steam when available is also very effective.

Provide farrowing stalls to save pigs.



Shortly before the sows farrow, wash their sides and udders with soap and water. At least brush the sows off well before placing them in clean pens.

Use farrowing stalls with guard rails or fenders on at least two sides of the pen to save pigs. Have heat lamps or other artificial heat when necessary. Do not use too much bedding. Change it often, and keep it dry.

After Farrowing

Feed sows sparingly after farrowing. No feed is recommended for the first day but give them water with the chill taken off. On the second day feed bulky feeds such as oats and bran. The following mixture, which has been shown to give good results, may be fed for the first 10 or 12 days:

28 lbs. ground corn
36 lbs. ground oats
16 lbs. wheat bran
10 lbs. alfalfa meal
6 lbs. soybean oil meal
3 lbs. tankage
1 lb. trace element salt

Use this feed sparingly at first and gradually increase it each day for 8 to 10 days until the sows are on full feed. Then switch to Ration No. 6 or No. 7.

If pigs start scouring, increase the sow's ration of oats and cut down on the rest of the feed.

Pastures Help Cut Costs

If the sows can graze on good rape, alfalfa, or clover pasture, they will not need as much supplementary protein feeds—especially those that need to be bought. Brood sows on good pasture can also be kept thrifty on less grain than is needed for winter feeding. In fact, good pasture can reduce the grain requirement as much as 50 per cent. Place little pigs on clean pastures that have not been used for hogs for two or preferably for three years.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, INSTITUTE OF
AGRICULTURE, ST. PAUL 1, MINNESOTA

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Minnesota, Agricultural Extension Service and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Skuli Rutford, Director. Published in furtherance of Agricultural Extension Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

10M-6-54



3 1951 D01 928 694 H