



PORK BRIEFS

The Latest Information
on Swine Nutrition

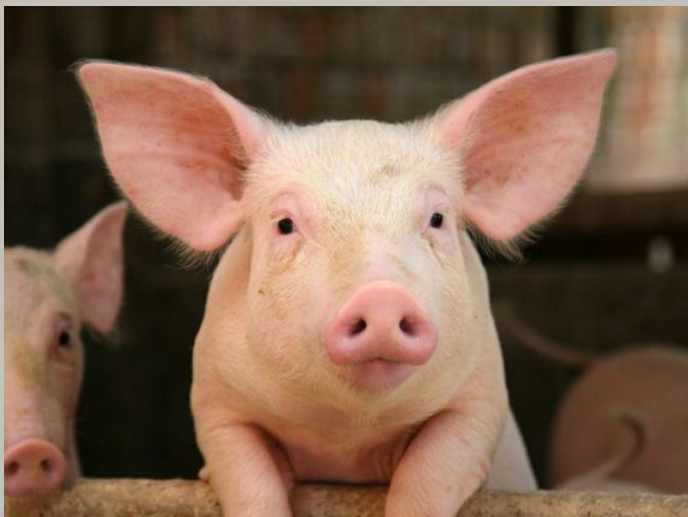


MAXIMIZING THE HIGH'S

By: Ken Palen

The January 2010 statistics from Statistics Canada are out and the downsizing that has occurred in the Canadian Swine Industry is huge. There are 18% less sows, and sow numbers are expected to drop even more. It has been quite a roller coaster ride with Canada having about 1.2 million sows in the late 1990's, then peaking out at about 1.3 million sows by 2005 and now back down to what is expected to be 1.2 million sows when this decline ends. Ontario has also shown a similar pattern with the highest recorded number of sows at 435,000 to a current decline of over 20% to about 340,000 sows. Another statistic that is not often discussed in the records is that when I first started selling feed to hog producers in 1976 there were 16,017 producers selling 2,543,882 hogs yearly in Ontario (Source: Ontario Pork). Recent 2009 Ontario Pork statistics show 2,261 producers selling 5,025,186 hogs and we know many people with shipping numbers have two numbers or are not currently shipping at all. Talk about efficiency, we are probably down to 5 to 10% of the producers growing twice as much pork. Even with all this downsizing, government hog buyouts, and just plain loss of enthusiasm there is a recent renewed interest in pushing ahead as the price shows a little upward movement.

Maximizing the highs is something hog producers have done for years.



The old saying about raising hogs is "The hogs will drag you down into the mud puddle but if you hold on long enough they will drag you back up to the top of the hill." The opportunity for hitting the highs is what keeps commodity producers interested in the business.

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Inside this Issue

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With larger litter sizes, comes the need for a solution to feed smaller piglets.

Here is what swine producer Brian McNichol has to say about firstSTART P Piglet milk replacer:

We have worked with Kenpal for all our feed since the mid 1980's and when we were looking for a new supplier for piglet milk replacer, Ken suggested we give their new milk replacer product firstSTART P a try.

We find that firstSTART P works just as well as the other milk replacers available and at a better price. With other products we have tried the piglets look swollen, but with firstSTART P they fatten up nicely!

We use the milk replacer with the piglets that fall back on the sows. With the larger litters we see, it is important to have this option available and we find that these runt piglets can usually be weaned at the same time as the rest of the litter.



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When these highs come and go are up to the total discretion of the reader. Questions are now being asked about feeding better nutrition, meeting breeding targets, reviewing health programs and booking commodities. These are questions that have not been asked for a couple of years.

In order to put current values on some productivity opportunities I asked Cor Harder (Fair Price Discovery) to run some economics using recent commodity costs, historical production costs and last years approximate pork selling price of 1.18/Kg. The chart below shows where some extra dollars per pig may be realized in the order from highest to lowest by the different opportunities.

Maximizing the Highs		
Productivity Chart		
Opportunities	Improvement	Extra \$ Value per Pig
Piglets Born Alive	Plus one Pig	\$2.75
Farrowing Rate	80% to 85%	\$2.03
Finisher Feed Efficiency	2.8 to 2.7	\$1.88
Dressing %	80% to 81%	\$1.70
Pre-Wean Mortality	12% to 8%	\$1.53
Finisher Mortality	2% Decrease	\$1.24
Pig Index	Extra one point	\$1.18
Nursery Mortality	2% Decrease	\$0.75
Nursery Feed Efficiency	1.6 to 1.5	\$0.65
	TOTAL	\$13.71

Pigs born alive show the biggest opportunity for extra returns. As selling pig price increases Pig Index would become a larger opportunity and the price of feed will determine where feed efficiency fits in the chart. The chart would need to be evaluated by each farm differently, but does give an idea of the opportunities of maximizing the productivity in certain areas of the business to optimize the returns.

Corn Quality Update

While reviewing the opportunities to improve productivity, the corn quality needs to be considered. Currently the corn is feeding out well, but there are reports of under conditioned sows. This can have a direct impact on reproduction and should be monitored closely. Growing pigs also seem to be consuming more corn than anticipated on normal years depending on the grades. Bins are emptying quicker than expected which could mean an increase of local corn required later in the summer. There are some reports of what I call Christmas trees growing in the storage bins. This is corn that has heated in the centre of the bins and can be mouldy. The corn can also let loose with a bang when it comes crashing down. Be checking but be careful and watch for air pockets in the bins as well.

In summary, hopefully we are turning the corner on the negative times we are seeing in the overall livestock industry in Canada. When opportunity exists being ready and understanding where to focus to grab some returns is usually a good goal. Hopefully some of this information is of value to your planning.

Thank You.



ARE YOUR SOWS LOOKING A BIT THIN?

Skinny Condition



Good Condition



- Reports in Ontario are indicating dry sows are losing body weight
- Most nutritionists would agree having a good body condition with some body fat cover at farrowing is desired

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