

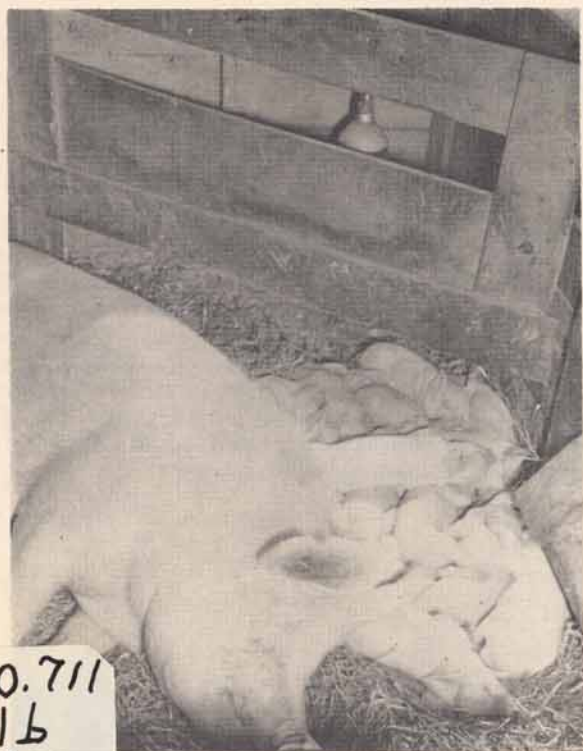


UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

College of Agriculture

Management and Feeding Of Brood Sows

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Management and Feeding Of Brood Sows

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THE number of pigs a sow will raise is influenced as much by care and feeding before farrowing as after the pigs are born. Four main factors determine the producing ability of a sow. These are:

Management

Feeding

Health

Inheritance.

Recommendations on management and feeding are given together because of the dependence of one on the other.

Before Breeding

Gilts that are to be used for breeding should be separated from the market hogs when about 5 months of age and put on a ration that will promote growth and body development. Both gilts and mature sows should have plenty of green feed for at least a month before they are to be bred. This can be either good, green-colored alfalfa hay or pasture. Hogs are inclined not to eat pasture that has started to mature and dry up. The following mixture makes a good feed for developing gilts and conditioning mature sows:

Barley	30 pounds
Oats	30 "
Wheat	20 "
Alfalfa meal.....	15 "
Meat meal.....	5 "
Iodized salt.....	½ "

Growing gilts can be self fed, but it best to hand feed mature sows.

At Time of Breeding

Keep sows and gilts active and firm fleshed by feeding and exercise. Have both sows and gilts gaining in weight at the time they are bred. The best way to do this is to increase the amount or reduce the bulkiness of the feed about 10 days before they are to be bred. Wheat and barley are

good feeds to use for this purpose. The following mixture makes a good feed for flushing gilts and sows before breeding:

Barley	25 pounds
Oats	25 "
Wheat	30 "
Alfalfa meal	10 "
Meat meal	5 "
Linseed oil meal	5 "
Iodized salt	½ "

It is more satisfactory to hand feed sows and gilts during the breeding season so they may be watched closely. They should never be bred while off feed or sick; wait until they are gaining again. Provide a well bedded house with plenty of room for all the sows to help prevent hog flu and pneumonia. It is best not to breed gilts before they are 8 months old, so they farrow their first litters at about 12 months of age. Keep a record of the date each sow is bred as this is very valuable at farrowing to insure that each sow is put into the farrowing house on time.

During Gestation Period

After sows are bred, feed a mixture that will allow them to gain slightly up to farrowing time. Regulate the rate of gain by varying the amount of hay in the feed mixture. Sows should never be allowed to lose weight after they are bred. Bred sows may be self fed, but hand feeding is generally best. Be careful about feeding damaged grain to bred sows and never feed them grain containing ergot. A good feed combination for bred sows and gilts is:

Barley	25 pounds
Oats	40 "
Wheat	10 "
Alfalfa meal	20 "
Meat meal	5 "
Iodized salt	½ "

Run the sows in small groups of 5 to 10 head according to size, age and temperament. Allow plenty of room in the sleeping quarters and keep them well bedded and ventilated.

At Farrowing Time

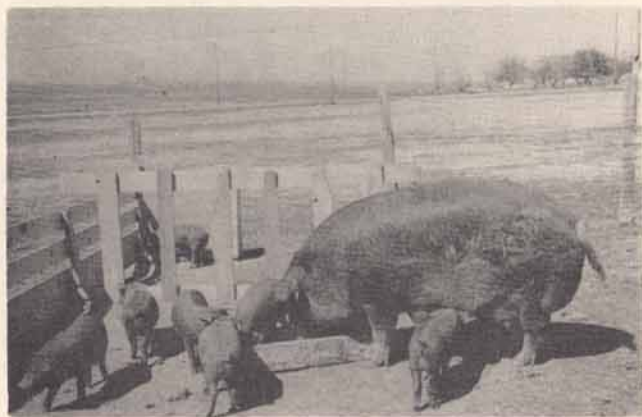
Prepare the farrowing pens ahead of the time the sows are to farrow. Clean each pen thoroughly and disinfect with hot lye water. Use 1 pound lye to 15 gallons of boiling water. Wash each sow and put her in the pen where she is to farrow about a week before she is due. Too often sows are not put in the pen soon enough to become adjusted before farrowing. Each pen should have

guard rails around the walls and the brooder in its place. Turn on the brooder heat a day or two before the sow farrows so she will become used to it. When the sow is put in the farrowing pen, change her feed to lighter, bulkier feeds and reduce the amount by about $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$. Take the protein supplement and other rich feeds out of the mixture so she will not have an oversupply of milk when she farrows. Too much milk will make the pigs sick and cause a lot of udder trouble with the sow. A good ration for sows at farrowing can be made up by mixing the following feeds:

Barley	30 pounds
Oats	30 "
Wheat bran	30 "
Alfalfa meal.....	10 "
Iodized salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ "

Do not feed the sow just before she starts to farrow or just after she finishes. Give her plenty of water and no feed until she is ready to eat, and then only enough to keep her quiet.

Give the sow plenty of bedding so she is comfortable any place in the pen. This will stop piling of the bedding and the danger of injuring the pigs. Short straw or shavings makes good bedding material. Even with the best of equipment and careful brood sows, the caretaker can save many little pigs and head off a lot of troubles by watching the sow closely while she is farrowing.



Make more profit per sow by creep feeding pigs

After Farrowing

Keep the sows feed bulky and limit the amount given after farrowing until the pigs are taking all the milk she gives. Then gradually change the feed to the heavier grains and add protein feeds. Make changes gradually to avoid throwing the sow "off feed" and scouring the pigs. Older sows usually take longer to change and are more sub-

ject to udder troubles because they produce more milk. Fat sows produce more milk than thin sows and must be handled more carefully. Feed sows suckling litters a ration quite low in fiber and containing plenty of protein and give them all they will eat in a self-feeder or by hand feeding. A good feed for sows suckling litters can be made up as follows:

Barley	30 pounds
Oats	25 "
Wheat	25 "
Alfalfa meal.....	10 "
Meat meal.....	10 "
Iodized salt.....	½ "

If sows are to be re-bred, wean the pigs when they are 8 weeks old and keep on full-feeding the sows. Protect the sows' udders by letting them back with the pigs every 24 hours for 3 or 4 days, or until the sows start to dry up. Reducing the feed of sows that are to be re-bred may result in small litters at the next farrowing.

Minerals

Prevent the nutritional diseases by the use of mixtures of good feeds including alfalfa hay or pasture. Include protein-rich feeds that come from an animal source in the mixture. Allow free access to a mineral mixture made up as follows:

Iodized salt.....	20 pounds
Oyster shell flour.....	40 "
Steamed bone meal.....	40 "

Water Is Essential

Providing good, clean water is one of the most important management practices and has a great bearing on production efficiency. An automatic or self-watering device that permits hogs free access to water but prevents their getting in it is best. There are many patented devices that work very satisfactorily. These are available at most supply stores handling hog lot equipment. Keeping water cool in summer and warming it slightly in severely cold weather will pay well in the feed saved. Where hand watering is necessary, as in the farrowing pen, give the water at regular intervals. Watering after each feeding is usually most satisfactory.

Keeping Brood Sows Healthy

Swine diseases greatly limit the production of hogs in Idaho and account for a major part of the failures in swine enterprises.

Brood sows must be kept free from disease if they are to produce profitably. To have a disease-

free sow herd, start with gilts and sows that come from a herd known to be disease-free, or protected by vaccination against hog cholera and swine erysipelas. Blood test all sows and boars for brucellosis before breeding and blood test any replacement hogs and isolate them for 30 days before they are put with the herd.

Use sanitary management practices to control the filth-borne diseases. Rotate pastures each year and use feeding floors and floored houses. Clean and disinfect the farrowing quarters before each farrowing.

Get rid of lice and mange by spraying the sows before breeding time with a lindane spray mixture containing 2 pounds of 25 per cent lindane wettable powder in 100 gallons of water, using a pump pressure of 400 pounds. Cover all parts of the sow, paying particular attention to inside of the ears and up under the fore and rear flanks. Treat all replacement hogs before they are allowed to come in contact with the herd to prevent re-infestation.

Selecting for Inherited Production Ability

The size, type, body conformation and temperament of brood sows have a definite influence on their producing ability and must be considered in selecting gilts or sows. In addition, such things as litter size and weight, number of teats and milk-producing ability may be the factors that determine whether or not a sow will produce profitably.

Select gilts and sows that come from litters in which 10 or more pigs of even size, averaging 2½ pounds or more were farrowed.

The weight of the litter at 8 weeks of age or at weaning time is one of the best measures of a sow's producing ability. The standard minimum weaning weight for most breeds is 275 pounds for first-litter gilt litters and 320 pounds for litters from mature sows. There must be at least 8 pigs raised to 56 days of age. Sows from litters that do not reach these weights are apt to be poor producers as brood sows.

Feed records are one of the most valuable tools to use in selecting profitable brood sows. Select breeding gilts from litters that make their gains on 4 pounds or less of feed per pound gain.

Select sows with good udders and 12 or more evenly spaced teats. Do not keep gilts that come from sows with meaty udders, blind or inverted teats, or those with unevenly spaced teats.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

JAMES E. KRAUS, Director

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