CREEP RATIONS FOR BABY PIGS

Young pigs, from birth to weaning age, require supplemental feeding if they are to make thrifty and economical gains. Supplemental feeding becomes more critical when litters are large, because it becomes impossible for a lactating sow to meet their increasing demands for energy. The supplemental rations must be high in both protein and energy and low in fiber because a pig at this age has a small digestive system. The ration should also be palatable and freshly prepared in order to encourage early consumption. The common grains in this area, oats and barley, are not suitable creep feeds because of their poor protein levels and high fiber content.

However, by removing the hulls from oats and by adding soybean oilmeal, we have a good base for building an adequate creep ration that is high in energy, high in protein, palatable and economical to feed.

A trial was started in May, 1970 to compare two creep rations. One creep ration was made up simply with oat groats, soybean oilmeal, minerals and vitamins.

The other creep ration contained a mixture of shelled corn, hulled oats, soybean oilmeal, dried whey, white sugar, minerals and vitamins. Both rations were self fed in meal form in a creep area that excluded the sows. The creep rations were available to the little pigs from about 10 days of age until weaning.

The pigs were assigned to creep ration by age. An effort was made to equalize the litters from sows and gilts between the creep rations. The pigs also had access to automatic water fountains and could eat with their mothers if they wanted to. About mid-way through the trial, all pigs were vaccinated for erysipelas and the male pigs castrated. Gains were figured on the difference between birth weight and weaning weight.

The trial was repeated with the fall litters. The creep rations as fed are shown in Table 16. Table 17 shows the results based on two farrowings.

Table 16. Pig Creep Rations as Fed at Dickinson, Spring and Fall 1970.

Ingredients	Simple Oat-soybean oilmeal	Complex corn
Hulled oats	1644	404
Soybean oilmeal	300	570
Shelled corn	-	600
Dried whey	-	270
White sugar	-	100
Bonemeal	20	40
Limestone	20	-
Trace mineral salt	10	10
Fortafeed	2	2
Vitamin B_{12}	4	4
Vitamin A	230 gms.	230 gms.
Zinc sulphate	100 gms.	100 gms.
Calculated % Protein	20.0	20.9
% TDN	87.3	80.3
% Calcium	0.74	0.75
% Phosphorus	0.56	0.64
Cost per ton	$78.40	$86.50

Table 17. Results of Feeding Either a Complex or a Simple Creep Ration.

		No. head	Birth weight	Weaning weight	Gain	Cost per hundredweight gain
Simple Oat-soybean oilmeal						
Spring	(males)	41	2.8	32.7	29.9	
	(females)	47	2.5	32.7	30.2	$2.37
Fall	(males)	48	2.7	36.1	33.4	
	(females)	34	2.5	35.5	33.0	$2.37
Average		170	2.63	34.25	31.63	$2.37
Complex corn						
Spring	(males)	38	2.7	38.2	35.5	
	(females)	44	2.7	36.8	34.1	$2.43
Fall	(males)	35	2.7	37.9	35.2	
	(females)	45	2.7	36.4	33.9	$2.82
Average		162	2.65	37.33	34.68	$2.63

Summary

Based on this trial involving more than 330 pigs, it appears that the complex ration did give approximately 3 pounds more gain per pig than did the simple oat groat ration. However, the cost per hundred pounds gain was consistently higher with the complex ration, averaging $.26 per hundredweight gain more than with the simple ration.

It appears that the complex ration should be the ration of choice even though the cost is slightly higher. It is important to keep the creep feed fresh and clean in order to get early consumption.