



*Suther's*  
Nutrition Management People

Quality  
Consistency  
Availability

### *Nursery Management Overview*

#### Stocking Density

- Most nursery flows today are operated on a six week turn. Pigs should average 50 lbs. when moved out. A minimum space requirement of 2.75 to 3.0 sq. foot per pig is needed.
- When loading the building or room leave an empty pen for pigs that fall behind. Most operations need enough space for 5 to 10% of the total number moved in.

#### Social Tips

- Stop, look, and listen. Enter the room quietly the first thing in the morning so you can see how pigs are sleeping, etc.
- Pigs respond to overcrowding by reducing feed intake. This depresses weight gain, hurts feed conversion, and most likely health status.
- Pigs can be sorted to size. However, this is not critical to their performance. Sort off the largest pigs and the smallest pigs and gate cut the rest.
- Remove pigs that don't start well or need to be treated to a sick pen. Pigs that are treated should be marked, checked the next day and treated again if needed.
- Use night lights when not in the building. Pigs react much like we do to the daylight hours, so leave lights on during the day with only night lights later.

#### Environmental Tips

- Follow the enclosed temp chart. Reduce temp by about 2°F per week. Pigs will tell you when they are comfortable based on their lying / sleeping habits. Chilled pigs will lie on their stomachs to conserve heat or pile up. Keep humidity in the room to a max. of 50 to 60 % if possible. This helps to reduce respiratory issues caused by disease or pit gases.
- Reduce drafts, provide plastic pads for pigs to lie on for 7 to 10 days after arrival. Size pads at ¾ sq. ft. per pig. Remove from the pen when pigs begin to dung on them.
- Allow for all the pig's needs within the pen design. They should be able to identify eating, drinking, sleeping, and dunging areas based on pen design and the quality of the environment.
- Use heat lamps to help make pigs comfortable after arrival. Use red bulbs if possible as this attracts the pig to the warmth. Watch the pig and adjust heat lamps up or down based on their lying / sleeping patterns.
- Use a Hi/Lo thermometer in the room to monitor temperature fluctuations. No more than 2 to 4° F per day.
- Monitor building pit gases. High levels of ammonia cause reduced feed intake, sneezing, respiratory issues, and redness around the eyes.
- Air inlets & fans. Monitor daily and watch to see how pigs are sleeping and where they are dunging. Adjust accordingly to maintain pig comfort. Make sure fans and inlets are cleaned periodically so they function properly.

#### Nutritional Tips

- Feed on plastic pads at least 3 times daily. This fosters the pig's natural curiosity and rooting instinct.
- Follow the feed budget. Plan to feed small pigs or those that fall behind slightly more of the first 2 diets while larger pigs may get slightly less.
- Feed small amounts at each feeding or just enough to make it to the next feeding. While pigs should never be out of feed, nursery diets will pick up the odors in the barn reducing palatability and feed intake.
- Make sure feeder adjustment is correct. Feed should only cover 1/3 to no more than ½ of the trough. Nursery diets are expensive so waste is a big factor.



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- Water – take time to adjust nipple waterer height weekly. Waterers should be set at the shoulder height of the pig to no more than 1" above. Check flow rate on nipples periodically. They should fill an 8 oz. cup in 15 seconds. Remember – a dirty nipple is one that is not working well. Lixit nipples are preferred for nursery pigs.
- Install the small "snap down" feeders for an additional water supply for a few days. This aids feed consumption and reduces navel sucking issues.
- Feed budgets – Stage 1 pelleted nursery diets are designed to be fed for 5 to 7 days. Make the transition to the first grind & mix diet by mixing the pellets in over about 2 days.
- Milk Replacer – follow usage recommendations on the bag. Use for pigs that are extremely dehydrated or do not start on feed well. Milk replacer usage should be minimal for each group. A simple cost effective milk feeder can be made from 4" PVC pipe.

### Disease Tips

- In a high health pig flow disease related issues should be minimal. Feed grade Neomycin / Terramycin can be used in the first 3 starter diets. The Phase 3 or final nursery diet can be non-medicated.
- Use a water proportioner to medicate pigs if needed. Garacin will cover most scour related issues at this age and Terramycin most respiratory issues. Electrolytes may be used to reduce dehydration issues after weaning.
- Make sure rooms are washed well and allowed to dry before using disinfectant. Proper cleaning helps to break any disease buildup.
- Sick pigs will be lethargic, head and ears will droop, and they will look rough haired. Make sure you really look at every pig every day, especially the youngest group.
- Use a veterinarian and do diagnostic work to determine the best method of therapy for your operation.

### Nursery Goals

- Death Loss – Less than 3 %, should be able to achieve 1 ½ %.
- Feed Conversion – Less than 1.85 with 1.55 attainable in high health pigs.
- Average Daily Gain – Greater than .90 lb. per day with 1.0 or better in high health herds.
- Culls – Should be at 1 to 1 ½ % or less.