

University of Missouri Extension

G2509, Reviewed October 1993

Swine Management Check Sheet

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This publication highlights some of the major swine management techniques producers should periodically check.

Setting goals

One aspect of good management is setting goals. This requires a record system adequate to determine your current position and to document whether you make improvements toward achieving those goals.

Goals vary with each producer. Matching what the top 10 percent producers are able to do might be one of your long-range goals. This goal requires you to invest more time, money and resources. It is the level you aim to achieve in perhaps five years. An intermediate goal could be a 10 percent improvement over present conditions in designated production areas. This goal puts you in a position to help you achieve a long-range goal.

Profitability factor

A swine producer who masters the art of good management has excellent profit opportunities. This is especially true with disease prevention and control.

A healthy herd of good-growing, quality breeding animals — adequately fed and housed — provides maximum profit opportunities for the owner who does not over-spend for facilities and/or feed.

Helpful hints

Keep herd healthy

- Obtain healthy female replacements.
- Isolate incoming boars and gilts.
- Isolate sick hogs.
- Establish a routine vaccination program.
- Size confined pigs.
- Adopt an all-in, all-out system.
- Select stress-resistant breeding stock.

Wean large litters

- Crossbreed with adequate boar power.

- Breed twice in the heat period.
- Improve health with antibiotics where needed.
- Save pigs by care at farrowing.
- Control farrowing house diseases: bacterial buildups — bunch pig crops and have a break in farrowing house use. Maintain proper ventilation.
- Contagious diseases — reduce traffic, immunize.

Reduce feed cost

- Prevent feed waste.
- Restrict feed so pregnant sows do not get fat.
- Use gain-tested boars for efficiency.
- Size groups of pigs and feed accordingly.
- Buy feed wisely. Consider computer ration formulation.

Produce quality

- Use high-ranking, performance-tested boars.
- Get carcass information on as many market hogs as practical.
- Market at proper weights.
- Market where quality is rewarded.
- Promote your product.

Example of goals

Pigs weaned per litter	8.5
Pigs per sow per year	18.0
Litters per sow per year	2.1
Total herd feed efficiency	3.6
Hogs sold @ 230 pounds weight 6 months of age	80 percent
Hogs getting carcass premium	80 percent

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Prebreeding

- Select healthy gilts with good growth and conformation, and with sound feet and legs.
- Select from large litters free of genetic defects. Individuals should have 12 or more evenly spaced teats.
- Use homegrown replacement gilts or disease-free, performance-tested, purchased gilts.
- Select to the practical limit from sow litters. (Gilts from sow litters transmit more disease resistance to their pigs than do gilts from gilt litters).
- Establish vaccination program for TGE, erysipelas and possibly leptospirosis and parvovirus.
- Purchase high ranking, performance-tested boars well ahead of the breeding season.
- Crossbreed for hybrid vigor.
- Plan your crossbreeding program.

Breeding

- Breed first week after weaning.
- Plan farrowing number to fit facilities.
- Use sufficient boar power of adequate age and numbers.
- Gilts should be 6 to 8 months old, weigh 250 pounds or more, and should have had at least one heat period before breeding.
- Breed 10 percent more females than you expect to farrow.
- When hand-mating, use two services spaced 12 to 24 hours apart.
- Increase boar's feed during breeding periods, according to his condition.
- Observe the herd closely during breeding — get breeding dates.

Gestation

- Limit-feed sows and boars (4 to 5 pounds per day). Prevent over-fatness. (Sows should gain 75 pounds, gilts 100 pounds).
- Consider or use individual sow stalls for feeding.
- Don't expose to other diseased swine.
- Prevent severe stress from all sources. Avoid overheating.
- Three weeks before farrowing treat for internal and external parasites.
- Repeat parasite control one week before farrowing.

Farrowing

- Wash sows and move them into quarters four days before farrowing. Feed a laxative ration.
- Farrow in clean, disinfected quarters or on clean ground.
- Have necessary medications and equipment on hand to care for sows and pigs.
- Be present when sows farrow or check routinely.
- Temperature check sows every 12 hours for 2 to 3 days after farrowing.
- Examine sows for caked udders.
- Full-feed nursing sows with eight or more pigs.
- Keep farrowing house well ventilated, but dry and free of drafts to reduce scours.
- Use footbath and minimize traffic in the farrowing house.
- Dip navel of newborn pigs in iodine.
- Clip needle teeth, ear notch, dock tails, start pig records.
- Keep pigs warm and dry.
- Even-up (cross-foster) litters. Transfer big pigs not runts.
- Protect from anemia before third day and at third week if still on concrete.
- Castrate before two weeks of age.
- Offer creep feed and water to baby pigs by seventh day.
- Wean at an age to fit your nursery but at a minimum 12-pound average pig weight.
- Watch for unhealthy litters. Sows may be a disease carrier.

Postweaning to 100 to 125 pounds

- Don't expose to other hogs — use all in - all out.
- Isolate sick pigs.
- Grow on clean ground or in confinement.
- Control internal parasites with medication as needed.
- Use 16 percent protein ration, appropriately medicated, during stress periods.

- Adjust feeders to minimize waste.
- Size pigs by weight. Consider split sex feeding.
- Minimize stress by shade, housing, working pens, water, good nutrition, careful handling, etc.

100 to 125 pounds to market

- Full-feed with adequate feeder and water space.
- Continue preventing feed wastage — this is the critical phase.
- Keep rations adequate but economical.
- Use foggers as needed to reduce heat stress.
- Identify a good market and meet its specifications.
- Calculate the shrink to markets and competitive pricing.
- Spot-check for dressing percent and carcass cutout.
- Build a reputation for good hogs, and market on a carcass value program.

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Related MU Extension publications

- G2310, Rotational Crossbreeding Systems for Pork Producers
<http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G2310>
- G2311, Terminal and Rotaterminal Crossbreeding Systems for Pork Producers
<http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G2311>
- G2502, Purchasing a Herd Boar for Commercial Swine Production
<http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G2502>

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