

Show Pig Nutrition

Source: K-State Show Pig Guide (2019) and used with permission from Dr. Joel DeRouchey, Kansas State University

Review from Elizabeth Share (Program Specialist OSU Extension), Dale Ricker (Program Specialist OSU Extension), Steven J. Moeller (Professor and State Swine Extension Specialist, OSU Department of Animal Sciences), and Andrea Rees (4-H/Youth Development Educator OSU Extension)

Starting your pig off right

- Allow free access to feed and clean water at all times
- From 50 to 150 lb. a 1.20% to 1.30% total lysine diet is generally fed
- From 150 lbs. until show day, a diet of 0.90 to 1.0% total lysine should be more than sufficient to meet the pigs needs for proper development

Ideal situation

- Place on full feed, all the pigs will eat, from time of purchase or weaning until show day
- Reality is this situation rarely occurs, and an alteration in the pig’s daily feed intake by the producer is often a necessity to maximize appearance of your pig

Maintenance daily feed requirements by body weight

Weight, lb.	Complete feed required, lb./day	Mcal, ME Metabolizable Energy	Lysine requirement, grams/day
150	2.1	3.21	0.9
160	2.2	3.34	0.9
170	2.3	3.46	0.9
180	2.4	3.58	1.0
190	2.5	3.70	1.0
200	2.5	3.81	1.1
210	2.6	3.93	1.1
220	2.7	4.04	1.1
230	2.8	4.15	1.2
240	2.8	4.26	1.2
250	2.9	4.36	1.3
260	3.0	4.46	1.3
270	3.0	4.57	1.3
280	3.1	4.67	1.4
290	3.2	4.77	1.4

1 lb of corn = 1.55 Mcal, ME; 1 lb of SBM = 1.53 Mcal of ME



The amount of feed per day listed in the chart does not seem like very much feed at all, what can I do so the pig is not so hungry all the time?

- Remember, the amount in the chart is for no weight gain, you can increase the amount you feed to grow the pig slowly, which is the recommended practice, not just holding at the same weight.
- You can feed a portion of the daily ration as rolled oats or a fibrous ingredient such as beet pulp, wheat middlings, or soybean hulls. This will add bulk and make the pig feel fuller after the meal and only add a small amount of energy.
 - Show feed suppliers offer various holding supplement products or complete rations to help with this issue.
- But... fibrous ingredients themselves do not provide enough protein (amino acids) to meet the body needs... so you must use these in combination with the normal ration to meet the pigs dietary needs. In addition, you may provide a top dress protein additive.
- It is recommended that pigs are weighed a minimum of twice per week to determine weight progress and change in the holding period.

- Do I need to top dress with additional protein, vitamins or mineral sources when I am holding my pig?

- Generally no, if your pig is 150 to 200 lbs. However, prolonged restricted feeding decreases the level of nutrients for a longer period, which may start to make the pig look stale and begin to lose muscle shape.
 - Show feed suppliers offer supplements that can be used during holding periods to help ensure all the proper nutrients are still consumed by your pig.
- When holding your pig above 200 lbs., a supplement or top dress will be needed to prevent your pig from looking stale or to prevent muscle loss.
- Typically the most economical protein source to top dress with is soybean meal. Other sources that can be used include dried whey, dried egg, or eggs themselves.
 - Soybean meal is generally the least expensive and matches the pig's needs for daily protein very well.
- In addition, restriction of feed intake will lower the amount of vitamins and minerals coming into the body. A maintenance diet will not cause deficiencies, but you should consider a supply of additional vitamins and minerals to the pig to prevent body losses.

- When you are done holding or restricting rate of daily gain, gradually over three to four days increase the feed amount until they are back on full feed eating all they wish daily.
- Pigs will compensate for some of the weight restriction by gaining faster the week after they are brought back up on full feed, so monitor closely the pig's weight gain.
 - If a pig has been restricted from feed for over 2 weeks, it is not uncommon that the pig may weigh 20 to 30 lbs heavier if given full feed for just one week.

- What if I purchase the right size of pig and determine at a weight over 200 lbs. that the pig is going to be too big?

- Start to reduce the amount of feed intake as soon as possible
- When holding in this weight range, you should top dress with a protein product/supplement.
- Never feed below the energy maintenance requirement
- Use a fibrous ingredient to help “bulk” the ration to increase the amount of feed fed each day so the pig does not become shallow in appearance.
- Exercise, exercise, exercise
 - Your pig will burn calories when exercised. You should exercise every other day for 20-30 minutes which will help reduce weight gain and keep your pig feeling good during this time.
- Weigh pigs twice weekly at a minimum during this time period to monitor weight adjustments.

- It is 2 weeks before the show and my pig is already at the ideal weight, now what?

- Crucial management is now required. This situation is the most unwanted by all pig show people, and you can do the most harm to the appearance of the pig if you do not pay close attention.
- For one week, feed the pig at maintenance, supply a protein top dress, and exercise daily. Also, add a high fiber ingredient or supplement to keep the pig full and not get a hollow appearance.
- After week one, bring the pig back up on feed, continuing to feed a protein top dress to bring back a fresh appearance.

- **NEVER** use water restriction as a way to reduce body weight.
- Possibly use electrolytes added to the free access water during these two weeks to help reduce any staleness that may occur.

How do I push the pig to gain more weight in a small amount of time?

- Feed the pig 4 to 6 small portions a day to stimulate appetite
- If your pig has a low appetite, adding a liquid fat (any vegetable) or dry fat (sold by all show pig feed dealers) to the diet can help add needed weight as the pig is consuming a higher level of energy that can be used for weight gain

Consequences of this type of feeding program

- Increased average daily gain
- An increased amount of body fat will develop due to the pig simply putting on more weight in a shorter period of time
- Pigs will generally look very “full” as a larger middle section will develop which may or may not be desirable for your pig

When is the best time to push your pig for increased daily gain?

- Between 125 to 210 pounds
- Pigs during this stage are developing muscle in a higher proportion compared to fat in the body

How do I properly lower daily gain to prevent an excessively heavy pig?

- If you determine your pig is going to be too big for your show, allow them to stay on full feed/full access to feed until they reach 130 to 150 lb.
 - Slow the pig’s growth rate after 150 lb.
- You must lower the feed intake and hand feed each day
 - However, you must feed enough to meet the pigs maintenance requirement (see previous chart)
- Feeding at a maintenance level will not stunt growth, it will simply prevent additional growth and maintain body weight
 - Generally, you will want to target a slower growth rate, such as 1 lb/day, rather than feeding a strict maintenance level.

NEVER feed below the maintenance requirement of your pig

Rules of thumb in determining feed costs:

1. The average amount that your pig will grow each day is between 1.7 and 2.0 pounds.
2. The average amount of feed your pig will consume each day is between 5 and 7 pounds per day.

****The amount of complete feed that it will take to feed a pig from 50 pounds to the targeted ending weight is as follows (Assuming a 3:1 feed conversation; that is, for every three pounds of feed your pig eats, he/she will gain one pound of weight)

Ending Weight	Amount of Feed
240 lbs	570 lbs
250 lbs	600 lbs
260 lbs	630 lbs
270 lbs	660 lbs
280 lbs	690 lbs