

Checklist to Determine Causes of Shortfalls in Feed Intake

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A. Have you determined what your feed intake target is?

1. How far below target are you?
2. Where in the growout phase does the shortfall exist?

B. Do pigs have ready access to feed?

1. Does the feed system ensure a continuous supply of feed to the feeder?
2. Is there adequate feeder capacity in the pen given the number of pigs in the pen?
3. Are the feeders properly placed within the room?
4. Is the feeder designed properly, to ensure easy access to the feed by the pig?
5. Is the feeder properly adjusted to ensure easy access to feed, while preventing excessive wastage?

C. Do the pigs have a continuous supply of fresh water?

1. Is the flow rate adequate for nipple drinkers?
2. Are dish drinkers clean and operative?
3. Do the pigs have ready access to the drinkers?
4. Are there sufficient drinkers in the pen?

D. Is the room environment conducive to maximizing feed intake?

1. Is the room temperature too high, even in cool weather?
2. In the summer, is everything possible being done to minimize the effects of excessive temperatures?
3. Monitor interior temperature relative to outside. Is it within 2-3°C?

E. What is the health status of the herd? Is there reason to believe that transient or acute infection is reducing appetite?

1. If yes, talk to your herd health veterinarian!

F. Do you suspect that diet composition (ingredients or nutrients) may be a problem?

1. Review the composition of the diet and determine if any ingredients may be a cause for concern (Hint: Pigs are much less particular than we are. It is unlikely that an ingredient per se is at fault)
2. Is it possible that the diet has become contaminated with mycotoxins or unpalatable weed seeds?
3. Are there imbalances in nutrient content which might cause suppressed intake?
4. Have you analyzed the diet to determine if errors in mixing or formulation are the cause of suppressed appetite?