PRAIRIE SWINE CENTRE INC.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

Ideas to Fine Tune Your Operation

The following checklist provides an easy-to-use list of items, which can improve productivity and reduce costs during these times of turbulent market prices. This checklist can be used in conjunction with the attached detailed checklist and the advice of your farm advisors.

Grow-Finish

- ❑ Determine the ideal selling weight for your packer grid
- ❑ Determine feed intake for pigs on your farm
- ❑ Avoid sort losses at market by weighing pigs
- ❑ Determine short run marginal profit
- ❑ Phase feeding
- ❑ Split-sex feeding
- ❑ Lowering calcium and phosphorus
- ❑ Use canola meal
- ❑ Investigate field peas for use in your diets
- ❑ Consider other ways of evaluating grain quality than bushel weight
- ❑ Use wet/dry feeders with mash diets
- ❑ Set feeders to reduce feed wastage
- ❑ Do not keep pigs too warm
- ❑ Reduce the impact of heat stress in the summer months
- ❑ Review feed-grade antibiotic selection and usage.

Breeding Herd

- ❑ Increase sow productivity
- ❑ Do not scrimp on replacement gilts
- ❑ Breeding efficiency, conception rates and whole herd feed conversion
- ❑ Consider depopulation and repopulation
- ❑ Consider artificial insemination

Farrowing Barn

- ❑ Maximize weaning weight
- ❑ Early identification and treatment of piglet diseases
- ❑ Beware pushing the sow herd too much

Nursery

- ❑ Maintaining proper temperature and humidity
- ❑ Use feed budgets
- ❑ Review feed pricing
- ❑ The role of diet form
- ❑ Review disease control measures

Feed Mill

- ❑ Use least cost formulation.
- ❑ Remove oil products if present only for dust control
- ❑ Review all diet formulations for unnecessary additives
- ❑ Check particle size if you are making your own feed
- ❑ Review quality control procedures
- ❑ Critically review every feed ingredient being used
- ❑ Consider alternative supplement/premix options

The Manure Storage

- ❑ Selective use of manure additives

Risk Management

- ❑ Purchasing of ingredients
- ❑ Marketing options

With the Family and Staff

- ❑ Look to improving task efficiency
- ❑ The importance of attention to detail
- ❑ Make everyone an expert
- ❑ Join a management club

With Your Lender

- ❑ Restructure debt

With Your Suppliers and Advisors

- ❑ Get your suppliers'commitment

PRAIRIE SWINE CENTRE INC.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

Dealing with the Market Crisis - The Right Time to Fine Tune Your Operation

The Canadian Pork Industry is experiencing unprecedented change, the most dramatic of which is current depressed cash market hog prices. There are no easy solutions to the oversupply of market weight hogs in the United States. As Canadian markets take their lead from various US cash hog markets our prices too have spiralled downward into price points not seen for over 35 years. Market prices may be largely out of the individual's control, but there are factors which producers can influence.

In the Summer 1998 edition of Centred on Swine a list of factors researched at the Centre was presented to assist you in reducing costs and improving productivity. Since that time prices have fluctuated widely, but always below the cost of production. This brochure goes further to identify savings in all areas of the operation.

Following is a comprehensive checklist of items that affect revenues and the cost of production. All areas of the barn and many current operating practices are reviewed for possible savings. For example, feed costs will continue to be the largest variable cost item and must be reviewed first. Typically there is at least $2-3 per pig in savings which can be implemented without impairing performance. On some farms even greater savings can be found through a detailed analysis of the feeding program. There are many other areas where costs can be trimmed or productivity improved.

It is going to take the concerted effort of many resource people to address the needs of each individual farm. As one producer pointed out to me recently "this is no time to isolate yourself" and he is right. The following list of ideas provides you and your advisers a place to start. When market prices return to more normal levels, the changes made now will continue to provide significant margin improvements. For example, every $2 per pig improvement in net income on a 200 sow farrow-to-finish operation translates into over $8,000 a year to reduce losses, put toward personal income or pay down debt.

The following list has been gleaned from a variety of sources including Prairie Swine Centre's previously published reports. Some producers will find they have already implemented many of these ideas. However, it is our experience that all producers will find some items, which they can use to increase their revenues or reduce their cost of production.

Irrespective of market conditions, by far the most effective way to improve one's financial position is to improve output; increased revenues almost always represent a greater opportunity to improve the bottom line than reducing expenses. In conditions such as these, there are clear incentives to doing both. We sincerely hope the attached list helps in this regard.

ALBERTA PORK

SASK PORK

MANITOBA*pork*

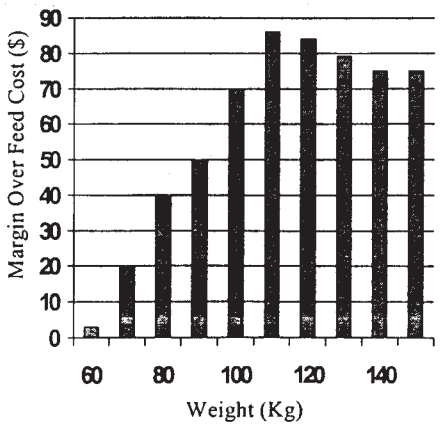
Grow-Finish

Throughout the grow-finish section financial implications of change are provided. Certain assumptions were made in providing these financial impact figures, including; overhead cost/pig place per day ranges from $0.10-0.20.

- ❑ Determine the ideal selling weight for your packer grid.
  - This requires monitoring feed intake and growth as pigs approach market weight and comparing this to the changes in yield and index as market weights increase. In this way, determine the cost of adding an extra kilogram to the market weight, and compare that cost to the added income. For more details, please refer to Centred on Swine, Vol5 # 3 Summer 1998. Improved net income of $2-5/pig or more is feasible by selecting the right market weight/packer combination for your farm. For example, with a finishing diet costing $0.15 per kilogram, and a feed conversion at 105 ckg of 3.5:1, it costs $0.53 to add 1 kg to the live weight. Assuming a dressing percentage of 79 and an index of 110, the price of pigs must be at least $61 per ckg to break even on added market weight. Of course, once you exceed the core, the price must be even higher to break even, since the carcass index will decline.
  - Computerized monitoring programs are available to make monitoring easier. For DOS systems GrowthMaster Performance Monitoring Program (available from Prairie Swine Centre); for Windows operating systems PorkMaster available from University of Guelph (http://www.aps.uoguelph.ca/~porkm).
- ❑ Determine short run marginal profit
  - In the short run the marginal profit from each additional pig marketed is approximated by the margin over feed cost. This is a more accurate approach to determine profitability than using average costs and ignores the fixed costs, which in the short run cannot be changed. The margin over feed cost varies with shipping grid used, feed price, market price and the distribution of body weights around the average at market (ie. how much variability there is in shipping weights). The following scenario was presented at the Banff Pork Seminar by Dr. John Deen. Note, the margin over feed cost does not include weaner costs, breeding herd feed, supplies, electricity, etc. This is a quick method to determine profitability, recognizing feed is the largest single factor in grow-finish production. Preparing such a graph for individual farms would provide useful information to base marketing decisions.

Figure 1. Margin Over Feed Cost (in dollars per pig) for pigs on the Fletcher grid at $130/100 Kg base price.

Source: Deen, Advances in Pork Production, Volume 10, 1999



- ❑ Determine feed intake for your pigs on your farm
  - The single most important information that a nutritionist can use to minimize feed costs, while ensuring performance is maintained, is feed intake. Knowing how much feed a pig eats each day provides the information nutritionists need to set the levels of amino acids and other nutrients at, but not above, requirements. It is not easy data to record, but without question will provide the greatest payback in terms of optimizing performance and minimizing feed costs on the majority of farms. Inexpensive weighing devices can be constructed, see Centred on Swine Vol2#1 (1995) and Vol5#3 (1998).
  - Feed intake varying widely between pens of the same weight group indicates problems. Solving feed intake problems takes priority over changing feed formulation.
  - Feed intake together with determining protein deposition rate specific to your farm will allow diet formulation to be made that meets the exact requirements of any herd.
- ❑ Avoid sort losses at market by weighing pigs
  - Weighing pigs at market weight ensures the maximum number fall within the optimum weight categories. Even when markets are $65 per kg, losing one index point due to sorting costs $0.55 per pig sold.
- ❑ Phase feeding
  - Feeding more than one diet from 23 kg to market weight ensures a more efficient use of nutrients. Many producers are using 3 to 5 diets during the growout period, in order to minimize overfeeding while ensuring that nutrient requirements are met. One producer calculated that his 4-phase program was saving him $4.50 per pig sold, compared to a single phase feeding program.
  - Each additional diet added does not add equally to profitability. For example, going from 1 phase to 2 may improve net income $6/pig place/yr., from 2 phases to three an additional $3/pig place/yr. ... from 5 phases to 6 the additional net profit is likely to be $0.75/pig place/yr.*

  For producers already phase feeding, now is a good time to review nutrient levels in the diet to ensure that nutrient requirements are being met, but costly excesses are avoided. Under current market conditions, "safety margins" in diet formulations need to be scrutinized very carefully.
- ❑ Split-sex feeding
  - It is well known that barrows require less expensive diets than gilts; they eat more feed and have the same or somewhat lower rates of protein deposition in the carcass. Tailoring feeding programs to animals based on sex is essential if feed costs are to be minimized.
  - For producers using continuous flow growout barns, the simple practice of housing gilts in pens separate from barrows will save money. Because barrows grow about 5 – 10% faster than gilts, barrow pens will empty sooner than mixed-sex pens, allowing that pen to be refilled with less mixing of tail enders. Employing split sex housing has the same effect as adding one more growout pen for every 20 already in the barn. It is an excellent, low-cost way to reduce overcrowding, improve performance and increase barn throughput.
  - Providing separate rearing facilities and specialized diets for each sex has been demonstrated to improve net income $3/pig place/yr.*
- ❑ Lowering calcium and phosphorus
  - Reducing the quantity of macrominerals in the diet decreases cost directly by reducing expensive phosphorus. Removal of these minerals also provides more flexibility in formulating allowing high energy diet specifications to be met using less expensive ingredients. Savings from $.60 to $2 per pig are possible.

Diet #	Calcium, %[2]	Phosphorus, %[2]	Savings, $[1]
1	1.0	0.9	---
2	0.9	0.8	0.67
3	0.8	0.7	0.68 (1.35)
4	0.7	0.6	0.67 (2.02)
5	0.6	0.5	0.68 (2.70)

[1] Savings at each level of calcium and phosphorus compared to the next higher level (amounts in brackets refers to savings compared to the highest level of calcium and phosphorus shown).
[2] Calcium and phosphorus levels of 0.60% and 0.50% respectively should be adequate for growing and finishing market hogs (NRC, 1998). Slightly higher levels may be required for developing breeding stock.

- ❑ Use canola meal
  - Many producers have already found that canola meal can be used safely and effectively in practical rations. The key is to ensure diets are properly formulated, on the basis of available nutrients (energy and amino acids) and not to introduce canola meal too quickly. Researchers at the Prairie Swine Centre have replaced all of the soybean meal with canola meal and achieved equivalent performance during growout. Even a 50:50 blend of canola meal and soybean meal, under current market conditions, will add up to significant savings. Depending on market prices, using modest amounts of canola meal can save $4 per tonne or more; this is equal to $1 per pig sold.
- ❑ Investigate field peas for use in your diets
  - The use of field peas in Canadian pig diets is rising rapidly. Experience has shown that pigs like peas, and depending on market conditions, substantial savings can be achieved. They are a local ingredient; they fit well into a crop rotation, and acreage is rising rapidly. Researchers at the Prairie Swine Centre have included field peas at up to 40% of the diet, and achieved performance equal to that on a conventional soybean meal-base diet.
- ❑ Consider other ways of evaluating grain quality than bushel weight
  - Research has shown time and again that bushel weight is a poor indicator of the feeding value of grains. Some studies have shown that as little as 5% to 10% of the variation in energy content is explained by differences in bushel weight. Many studies have found that 46 lb. barley often has the same energy content as 50 lb. barley, and that high bushel weight barley (> 50 lb.) often has no more energy than regular barley.
  - Recent studies at the Prairie Swine Centre have shown that for every 1 percentage point rise or fall in ADF (Acid Detergent Fibre), there is a 3% fall or rise, respectively, in the Digestible Energy content of barley.
  - Buying barley that has been discounted for bushel weight, but which has the same ADF content as regular barley can often save $0.10 to $0.20 per bushel or more. Such savings from using such discounted barley would be $0.60 to $1.20 per pig.
- ❑ Use wet/dry feeders with mash diets
  - Particularly in the finishing barn, and when mash diets are being fed, the use of wet/dry feeders improves feed intake and speeds hogs to market. Recent studies at Prairie Swine Centre found that on average, wet/dry feeders increased growth rate by 5% compared to dry feeders; this is equivalent to reducing days to market by 5 days. Saving 5 days in the grow-finish barn is worth $0.50 to $1.00 per pig in housing costs.
- ❑ Set feeders to reduce feed wastage
  - It may sound like a broken record, but even 5% feed wastage at the present time costs the pork producer more than $2 per pig sold. It may be impossible to eliminate feed wastage, but research at Prairie Swine Centre has shown that with most commercial feeders, wastage of 3% or less is not an unreasonable expectation.

- ❑ Do not keep pigs too warm
  - Elevated barn temperatures reduce feed intake and thus growth rate. For every 1°C above the pig's thermoneutral zone, feed intake drops by 1-2% and growth rate drops by about 3%. Thus, for every °C above the pigs thermoneutral zone, net income is reduced by $0.30 to $0.45 per pig.
  - For all-in-all-out barns, the air temperature should range from 22°C when pigs are 30 kg to 15°C when they over 55 kg. If floors are solid, a further 1°C should decrease this temperature. To some, this seems quite cool; yet, producers who have used this temperature regime noted that not only did feed intake and growth rate improve, but pens were cleaner as well. For detailed recommendations see Swine Building Ventilation (published by Prairie Swine Centre).
  - For pigs housed outdoors or in shelters, the issue will be cold temperatures in the winter, as pigs perform extremely well outside or in low cost shelters in the summer months. To minimize the impact of cold weather on feed conversion in the winter, it is important that the straw be kept plentiful, and dry, and ensure draughts are minimized. Do not seal hoop structures completely as they require ventilation (see manufacturer for specific recommendations).
  - Barn age, insulation quality, prevalence of drafts, and humidity levels will affect comfort level. The final judge of adequate temperature should be visual observation of pigs. Dr. Gonyou reminds us that some piling is normal and that pens should not be kept so warm that pigs are spread out during sleep periods.
- ❑ Reduce the impact of heat stress in the summer months
  - During the hot summer months, air temperature within the barn should be no more than 3°C above the outside temperature. If the differential is greater than this, the impact of summer temperatures will be greater than it needs to be.
  - Because Prairie summers are characterized by hot days and cool nights, as opposed to hot days and hot nights in more southerly regions, barn temperature management procedures can be used to limit the impact of the high daytime temperatures. For example, research at the Prairie Swine Centre has found that by reducing the setpoint temperature by 6°C during hot weather, the barn becomes cooler at night, with somewhat shorter duration of high temperatures. The net result was an increase in growth rate of 2-5%, equal to 2 to 5 fewer days to market; this is valued at $0.20 to $0.75 per pig sold.
- ❑ Review feed-grade antibiotic selection and usage.
  - Is it still necessary? Are the correct products being used? This should be discussed with your veterinarian and nutritionist.

Breeding Herd

- ❑ Increase sow productivity
  - Sow productivity may be an over-rated measure of herd efficiency, but there is no denying that increasing the number of pigs produced from a given herd will reduce the average cost of production. One estimate suggests that for every extra pig sold/sow/year the cost of production declines by 2%, or about $2.50 per pig.
  - Increasing pigs sold/sow/year is influenced by litter size (born alive), preweaning mortality and farrowing rate.
  - What may be more important than average herd productivity is farrowing crate output. Keeping crates full is challenging, but rewarding. It requires attention to farrowing rate and maintenance of an effective gilt pool.
- ❑ Do not scrimp on replacement gilts
  - Keeping terminal cross finishing gilts as replacements may not have the effect you were looking for. According to a recent study by Dr. A. Schinckel and Brian Rickert,

estimates of the savings of the terminal cross female are $2-3 (US) per piglet produced. Long term cost of reduced reproductive performance was estimated at $3-6 (US) per piglet produced.

- ❑ Breeding efficiency, conception rates and whole herd feed conversion
  - These are the most critical numbers to focus on in the breeding herd at this time, according to Steve Dudley, DVM, as reported in National Hog Farmer, December 15, 1998.
- ❑ Consider depopulation and repopulation
  - Many producers who have depopulated a unit with multiple disease problems have been pleasantly surprised by the impact on productivity of repopulating with high health stock. It may be getting to be too late in the current depressed market cycle to implement depop/repop. A better time would have been the third quarter of 1998. The ideal is to depopulate when markets are peaking, and repopulate when markets are depressed. This tends to maximize cash flow in the newly populated unit.
  - Depopulation and repopulation was the topic of a recent issue of The Canadian Swine Forum (Sept-Oct. 1998)
  - A modelling exercise considering a compromised health status has identified potential losses of $12/pig place/yr.* Assumptions made included lean gain decreases by 20%, feed intake lower by 6%, maintenance energy requirements 4% higher, and mortality 1% higher than in pigs with high health.
- ❑ Consider artificial insemination
  - A.I. may not be for everyone, but it certainly is being widely practiced by an increasing part of the swine industry. Savings in boars purchased and housing costs, flexibility and ease of genetic management are all reasons for making the switch. More and more herds are switching to A.I.; the major challenge is with gilts, where heat detection is most difficult and estrous shorter than with mature sows.
  - AI uses fewer boars allowing additional room for sows in the breeding area, and reduced housing & feeding costs for boars. Natural service requires a boar to sow ratio of 1:20, in a 100% AI system 1:200 is possible (Phil Burke, Advances in Pork Production, Vol. 10, 1999). However, the "typical" recommendation is to use boars for gilts and AI for all other matings.

Farrowing Barn

- ❑ Maximize weaning weight
  - Every effort should be made to maximize weaning weight. Every study on the subject concludes that heavier weaning weights mean fewer days to market. This is accomplished by maximizing feed intake in the lactating sow, minimizing the impact of disease on the nursing piglets and avoidance of chilling temperatures.
  - Lactation feed intake can be increased by challenging the sow to eat as much as possible during the first week after farrowing, but without causing feed refusal. In other words, provide the sow with feed to appetite, but no more. If feed refusal occurs, it is unlikely that feed intake will ever recover fully during that lactation. Sow feed intake cards allow you to manage feed intake, and are available from most veterinarians, feed companies and breeding stock suppliers.
  - Other key factors affecting lactation feed intake include feed intake during gestation (feeding too much in gestation will reduce lactation feed intake) and farrowing room temperature.

- Some producers report success by wetting the sow feed after each feeding; others have found little advantage. Wet/dry feeders in the farrowing room have been reported to increase feed intake in summer by over 25%, with a much smaller response at other times of the year.

❑ Early identification and treatment of piglet diseases

- This will decrease the number of chronic poor-doers, thus improving the overall quality of the pig herd.

❑ Beware pushing the sow herd too much

- While there is clearly a need to maximize herd productivity, too many pigs can overcrowd facilities, put pressure on management and lead to all manners of problems. The challenge of management, then, is to keep production at the highest possible level, without overdoing it. The number of farrowings should be determined by the target number of pigs to be shipped each period.

Nursery

❑ Maintaining proper temperature and humidity

- As in the feeder barn, keeping piglets too warm reduces feed intake and slows growth. On the other hand, chilling will reduce feed conversion and could cause health problems. There is very little good information on recommended nursery temperatures, so there is a need to watch the pigs to ensure that there is neither huddling, as a sign of too low a temperature, nor panting and laying in manure, as a sign of excessive heat.

❑ Use feed budgets

- Feed budgets are commonly used to define the quantity of each diet to be fed to pigs in the nursery. One of their key advantages is they help to avoid feeding excessive amounts of the very expensive early wean diets.
- However, there is some risk to using feed budgets. For example, if we want pigs to get 1.5 kg of the Phase 1 diet, and assuming there are 100 pigs in the room, the feed budget would suggest we feed 1500 kg of this diet. However, larger pigs will eat more feed per day than the smaller pigs, and thus get more than average of the Phase 1 diet. Yet, it is the smaller pigs that probably need more of this diet, so producers must adjust the way in which to provide feed to these pigs to ensure that, as much as possible, the feed budget is being followed for all of the pigs, not just the "average" pig.
- Temperature recommendations in the nursery are imprecise, but suggested starting points are 29°-30°C at weaning (5 kn BW) declining 1°C per week to 24°C when pigs are 20 kg. Correct temperature will depend on drafts, humidity, floor type, etc.

❑ Review feed pricing

- Starter diet formulation requires specialized, expensive ingredients. Can you manufacture all of these diets for less than you can purchase them? Considerations include the cost of inventory of medications, whey powders, and plasma, the cost of ingredient wastage, quality assurance considerations such as order of mixing and flushing the system.

❑ Role of diet form

- Pelleted diets have been reported to improve feed conversion and gain in all stages of growing swine. Improvements of 7-9% for both feed efficiency and growth rate with pelleted vs. mash diets are reasonable. Some of this improvement is due to reduction in feed wastage, which may be minimized by improved feeder design and daily feeder management.

- ❑ Review disease control measures
  - Does health status and closed herd policy allow some reductions in sanitation procedures? Is the vaccination program up to date? Can some vaccinations be removed temporarily or permanently? Changes to the herd health program should be discussed with the unit's veterinarian, and no changes made without such consultation.

Feed Mill

- ❑ Use least cost formulation.
  - While there is still widespread concern about changing diet formulations, the pig has proven over many centuries to be a very adaptable animal. While some people will maintain a fixed formula for years, others will reformulate – and allow modest changes each time – on a regular basis to take advantage of changing market conditions. The frequency of reformulation depends on how volatile the markets are, but at the present time, every three months should be the minimum.
- ❑ Remove oil products if present only for dust control
  - Under the present market conditions, adding oil at 0.5% of the diet to control dust increases the cost of the diet by about $3.80 per tonne or possibly more. That is equivalent to about $1.00 per pig sold. In other words, the same diet, formulated to contain the same level of energy, but without using oil can be manufactured for $4 less than a diet containing oil. Until markets improve, one can live with the dust (NB. We assume people working in the barn are already using dust masks. If you are not, you should!).
  - As a dust suppressant, oil/fat added to feed has a minor effect on the respirable dust in the barn. If dust is a problem, research at the Prairie Swine Centre has shown that oil sprinkling on the floor is much more effective and less costly – about $0.60 per pig sold.
- ❑ Review all diet formulations for unnecessary additives
  - Sometimes things get added into a diet to address a specific problem, but remain in the diet long after the problem disappears. Therefore, a regular review of your diets with a qualified nutritionist or with your feed supplier could pay big dividends.
- ❑ Check particle size if you are making your own feed
  - Particle size for wheat and barley should be between 650 microns and 750 microns. Many commercial labs can test for particle size. Particle size will be a function of screen size (and wear) hammer wear and hammer mill rpm. If problems with particle size arise, all three should be looked at.
  - Excessive particle size leads to poor performance, while too small a particle size increases feed manufacturing costs and can lead to ulcers.
  - Research has demonstrated that swine diets with an average particle size larger than optimum (over 800 microns) can result in 5-8% poorer feed efficiency.
- ❑ Review quality control procedures
  - If you purchase prepared feed, quality control is the responsibility of the feed supplier. If you manufacture your own diets, it becomes your responsibility.
  - Feed quality control should consider at least three issues
    - ◊ Ingredient quality
      - For example, do the specifications for ingredients used to formulate the diet match the nutrient levels of the ingredients bring used? Is the quality of incoming ingredients (home grown or purchased) the same quality as that reflected in the diet formulations?

- ◊ Accuracy of the feed manufacturing process
  - For example, is the proportion of ingredients specified in the formulation the same as that actually being mixed?
- ◊ Delivery of the feed to the pig
  - Feed separation can sometimes be a problem. Separation can occur in the storage bin, during filling, or in the feed delivery lines. Sampling individual feeders in the barn will determine if separation is an issue. Obviously, separation is not an issue with pelleted diets.

❑ Critically review every feed ingredient being used

- Are they the best ingredients for the job at hand? Is there a less expensive way to supply the same nutrients? As discussed above, unless one is preparing a very high energy diet, oil is a more expensive source of energy than is wheat or hulless barley.
- Is group buying with neighbour or family a way to improve trucking rates or payment schedules?

❑ Consider alternative supplement/premix options

- Lower inclusion products can provide lower nutrient costs. To take advantage of these savings will require additional storage for bulk ingredients such as dicalcium phosphate or protein sources such as meatmeal, canola meal or pea meal.

The Manure Storage

❑ Selective use of manure additives

- Manure treatments and pit additives typically cost in the range of $1.50/pig/month. With lagoons frozen and limited opportunity to directly improve pig performance, the use of pit treatments should be reviewed.

Risk Management

❑ Purchasing of ingredients

- Forward pricing on major commodities can be done as an individual or through your feed company.

❑ Marketing options

- Enrol in a good options course to learn how to mitigate pork price fluctuations in the future. However, do not over-react and jump into a new marketing program without fully understanding the process.

With the Family and Staff

❑ Look to improving task efficiency

- Compare with others and set targets for labour on a per pig or per kilogram shipped basis. Benchmarking your productivity and financial performance against others of similar size is an excellent way to set realistic goals.

❑ The importance of attention to detail

- During this period of low prices, attention to detail ensures you are doing the best you can.

❑ Make everyone an expert

- Make sure everyone knows how to adjust feeders to reduce waste. Some bare area on the feeding pan should be seen, otherwise the feeders are delivering too much feed. Reducing feed wastage from 8% to 5% improves net income $1-1.25/pig.

- ❑ Join a management club
  - The support and ideas of pork producers that share your concerns is an invaluable experience.

With Your Lender

- ❑ Restructure debt
  - To lower payments during times of restricted cash flow consider restructuring long and short-term debt.

With Your Suppliers and Advisors

- ❑ Get their commitment to provide the information and dedicated effort required to make change and implement the survival strategy. Someone who will provide professional, well-informed, enthusiastic support should replace those who cannot or will not commit to your team

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of seeking the input of outside expertise to review the above items. Veterinarians, feed suppliers, breeding stock suppliers, barn equipment suppliers, lenders and government extension personnel can all contribute in a significant way to reviewing these and other ideas for improving production costs and revenues. The above checklist is perhaps a starting point. A detailed action plan should be developed for your specific farm and may require outside advice.

In addition, if producers would like to organize a meeting of neighbours to get together to discuss these ideas, the Prairie Swine Centre will make every attempt to provide one of our scientists to attend the meeting to help answer questions specific to your farm.

I have read the Checklist and have enlisted the assistance of my advisors to implement a survival strategy.

Pork Producer _____

We have recognized the opportunities to assist this production unit in implementing a survival strategy and will provide our assistance in implementing the agreed upon changes.

Veterinarian _____

Feed Supplier/Advisor _____

Pharmaceutical Supplier/Advisor _____

Genetics Supplier/Advisor _____

Ventilation Supplier/Advisor _____

Waste Handling Supplier/Advisor _____

Lending Agency/Financial Advisor _____

This publication has been prepared by Prairie Swine Centre as a service to the pork producers who support program funding through their research checkoff contributions.

For further information or additional copies contact Lee Whittington
phone (306) 477-7447, fax (306) 955-2510, E-mail whittington@sask.usask.ca
or visit our web site: http://adminsrv.usask.ca/psci