



## Daily Management of Feed Efficiency

There are numerous management decisions made on a daily basis that can have a significant impact on feed efficiency. Taking a look within your operation, if you could focus your efforts on one aspect to improve feed efficiency, what would it be? That was a question posed to Dr. Bob Goodband (Kansas State University) during a recent webinar (March 27) examining “Feeding and barn management practices that improve feed efficiency.”

What is the one area where you should spend the greatest effort? Feeder pan coverage. Ensuring feeders are properly adjusted and functioning on a routine basis, such that approximately 40-50% of the feeder pan has feed in it. Feeder adjustment is not as critical, as the adjustment will vary depending on diet type (pellet vs. mash), and coarseness of grind which impacts flow properties within the feeder. Feeder pan coverage greater than 50% increases feed wastage, and lower than 40% results in reduced pig performance.

Research has found, if there is adequate access to feeder space, opening the feeder will not improve ADG, and can result in poorer feed efficiency – especially after 70 kgs. However, if pigs are restricted on feeder space, opening feeders will increase ADFI and ADG with little to no impact on feed efficiency. It’s easy to see how feeders need to be managed individually on a daily basis in order to maximize pig performance. Studies on commercial farms have found, on average, 10% of the feeders are not working properly at any one time due to plugged feed lines or feeders, broken hardware or bins bridging.

While proper feeder adjustment can have a huge impact on feed efficiency, producers are encouraged to focus their efforts in a number of areas within the barn.

### Check and repair feed handling equipment

- Make repairs to minimize continual feed loss and prevent disasters
- Leaking bins, broken feed lines, feeder adjustment rods, grease bearings

### Loading the barn

- Do not sort into tight weight categories
- Do not overstock and leave too many pens open – some feeders don’t tolerate being used on one side without wastage

### Daily Management

- Individual pig treatment and timely euthanasia
- Water availability and settings
- Manage feed budgets
- Manage the environment - proper temperature and ventilation

As part of Prairie Swine Centre’s “Focus on Feed Efficiency” webinar series the topic of “Feeding and barn management practices that improve feed efficiency” was recently addressed by Dr. Bob Goodband. For more information on this topic, or others related to feed efficiency can be found on our website.

The Impact of Feeder Adjustment and Group Size / Density on Weanling Pig Performance

<http://www.prairieswine.com/the-impact-of-feeder-adjustment-and-group-sizedensity-on-weanling-pig-performance/>

One Less Chore for the Producer

<http://www.prairieswine.com/one-less-chore-for-the-producer/>

Dr. Bob Goodband’s presentation “Feeding and barn management practices that improve feed efficiency”

<http://www.prairieswine.com/feeding-and-barn-management-practices-that-improve-feed-efficiency/>

Feeder Coverage



Too little coverage (30%)



Good coverage (50%)



Too much coverage (80%)