



Evaluating Nursery Feed Programs

Recently Hubbard Feeds made changes to its nursery feeds. These changes incorporated new technology gained from Hubbard Feeds swine research trials done over the past two years. In the Lean Start product line, these changes reduced the cost of our products while maintaining performance. In the Fundamentals product line performance was improved with the same feed cost per pig.

Each of Hubbard's nursery product lines has a different objective. When deciding which program to recommend, two factors must be taken into consideration. The first factor is knowing when to use each product line. The second is knowing which nursery production parameters the producer will use to evaluate your feeding program.

In the past most nursery feed programs were evaluated on the additional gain or weight they produced. Using this method, a dollar value was given for the weight gain and feed costs were subtracted from that value. The more pounds of weight a feeding program produced, the higher its value and the greater its return over feed costs. In the example below, the Hubbard pigs gained two additional pounds over Brand X, while costing only \$.10 per pig extra in feed costs. If you value the additional gain at \$.50/lb then the Hubbard program produced \$.90 per pig in extra value. (\$.50 x 2 lbs—\$.10/pig in extra feed costs.)

Example 1:

	<u>Lean Start</u>	<u>Brand X</u>
Beginning Weight (lbs)	11.75	11.75
Ending Weight (lbs)	27.50	25.50
Lbs of Gain	15.75	13.75
Feed Cost/pig	\$5.80	\$5.70

For a producer that judges a nursery program on the pounds of pork produced and the value of that gain, Lean Start is the program of choice. The consistent performance through a variety of conditions makes Lean Start a very reliable feed. The high complexity of the Lean Start program helps maximize performance in herds with variable health status.

But not every pork producer evaluates a feeding program on the pounds of pork it produces. They may have ample finisher space so that production flow is not a concern and the cost of putting on a few additional pounds in the nursery is not advantageous. Some producers consider feed cost per pig as the deciding factor in their nursery program. The nutrition program that offers the lowest feed cost per pig while maintaining a certain level of performance will be their program of choice.

If we go back to Example 1 above and apply it to the producer who makes a feed decision based on cost per pig and not return over feed costs, we can see that Hubbard is actually \$.10/pig more expensive. Even though we are producing a heavier pig, we may not get the nutrition business because our feed cost/pig is more expensive.

For the producer whose focus is on feed cost/pig, Hubbard's Fundamentals nursery program should be considered. Fundamentals performs best in high health systems and is designed for the producer who doesn't value additional gain in the nursery but places a higher emphasis on feed cost/pig. Feed cost per pig will be lower with Fundamentals and in healthy herds, performance can be just as good. This is shown in Example 2 where Lean Start and Fundamentals were fed to healthy nursery pigs.

Example 2:

	<u>Lean Start</u>	<u>Fundamentals</u>
Beginning Weight (lbs)	13.25	13.32
Ending Weight (lbs)	28.80	28.80
ADG	.65	.645
FG	1.19	1.19

Example 3 below is a nursery trial in which both Lean Start and Fundamentals were compared against two regional competitors.

Example 3:

	<u>Lean Start</u>	<u>Fundamentals</u>	<u>Brand A</u>	<u>Brand B</u>
Beginning Weight (lbs)	11.45	11.50	11.46	11.41
Ending Weight (lbs)	27.40	26.39	26.07	25.20
Lbs of Gain	15.95	14.89	14.60	13.78
ADG	.90	.88	.89	.81
FG	1.19	1.24	1.28	1.25
Feed Cost/pig	\$5.76	\$4.06	\$4.87	\$4.79

The Lean Start program produced a heavier 1-2 lb heavier pig compared to Fundamentals and the competitors. In a nursery system where health is variable, management faces constraints and a heavier pig is valued, the additional feed cost of the Lean Start program can be justified. In a healthy nursery system where more emphasis is placed on feed cost per pig, the additional cost of the Lean Start program may not be justified and the Fundamentals program should be considered.

Summary:

Evaluating a nursery and recommending the correct nursery feed program is not always an easy task. There are many variables in the nursery and with the producer. There may also be floor stocking issues at the dealership and the plant. With the recent changes in Hubbard's starter feed program, there is more flexibility in choosing the right program. Each of Hubbard's nursery product lines has a different objective. When deciding which program to recommend, two factors must be taken into consideration. The first factor is knowing what each of Hubbard's nursery product lines were developed for. The second is knowing which nursery production parameters the producer will use to evaluate your feeding program. There is no one best program. Asking the right questions before the producer uses the feed will result in success with Hubbard's Starter Feed program.