



Swine Tech-Line



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Preparing for Summer Heat
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What should be on the top of every producer's "To Do" list to prepare for summer weather?

Ventilation equipment is high on the list. Give your barn a hot weather test run to reveal any problems with curtain controls, fan motors, belts, inlet settings or other ventilation equipment. Ramp up each stage by lowering the set point slowly and make a note of the temperature as each fan, curtain and inlet opens. Next, compare this to your controller settings to verify everything worked as expected. Remember to check misters or dripper systems and your back-up thermostats. This is also a good time to clean and grease bearings and actuators. If you are pulling air through the attic, check and clean the soffit and ridge vent screens, so air flows freely into the attic. Be sure to test run cool cells to ensure good saturation and airflow.

During this preparation time, talk to your load out crew and truckers to review hot weather handling procedures. Identify potential loading and transportation problems and try to resolve them before summer gets here. Taking time to discuss these measures can really raise awareness and prevent costly losses during transport.

What types of changes should be considered in the nutrition programs to help counter the effects of heat and reduced feed intake?

Hot weather usually affects intake, so it is a good idea to increase diet fortification. One way to accomplish this is by feeding higher fat levels in grow finish rations to help maintain gain during the summer heat and humidity and reduced feed intake.

In the farrowing barns the lactation diet fortification should also be increased because of the lower feed intakes. Another suggestion would be to feed more frequently, especially in the evening when sows have some time to "make up" a little with consumption during the cool evening hours. Many producers have gone to ad-lib feeding in lactation to improve intake. Opti-Pak Efficiency, which is added to lactation diets and helps increase nutrient utilization has been shown to be effective in minimizing the negative effects of low intake.

Any other tips to help prepare for the summer weather?

Flush and sanitize your water lines between groups to remove sediment and bacteria. In the summer, water requirements can increase by 150% or more, so ample access to clean water is very important to healthy pigs that gain well throughout the summer.

Monitor feed outage events. With the increase in humidity and high DDGS use, feed hang-ups occur more frequently. Repeated outages can cause ulcers and excessive stress on your pigs. Try to check augers more frequently in hot weather or talk to your feed manufacturer or Hubbard sales rep to get help.

For more information on minimizing the negative effects of summer heat and humidity, contact your Hubbard Feed representative.

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