

SWINE SOLUTIONS

Starting off on the right hoof: Nursery strategies to improve mortality and create more full-value pigs

A universal truth exists in swine production: Pigs must eat and drink, not only to survive, but to thrive. Times of increased stress create the biggest challenge in getting pigs to eat and drink. Weaning is a stressful time for the young pig due to myriad factors, including maternal separation, changes in environment, transportation stress, establishment of social hierarchy, abrupt diet change, vaccinations and exposure to pathogens. Hubbard Feeds has identified several feeding strategies that can help improve the transition from the sow to dry feed, thereby increasing pigs' chances of thriving. Hubbard Feeds recommended starting protocol

Products to inventory:

- Steam rolled oats
- 28080 Opti-Lac Baby Pig Milk Replacer (contains bovine plasma)
- 5220 First Course® Pre-starter pellet
- 50518 KICKOFF
- 50A0 Lean Start® 2 pellet
- 29306 PowerStart™ 19/13 Complete Pellet

Equipment to use:

- Gruel feeders (e.g., Rotecna) or troughs (troughs are easier to wash and can be stacked)
- Plenty of clean mats or trays for mat feeding

Managing small pens:

- Small pigs (bottom 5 to 10 percent) should be sorted off on the first day pigs enter the facility, using normal stocking density.
- Supply small pigs with an appropriate pre-starter (First Course pellet).
 - Feed gruel four times per day for no more than 10 days post-weaning.
 - Mat feed four times per day for no more than 10 days post-weaning.

Handling sick or starve-out pigs (pulled at days three to five or days seven to 10):

- Identify sick or starve-out pigs.
 - Look for pigs that are gaunt, with heads down, exhibiting lameness, fever, etc. (This can include bigger pigs.)
- The number of sick or starve-out pens may vary from group to group, but typically they use 10 percent of the barn space.
 - Stocking density should be 50 percent of the normal density to reduce competition for feed and water.
- Supply sick or starve-out pigs with the appropriate pre-starter (First Course pellet).
 - Gruel feed for seven days after sick/starve-out pen placement.
 - Mat feed four times per day for seven to 10 days after sick/starve-out pen placement.
- The poorest-performing pigs from the day three to day five pulls may be moved to the day seven to day 10 pull pens to allow for extended gruel and mat feeding.

Mat feeding guidelines:

- The biggest opportunity to boost growth and support livability/health is by increasing intakes during the first seven to 10 days post-weaning.
- Walking pens and mat feeding four times per day provides the best results.
- Mat feed 15 ounces by volume (0.75 pounds) for every 50 pigs per feeding (60 ounces total for one day).
 - Refer to photo and chart on the following page for volume guidelines.
- A 1-pint scoop works best to provide accurate amounts and reduce wastage versus a larger scoop.

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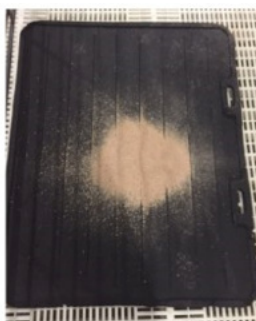
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Gruel feeding guidelines:

- Similar to mat feeding, gruel feeding helps to boost growth and support the livability/health of small and sick/starve-out pigs that struggle in making the switch to dry feed post-weaning.
- Gruel is a mixture of dry feed, ingredients mixed with water and liquid products that is designed to increase intake.
- Mix dry feed with water/liquid products in a 3:1 ratio by volume. Gruel appearance should resemble an oatmeal consistency.
 - A 3:1 ratio is equivalent to 1 pound of dry feed and 0.5 gallons of water.
 - Feeding at a ratio of 3:1, the trough should be licked clean within 30 to 45 minutes (refer to photos on the right below).
 - The optimal trough space for gruel feeding is 2 inches per pig.
- Gruel pans should be placed away from the sleeping area to keep pigs dry.

Guidelines for gruel amounts by stocking density:

# pigs/pen	volume ounces/pen	# QC Supply Scoop # pint
20	6	1/3
30	9	1/2
40	12	1/2
50	15	3/4
60	17	1
70	20	1
80	23	1



Product #30156 from QC Supply works well.

Freshly Made Gruel



30 to 45 minutes

Cleaned Up After 30-45 minutes



Pig feeding guidelines by weaning weight			
6–8 lbs.	8–10 lbs. 1	0–12 lbs. 1	2–15 lbs.
Feed 1–2 lbs. per pig of First Course pellet in feeder; also use for mat feeding. Put a small amount of KICKOFF on the mat and on the pellets in the feed trough for a few days. Gruel mix: Mix a handful of First Course with Opti-Lac Baby Pig Milk Replacer (as directed by label) or use water, and 0.5 lbs. of rolled oats. Gruel with this mixture for 1 week.	First Course pellet at 2 lbs. per pig	Lean Start 2 pellet at 2 lbs. per pig	PowerStart 19/13 Complete feed (29306) at 3–4 lbs. per pig
Pig feeding guidelines by weaning weight			
8–10 lbs.		10–12 lbs.	12–15 lbs.
Feed 1–2 lbs. per pig First Course pellet in the feeder; also use for mat feeding. Put a small amount of KICKOFF on the mat and on the pellets in the feed trough for a few days. Gruel mix: Mix a handful of First Course with Opti-Lac Baby Pig Milk Replacer (as directed by label) or use water, and 0.5 lbs. of rolled oats. Gruel with this mixture for 4 days.		Lean Start 2 pellet at 2 lbs. per pig	PowerStart 19/13 Complete feed (29306) at 3–4 lbs. per pig

Following the steps outlined in the starting protocol will help reduce mortality and increase the number of full-value pigs exiting the nursery. Starting pigs off on the right hoof gives them the best opportunity to reach their full genetic potential in the nursery and beyond.