



Optimise creep intake and see post-weaning performance soar

Farm facts

Name: Worsall Manor Farms

Location: Yarm, Teeside

Farm size & enterprise: Indoor 340 sow farrow to finish, weaning approximately 150 pigs/batch

Benefits

- High pre-weaning creep intake (300 g/day)
- Average weaning weight 9.7 kg
- High staff morale
- Low piglet mortality (2%)
- No growth check post-weaning
- More uniform piglets at weaning

The System

Piglets are fed a damp mixture of a high milk powder starter feed and peat at seven days of age directly onto the floor, away from the sow and dunging area. Small quantities are given while the sow feeds.

The peat is heat treated, has a naturally low pH (which helps reduce bacterial growth) and contains micro-minerals.

A gradual changeover to a very sweet lower milk starter feed occurs after six days, before a further transition to a high specification starter feed.

This is presented in a reversible flat trough allowing a clean trough face when flipped over. This trough is made from H channel iron which due to its heavy weight and low lipped sides allows good access.



Over days 7-21 of age each piglet consumes on average 0.5 kg creep, establishing the gut so that on the first day post-weaning consumption averages 375g ie 1 kg in under three days!

“ Creep feeding little and often, in addition to good genetics, feed and stockmen, gives piglets the best possible start
Brian Bainbridge, producer ”



Background

Weaning is a source of many challenges to the piglet including mixing, relocation and gut modification.

Creep feeding promotes the development of the gut and encourages digestive enzyme development. This allows the piglet to digest nutrients from food other than milk.

Sow milk reaches a nutritional peak three weeks into lactation, so it is essential to establish a good creep feeding regime to maintain appropriate nutrition levels and give your weaners the best possible start.

Key to success

- Provide plenty of light to encourage rooting
- Ensure optimal temperature and ventilation
- Mix creep with heat treated peat for the first week to encourage rooting without waste
- Feed creep when the sow is fed as piglets are active and inquisitive at this time; piglets respond to a routine
- Gradual diet changes ensure maximum gut efficiency

More advice on creep feeding can be found in BPEX Action for Productivity No. 5 – Creep Feeding