

FEEDING YOUR PIGS

FACT SHEET



Pigs can be raised on a variety of feeds, as long as the nutritional requirements for various stages of production are met. Poorly balanced diets result in pigs that get sick more easily, grow slowly, and produce a poorer quality carcass.

Pigs are omnivores (eat food from plant and animal origin) and require energy (fats, carbohydrates), protein (amino acids), vitamins and minerals, and clean water.

How much a pig eats is dependent on a number of factors such as their breed, age, sex, stage of growth, condition, housing, season and type of ingredients used. Ideally, pregnant sows and boars are fed once or twice a day, while growing pigs and lactating sows would have access to feed 24 hours a day. This will ensure the greatest welfare and growth of your pigs.

The easiest and most convenient way to feed your pigs is to purchase complete feed. This will ensure your pigs will get the nutrition they require that will benefit them the most. Other options include blending your own feed on farm, or a combination of purchased and farm-made feeds.



PASTURE PRODUCTION

- Pigs require additional feed when raised on pasture. Pasture does not provide enough or adequate nutrients for pigs.
- Rotational grazing improves pasture and pig performance
- Pigs on pasture are more susceptible to parasite infection. Disease and parasite management is essential.

DON'T FORGET THE WATER

- A pig's water intake is 2–3 times higher than feed intake, therefore providing clean fresh water at all times is essential.
- Pigs require continuous access to water (24/7) to ensure they stay healthy and grow to their best potential.
- Water can be provided using a trough, tub, nipple drinker, or water bowl. The system that will work best for you will depend on water source, number of pigs, pasture or pen layout and season.
- Regardless of the water system you use, ensure you clean it on a regular basis to avoid contamination from manure.





CONSEQUENCES OF POOR NUTRITION

- Pigs get sick more easily. Deficiencies, excesses, and imbalances in the diet can cause health and/or production issues.
- Pigs tend to grow more slowly.
- Pigs convert feed inefficiently.
- Pigs produce a poorer quality carcass (e.g., too fat, low muscle mass).

FEED AND WATER CONSIDERATIONS



DO

- ✓ **Provide a balanced diet to meet pigs' nutritional needs at each stage of production.** Choosing the appropriate feed for the stage of growth has a direct effect on how long it takes to get a pig to market weight, how much it costs, and the meat quality.
- ✓ **Provide constant access to fresh, clean water.** Pigs can drink up to 20 L a day. Make sure water doesn't freeze in winter.
- ✓ **Provide enough feeder space** to prevent competition, and ensure feeders are easily accessible to all pigs.
- ✓ **Feed troughs should be rodent- and pest-proof.** Clean up feed spills. Spills will attract pests and wild animals.
- ✓ **Purchase feed and feed ingredients from reputable sources.** Avoid purchasing feed from international or unknown sources.



DON'T

- X **Don't feed meat or meat by-products to pigs; this is prohibited in Canada.** Meat scraps or dinner table scraps could be contaminated with diseases that could make your pigs sick.
- X **Avoid feeding recycled food products (RFPs)** including kitchen waste or food scraps to pigs as they may be contaminated with or contain small amounts of meat products. If you are feeding RFPs, be sure to check the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) guidelines.
- X **Don't feed hay or straw to pigs** that contain visible contaminants, such as dead rodents, bird nests, or animal feces.
- X **Avoid using surface water as a water source.** Not only will it contaminate the water body but also it could compromise the health and well-being of your pigs.

More information and resources about feeding your pigs can be found at www.SmallScalePigFarming.com.

