

REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EFFICIENT RECORDING SYSTEM FOR COMMERCIAL PIGGERIES

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The general requirements for any livestock performance recording system are to record the performance of all traits which can be cheaply and accurately measured, and which are essential for:

1. Efficient management of the enterprise; and
2. Implementing a scientifically based breeding program, whenever breeding in particular of the sires, is contemplated.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The specific requirements are considered for a recording system adapted to the needs of a commercial piggery with a herd size suitable for weekly batch-farrowing, - say a minimum of 2 boars and 100 sows. Typical features for a piggery of that size are:

1. The continuous observation of reproductive and growth traits, to be recorded daily throughout the whole year, in contrast to most other livestock enterprises, with the exception of a meat chicken breeding operation.
2. The feasibility and economic necessity of Management by Objectives requiring monitoring of production, in order to maximize output of meat sold per sow and year.
3. The necessity to move pigs to different types of housing, according to their changing position in the reproductive cycle and their age group.

IMPLEMENTING THE REQUIREMENTS

1. The forms used for recording must be designed as an integrated system. The number of entries and duplications must be minimized, but at the same time one must allow for the monitoring of all management functions and facilitate the analysis of all basic data, assembled by the manager or foreman on a Weekly Report Sheet. Only a low-cost electronic calculator, equipped with an item count and printing rolls, is required.
2. Computers are not required, as entries have to be analysed on a weekly basis, and as the number of entries is too few in most cases to justify even the use of a mini-computer.
3. A loose-leaf record card is used for each selected breeder, (Sample displayed). Cards are filed in a specially designed 4 holes holder (23 x 15 cm) and capable of holding 400 cards. These holders allow the easy and fast interchange of the Dam's record cards and their filing in any desired sequence. This may be in order of their tag numbers, or according to the stage in their reproductive cycle (so that sows close to farrowing, or just weaned and ready for mating, or those which should be tested for pregnancy, or culled have their cards on top of the sub-group's pack for attention).

Where a breeding program exists, a specially designed second card is prepared for each litter and filed behind the Dam's card, so that her own performance and that of all her litters can be easily evaluated.

4. Other forms required:-

a) A Weekly Report Sheet with the following headings (see sample):

Date	Sow Tag	Housed	Farrowed Pigs	W E A N E D				MATED to Boar	Preg. Test	Disposal
				M	F	T	kg			

b) A Weighing Sheet, pre-prepared in numerical order of identification numbers, tattoo or ear notch, for pre-determined weaning age (3, 4 or 5 weeks) and final weighing at marketing age. When selection for breeding is done, then ultrasonic fat measurement (C + K) is included.

5. The traits measured and recorded:

- a) Farrowing: number of sow, date, numbers of born healthy and dead.
- b) Weaning: date and age, numbers, identification and weight of pigs.
- c) As under b) at 10 weeks of age if desired.
- d) Marketing age: weights and ultrasonic C + K measurements.
- e) Matings: date and sire.
- f) Pregnancy test results.

6. Decisions to be made, based on weekly report sheet: Selection and culling.

7. Monitoring of management on a weekly basis: Sows over-due for matings, conception rate, growth rate, numbers of litters and piglets born, mortality, numbers, weight and grading of pigs marketed. Monthly feed consumption of different rations purchased or mixed.

8. Summarized Reports: On a quarterly or annual basis, can be easily prepared from the weekly data, and used to demonstrate time trends and comparisons with published industry standards.

9. Estimated cost per week per 100 sows:

- a) Measurement and recording of data; 13 man hr.
- b) Analysis, monitoring, comments and preparation of Summary reports: 4 hr. (Manager or Consultant).

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