

Finishing Facilities

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In 2017, on-farm best management practices were audited on a total of 24 farms throughout Canada as part of a national project titled From Innovation to Adoption: On-farm Demonstration of Swine Research. This article is part of an eight-part series reporting on these audits.

Successfully managing finishing facilities requires attention to detail on a daily basis. Due to the length of the finishing period and the percentage of total resources used, small changes will have a large impact on the profitability of the operation.

A total of 16 finishing facilities were audited achieving a score of more than 80% (for the adoption of best management practices) in a number of key areas. As with nursery facilities, one possible area of improvement is increased adoption of enrichment, as only two thirds of farms currently utilize enrichment in finishing pens. Other areas of consideration should be the re-assessment of sorting pigs and additional water availability.



Enrichment

Based on audit data, the use of enrichment in finishing facilities is one area that requires some attention. As showed in Table 1, data suggests that only 65% of farms audited currently incorporate enrichment in their finishing facilities, with chains being the most common form of enrichment (70 %) followed by wood (30 %). Support tools for the successful incorporation of enrichment are available through the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (Appendix H).^{1, 2, 3}

Feeder Type and Water availability

As seen in Figure 1, a vast majority of the audited producers have adopted wet/dry feeders, which have been shown to increase pig performance. Approximately 50 % of the audited producers utilize the feeder as the only source of water within the pen (Figure 2). In some situations it has been shown that reduced floor space allowance may negatively affect growth performance, due to decreased access of feed and water, especially at later stages of the grower-finisher period. Producers should consider

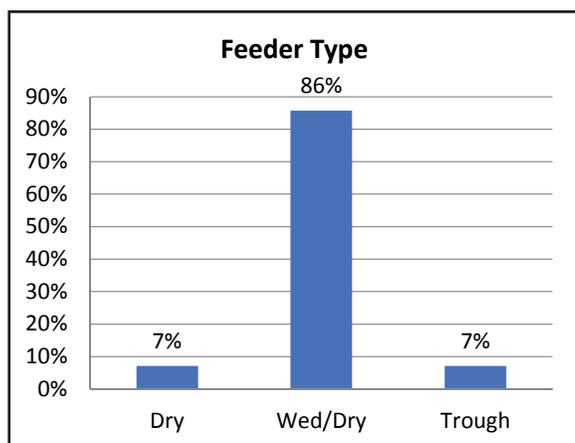


Figure 1. Feeder types in finishing barns

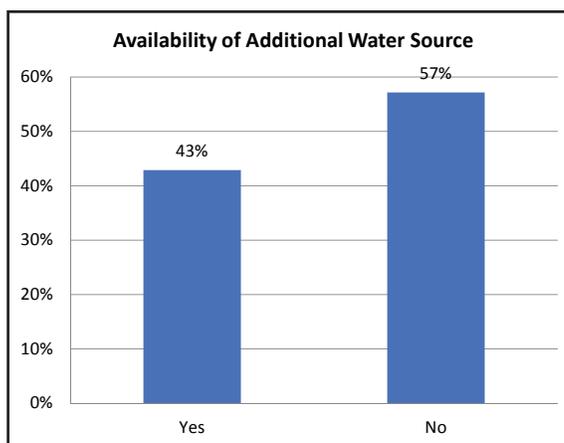


Figure 2. Farms providing water source in addition to a wet/dry feeder

increasing the number of water sources, as research has indicated that adding one extra drinker resulted in a significant improvement in average daily gain and feed efficiency as well as reduced average daily feed intake.⁴

Table 1. Audit results of 16 finishing facilities across Canada

Category	Average Percentage of Farms		
Pigs sorted by size <i>It is recommended not to sort pigs by size in finishing</i>	53 %	47 %	0 %
Number of Diets/Phases <i>It would be recommended to have a minimum of 3 grower-finishing diets</i>	88 %	12 %	0 %
Type of enrichment used <i>It is recommended that enrichment be used in individual pens.</i>	65 %	35 %	0 %
Euthanasia method used <i>Pig must be rendered immediately insensible - must not return to sensibility prior to death.</i>	100 %	0 %	0 %
How often are pen walked? <i>It would be recommended to walk pens on a daily basis</i>	82 %	18 %	0 %
Split sex feeding implemented <i>It's recommended to split-sex whenever possible.</i>	11 %	89 %	0 %
Phytase included in diets <i>Recommendation: include phytase in all diets.</i>	80 %	2 %	20 %

Sorting pigs

Results from the audit indicate that approximately half of participating farms sort pigs when transferred into the finishing barn. There are multiple factors to consider when deciding to sort or not at this phase. Research indicates that finisher pigs fed ad libitum do not benefit from sorting.⁵ However, sorting on the basis of nutritional needs can be effective in cases such as split-sex feeding, as well as for newly-weaned pigs, in order to provide the best diets to each group.

Legend

Meets recommendation	
Partially meets recommendation	
Does not meet recommendation	

Conclusion

Overall, pork producers are doing an excellent job in ensuring best management practices are implemented on-farm within finishing facilities. Some farms could see potential benefits by a focusing on areas of lower ratings (enrichment, sorting, water availability) and assessing how to best incorporate them into their operations. Take a look at the 'For Further Reading' section to learn more about these possible improvements.

For Further Reading

¹Enriching the living space of pigs to comply with the Code (English) <http://www.cdpq.ca/getmedia/cefa398c-ba4d-46c8-a1a0-ad5c04574e1c/Fiche-enrichissement-version-anglaise.pdf.aspx>

²Enrich the living space of pigs in order to come up to code (Français) <http://www.cdpq.ca/publications-et-documents/publications-techniques-et-scientifiques/enrichir-l-espace-de-vie-des-porcs-pour-respecter.aspx?lang=en-CA>

³Code of practice for care and handling of pigs (English) http://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/pig_code_of_practice.pdf
(Français) http://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/porcs_code_de_pratiques.pdf

⁴The Effects of Water Availability and Space Allowance on Productivity and Profitability (English) <http://www.prairieswine.com/water-availability-and-crowding/>

⁵Sorting Pigs: Why We Do It, and Why We Shouldn't (English) <http://www.prairieswine.com/sorting-pigs-why-we-do-it-and-why-we-shouldn-t/>

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