

Sows - assessment of condition and feeding

Control of condition

A uniform, medium condition ensures a satisfactory longevity, a low feed consumption and a low risk of shoulder ulcers. Good control of condition requires individual feeding and requires that all sows have their condition assessed in 1st, 2nd and 3rd months of gestation and at farrowing.

Use your eyes at the daily control of condition. Four times a year, check your ability to assess "medium condition" by measuring the backfat thickness of 20 sows (see figure 1).

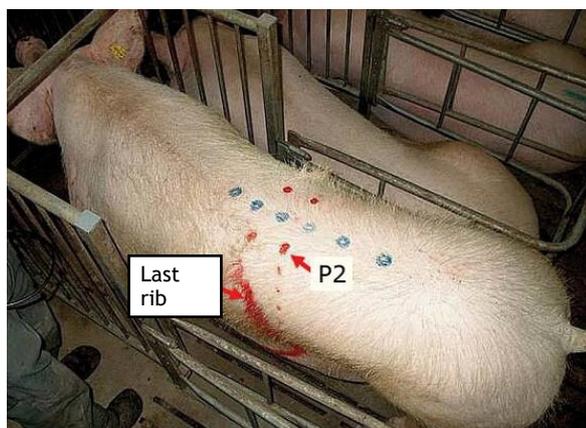


Figure 1. Measurement in P2 abreast of the last rib. Measure 7 cm from the middle of the back. To increase the accuracy, also measure 7 cm in front of this point. The backfat thickness is stated as an average of these two measurements. If necessary, repeat the measurements on the other side of the sow.

Backfat thickness of:

- Gilts: 12-18 mm at the time of service.
- Gestating sows: 15-20 mm.
- Lactating sows: 14-18 mm at weaning.

Inspection of the feeding system

Check routinely that the expected amount of feed is being fed.

It is particularly important to check this in feed stations and liquid feeding systems.

Feeding strategies

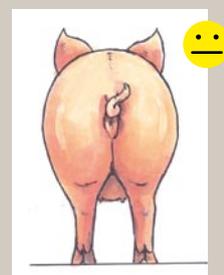
Feed **gilts** restrictively with 2.5 FU_{sow}/day from approx. 60 kg. 14 days before expected service, increase the feed dose to 3.5 FU_{sow}/day.

Feed **lactating sows** min. 3 times/day. Feed 2.5 FU_{sow}/day upon transfer to the farrowing facility. After farrowing, increase the dose to approx. 5 FU_{sow} at day 7 of lactation. Then feed approximate ad lib.

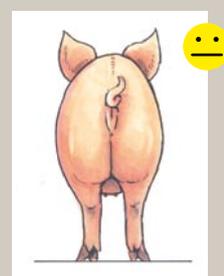
Feed **gestating sows** once a day. The normal feed dose varies between 2-3 FU_{sow} depending on condition. Increase the feed dose by approx. 0.5 FU_{sow}/day the last four weeks before farrowing. If the housing temperature deviates from 20°C, adjust the feed dose ± 0.25 FU_{sow} / 5°C fall/rise in temperature.



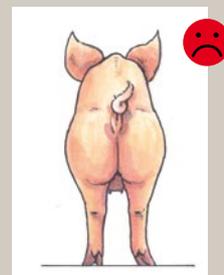
Medium
Hipbone and spine can be felt by a light press of hand.



Fat
Hipbone and spine are completely hidden.



Thin
Hipbone and spine are visible.



Very thin
Hipbone and spine are distinct.