



# The balance between genetics, health, housing, nutrition and management

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Pig production is a highly intensive farming operation. It entails many different facets and for efficient production a fine balance needs to be maintained between genetics, health, housing, nutrition and management. None of these aspects or cornerstones can be seen or managed separately from each other.

A large number of producers within the South African swine industry mix their own feed, either

completely or they use a high protein concentrate (maize free concentrate). One of the most important secrets of home mixing is the quality of the ingredients being used and the consistency of the quality from one batch to the next. Pigs are sensitive to variations in ingredient quality, and this could lead to variations in feed intake, growth, health status and efficiency of production.

When purchasing ingredients, it is essential to understand the potential variation in quality

parameters and the risks involved with mycotoxin contamination. Each ingredient plays an important role in the diet. Many different ingredients can be used in swine diets, but the use thereof will be limited by the availability, quality and price.

If a producer cannot source a specific ingredient of good quality at a good price, it may be better not to formulate this ingredient into the diet at all.

Animal nutritionists formulate the feed rations as close as possible





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in the weaner and grower phases, there would usually be two to three rations being used in the weaner phase (from weaning to 70/77 days old) and then two grower diets with a finisher (marketing) diet when pigs are slaughtered at a heavier weight (above 105kg live).

The larger the farm and the more "all-in/all-out" the different sections are being managed, the more diets would be applied to increase efficiency.

To conclude, the feeding of the grower pig means a fine balance between requirements, housing, genetics, health and management and ingredient quality is critical to maintain efficient production, especially where farmers mix their own feed on farm.

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