

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
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Winter Rations for Brood Sows

Summary of 1917-18 Experiments on the Feeding and
 Management of Pregnant Sows

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Leading swine authorities have estimated that 40 out of every 100 pigs farrowed in Western Canada are either still-born or die shortly after birth. Many of these pigs appear to be perfectly normal but lack sufficient vitality to withstand the difficulties of young pignood. By far the greatest mortality, however, is due to the appearance of the dreaded hairless pig. One man came to this office last spring with a statement something like this: "I bred 100 gilts last fall with the idea of raising my feeder pigs this year instead of buying them at the stock yards. The first 18 gilts have already farrowed and practically every litter has been hairless. What can I do, to save the other 82 litters?" He had been feeding a ration consisting largely of shorts, and the gilts were over fat. Was the difficulty due to the feed, to the gilts being too fat, or both? Another breeder states: "I am going out of the hog business this fall for the simple reason that pig losses at time of farrowing have ruined my profits for the last three years." A 40 per cent. loss is certainly a handicap in the production of any class of live stock at any time, but more particularly just now under existing feed and labor costs.

Experienced breeders agree that heavy losses follow years of early frosts where large quantities of frozen grain are fed to the pregnant sows. For this reason many have been firm in the belief that frozen wheat contains certain poisonous properties that make it unsuited to the brood sow ration. Others contend that the greatest difficulties follow long, severe winters where sows have a tendency to remain in their sleeping quarters rather than rustle for a living. This has led them to the conclusion that lack of exercise, insufficient

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