



# Pig Nutrition & Weight Management Guide

Proper nutrition is essential for a pig's health, growth, and longevity. Pigs are omnivores with simple stomachs, meaning they require a balanced diet to thrive.

## I. Key Nutritional Components

A balanced diet must include the following six pillars:

- **Water:** The most important nutrient. Pigs require constant access to clean, fresh water.
- **Energy:** Derived from carbohydrates (grains like corn, barley, wheat) and fats. Energy supports daily activity and growth.
- **Protein:** Essential for muscle development and tissue repair. The quality of protein is determined by its **amino acid profile** (Lysine is usually the first limiting amino acid).
- **Minerals:** Crucial for skeletal health and metabolic function (specifically Calcium and Phosphorus).
- **Vitamins:** Necessary for immunity and overall vitality (A, D, E, and B-vitamins).
- **Fiber:** Important for digestive health, though high fiber levels can reduce energy intake in growing pigs.

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## II. Nutrition by Life Stage

Nutritional requirements change drastically as a pig matures.

| Life Stage                         | Primary Focus                 | Feed Type                                    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Starter (Weaning - 40 lbs)</b>  | Rapid development, gut health | High protein, high energy, highly digestible |
| <b>Grower (40 lbs - 150 lbs)</b>   | Muscle and bone growth        | Moderate protein, balanced energy            |
| <b>Finisher (150 lbs - Market)</b> | Fat deposition, weight gain   | Lower protein, high energy                   |

|                             |                                      |                                 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Breeding/Maintenance</b> | Maintaining health, avoiding obesity | Controlled calories, high fiber |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

### III. Measuring Pig Weight

Knowing your pig's weight is crucial for adjusting feed rations and monitoring health. If you do not have a large livestock scale, you can estimate weight using a measuring tape.

#### How to Measure:

1. **Girth:** Measure the circumference of the pig immediately behind the front legs (around the heart/shoulders).
2. **Length:** Measure from the base of the ears to the base of the tail.
3. **Calculate:** Square the girth measurement, multiply by the length, and divide by 400.

### IV. Body Condition Scoring (BCS)

Visual appraisal is key to preventing obesity or malnutrition. Pigs should be scored on a scale of **1 to 5**.

| Score | Condition    | Visual/Physical Cues   |
|-------|--------------|--|
| 1     | Emaciated    | Hips, ribs, and backbone are highly visible. No fat cover.                   |
| 2     | Thin         | Hips, ribs, and backbone are easily felt with light pressure.                |
| 3     | <b>Ideal</b> | <b>Ribs and backbone are not visible but can be felt with firm pressure.</b> |
| 4     | Fat          | Ribs and backbone are difficult to feel even with firm pressure.             |
| 5     | Obese        | Ribs and backbone are not felt. Massive fat deposits present.                |

## V. Feeding Best Practices

- **Free Choice vs. Limit Feeding:** Young pigs should generally be fed "free choice" (all they can eat). Mature pigs or pets often need to be "limit fed" to prevent obesity.
- **Avoid Table Scraps:** While pigs are omnivores, table scraps are often unbalanced, too high in salt, or unsafe (e.g., chocolate, moldy food).
- **Consistency:** Feed at the same time daily to reduce stress and digestive upset.

