

Akey Gro Booster in Late Starter and Early Grower Diets

When pork prices decrease, one of the first things producers consider is feed cost reductions to minimize out-of-pocket expenses. Feed cost per ton is targeted since it is an easy number to verify and track. However, to maximize return on feed investment, producers should evaluate feed cost per pound of gain and the value of extra pounds gained by pigs in the same time frame, not simply feed cost per ton.

Late nursery and early grower diets are one of the first places producers look to cut costs, but at what price? Akey Gro Booster is designed to help transition pigs from nursery to grow-finish levels of amino acids, vitamins, and trace minerals. It also supplies BioPlus 2B, a direct-fed microbial product Akey has used for more than two years in prestarter and starter feeds for pigs up to 60 lb body weight. In addition, Gro Booster provides a source of highly digestible amino acids to the diet to support optimal growth and feed efficiency. Akey recently conducted an experiment with 818 pigs fed Swine Micro 4 or Swine Micro 4 plus Gro Booster from 30 to 60 lb body weight. Results of the Akey research trial are shown below.

Gro Booster Improves Performance of Pigs from 30 to 60 lb Body Weight

Item	Swine Micro 4	Swine Micro 4 + Gro Booster
Wt in, lb	31	31
Wt out, lb ^a	58	61
ADG, lb ^b	1.28	1.42
ADFI, lb ^b	2.02	2.15
F/G	1.58	1.52

Trial F3_N03_16. ^a P<.02. ^b P<.01.

In this trial, feeding Gro Booster in conjunction with Swine Micro 4 increased ADFI by 6% and ADG by 11%. Although not different statistically, feeding Gro Booster improved F/G by 4%. Final weight increased 3 lb/pig. Most researchers agree that weight differences observed at the end of the nursery period will be maintained to slaughter, if not increased. Conservatively, 3 lb of extra weight out of the nursery would result in 3 lb extra weight at market. Using a \$40/cwt market price, the extra pounds are worth \$1.20/pig. Extra feed cost incurred due to feeding Gro Booster for 30 lb of weight gain is approximately \$0.30/pig. Combined, these results suggest a 4:1 return on investment. Although cost per ton of complete feed is less when using Swine Micro 4 alone, pig performance tells us that it is more economical overall to incorporate Gro Booster in late nursery and early grower feeds.

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