



**SOWMAX**  
AdLib Sow Feeder

# The SowMAX Handbook

Feeding the Lactating Sow with SowMAX



# Introduction

Feeding lactating sows is a tough job. Training farrowing house personnel to do the job correctly may be one of the biggest challenges a unit manager faces.

As stated in  
*Feeding the Lactating Sow*  
(Frank Ahrene, 2005)



*"The objective of the farrowing barn staff must be to maximize sow feed intake. Whether sows are fed manually or by automatic feeding systems, they should be fed a minimum of twice daily, preferable three or more times per day, and have fresh feed available to them at all times."*

This same pamphlet goes on to say

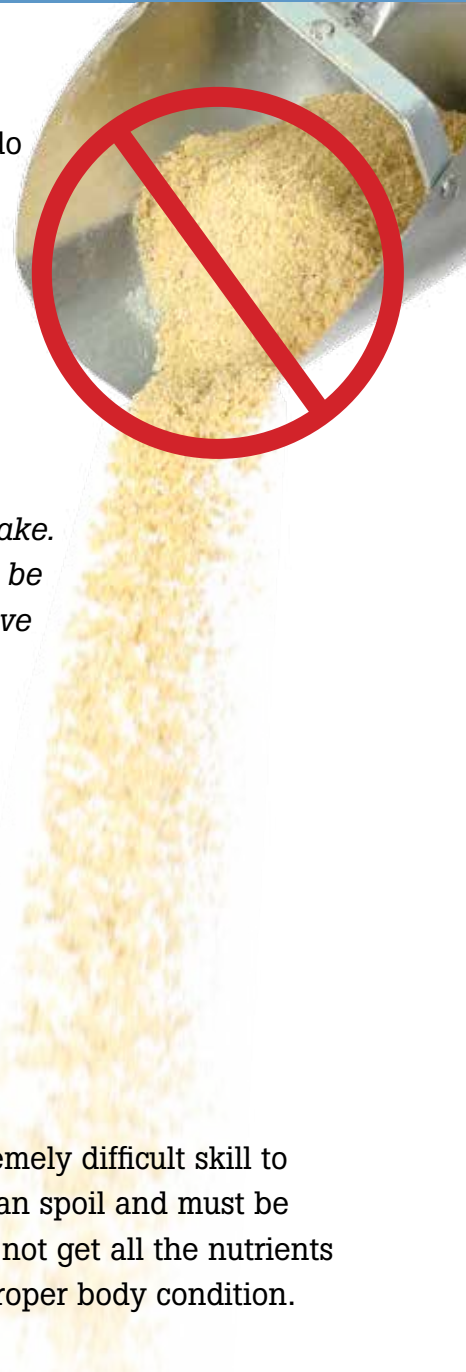
*"...many sows, especially parity 1 and 2 sows, do not consume enough feed during lactation to meet their energy and nutrient needs for maintenance and milk production. The consequence is that these sows mobilize their own body tissues to meet their energy and nutrient needs. It has been shown that excessive weight loss during lactation will compromise subsequent reproductive performance (Hughes 1993, Tantasuparuk et al 2001)."*



Hand feeding a sow in lactation is an extremely difficult skill to perfect. Feed her too much, and the feed can spoil and must be discarded. Feed her too little, and she will not get all the nutrients she needs to produce milk and maintain proper body condition.

Think of it in this perspective, a sow produces more milk per pound of body weight than a milk cow! They can't produce to their full genetic potential without being fed correctly.

SowMAX eliminates all the guesswork. Keep the dispenser full, and sows have fresh feed available 24/7...on weekends, holidays and at night during hot weather.



# The SowMAX Feed Dispenser

We think the SowMAX feed dispenser is the most effective tool for feeding lactating sows that any producer can utilize.

SowMAX offers these advantages:

## **100% Stainless Steel construction.**

There are no plastic parts to wear or go out of adjustment.

## **No motors or electronics.**

Many systems use a metering motor to dispense the feed and ear tags to start the motor. SowMAX uses the simple action of the sow activating a lever - no motors to replace or ear tags to lose.

## **Adapts to existing feeders and delivery systems.**

Choose from a 20 lb. hopper for hand filling or install with a feed system to automatically fill the dispensers. Adapts to most existing farrowing feeders with simple brackets.

## **Positive actuation and adjustment.**

Other systems utilize a bumper ball or bar that can vary in the amount of feed delivered. With SowMAX, you adjust the amount, and the trigger mechanism dispenses that exact amount every time the sow activates the lever.



## Feeding Procedure

Prior to farrowing (110 -114 days), hand feed 2-3 lbs. twice per day. Set the adjustment lever on the side of the dispenser to its widest opening. Place the feed into the hopper and hand activate the trigger lever to assure animals can manipulate the feed action. Activating the lever gets the sows up and accustom to using the SowMAX trigger. This training is especially important with first litter gilts. Continue to hand feed this limited ration until three days after farrowing.



On day three, fill the hopper full in the morning. Later in the day check for feed disappearance or a noticeable indentation of the feed level. If no feed disappearance is present, the sow has not eaten and needs additional attention.

Check for excess feed in the feed pan. If excess feed is present, move the side adjustment down to a lower setting to limit the amount of feed delivered with each levered stroke.

Also, check for the presence of wet feed in the feed pan. If the feed is wet, make the necessary adjustments to nipple placement or reduce water line pressure to prevent water from spraying into the feed pan.

Fill the hopper again in the afternoon of day three. Continue to fill the hopper morning and evening through the remainder of the lactation period.



The SowMAX dispenser holds approximately 6.5 pounds of feed. Adding the blue plastic hopper, feed capacity increases to 20.5 pounds. Topping off the hopper with feed both morning and evening, will provide any sow with a full day's ration.

If using a 3" drop pipe from an overhead fill system, you can estimate the amount of feed storage. A 3" tube holds about 1.5 pounds per foot. A typical length for a drop tube is about three feet. Multiplying the length of the feed tube with the feed capacity per foot of the tube will provide estimated feed storage capacity. For example, a 3" drop tube at 3' long will hold 4.5 pounds ( $3 \times 1.5 = 4.5$ ). Adding the amount of feed in the SowMAX to this number will provide total estimated feed capacity, in this case estimated feed storage would be 11 pounds. With this combination, it may be necessary to fill the SowMAX three times per day for heavy milking sows late in the lactation period.



# Checklist to Order SowMAX for Existing Crates

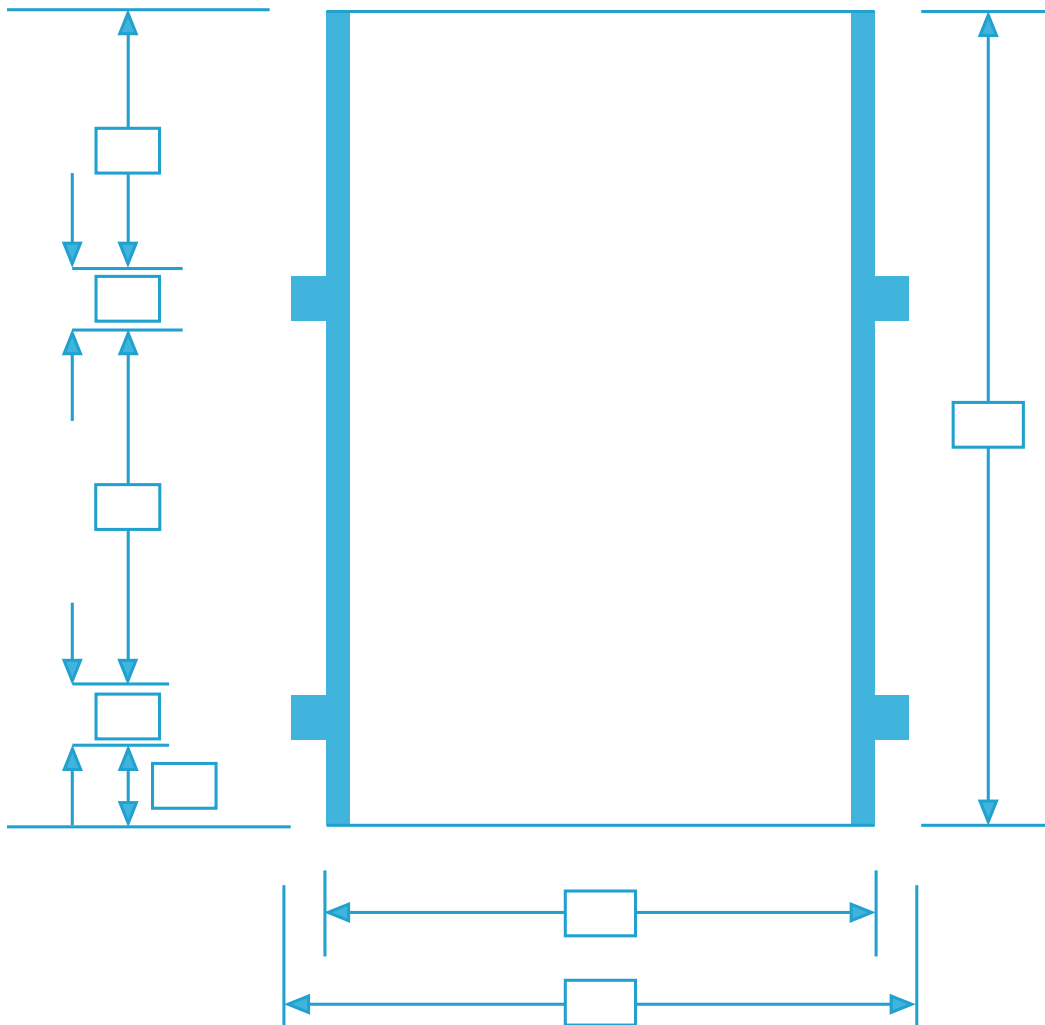
We will need some additional information to help you determine the best method of incorporating SowMAX dispensers to your existing farrowing crates.

Generally, SowMAX is mounted onto a head gate instead of bolting directly onto a feeder. This allows for feeders to be easily pivoted or removed for cleaning.

First, take a picture of the farrowing crate door frame and the head gate with your smartphone. This will help describe the type of drop rods and clips on your equipment. Size of the feeder also determines the mounting location for the SowMAX dispenser.

Second fill out the simple diagram (on page 7) showing dimensions of the head gate. Fill in any pipes or solid areas on the crate.





Click <http://www.hogslat.com/HSIHeadGate/HeadGate> to access the electronic version of the diagram. Fill in the dimensions, contact information, and click the send button.

To send photos, click [HERE](#) on the same form to create a separate email to [webinfo.us@hogslat.com](mailto:webinfo.us@hogslat.com). Attach any photos of the head gates, crates and feeders. Our sales staff will use the diagram and photos to quote attachments needed to add SowMAX dispensers to your existing crates.

To access the diagram from a printed version, go to [www.hogslat.com](http://www.hogslat.com) and search for SowMAX. Located under the Resource tab, is a link to the head gate diagram.



# SOWMAX

**HOG SLAT AdLib Sow Feeder**

With SowMAX you'll do a better job of feeding lactating sows, and you'll do it with less work. Fill the hopper daily, and fresh feed is always available...day or night. **Reduce labor. Reduce feed waste. Feed your sows better.**



Learn more about the advantages of SowMAX dispensers feeding weaned sows in breeding. Go to [www.hogslat.com](http://www.hogslat.com) and search for SowMAX. You'll find blogs and videos with more information.



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