Adding field peas to swine rations could lower cost, phosphorous levels

By WENDY SWEETER, For Lee Agri-Media

Feeding field peas in swine diets could lower feed costs and lower the amount of phosphorous in manure.

According to South Dakota State University associate professor of monogastric nutrition Hans Stein, field pea research at SDSU looks at the nutritional value in swine diets.

(One) way it will help producers is that it can lower the cost of feed by including field peas in their rations. Also, especially if you go to the west of here, producers have to drive quite a ways to get soybean meal,” Stein said. “But they can grow their own field pea so they would save some trucking costs also, which can be a major problem if you are far from Brookings.”

Stein started his research at SDSU in 2000. A group of field pea growers came to him at that time to see if he would be willing to do some research with swine rations.

“When they heard there was a new swine nutritionist here, they contacted me and told me that they had trouble selling their field peas to swine producers because nobody had done the research. They didn’t know how much they could put in there,” Stein said.

Since the start of the field pea research, Stein and other swine researchers at SDSU have conducted eight experiments dealing with field peas. Some of those experiments looked at how field peas fit in the ration, how the nutrients are digested, and what pigs get out of them as well as how phosphorous is utilized.

Stein found that field peas in nursery diets can be at least 18 percent of the diet. In growing and finishing pig diets, field peas can account for 36 percent with no negative effects. A rule of thumb, Stein said, is if producers include 3 percent field peas into the diet, you take out 2 percent corn and 1 percent soybean meal. However, he said they still need to balance the amino acids.

“We have also measured the digestibility of all of the amino acids in field peas and found that for most amino acids the digestibility is very close to what it is in soybean meal,” Stein said. “And, we measured the energy concentration and found that that was close to what is in corn. So if you take corn and soybean meal out and use field peas then you don’t get less energy into the diet, which is also important.”

Stein also found that phosphorous is a lot better utilized in field peas than in corn and soybean meal.

“So, you will have less phosphorous in your waste stream if you use field peas compared to corn and soybean meal,” he said.

In the most recent field pea study, the

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