

Executive Summary

Swine nutrition has been an important part of research done at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During our research, we focus on the ethical dilemmas of nutrition research, regulations and protocols that the researchers face and how they deal with it. We interviewed Mr. Bill Fisher, Head of Swine Research Center (SRC), and Dr. Michael Ellis, Professor at the Department of Animal Science.

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), is responsible to make sure that the proposed experiment is consistent with animal care standards. The committee reviews the SRC at least once every six months. Any research activity can be suspended if it does not meet the IACUC's standards. For research on the use of animal feed, there is a protocol called the Generally Recommended As Safe (GRAS) that the researchers follow. Only GRAS-approved products are allowed to be fed to the swine. In order to reach the commercial market, the pig's diet must consist of only GRAS-approved products.

Ethanol production is one of the big factors in nutrition research. A by-product of ethanol production is distiller-dried grains and it is not traditionally used in pig feed. Thus, researchers are trying to get a better understanding of how it interacts in swine's bodies before it can be widely used. Feeding swine with genetic modified organisms (GMO's) such as corn and soybean is common. Some people wonder if GMO's may enter the food chain and effect humans or animals in a negative way. Evidence suggests that more than 95 percent of DNA and RNA are completely broken down within the digestive system and there is no risk being posed to human and animal health.

In conclusion, the research being done at SRC is critical in solving issues that arise from feeding pigs with alternative new feeds. The regulations and protocols are important in making sure the research is conducted with ethics in mind.