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POPULAR ARTICLE

Swill Feeding in Pigs: Turning Kitchen Waste into Profit

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Introduction:

Pig farming is slowly gaining popularity in India, especially in the North-East and Southern states where pork is a preferred meat. Today, India has nearly 9 million pigs, with thousands of small farmers depending on them for their livelihood. In Punjab alone, about 52,000 pigs are reared by 2,500 farmers.

But pig farming is not just about rearing, it's about managing feed. Since 60–70% of the cost of pig production goes into feeding, farmers are always searching for cheaper, nutritious options. One of the most interesting and practical solutions is swill feeding, using kitchen waste or hotel leftovers as pig feed.

Why Pig Farming is Attractive:

- A sow matures at 6–8 months, gives birth twice a year, and produces about 10–12 piglets per litter.
- Pigs grow fast and reach market weight (100 kg) within a year.
- The demand for pork is high in North-East India and Southern states like Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.
- The selling price is attractive- ₹190 per kg live weight, which means about ₹19,000 per pig.
- Compared to other livestock businesses, starting a pig farm requires relatively less investment in infrastructure and equipment.
- Pigs convert feed into meat more efficiently than cattle, making them cost-effective to rear.
- Pigs have a short breeding cycle, allowing farmers to expand their herd quickly.
- They can eat kitchen waste, crop residues, and agricultural by-products, reducing feeding costs.
- Pigs have a high dressing percentage (65–80%),



meaning more meat per animal.

- Pig dung is an excellent organic fertilizer, improving soil health and crop yield.
- Pork processing, cold storage, and value-added products (sausages, bacon) are expanding in India.

Life Stages of a Pig:

1. **Weaning Stage** – up to 10 kg body weight.
2. **Growing Stage** – up to 50 kg.
3. **Fattening Stage** – from 50 kg till market.

Each stage requires different feeding strategies.

The Feeding Challenge

- Feed alone consumes two-thirds of total farm cost.
- Balanced feed must contain cereals for energy, oil cakes for protein, green fodder for fiber, along with vitamins, minerals, and water.
- Good feeding means healthy pigs, better growth, fewer diseases, and higher profits.

Kitchen Waste as Feed: Swill Feeding:

In many parts of the country, farmers use kitchen waste as a cheap and easily available source of feed for pigs. This practice is called swill feeding. The waste usually comes from homes, hotels, hostels, restaurants, and even food processing units. It may include leftover rice, chapati, cooked vegetables, pulses, meat, fish, and other food scraps.



Why Farmers Like It:

- **Cheap:** Cuts down feed costs drastically.
- **Nutritious:** Contains easily digestible protein and energy.
- **Available:** Hotels, community kitchens, and hostels produce large amounts of food waste daily.
- **Reduces Waste:** Helps in recycling kitchen waste and keeping the environment clean.
- **Easy Access:** Farmers can collect it locally with minimal transport cost.
- **Varied Diet:** Provides a mix of rice, chapati, vegetables, pulses, and meat, which pigs like to eat.
- **Saves Time:** Farmers spend less time preparing formulated feed.
- **Quick Growth:** Pigs fed swill often show good growth performance when managed well.
- **Sustainable Practice:** Supports circular economy by converting food waste into meat.

How to Use It Safely:

- Always boil the waste for 30 minutes at 100°C (fire or steam).
- This kills disease-causing germs and makes food safe for pigs.

Risks of Feeding Waste Directly:

- Spoiled or stale food can make pigs sick.
- Infectious diseases like African Swine Fever can spread.
- Too much oily, spicy, or salty food upsets digestion.
- Sometimes harmful items like plastic or glass pieces are mixed in, which can even kill pigs.

What Research Says:

- **Bihar (2009):** Pigs fed with boiled kitchen waste gained more weight and at half the cost of normal feed.
- **Chennai (2010):** Pigs given 75% waste + 25% feed performed better in meat yield.
- **Uttar Pradesh (2010):** Waste-fed pigs showed faster growth and much lower feed cost.

Clearly, when used properly, kitchen waste can cut feed costs while still ensuring good growth and profit.

Tips for Farmers:

1. Collect waste only from trusted sources.
2. Always boil before feeding.
3. Avoid spicy, oily, or rotten food.
4. Keep sheds clean and hygienic.
5. Use waste feed along with some balanced concentrate for best results.

The Bottom Line:

Swill feeding is a double benefit system- it reduces the problem of food waste and at the same time lowers pig-rearing costs. With simple precautions, farmers can increase profit, reduce expenses, and rear healthier pigs.

And with mobile apps and YouTube channels now supporting piggery farmers, the future of pig farming in India looks promising.