SWINE FACILITIES

Properly designed facilities coupled with good management can result in increased profits from a swine enterprise. The type of swine facilities used on a particular farm depends on the type of operation, its size, the manager’s ability, the amount and type of labor available and the owner’s long range objectives.

The following questions should be answered by the operator before planning any swine facilities and equipment.

1. Do you really want to raise hogs?
2. How many hogs do you want to raise and/or feed per year?
3. How many times per year do you want to farrow?
4. How much labor do you have now and expect to have ten years from now?
5. Will manure handling and disposal create problems?

Considerations for Location of Buildings and Equipment

1. FUTURE EXPANSION - Leave room for additional buildings to be conveniently placed for movement of animals, feed, vehicles, and for manure disposal.

2. ACCESS - All-weather access, convenient to farmstead, but not to general public, near utilities and water source and permit easy movement of pigs from farrowing through market.

3. ODOR CONTROL - Locate downwind from dwelling house and consider neighbor’s dwellings. Odors can be objectional for 1/2-mile or more. Consider the possibility of new homes being constructed on adjacent property.

Pasture or Confinement

The degree of mechanization depends largely on the number of pigs raised and available labor. The total cost of production is not significantly influenced by the type of facilities used. Buildings and equipment costs could be only 10- to 15-percent of the total cost. Research shows little difference in the total cost of production between pasture, solid floor, or slatted-floor facilities. Additional building cost was offset by decreased labor and more efficient production.
Pasture Systems

Pasture systems with portable houses are most practical for small operators with less than 20 sows; however, very large outside production units can be efficient and profitable. Other considerations are:

1. Requires ample available pasture to allow rotation for disease control.
2. Farrow sows twice per year maximum.
3. Allows the ability to feed out pigs with a minimum investment in buildings.
4. Have all necessary labor to support pasture handling.
5. Small scale production allows evaluation of long term goals for confinement facilities.

Confinement facilities

Confinement facilities are recommended when:

1. Large numbers of pigs are produced.
2. Farrowing is scheduled year-round.
3. Labor is expensive and in short supply.
4. Quality management is available.
5. Land is expensive and more suited for other purposes.
6. Capital is available to invest in facilities.

Building a Confinement System

Every swine producer should have a plan for his future system even though it may require several years to complete. Some buildings can be remodeled satisfactorily, however, it may be cheaper and more satisfactory to start with new buildings.

First priority should be given to the farrowing facility. Second is the nursery for proper postweaning environment. Then the grower/finishing facility would be next. Feed processing facilities are usually constructed for finishing large numbers of hogs. Usually the last step will be a sow confinement unit for gestation and breeding.