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Multiple Farrowing

By Ken Krause

ONE OF THE topics that is currently undergoing a great deal of discussion in agriculture is changes that are taking place in hog production methods. Heading the list of ideas that might help hog farmers to maintain or increase their farm profits are multiple farrowing, raising in confinement on concrete, and balanced rations. These ideas aren't completely new, but have been modified over a period of years.

The McClean County System of Swine Sanitation was introduced in 1919. This system used rotated pasture for both breeding and fattening herds. With this system the conventional one-litter systems of hog production are common. The one-litter system is associated with sows farrowing on pasture in the summertime and the two-litter system usually is a program with gilts that farrow in the spring and then are rebred to farrow in the fall.

Since the introduction of the McClean County System, research workers have stressed the improvement of details, and have not generally advocated revolutionized systems of production. It is difficult for the producer to bring together these details and develop a new system. Consequently when researchers and others began to consolidate the great masses of research findings into a new system of production involving radically different methods, farmers showed much interest. Established farmers, too, wished to learn about the new multiple farrowing systems and

confinement raising methods.

In the new multiple farrowing system which emerged, several groups of sows are kept and farrowings are spread over several different months. This may involve the complete or partial confinement on concrete. Thus multiple farrowing has joined the expansion of the conventional systems of production as a method of increasing volume.

Some observers contend that multiple farrowing uses facilities more fully than conventional systems, thus reducing fixed costs in investment per unit of output. However, new management problems arise with confinement and increased intensity. Labor requirements are more evenly distributed over the year, but more total labor may be required.

The owner-operated Joe Wise farm near Storm Lake is a 160-acre example of an operation that has consolidated many new swine raising ideas. Wise has averaged 703 pigs marketed from the farm during the past five years.

A complete balanced ration is mixed and ground through this home-made system of grainery equipment. Self-feeders keep a constant supply of feed before the hogs.



A small laying flock, crop acres and the hog enterprises keep Wise and a full-time hired hand busy all year.

Wise has constructed an elevator type building which he uses to grind and mix balanced feeding rations. A horse barn has now been remodeled to serve as a growing area for pigs after they are moved from the farrowing house. Large, open-type sheds adjoined by cement floors provide fattening space.

A steam unit is used to keep the large concrete areas clean. In this type of operation, sanitation is a must. This is one reason why multiple farrowing and raising in confinement on concrete may never replace the conventional methods of swine production for many farmers.

Adoption to multiple farrowing and confinement on concrete may be hampered by two other important limitations—larger capital requirements and greater attention to all management phases of the hog enterprise.



This elevator-type building was constructed for storing, mixing, and grinding rations.