

Largest hog farm has unique ideas

[Continued from Page 24]
 prior to the time they're due, sows move into the well insulated and ventilated farrowing house. Built three years ago, the six-room facility is like a giant lineup of incubators. Each room contains 13 crates, giving the farrowing house a total capacity for 108 sows at a time. But one of the rooms is always empty as their use is rotated for complete

cleaning and disinfection. A new room is emptied each week.
 Variable speed fans, along with insulation and a sub-floor heating system maintain an even temperature of about 70 degrees 365 days a year. Strategically located ducts insure that the air flow is complete and non-drafting. Odors from the barn and underlying manure pits are

drawn out along with stale air. Special louvres and doors can be opened to draw air from either outside or the interior walkways. The sub-floor heating tubes are only under the areas used by baby pigs. For supplementary heat, Kephart has catalytic gas heaters available.

Until recently, Kephart allowed piglets to stay with their mothers for as long as six weeks. But a period of experimentation has convinced him that just four and even three weeks is sufficient. The goal is to have sows produce an average of 2½ litters per year. He reports no significant problems so far.

Once removed from the farrowing crates, the young pigs are raised outside until they reach a weight of approximately 60 pounds. Kephart explained that they're off to a better start that way, compared to bringing them straight to one of the feeder houses.

The feeder houses, which are cooled down 10 degrees

with evaporative coolers, are separated into two divisions - one area for those animals weighing between 60 and 150 pounds, the other for putting on the last 60 to 70 pounds until a market weight of 210 to 230 pounds has been reached. Aside from the variation in size of the animals, the main reason for the separation of the pigs is the difference in feed. The pre-finish feed is a meal containing 13 to 14 per cent protein, while the final finishing feed tests 11 to 12 per cent protein. In either case, feed is moved automatically and the pigs are allowed to eat as much as they want. They reach their marketing weight at approximately five to six months of age.

In assessing the operation, Kephart cites no major problems and he notes that once the pigs are weaned, the period of maximum stress is over. It's a down-hill battle when pigs come out of the crate, he said.

As in most hog operations,

manure is handled through pits and liquid manure spreaders. BDM has slatted floors and pits in each of its barns. The material is removed and hauled in a 3200-gallon spreader powered by a 4020 John Deere. Loading time is just four minutes, but Kephart is quick to add that it takes a six-inch pipe and a 1000-rpm shaft to do it.

Market hogs leaving BDM Farms are sold through the Pennsylvania Farmers Association's grade and

yield program.

Being just a year out of college, Kephart was asked to sum up his experiences and observations since becoming herdsman. "I feel that everything I know now I learned after I came here," he responded.

Four additions put on Paraquat labeling

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. - Four new additions to ORTHO Paraquat CLR labeling have been announced by Chevron Chemical Company. The additions are: Paraquat on potatoes after planting as a pre-emergence treatment, ground application only and the addition of aerial application for North Dakota only; Paraquat as a tank mix with AATREX 80W and PRINCEP 80W for corn;

Paraquat as a post-emergence directed spray used either alone or in combination with Atrazine as a tank mix on corn; and labeling updated or amended from previous labeling. Paraquat as a soybean harvest aid on soybeans when plants are mature with beans fully developed and at least ½ of the leaves have dropped, and leaves left on plants are turning yellow.

Affluence explained

WASHINGTON — There's a direct relationship between a nation's agricultural productivity and its affluence. In other words, the less time people spend producing food, the more time they have to acquire the other things that ordinarily measure wealth and affluence.

The United States is an excellent example of this relationship at work. Only four percent of Americans are engaged in agriculture,

leaving 96 percent free to produce something else. In India, 68 percent of the people are in agriculture; in Brazil, 53 percent.

This relationship is explained in detail in "The Secret of Affluence," a USDA Office of Communication publication prepared for the USDA Pavilion at the Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Fla., May 30 through Sept. 6.

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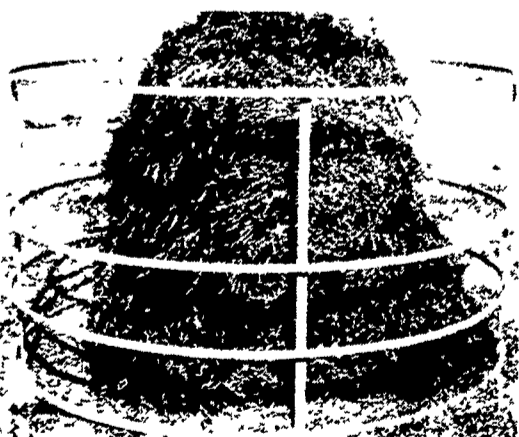
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