

Expanded metal floors boost weanling pig performance

DECATUR, Ind. — Expanded metal floors in swine nurseries can help improve the performance of weaning pigs in both "continuous use" and "all-in, all-out" nursery systems.

Dr. Steve Hays, Master Mix swine research specialist, says that in "fair" nursery environments, the use of expanded metal floors can be expected to increase final nursery weights 6.0 to 6.5 pounds over slats and concrete flooring.

Hays defines a fair nursery environment as a nursery consisting of one-third slats, two-thirds solid concrete flooring; solid partitions; electric heat in the floor; fair ventilation; and good temperature control.

"Since solid heated concrete has always presented problems, Master Mix research decided to test the use of expanded metal in the fair environment," Dr. Hays says.

For the research studies, expanded metal was installed eight inches above the slats and solid concrete in one-half of the pens. The tests were conducted in both the "continuous-use" nursery system and the "all-in, all-out" nursery system.

"The continuous-use pigs placed on the expanded metal actually weighed 6 per cent less at the beginning of the test compared to those on solid concrete. They actually gained 73 per cent more weight during the 26-day feeding period," he says.

Hays adds that the "continuous-use" nursery

pigs on expanded metal gained 1.8 pounds during the first 12 days after weaning, while the "continuous-use" nursery pigs on the slats and solid concrete lost an average of 0.1 pounds during the same post-weaning stress period.

"The 'all-in, all-out' nursery pigs on expanded metal gained an average of 4.8 pounds during the first 13 days after weaning, while the 'all-in, all-out' nursery pigs on slats and concrete gained an average of 3.2 pounds.

"For the entire test, the 'all-in, all-out' nursery pigs on expanded metal gained 37 per cent more weight during the 33-day test period than did the 'all-in, all-out' nursery pigs on the slats and solid concrete," he explains.

Doctor Hays says that although the per cent improvement was less for the "all-in, all-out" nursery pigs, the pigs on expanded metal in both tests gained an additional 6.0 to 6.5 pounds during the nursery period.

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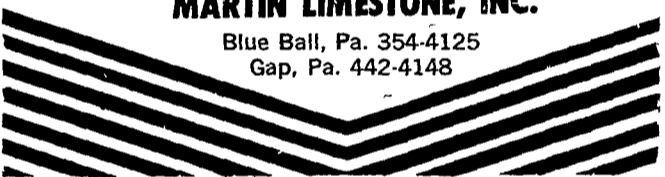


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