

Group housing for Spanish sows

Statistics from Agragex, the Spanish Exporters Association, show that Spain is the third largest producer of meat in the whole of Europe. The national pig herd in Spain has doubled over the last decade and with a yearly production amounting to €4,000 million it is second only to Germany as the second largest pork producer in Europe.

New legislation in Spain dictates that new buildings for sows should facilitate for group housing and not individual stalls. Estiche Farm at Vilanova de la Sal is located high in the Catalan hills between Lleida and Zaragoza and is one of the first to be built to the specifications of the new legislation.

The €4.5 million project green field site can house 3,300 sows and was completed in June 2006 by Spanish company Cincaporc. It is stocked with genetics from Seleccion Batalle.



Cincaporc already owns 15,000 sows and controls a further 10,000 on contract.

The gestation building is 330m long x 28m wide and contains 22 mating and pregnant sow pens and a training pen for gilts. A central area contains stalls for oestrus checking and insemination.

Each group of 80 pregnant sows is serviced by two ESF (electronic sow feeding) systems. In total the gestation building contains 46 Mannebeck Intec 6001 ESF systems. Penning, flooring, drinkers and feeders are installed by Rotecna.

The unit is 550m above sea level and in the Catalan hills summer temperatures can reach 35-40°C and fall to -10° in the winter months.

Large 50" Exafan fans at the end of the house provide tunnel ventilation aided by four lines of roof inlets, extra 36" fans on the side walls, cooling pads, and side curtains.

The farrowing house runs parallel to the gestation house and comprises of 16 rooms each with a capacity for 40 sows. There are also two quarantine buildings for 200 sows each on the site. Weaned pigs are moved 2km to the six nursery buildings at five weeks of age.

Unit manager Antonio Montull told International Pig Topics that the 10-15% extra cost involved to install the group housing system would soon be recouped by the extra efficiency it achieved. ■

