

Scandinavian producers pioneer farrowing pens of the future

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Many years of professional experience together with increasing consumer demands are important milestones for modern pig production.

A common issue among pig producers is that it has been difficult to combine loose housing systems and more animal welfare to harmonise with being competitive and able to maintain a high level of pig production.

For most pig producers, the farrowing pens for loose nursing sows are obviously linked to an increased investment, and the main concern is probably the risk of increased piglet mortality. At the same time, animal welfare is an important topic which the farrowing pens for loose nursing sows will fulfill.

Scandinavian experience

To facilitate animal welfare and the focus of piglet mortality, Denmark and the Nordic countries have been moving forward in the process of creating farrowing pens that will take these factors into account.

Turning the eyes of the Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Sweden, the legislation has required that the sows are loose in the farrowing units, meaning that



this kind of pig production has been established for decades – and with success. Although there are many different models of farrowing pens, the loose farrowing system has been integrated in the pig production as a well functioning housing system.

In Denmark, The Danish Pig Research Centre (board member of Danish Agriculture and Food Council, Pig Production) is in charge of research and development tasks related to the live pig and of communicating knowledge obtained through these activities.

Among these activities is production systems and environmental technology focusing on areas such as animal welfare, animal health and food safety. In 2014, the Danish Agriculture and Food Council dedi-

cated and prioritised an effort area of several million DKK for the establishment of farrowing pens for loose sows.

The support for this type of housing system has resulted in research and development of farrowing pens for loose nursing sows. In Denmark the Danish Pig Research Centre and several suppliers and relevant organisations have identified the natural behaviour and the needs of the sow and piglets to examine the pen design that would meet the needs of sow and piglets and at the same time fulfill the needs of great usability for the staff.

Danish investment

The Danish company, Jyden, which specialises in the development and production of animal housing systems, has dedicated a huge amount of know-how and resources in developing farrowing pens for loose, nursing sows.

"We feel a certain responsibility to pig production in general – and that is why we want to be in front of development for optimal production systems that can meet both legal and consumer requirements.

"From our point of view, it requires that we are proactive and contribute with our experience, expertise and know-how. It is not without reason that we have supplied the largest number of farrowing pens for loose sows," Jesper

Bech, sales director of Jyden, commented.

One of the key factors of Jyden's farrowing pens is that the pens are designed with the fact that the sow is loose while nursing. The pen design then makes it possible to protect the piglets in the first, critical days right after farrowing (where piglet mortality is greatest).

To Jyden it is primarily essential that the design is focused on a farrowing pen (for loose sows) with the possibility to use the integrated protection wings – and not just to open a traditional farrowing crate.

With these thoughts in mind, it will be possible to achieve production results in line with traditional farrowing pens.

More solutions

Jyden has not only one but more solutions for farrowing pens for loose sows, depending on different needs. Currently, the most popular farrowing pens are the JLF10 (without protection wing), the JLF10 SWAP (with protection wing including base plate), the AP LF14 (square pen with protection wings including base plates) and the JLF14 (with protection wings without base plates).

Worldwide interest

Jyden has designed the pens by leading Danish principles and they will provide good opportunities on the international market as well.

Danish pig producers are known and taken seriously for their quality in pig production – and Denmark is a good model to many other pig producers worldwide.

For that reason, they have experienced a huge interest in their housing systems for loose sows which has given them more attention in the markets abroad.

Jyden have supplied large export orders worldwide, for example to England and Australia, where there is a great consumer demand for pork that is produced with animal welfare in mind. ■

