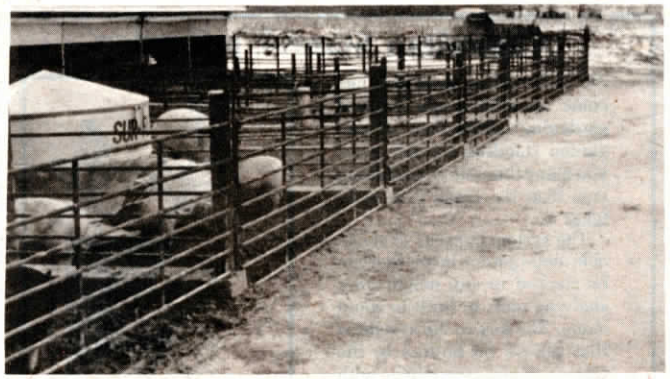

Build Your Own Steel Crates, Fences

Here's one way to beat the high cost of "tooling up" with new facilities for hogs or cattle — buy the material wholesale and build it yourself.

"We think it's the only way to go," says David Unverfehrt, Illinois hog producer who, with his brother-in-law David Droste, is doing a booming sideline business selling solid steel rod to do-it-yourselfers.

"Build your own fence lines, farrowing crates, gestation stalls and other facilities with solid steel and you'll never need to replace it again. It doesn't rust out like hollow tubing and doesn't restrict air movement like concrete. And, purchased wholesale, it doesn't cost any more than hollow tubing," Unverfehrt points out.

He sells cold rolled, high-tensile solid steel rod direct to do-it-yourself farmer-customers in 25-ft. lengths and in diameters of ⅝, ¾, ⅞ or 1 in.

"In welding the solid steel stock yourself, you have to use a DC welder and low hydrogen rod to prevent the metal from crystalizing. If you don't have a DC welder, you can either rent or buy one," says Unverfehrt.

He notes that the cost of enough solid steel rod (⅞-in. dia.) to build a farrowing crate of your own design, plus about 25 ft. of ½-in. tubing per crate for front and rear gate hinges, would run "about $100 per crate."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Unverfehrt Enterprises, David Unverfehrt, President, Rt. 1, Box 142, Okawville, Ill. 62271 (ph 618 243-6516).

First Fold-Up Scale

First on the market with a fold-up scale to save valuable storage space — and to keep alleys open and unobstructed — is Ostee Corp.

When not in use, it folds up against a wall or partition, taking up only 6 in. of space. When in use, the hinged floor folds out and rests 1 in. above floor level, making it easy to move individual animals — or carts containing small pigs or feed — onto it for fast, accurate weighing.

The scale's frame attaches via mounting brackets and extends out 3½ in. from the wall. With the hinged platform folded up against it, the entire unit takes up only 6 in. of alley space. It's easily carried through narrow gates and doors from one station to another.

Standard platform size is 20 by 49 in. for a 300 lb. capacity model and 24 by 60 for a 500 lb. model. A dial scale

is standard, with a digital readout option also available.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ostee Corp., P.O. Box 188, Sylvan Grove, Kan. 67481 (ph 913 526-7111).

Safety Grooving For Concrete Floors

Concrete grooving, which is old hat to dairymen for improving traction on slippery or worn concrete surfaces, is now being offered to hog producers by the Surehoof Co.

For hogs, the California-based firm has developed an exclusive "surehoof" pattern made up of alternate grooved (6 grooves side by side in a strip 1¼ in. wide) and non-grooved (¾ in. wide) strips. The pattern provides 100% traction of the surface area to help stop hogs from slipping.

Cost ranges from $1 to $4.50 per sq. ft., depending on size of the floor and the number of jobs in a given community.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Surehoof, 575 Birch Court, Suite A, Colton, Cal. 92324 (ph 714 825-8401).

A few turns of the lever handle rolls the plug-pipe up the chains, allowing feed to drop in front of each sow.

Drop Feeder Simplifies Sow Feeding

By Dave Wilkins

Hand-feeding dry sows one at a time? Then you have Mike and Macky Waldner's sympathies.

They hand-fed dry sows individually at one time, and are all too familiar with the stress this puts on pregnant females.

Mike Waldner runs a 290-sow farrow-to-finish operation, and son Macky, a 240-sow operation near Baldur, Man. They needed a better way to feed gilts and developed homemade drop feeders which distribute feed quickly to all sows at one time. It's still hand-feeding, but not one sow at a time.

Dry sows are housed in 255 gestation stalls, each 22 in. wide, in eight 60 rows. The 8 rows are divided by a central alley, with 4 on each side. Fifteen stalls are kept as a buffer. Feed is dispersed from a tapered galvanized steel trough mounted over the front of the stalls, running the full length of each row. The trough is 8" wide at the top and 8 in. high, with a 1¼-in. opening at the bottom. Feed drops inside the stalls, just in front of a below-floor water trough. Sows enter the stalls from the rear and exit from the front.

The trough is made in 10-ft. sections. To reinforce each joint, Waldner first cut 2-ft. off one side at the end of each section. When fitted together, these offset ends overlap on one side, making the 60-ft. trough more rigid.

A 1½-in. dia. galvanized pipe, welded together in 10-ft. sections, sits in the bottom of the trough, acting like a plug. At 44-in. intervals, a chain, bolted to the pipe, is hooked to a 3-in. strap of galvanized steel on top of the feeder by a cotter pin. At feeding time, a single lever at the end of the pipe is cranked clockwise, the pipe winds up the chains, and feed drops in front of every sow in the row.

The feeder is fastened to the top rail of every other stall with U-bolts and shimmed up with small pieces of pipe to keep it slightly above the stalls.

Waldner feeds dry sows daily in the morning. To feed, he simply goes down the alley between the rows cranking 2 levers at a time. It takes about 30 seconds to trip all 8 feeders, compared to the 30 minutes it took to feed each sow by hand. Afterward, the next morning's feed is manually put in the troughs.

Waldner says he had to make some modifications to his original design to stop sows from pushing the pipe up with their noses to get extra feed. To keep sows from poking their noses where they don't belong, he lengthened the outside flange at the bottom of the feeder from 1½ in. to 3 in. and ran an electrified wire above the sows' heads.

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