Hog February Newsletter

Hogs n' Kisses this Valentine's Day! XOXO
PIG HEATING PADS vs. HEAT LAMPS: THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER PLACEMENT IN FARROWING FACILITIES

“Heat placement for young pigs is a critical component for getting animals started quickly and maintaining optimal health. In gestation and finishing, only one macro-environment is necessary because animals are of similar age and have similar temperature requirements.”

“Conversely, in farrowing, nursery, and wean-to-finish, a micro-environment must be maintained within a larger airspace. In farrowing, piglets must be kept from becoming chilled, which often leads to scours, more tail-enders, and less healthy piglets.”

“There are two ways to provide supplemental heat to piglets: from the top-down or the bottom-up. Heat rises so having heat under the piglets tends to be more practical and economical. Heat is not lost because the heat source is completely utilized by the litter. Bottom-up heat works well for farrowing and nursery animals. Radiant heat from above the animals works best in wean-to-finish. Top-down heat provides a zone of comfort for animals to go to the feeder, get a drink, and then lie back down under the heat source. For pigs up to 21 days, heating pads are the preferred choice for many reasons. First a farrowing stall is rectangular, and the pig heat mat fits logically in the creep area, creating a six-inch gap between the heat source and sow.”

“Another major benefit of a heat mat is its shape: pig heating pads maintain a larger, more spread-out heat source in the creep area. For litters over 12 pigs, a 5 foot mat is used to provide the recommended 0.33 square foot per piglet. In wean-to-finish, Dr. Hongwei Xin of Iowa State University recommends 0.5 square foot per pig.”

“Heat lamps cannot accomplish these recommendations. In order to provide more intense heat, lamps must be lowered closer to the floor surface, thus decreasing the usable heated area. In turn, to provide a larger coverage area of heat, lamps must be raised, which decreases the intensity.”

For the complete article by Brian Strobel of Osborne Industries, Inc., Visit:

In a year-long, on-farm research trial, a Canadian heat pad system proved more efficient to operate than heat lamps in a comparison of two creep heating systems. The heat pads cost 45% less to operate. It took a year to convince Terry Feldmann that heat pads could outperform heat lamps "I was a disbeliever, and that is why I insisted this study be done for a full year," declares the East Peoria, IL, agricultural engineer (Feldmann & Associates).

"I was a heat lamp man. I just didn't know if people could do as good a job managing the creep area and keeping the pigs comfortable with a pad as they could with a lamp."

"My whole premise is, if pig performance is the same with both systems, and one system is a lot more energy efficient and costs less to operate, a person really needs to look at that system," says Feldmann. The heat pad is also easier to maintain - it has no light bulbs or lamp housing to replace.

Go to the following link to read the whole article:
http://www.nationalhogfarmer.com/mag/farming_heat_pad_system
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