Events and Programs

Several events may be helpful as you further explore your options. The first is the series of field days organized each summer by the Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program (ESAP) of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and local chapters of the Sustainable Farming Association. During these field days, farmers who use the systems described in this guide provide you with a first-hand look at their operations. (See “Organizations” for information on how to contact MDA-ESAP.)

The Alternative Swine Production Systems Program was formed in response to concerns from producers interested in alternative swine systems. It is funded by the Minnesota State Legislature and is a joint program of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, the Swine Center at the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Its mission is to conduct research and educate producers about alternative swine systems that are profitable, environmentally friendly, and help support rural communities in Minnesota. They maintain a database of pork producers using alternative systems in Minnesota, produce a resource book on alternative system information, and sponsor multiple programs throughout the year. (See “Organizations” for contact information.)

Iowa State University Alternative Swine Systems Initiative Team (also known as the “Hoop Group”) has an active research program and is a wealth of information on alternative swine production techniques. It is an interdisciplinary team working on topics related to sustainable alternative swine systems, including hoop structures for finishing pigs and gestating sows, outdoor farrowing, and deep-bedded Swedish systems. (See “Organizations” for contact information).

The Minnesota Pork Producers’ Association (MPPA) holds an annual convention (January/February) during which you can visit and learn about various hog production systems. (See “Organizations” for information on how to contact MPPA).

The University of Minnesota Swine Center also holds workshops and conferences throughout the year, including the Leman Conference (September) and the Minnesota Nutrition Conference (September). In addition, legislative funding has made it possible to construct two new facilities for swine research: a 600-sow breeding/gestation/farrowing research facility at the Southern Experiment Station in Waseca, and a 500-head off-site nursery and alternate swine housing research facility at the West Central Experiment Station in Morris, Minnesota. The Alternative Swine Production System Program has overseen the construction of four hoop structures at Morris, two of which will be used for research on finishing hogs, one for gestating sows, and a fourth for bedding storage. In addition, an older confinement farrowing building will be remodeled into a Swedish deep-bedded farrowing unit. These facilities will enable researchers to learn more about improving feed efficiency in alternative systems, observe pig behavior and handling and make comparisons of bedding types and types of feed in these alternative systems. (See “Organizations” for contact information.)

Another program that will interest Minnesota swine producers is Minnesota Certified Pork (MNCEP). This program is a cooperative effort by the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to implement and certify high-quality swine production practices on independent Minnesota farms. The goal is to provide quality pork to the marketplace, traceable back to the farm of origin. The quality standards are outlined in the MNCEP Quality Handbook. The standards can also reflect certain market segment demands (e.g., export to Japan, natural food retailers, or organic markets), in contrast to the NPPC-PQA Level III standards. The standards are written as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on best production practices, pre-harvest food safety, environmental stewardship, animal welfare, and recording and documentation. Compliance with applicable SOPs are audited internally once a month and third-party-certified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture once a year.

MNCEP serves as a pilot project for a broader program just being initiated, Minnesota Certified (MnCERT). This program will develop production practice standards for many agricultural commodities in Minnesota. MnCERT will also research requirements for niche markets or market segments with specific demands, and tailor production practice standards to meet those specific requirements. For more information on both these programs, visit the University of Minnesota Swine Center web page. (See “Organizations” for contact information.)

Organizations


Iowa State University Alternative Swine Systems Initiative Team. Mark Honeyman and James Kliebenstein, co-leaders. B1 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, 50010. 515-294-4621. honeyman@astate.edu

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. 209 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-1050. Phone: 515-294-3711. Fax 515-294-9696. leocenter@astate.edu, www.leopold.iastate.edu


Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. c/o DeEtta Bilek, Route 1, Box 4, Aldrich, MN 56434. 218-445-5475. deebilek@wcta.net.

University of Minnesota Swine Center. 385 Animal Science/Veterinary Medicine, 1988 Fitch Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. 612-625-3173. longt001@umn.edu, www.cvm.umn.edu/swine

Individuals

Dwight Ault, pasture-farrowing hog producer. Route 1, Box 230, Austin, MN 55912. 507-437-3085.


Byron Bartz, pasture hog producer. RR 1, Box 20, Barrett, MN 56311. 612-528-2301.


Tom Frantzen, pasture-farrowing hog producer. 1155 Jasper Ave., New Hampton, IA 50659. 515-364-6426.


Scott Hislop, confinement hog producer, RR3, Mapleton, MN 56065-9314. 507-524-4583.


Roger Moon, livestock entomologist. 219 Hodson Hall, 1980 Folwell Ave., Univ. of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108. 612-624-2209.

Mark Moulton, hoop house and confinement hog producer. 51420 Game Ave., Rush City, MN 55069. 320-358-4632.

Mike Natvig, pasture farrowing hog producer. 20074 Timber Avenue, Cresco, IA 52136. 319-569-8358.

Bret Oelke, Extension educator, Grant County Extension. P.O. Box 1099, Elbow Lake, MN 56531. 218-685-4820.

Peter Reese, Catalyst Consulting. Box 246, Kohler, WI 53044. 920-457-1009. farmsmart@aol.com

Jim Van Der Pol, pasture and hoop house hog producer. 1475 110th Ave NE, Kerkhoven, MN 56252. 320-847-3432.

Steve Zink, farm management instructor. Willmar Area Technical College, 701 S. 9th St., High School, Olivia, MN 56277. 612-523-5468

Publications

Alternative Systems


**Greenbook.** Contains reports on sustainable agriculture projects, including alternative swine production. Published annually. Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 90 W. Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107. 612-296-7673. www.mda.state.mn.us/ESAP


**Swine System Options for Iowa.** Proceedings of a conference held February 21, 1996 at Iowa State University. Available from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.


### Swine Sourcebook: Alternatives for Pork Producers

Many of the resources and cited references listed in this section are available in the Swine Sourcebook, an extensive compilation of articles and other publications on alternative swine production systems in one notebook. The table of contents from the Swine Sourcebook is printed below and an order form for the Swine Sourcebook is at the back of this book. The publication is available from Minnesota county Extension offices (item number PC-7289).

#### Part One: Sustainable Pork Production

7. Outdoor vs Indoor Pig Production in Iowa: An Economic and Production Comparison. Mark Honeyman and Arlie Penner, Iowa State University.

#### Part Two: Hoop Structures

Swine Sourcebook contents, cont'd.

Harmon, Mark Honeyman and John Creswell, Iowa State University.

Demonstration

Part Three: Swedish Deep Bedding
Research
2. Swedish Deep Bedded Group Nursing Systems for Feeder Pig Production. Marlene Halverson, Mark Honeyman and Mary Adams, Iowa State University.
3. Alternative Housing for Feeder Pig Production. L.D. Jacobson and Q. Geng, American Society of Agricultural Engineers.
4. First Year Results of a Swedish Deep-Bedded Feeder Pig Production System in Iowa. Mark Honeyman and D. Kent, Iowa State University.

Demonstration
1. Demonstrating a Swedish Feeder Pig Production System in Iowa. M.S. Honeyman and D. Kent, Iowa State University.

Part Four: Pasture Systems
Research
6. Pig Crushing Mortality by Hut Type in Outdoor Farrowing. M.S. Honeyman and W. Roush, Iowa State University.

Demonstration
5. Grazing Hogs on Standing Grain and Pasture. Michael and Jason Hartmann, Greenbook '97.
Swine Sourcebook contents, cont’d.


7. Expanding Into Outdoor Hog Production. James Van Der Pol, Greenbook ’96 and Greenbook ’94.


Part Five: Low Antibiotic Production


Part Six: Marketing

1. Market Access—Survey Results. John D. Lawrence, Iowa State University.


More Ideas

1. Alternative Farming Systems Information Center National Agricultural Library, United States Department of Agriculture.


Confinement Systems

Livestock Industry Facilities and Environment. Iowa State University, University Extension, Ames, Iowa.

Cited References


SWINE SOURCE BOOK:
Alternatives for Pork Producers

✓ Combines educational publications and popular press publications about low-input, low-capital-investment swine production systems, such as deep-bedded straw, hoop structures, and pasture farrowing.

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