7-1-1994

New Unit's First Job: Spacing for 300-pound Market Weight

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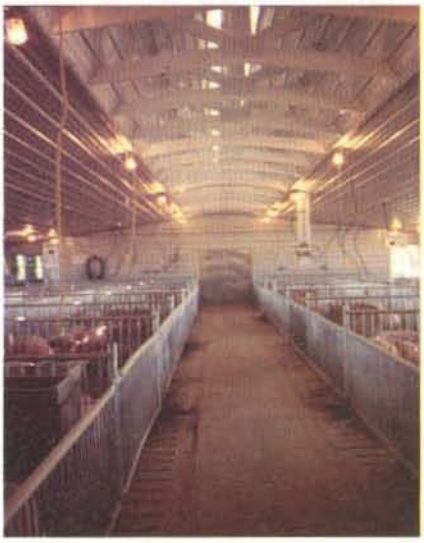
■ You're looking at the interior of what's called a "double-wide" swine finishing unit unveiled at the University of Nebraska Northeast Research and Extension Center open house, at Concord, in late June.

Northeast Center swine specialist Mike Brumm says the first study in the new research unit will look at space requirements for feeding pigs to a market weight of 300 pounds under all in-all out operation. Various pen size and number combinations will be the focus of future research in the unit which can be divided into the following arrangements: Eight pens, each 14 by 16 feet; 16 pens, each 8 by 14 feet; and 32 pens, each 7 by 8 feet. The animal space equals 8 square feet per head for 224 head.

The unit is designed with a fresh water, under-slat gutter flush system, which flushes by gravity to a lagoon system that is part of a swine waste management study involving crop irrigation.

Thermostatically controlled curtains on the walls can be opened simultaneously toward the center from top and bottom, opened from the top only, or opened from the bottom only, for studies of winter air inlet patterns. The barn is also designed with what is called "chimney ventilation" through which air volume for ventilation is controlled by raising and lowering 12-foot sections of PVC pipe against a roof gap by means of pull ropes dangling from the pipe to within reach of the operator walking along the alley running down the center of the unit.



A look inside a new swine research unit at the University of Nebraska Northeast Research and Extension Center: Among first research will be study of space requirements for feeding market hogs to 300 pounds.