

SOW HOUSING

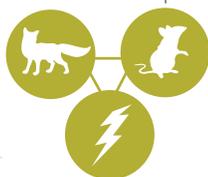
ON AMERICA'S HOG FARMS

In America today, there are more than **68,000** hog farms, and farmers have proven for generations that they are committed to providing a safe, comfortable place for hogs to live.

While there are many types of housing systems, there are some common elements to each. The following information is intended to provide greater understanding about how each system operates.

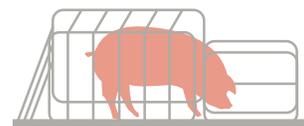
>40 YEARS ago...

Farmers began raising hogs indoors to **protect** the animals from predators, disease and extreme weather.



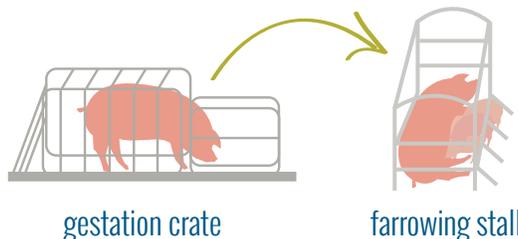
FARMER care

Gestation stalls enable farmers to give an animal **individualized care**, such as monitoring and providing special medical care for overall health.



FROM gestation crate

Sows gestate (are pregnant) for approximately 114 days. **Gestation crates are pens where a female pig may be kept during her pregnancy and reduce sow aggression and ensure individualized care.** Shortly before birth, farmers transition sows to farrowing stall. Farrowing crates allow for more movement for sows to care for their new piglets.



TO farrowing stall

A sow is moved back to the individual stall when it's time to wean the month-old piglets. The piglets will then be transitioned into a separate pen to grow. The sow is then bred and the cycle is repeated.

CONVENTIONAL HOUSING

SOWS SPEND
100%
OF THE YEAR
IN GESTATION OR
FARROWING STALLS

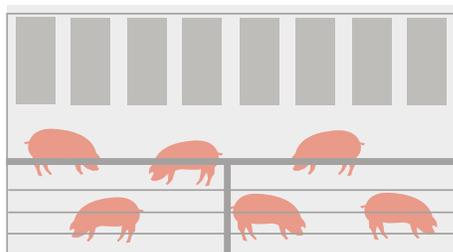
VS

SOWS SPEND
35%
OF THE YEAR
IN GESTATION OR
FARROWING STALLS

GROUP HOUSING

THE TRANSITION to group housing

Since the 1980s, most farmers have used gestation crates to house pregnant pigs. Increased public interest is influencing housing practices. Hog farmers will need to modify facilities and management practices to manage sows in a group setting.



Different group housing systems

- As **few as five** or as **many as 100** sows may live together
- Sows have more freedom of movement and an opportunity to socialize
- There may be increased competition for food and water
- Individual animals may be challenged by behavior of more aggressive animals in the group

University research shows there are trade-offs for each housing system. Housing systems differ in their abilities to monitor animals' nutrition, physical health and living environment. With the help of veterinarians, educators, extension agents and other advisors, hog farmers are adjusting management practices to ensure that animals receive the best care possible.