

National Sow Housing Conversion Project

► Jennifer Brown, Prairie Swine Centre

The main goal of this work is to assist Canadian pork producers in the transition to group-housing systems for sows by providing technical and engineering support for barn renovations, and documenting renovations on commercial farms in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Researchers will be recording pig management and productivity before and after the transition and documenting the renovation process, management changes and costs, as well as providing up-to-date scientific information on group-housing options. In this way the project will generate valuable technical information to help producers make a sustainable and productive transition to group-housing.

Summary

Over 96% of Canada's 1.29 million sow herd is still managed in gestation stall housing, Canadian producers will need a reference tool to transition toward group housing management of swine barns.

To develop this reference tool, the main activities of this project are:

- establishment of a national working group
- development and dissemination of group housing factsheets in French and English through the partner websites
- selection and planning of the conversion of four "Lead User" demonstration barns from stalls to group housing for sows: two in Western Canada and two in the East
- documentation of barn conversions at the four commercial sites: information on the barn design, the management and productivity of sows before and after the conversion, and labour and building costs
- Validation of the group housing conversion model developed by the University of Manitoba and implementation of any necessary alterations to refine the model as a tool for barn renovations

Collaborators

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