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# OREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

## EXTENSION SERVICE

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### The Farrowing Pen

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## THE FARROWING PEN

In constructing a farrowing pen all the points which will contribute to the comfort of the sow without endangering her young and without involving too much expense should be included. The size is not so important, and the larger the pen the greater the expense involved. There should be room enough, however, for the bed, trough, place to stand when eating, and a place for droppings.

These points will involve a space at least 8 ft. x 10 ft., and preferably 10 ft. x 10 ft. The farrowing pen may be one unit of a large or centralized piggery, or it may be a detached building or sty in the nature of a colony house. In the latter case 8 ft. x 10 ft. or even 8 ft. x 8 ft. is very satisfactory if a platform outside is provided on which to place the trough in muddy weather. If pigs are to be farrowed during the late fall and winter or early spring, the colony house is not so satisfactory for the Willamette Valley because of the difficulty of keeping the sows out of the mud, and because the work of the attendant must be done while exposed to the weather. In Eastern and Southern Oregon the colony house is not so satisfactory because in many localities it is not warm enough. For late spring and summer pigs, however, it is suitable and the initial cost is approximately only one-sixth that of a farrowing pen in a centralized house.

If two litters a year are to be raised, and unless the large house is made accessible to pastures, both plans of farrowing pens may be used at different times on the same farm; and if one is so situated that two litters a year are profitable, the extra expense will probably be justified. The cost of lanes from the pens in the centralized piggeries will probably exceed the cost of colony houses.

The features to be embodied in a farrowing pen are sunshine, cleanliness, slope or drainage of the floor, protection of the sow from weather and draught and from other pigs, and protection of the pigs from predacious animals.

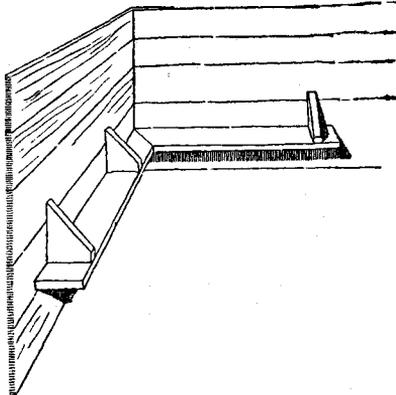
To secure direct sunlight on the floor, the windows should be located in the side of the pen which promises the greatest amount of sunshine. This will usually be the south side, and if the pen is in a centralized house, the latter may well face the south, the windows being at such height that the light strikes the floor of the pen as long as possible during the season when farrowing is planned. If colony houses are used and rains do not come from the south, the house may have the open front to the south or have a window in the south end; if rains prevail from the south, a sash may be inserted in the south side of the house or the house may face north and have a glass in the back. The latter is less satisfactory for the light either passes over the bed or else, if the window is low enough for the light to strike the bed, the sow is likely to break the glass.

To secure drainage of the floor, the latter is frequently sloped toward the door, the bed being highest. Some plan for removing the manure and liquid excrement will need to be provided both for sanitary and economic reasons. Sometimes the entire floor slopes to an intake for liquid which is piped to a cistern or pit and the solid manure is cared for separately.

The roof should be tight to keep the bed dry and to avoid an excess of liquid to be cared for with the manure. The walls of the pen may be tight, except for openings for ventilation, which should be so located as to avoid direct air currents on the bed; or if a centralized house is used, the bed, at least, should be enclosed on the windy side by tight boards two or three feet high. This may be either a part of the enclosure, or, if the partitions are of woven wire or open work of any kind, wind breaks around the bed should be temporarily provided, as large houses are likely to be draughty.

Protection from other pigs will of course be secured by excluding them from the farrowing pen. Other hogs sometimes eat the young and in this way may also induce the habit in the sow.

The little pigs need protection from their mother lest she lie on them or mash them against the wall. A fender rail, such as shown in the drawing affords a fair degree of protection, though a sow may lie on a pig or step on it out in the middle of the pen; but by far the most young pigs are killed by being mashed against the wall or in the bottom of too deep a pig bed. This latter can be avoided by seeing to it that only a small amount of straw be provided, and that it is fairly chaffy.



FENDER RAIL FOR FARROWING PEN  
(After Fig. 22 in Bulletin 242, University of Wisconsin)