

Experiences from a 5200-sow farm in Poland

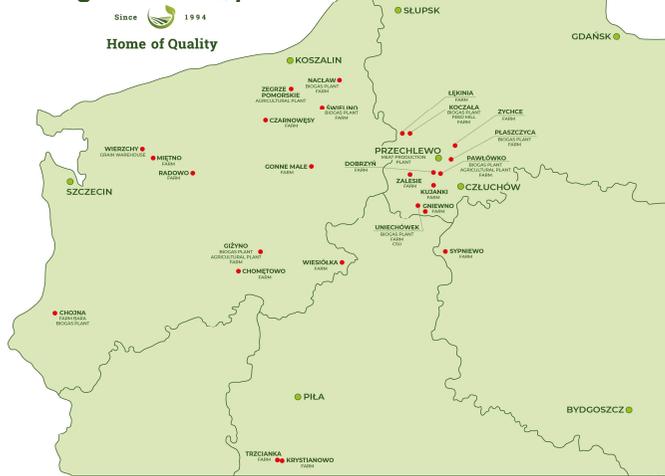
KASPER BALSLEV SØRENSEN, PRODUCTION MANAGER, GOODVALLEY

GOODVALLEY POLSKA
ACTIVITY AREA

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Bara farm

- 5,200 sows and 21,000 pen places for weaners.
- The farm was renovated in 2014.
- 1,356 pens for loose lactating sows divided in 16 sections.
- Full slatted plastic floor in all pens
- Possibility for confinement around farrowing.
- High pressure cooling in all sections and electric heating mats in all corners.
- All sows are cross breeds between Danish Landrace and Danish Yorkshire.
- Running a raised without antibiotic program.

Our experience with pens for loose lactating sows:

"We have chosen the solution where we are able to confine the sow during the first days after farrowing to reduce the risk piglets getting squeezed. We believe that this is one of the reasons we can have the same mortality as we see in traditional pens. However, at the day of opening we still see a higher mortality."

"We have around one kilo higher weaning weight in our loose housed farrowing crates when we compare to our traditional crates on our other locations. The pigs also seem very active after weaning"

"The climate in the barn is much more important when the sow is loose. We have smaller sections to better set the correct temperature and we have invested in cooling system and heating mats with automatic heat curve to make sure that the climate inside the barn is always as close to optimal as possible. However, if we have a very warm day, we can see it straight away on the mortality. Thus, the piglets are lying outside the corners."

"You need to take everyday routines into consideration when you choose design. We have 1,356 farrowing pens on the farm. So, we need to think how we can optimize each process for the employees. Because the pens are bigger, we also have more square meters and therefore, a greater distance to travel. We try to focus on lean tools to be as efficient as possible."

"We found, that we cannot just transfer our normal routines from traditional pens to loose lactating pens. We need to adjust our focus on climate, hygiene and daily supervision. The climate needs to encourage the pigs not to lie in the area where the sow is. The hygiene is more difficult, because the sow can be moving and standing in many positions. Thus, we need to check that piglet drinker, floor and corner are all clean. In our pen design we have prioritize easy access to the piglet corner, but not to the feeder. We see that the only time where sows can show aggression is when the piglets are picked up. Therefore, we always try to close them in the corner if we need to capture a piglet."