



Profile from the Field

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Confinement Building Redesign Sheds 'Sunlight' on Animal Welfare Operation in North Dakota

Project Title: Confinement Building Redesign
Sheds 'Sunlight' on Animal Welfare
Coordinator: Paul Sobocinski

Location: Wabasso, Minnesota
SARE Grant: \$7,450
Duration: 2012-2014

To read the full project report, go to www.sare.org/projects and search for project number FNC12-890.



With support from a SARE grant, Paul Sobocinski converted a confinement building to a straw-based growing unit. Photo by Paul Sobocinski.

Paul Sobocinski has a 240 acre crop and livestock farm that includes hogs and cattle. In 2001, he received a SARE grant for the conversion of an existing pole barn to a deep bedded sow and piglet nursery. In 2012 he received a second NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher grant for \$7,450 to renovate an existing 24 by 64 foot confinement building with a partial pit to make the building suitable as a straw-based, animal-welfare-friendly growing unit.

Sobocinski added a new door and new windows. He built a pad for two feed bulk tanks and capped a major portion of the existing slats over their respective pits. He reinsulated the entire building and built ventilating chutes. He also installed new variable speed pit fans and installed new motors as needed in wall fans.

Sobocinski reported that pig performance in the building has been positive in terms of pig comfort and the rate of gain per pound of feed fed, resulting in 40% less feed per pound of gain compared to pigs in this weight category fed outside. He said the converted building pigs can be gated into the feeding area which makes clean out easier. Capping 2/3rds of the pit was a main factor in improving air quality.

The atmosphere has improved, and the air quality in the building is superior to when it was previously used as a pig confinement unit. He reported that the audit team for both Niman Ranch and Chipotle thought it was exceptional.

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