

# 5 extra uses for pig house slat gap covers

Slat gap covers, a plastic product to cover up slat space without having to rebuild an entire pig house, have found different uses in several places around the world.



The Danish [pig-proof invention](#) has been found to be of more use than just reducing the slat-free surface to meet legal requirements. The invention also helps reduce corrosion due to wet feeding, create comfort zones for sows and block straw from going into the manure pits.

## 1. Preventing corrosion from whey in the pig house

Dr Yolande Seddon and Dr Jennifer Brown at the Prairie Swine Centre in Saskatoon, SK have been testing the cover for some months. Canadians often give their pigs whey through nipple drinkers. Whey is of course corrosive and drips from the nipples resulting in corrosion of the concrete slats.

Brown said, "Fitting lengths of the slat gap covers below the nipples should protect the slats and should help make the slats last a long time. The covers are very easy to fit and are doing a great job."

Slat gap export agent [Julian Smith](#) has been closely following the Prairie Swine Centre trial. He said, "We have had a lot of enquiries from farmers feeding whey, about a wider cover, which we are working on at present."

## 2. Providing comfort zones for pregnant sows

Not only in the case of whey feeding slat gap covers proved to be a solution, also with regards to animal welfare there has been some unexpected feedback. Gerald Kodde of Bacon Acre Farm, ON, Canada, used the covers to provide comfort zones for pregnant sows, fitting the covers in areas where the sows prefer to lie, as concrete slats are not very comfortable.

## 3. Better pig welfare though draught prevention

Another application with regard to animal welfare was found by Agri Marché, a pig business based in Quebec, Canada. This farm used the covers to beneficial effect in finisher pig pens, on its farms. Draughts can result in pigs dunging in the wrong places and the covers block these draughts and result in cleaner and better performing pigs.

#### **4. Preventing blockages in pig house slurry pits**

In Germany, pigs have to have access to straw and this is provided in wall mounted racks. Naturally straw eventually ends up getting stuck between the slats and also in the slurry pits causing pumping problems – fitting the covers underneath the racks has proved a cheap and easy way to cure these management headaches.

#### **5. Save costs by reducing pig feed wastage**

Feed is 70% of production costs – yet often a lot ends up under the slats, making a crust that feeds flies rather than pigs. If ad lib feeders are not adjusted correctly and regularly, then feed loss through the slats can be substantial.

Richard Butterworth is a well known farrow-to-finish East Yorkshire producer. "My feeders were spilling out feed. I tried fitting plastic boards under the feed troughs but the pigs found they were too slippery. Fitting slat gap covers has stopped the feed wastage and the covers do an excellent job."

by Stuart Lumb Feb 20, 2015

Pig Progress