

What's Best for You: Comparing Systems

Comparison of Hog Production Systems

Category Farrow Finish	
	Swedish Deep-Straw	Pasture Production	Confinement	Hoop Structure with Deep Bedding	Confinement
Feed					
Feed composition	All grain	25–75% grain	All grain	All grain	All grain
Susceptibility to commodity market price (feed costs)	High	Low	High	High	High
Animal Health					
Medicated feed typically used (i.e., antibiotics)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Animal stress	Low	Medium	High	Low	High
Scale, Financial Risk and Market Considerations					
Scale required for system	Typically less than 100 sows	Any number of sows	400-2,000 sows	Variable; typically 180–200 head per hoop structure	900 –1,000 head per building
Processor acceptance	n/a	n/a	n/a	Depends on scale	Good
Potential to enter niche markets	High	High	Low	Medium	Low
Labor Required					
Labor/management skills required:					
—Mechanical	Medium	Low	High	Low	High
—Financial	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High
—Husbandry	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Seasonal or steady work	Constant	Seasonal	Constant	Constant	Constant
Environmental and Social Considerations					
Indoor odor	Low	n/a	High	Low	High
Outdoor odor	Low	Medium	High	Low	High
Potential to negatively impact water quality	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High
Neighbor acceptance	High	Medium	Low	High	Low

What's Best for You: Applying Your Situation

In the first section, *Your Situation: Taking Stock and Clarifying Values*, you identified important family values and resources related to farming. The purpose of this section is to help you evaluate and select a system that is most consistent with these values and resources.

Now that you have learned about the different options available to you, and read about the experiences of other farmers using the various systems, you can assess how well each of the options fits with the answers you provided to questions 1 to 5 in the first section. Next to each question, put a check in the box under the option or options that best reflect how you answered the question.

	Swedish	Hoop Structure	Pasture	Confinement
The aspect of farming I most value/enjoy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The relationship I want with my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The type and level of risk with which I'm comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The types of work I like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The aspects of hog production that are most appealing to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For each of the resources listed in the table below, select the hog production system that is most consistent with your family's strengths and resources. Look at your answers to question 6 in the first section.

Resources	Swedish	Hoop Structure	Pasture	Confinement
Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

