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Improved indoor climate for animals and employees in houses with underfloor exhaustion

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Underfloor exhaustion is the best there is, but it requires good management, says Poul Jensen who has 30 years' experience with this type of exhaustion

Previously, when I visited other pig houses with full slats, ammonia smarted my eyes. I was not at all used to that type of air from my own houses, says Poul Jensen while we are sitting in 'Kastaniegaarden', his farm in Ejdrup near Nibe, Denmark, on a warm day during spring.

– I have had underfloor exhaustion in my houses since I took over the farm 30 years ago and have therefore not been used to a lot of ammonia in the house air. This confirmed to me that it was correct to continue using underfloor exhaustion, says Poul Jensen (aged 60) who now runs Skovbøll Jensen I/S together with his son Ole Skovbøll Jensen (aged 26).

The company has a pig production of 550 sows. Of the approx. 15,000 piglets, they produce 5,500 finishers themselves while the rest are sold as 30 kg pigs.

According to father and son, the farm is running satisfactorily with a currently very constant daily growth of 920 g.



– When I took over the farm, the pig house had underfloor exhaustion. Later, I continued with underfloor exhaustion in a Protecta house and since then underfloor exhaustion has been our preferred type of ventilation both when we have renovated and when we have built new houses. Even though the system is more expensive to establish, I can say after 30 years in houses with underfloor exhaustion that it is the best type of ventilation around, says Poul Jensen.



Both ducts and directly on slats

– We have tried several options and have never had any problems. In some of the houses, we have ducts in which the house air flows to the outlets located outside the building. In other houses, we have tried using outlets located directly on slats. This is a cheaper solution to establish, however, pen areas may be lost. Our new farrowing houses have plastic slats in which it is easy to cut holes for outlets. It is even possible to locate two outlets in the corners of the house without having to abolish any pen areas, say Ole and Poul Jensen.

Paul R. Jeppesen, SKOV, another visitor, points out to the hosts that it is not without a certain risk to locate outlets directly on slats.

– We know that, but no matter which solution we have chosen, we cannot see any differences in the results. Of course, you have to take care that the slurry level does not become too high in order to prevent it from moving up the outlet when it is located directly on the slats. This would cause the ventilation system to stop. We do not have an alarm system; we simply keep an eye on the situation. As farmers, there are so many other things that we have to be aware of all the time, says Poul Jensen.

Good climate

Ole and Poul Jensen have floor exhaustion in approx. 80 per cent of their houses. There is no doubt in their minds that they prefer to be in houses with underfloor exhaustion. A good indoor climate is particularly important in mating and farrowing houses where their employees work a lot.

– I've often heard colleagues complain about their ventilation but we have never had that kind of trouble. And the ventilation system has hardly required any maintenance work. We have only had a few problems with our humidity sensors but those problems have been solved.

Requires control

According to Poul Jensen, underfloor exhaustion requires the ability to control the ventilation.

– The pressure must be negative and the ventilation must be set correctly. Furthermore, it requires correct management, says the experienced pig producer who intends to retire in five years, leaving his son to take over the helm.



Poul and Ole Jensen have underfloor exhaustion in most of their houses and there is no doubt in their minds that they prefer being in houses with underfloor exhaustion. Photo: Pressebureauet Århus.

