

FALL 2024

PIPESTONE JOURNAL





PIG CARE BASICS

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PRESIDENT'S Message



Hannah Walkes
President
Pipestone Services

Hannah Walkes hails from a traditional crop and livestock farm in southwest Minnesota. A graduate of South Dakota State University, she began her career with PIPESTONE in 2007 and today, serves as President of Pipestone Services.

The Timeless Fundamentals of Pig Production

I'll never forget one of my first barn walk-throughs with Dr. G. F. Kennedy. "People try to overcomplicate pig farming. It comes down to air, water, and feed and if you get those right, this really isn't that hard," he shared. While that may be oversimplifying it at times, his general wisdom was right, and pig production has always relied on these three fundamental pillars:

- Good **AIR** quality.
- Access to fresh, clean **WATER**.
- Balanced, nutritious **FEED**.

In this publication, we will dive deeper into these timeless principles, exploring how these elements continue to drive the efficiency and success of today's pig—and on the advice of Doc Kennedy, try to not overcomplicate.

Thank you for your trust in PIPESTONE. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve your farm.



Dr. G.F. "Doc" Kennedy

Hannah Walkes



VENTILATION CHALLENGES:

Practical Solutions For Healthier Pigs



Jeff Blythe, DVM
Veterinarian
Pipestone Veterinary Services

Dr. Jeff Blythe grew up on a crop and livestock farm in Williamsburg, Iowa, and earned his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State in 1991. He joined the Orange City Vet Clinic in 1992, became a partner in 1994, and joined Pipestone Holdings after its 2018 acquisition. Dr. Blythe is now the managing veterinarian for the Orange City location.



Nick Enfield
Production Consultant
FarmPro, Pipestone Business

Nick Enfield grew up outside of Collins, IA, where his family raised and marketed show sheep and seed stock throughout the Midwest. He joined PIPESTONE in 2018 as a Production Consultant, bringing over 15 years of experience in commercial swine production to the FarmPro team.

Effective ventilation is one of the most critical factors in maintaining a healthy and productive swine operation. It influences air quality, temperature control, and the overall environment for the pigs. However, achieving the right balance in ventilation comes with its challenges, especially when factoring in barn design, fan efficiency, and climate conditions.

Precision in managing airflow, temperature, and humidity is vital. Dr. Blythe shares, "I always carry an anemometer and an infrared gun to measure airspeed and temperature. These tools can help identify potential issues before they become major problems."

Additionally, monitoring equipment placement is just as crucial: "Probe placement can make or break your barn's environment. If probes are taking on air straight out of the inlets, or directly from a heater it can make the barn seem cooler or hotter than it really is."

Common Ventilation Challenges

- **Inconsistent Airflow:** Poor airflow can lead to areas of the barn with stagnant air or high humidity, which are breeding grounds for pathogens like bacteria and viruses.
- **Temperature Control Issues:** Proper temperature control is essential, especially since pigs' comfort can be impacted by even small fluctuations.

- **Humidity Problems:** High humidity in the barn can exacerbate respiratory issues and provide a fertile environment for disease. Low humidity, on the other hand, can lead to excess dust, dehydration, and stress in pigs.
- **Fan Degradation:** Over time, fans can lose efficiency due to dirt, debris, and general wear, making it harder to maintain consistent airflow and adequate ventilation. Functional equipment is paramount

Addressing Ventilation Challenges



Probe Placement & Monitoring

Proper probe placement is vital. If the temperature probes are placed in direct line to an air inlet or heater, the controller might read a lower or higher temperature than the pigs are experiencing. This results in a suboptimal environment and potential discomfort for the pigs. "We found probes placed right between inlets," Enfield recalls. "The probes were reading much cooler temperatures than the actual barn temperature because they were getting air directly from those inlets, while the pigs were much warmer. You want to be making ventilation decisions for where the pigs are, not where the air is coming in," Blythe stresses.



Maintaining Fan Efficiency

Fan efficiency is a recurring issue in barns, especially when dirt and manure accumulate on the equipment. The efficiency of tunnel fans can degrade by as much as 15%, while pit fans can lose about 10% efficiency



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due to dirt buildup and wind resistance. “We take the book value of the fan’s cubic feet per minute (CFM), then multiply it by 90% twice to get a more accurate real-world value,” Enfield explains.

The role of outside cones on tunnel fans is also highlighted. These cones help create a shaft of air, improving airflow efficiency. Without them, a fan can lose up to 15% of its capacity. Over time, cones can crack and wear out, so regular maintenance or replacement is necessary to keep the system functioning optimally. A good practice is to make sure fan louvers get washed between turns, and when weather allows, to power wash pit fans to ensure optimal performance.

Calculating by Pig Size & Seasonality

Determining the correct ventilation rate based on pig size & seasonality is critical for ensuring a healthy environment. The minimum cold weather rule of thumb is 2 CFM per pig for weaned pigs. “For a 1,000-head room, you’d need around 2,000 CFM of air moving through the barn. Knowing your fan size and output helps ensure you hit that target,” Enfield explains.

As pigs grow, the ventilation needs increase. A 30-pound pig might require about three CFM, while a 50-pound pig would need around five CFM. It’s essential to scale ventilation to match the pigs’ weight and weather to avoid issues such as under-ventilation, which leads to high humidity, or over-ventilation, which can result in drafts and increased energy costs.

Managing Humidity Levels

Humidity is a major concern in swine barns. Dr. Blythe advises maintaining humidity between 40% and 60%, with 50% being the ideal target. High humidity not only increases the risk of bacterial growth but also contributes to respiratory problems in pigs. “When humidity starts creeping above 70%, you need to intervene,” he warns. “If it hits 80% or higher, the environment becomes really conducive to bacterial and viral growth, leading to poor respiratory health.”

“A damp pig is a sign that conditions need to be addressed for the health of your pigs, your caretakers, and your facility.”

Monitoring Pig Behavior

Pig behavior is one of the most reliable indicators of proper ventilation. If pigs are piling up, it’s a sign

that they’re not comfortable, regardless of what the thermometer says. Let the pigs and the environment guide your adjustments. Walk through the barn, observe how the pigs lay, their movement, and any signs of discomfort, then assess how it feels—whether it’s too humid or gassy—making time for sensory observation is a vital exercise.

Airspeed Control & Inlet Management

Proper airspeed ensures the ventilation benefits the pigs without creating drafts or dead zones. “You don’t want the air coming out of the inlets too fast or too slow,” Enfield notes. “If it’s too fast, you’ll create drafts that stress the pigs. If it’s too slow, the air will drop straight down and won’t circulate properly.” Target 800-1,000 feet per minute (fpm) for power ventilation stages. A realistic target for barns operating in minimum ventilation (below set point) is 300-600 fpm.

Dealing with Cold Weather Ventilation

Cold weather presents a unique set of ventilation challenges. “In cold weather, you want your minimum fan (stages 1 & 2) ventilation bandwidths a bit wider (1.5°-2°) with a 0.5-degree offset,” Dr. Blythe advises. “That way, you’re controlling airflow without creating huge temperature swings.” In colder climates, it’s easy to under ventilate in an effort to save on heating costs, but this can lead to high humidity and poor air quality.

By addressing these common challenges—through regular maintenance, probe placement, and a focus on air quality—farmers can significantly improve their barn environments. Effective ventilation not only boosts pig health but also improves farm productivity and profitability. 🏠



IMPACT OF WATER QUALITY

on Nursery Pig Performance



Erin Little
Director of Research Operations
Pipestone Research

Erin Little graduated from South Dakota State University with a B.S. in Animal Science and an M.S. in Swine Genetics. She began her career with PIPESTONE managing day-to-day activities in research barns. Today, she serves as the Director of Research Operations, where she helps organize the team, build and implement protocols, and analyze and interpret data.



Roy Edler
BioStatistician
Pipestone Research

Roy Edler developed a passion for farming and livestock growing up in Northeast Iowa and actively participating in 4-H and FFA. He earned his M.S. degree from Iowa State University and brought his expertise to PIPESTONE in 2017 as a Biostatistician for Pipestone Research.

Water quality is a critical but often underappreciated factor in swine management. To better understand its impact, Pipestone Research recently conducted a series of trials comparing the performance of pigs raised on rural water versus well water. These trials yielded significant insights into how water quality can influence pig growth, health, and overall nursery performance.

Trial 1 Striking Differences Between Rural and Well Water

In the first trial, pigs were divided into two groups: one group was provided well water, and the other rural water. The study aimed to evaluate key performance indicators such as average daily gain, feed intake, feed conversion, and survivability. The well water has been the only water source for that barn since it was built. The rural water was provided via a milk tanker and a sump pump to match the flowability of the water. Water samples were collected regularly and stayed consistent within the water source. The results were striking.

Pigs on rural water showed a **5% higher full-value rate and had a mortality rate of just 2.3%**, compared to a 6% mortality rate in the group on well water. Additionally, the pigs on well water exhibited significantly more diarrhea, leading to poor growth and increased mortality.

The differences were visually apparent as well. Pens with pigs on rural water were dry and clean, while those on well water were wet and dirty, with pigs showing signs of looseness and poor condition. The



study highlighted the potential negative effects of well water on pig health, raising questions about the specific water quality parameters responsible for these differences.



Trial pigs in the rural water pen.



Trial pigs in the well water pen.



Trial 2 Validating Findings

Given the dramatic results of the first trial, the team decided to replicate the study to validate the findings.

This time, the rural water was directly plumbed into the barn, still, water quality was consistent with the first study. Pigs were again divided into groups: those receiving well water and those receiving rural water.

The results of the second trial were consistent with the first. Pigs on rural water outperformed those on well water in terms of average daily gain and feed intake. Mortality rates were again higher in the well water group, with a 9.25% mortality rate compared to 4.41% in the rural water group.

As in the first trial, the visual differences were clear. Pens with pigs on well water were noticeably wetter and dirtier, with more severe diarrhea compared to the cleaner, drier pens of pigs on rural water.

Conclusions and Future Directions

These trials underscore the significant impact that water quality can have on nursery pig performance. The consistent results across both

studies suggest that poor-quality well water can lead to increased diarrhea, higher mortality rates, and overall poorer growth performance in pigs. The use of rural water, on the other hand, resulted in better health outcomes and more efficient growth.

However, the trials also raised important questions about the specific factors within the well water that contributed to these negative outcomes. While the water analysis showed differences in elements like calcium, magnesium, and total dissolved solids, the exact combination of factors that led to poorer performance remains unclear. Future research is needed to pinpoint these elements and develop strategies to mitigate their effects.

In conclusion, these studies highlight the importance of considering water quality in swine nursery management. We recommend that producers using well water for nursery groups experiencing unexplained diarrhea should investigate their water quality and consider appropriate water treatment or alternative sources.



FIELD TO FEED:

Ensuring Pig Nutrition When Life Gets Busy



Hayden Kerkaert
Nutritionist
Pipestone Nutrition

It's one of the most wonderful times of the year, and no it's not Christmas, it's harvest time! Corn stalks flying and bean stubble being made is a farmer's dream and at the forefront of everyone's mind. However, we can't forget about our 4-legged friends in our barns. The importance of keeping the right ration and right amount of feed in front of our pigs cannot be overlooked. Feed outages and feed wastage can both result in poorer performance, increased mortality and negatively impact the bottom line.

As you are called away from your barns more often, don't forget these important things to keep in mind:

- 1 Check that feeder adjustments are set correctly. Feeders left wide open will lead to feed wastage that will negatively impact feed conversions up to one tenth. Although feed ingredient prices have come down, one tenth of feed conversion is still worth \$2.85/pig. Feeders set too tight result in feed restrictions in which translates to poorer growth performance. *(See the recommended ideal pan coverage in the image at right.)*
- 2 Most feeders are not built with enough feed capacity for late finishing pigs to make it an entire day with only one filling. Two or more feed outages in late finishing can affect negatively market weights, with more than two outages reducing market weight up to 10 lbs. In addition, feed outages at any point in the life of the pig can result in increased mortality from twisted gut and hemorrhagic bowels. Be sure to continue checking barns two times a day, even if the second check is just to make sure every feeder is full in the barn.
- 3 Always check bin fill levels and that the correct bin slides are open prior to leaving the site. This will help confirm the amount of feed present at the site and verify no feed hangups have occurred.



- 4 Be proactive on ordering feed and don't try to stretch out feed deliveries, especially going into weekends. It is cheaper to order less feed to fill up a bin prior to the weekend than it is to run out of feed or to pay for an emergency same day order of feed. There are several feed budgeting tools available, to the right is an example of a feed intake chart to help predict feed usage.
- 5 New crop corn is typically higher quality than the corn we just cleaned out of bins. However, it is important to test for mycotoxins to gauge corn quality from this year's crop. No two crops are the same and it's good to know if we may have mycotoxins before the pig tells us. Reach out to your nutritionist to get a new crop corn sample submitted. 

FEED INTAKE CHART

Week Post Wean	Weight	Avg. Daily Feed Intake	Cumulative Feed Intake
Wean	14 lbs		
1	16	0.41	0
2	18	0.81	6
3	25	1.22	15
4	32	1.64	26
5	41	2.08	41
6	51	2.52	57
7	62	2.97	79
8	74	3.42	103
9	87	3.87	130
10	100	4.31	160
11	114	4.74	193
12	129	5.15	230
13	144	5.54	268
14	159	5.91	310
15	174	6.25	353
16	190	6.55	399
17	205	6.82	447
18	220	7.05	496
19	235	7.24	547
20	250	7.24	598
21	264	7.24	648
22	278	7.24	699
23	291	7.24	750



The Value of MANURE



Marty Rost
Environmental Specialist
Pipestone Management

Marty Rost was raised on a grain, cattle, and hog operation in southwest Minnesota. He earned his degree from South Dakota State University and has been helping farmers at PIPESTONE since 1995. Now serving as Environmental Director, Marty is dedicated to supporting farmers while promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship.

As you all know, manure has many benefits that help improve the soil fertility. Aside from the ever-popular discussions about Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium (NPK), manure provides many other micronutrients such as Sulfur, Calcium, Magnesium, Sodium, Copper, Iron, Manganese and Zinc. Manure from a farrow to wean operation could generally have \$10-20/acre in value from these micronutrients.

NPK are the most commonly talked about nutrients that are needed by the crops we grow. It is important to remember that the amounts of these nutrients varies from barn to barn and region to region. Reasons, they vary include herd diets, water quality, manure storage facilities and many other factors. For instance, manure coming from an uncovered manure storage structure will have less Nitrogen than if it's coming from a

covered manure storage structure due to volatilization of the Nitrogen. That's why it is critical that you test the manure and use a good sample history to determine the application rate. Not doing this could result in wasting nutrients or depriving your crop of needed nutrients. Once application is complete, make sure to submit manure samples from the manure that is applied. Calculate from those results, what nutrients your fields received and if supplemental nutrients are needed.

The value of NPK from a farrow to wean operations will generally be in the \$10-\$25/1,000 gallon range. Depending on soil and crop needs, the value per acre will hit anywhere from \$100 to \$225 per acre. Likewise, manure from finishing facilities could range from \$30-\$60/1,000 gallons.

It is important to remember that there are a few cons that come with using manure. Some include soil compaction, wet application conditions, early application leading to N loss, inconsistent nutrient distribution, tracks and ruts just to name a few. However, many of the cons can be mitigated by proper planning, communication, patience and working with the applicator. If I've learned something over the years, it's not to pass up a pumping opportunity when it's there. If the ground is fit and you have access to an applicator, apply some manure. You never know what the next weather pattern or challenge may bring. Be patient when working with custom applicators and the owners of the manure. Applicators get held up by weather just as much as crop producers. The swine producer is also pressured by storage limitations at times. If you are fortunate enough to have your own manure application equipment, make sure to set time aside to apply manure





or be prepared to hire extra help when the ground is fit to apply manure.

Keep in mind that the benefits of utilizing manure far outweigh the cons associated with using it. Benefits like lowered fertilizer costs, increased yields, building soil fertility and value as well as being part of a sustainable recycling chain, makes for a successful farmer!

In closing, remember to always keep good records. Learn from what works and what does not. Make adjustments if necessary and be open to applying

supplemental nutrients if needed. I've found that if one has patience, works with his crop consultant and custom applicators, manure will be a huge asset to help gain a competitive advantage over the crop farmers that don't have access to manure. ▄

MAXIMIZING PROFIT

How Managing Market Weight Variations Boosts your Bottom Line



Alex Kremer
Market Sales Manager
FarmPro, Pipestone Business

Born and raised in Southwest Minnesota, Alex Kremer discovered his passion for agriculture at an early age. He earned his degree in Agricultural Sciences from South Dakota State University and joined the FarmPro team in 2017. As Market Sales Manager, Alex helps farmers navigate and optimize market selection.

As pig farmers, we know that every stage of production, from breeding to finishing, is crucial. But even when we've done everything right up until the last few weeks, there's still a lot of money on the table when it comes to marketing your pigs. This final phase—selling your pigs at the right weight and the right time—can make or break your bottom line. By paying attention to the Coefficient of Variation (CV) and how you sort your pigs, you can turn what might seem like small adjustments into big financial gains.

Understanding CV and Why It Matters

You've probably heard terms like CV and sort loss thrown around when looking at your kill sheet. But what do they really mean, and how do they affect your profit?

- Standard deviation measures the range of pig weights in your group, from the lightest to the heaviest.
- CV (Coefficient of Variation) takes that standard deviation and divides it by the average weight of the pigs. This gives you a percentage that tells you how consistent your pigs are in size.

The lower your CV, the more uniform your pigs are. Packers want uniformity because it keeps their processing plants running efficiently. When pigs come in at the right weight, packers reward you. But if your pigs are too heavy or too light, you face penalties, which is where sort loss comes into play.

What's a Good CV?

If you don't sort your pigs and just let them go to market at random (what we call a "gate cut"), you could end up with a CV as high as 12%. On the flip side, if you take the time to sort carefully, you can get that CV down to 5%, which is considered excellent. The average for farmers we work with sits at around 7%.

Here's the kicker: **moving from a 10% CV to the average 7% can save you about \$5 per pig.** For a barn of 2,400 pigs, that's an extra \$12,000. Going from 7% to 5% CV might net you another dollar per pig. While the returns diminish as your CV gets tighter, those small margins can still add up.

How to Improve Your CV and Reduce Sort Loss

So how do you make sure your pigs hit that sweet spot for weight?

 **1) Have a Plan:** Before you go into the barn, know how many pigs you want to sort for each load. Don't just focus on a few pens—spread your selection evenly across the barn to avoid large weight variations.

 **2) Watch the Numbers:** Pay attention to feed consumption and days on feed. This can give you an idea of when your pigs are ready to hit that target weight.

 **3) Use Tools if Available:** If your barn has scales, use them to fine-tune your sorting process. However, make sure the setup doesn't interfere with the pigs' access to feed, as this can slow down their growth.

 **4) Keep an Eye on Health:** Health issues can create significant variation in weight. A healthier group of pigs will naturally have less variation, making it easier to hit that ideal CV.

 **5) Plan for the Last Load:** The last load out of the barn is often where variation spikes because you're left with the lightest and slowest-growing pigs. Sorting carefully here or sending these pigs to a different packer or market can help minimize losses.

Why the Packers Care About Consistency

Packers run a high-speed operation, and for them to maintain efficiency, they need pigs that are as uniform as possible. The closer your pigs are to their target

weight, the more efficiently the plant can process them, and the more they're willing to pay you. For example, certain packers might prefer slightly lighter pigs if given the choice, but each packer has its own matrix for determining penalties based on over- or under-weight pigs.

Why It Pays to Focus on Marketing

The time and effort you put into sorting your pigs properly can make a huge difference to your profitability. If you're letting your pigs run to market without a plan, you're likely leaving money on the table. But by tightening your CV and hitting the packer's weight targets, you can maximize your returns.

In today's tight market, those small gains—whether \$5 a pig or even just \$1—can be the difference between breaking even and making a profit. By focusing on sorting and reducing variation, you're not just optimizing your operation—you're ensuring you're getting the best possible value for all the hard work

you've put into raising your pigs.

So next time you're preparing to market your pigs, ask yourself: "Am I doing everything I can to maximize my profits?" If not, take a closer look at your CV and sort strategy. A little extra effort could mean a big boost to your bottom line. 



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this discussion
on the
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WEBER FARMS: HONORING TRADITION WHILE *Embracing Growth*

For Justin Weber and his family, farming is more than just a business—it's been a way of life for generations. "I'm a fifth-generation farmer and the fourth-generation on this land here in Jesup," Justin explains. His great-great-grandfather farmed near Monticello, Iowa, but in the 1920s, the family moved to their current location. Justin's father, Irv, remembers milking about 65 cows as a boy, but when milk prices dropped, the family had to pivot. "They got out of dairy and started farrowing pigs, but struggled with Transmissible Gastroenteritis (TGE)," Justin recalls. By 1975, the family had found their niche—buying and raising feeder pigs.

From a young age, Justin was immersed in farm life, tagging along with his dad to sale barns—experiences that sparked his love for farming. In 1996, Irv built the family's first finishing barn, and another was added in 2001, setting the foundation for pig production. By 2015, however, Justin realized they needed to make a decision: either grow or get out. "We were only

finishing about 3,000 pigs a year, and it was kind of like, what are we doing here?" That's when Justin and Irv bought shares in Thunder Ridge, a sow farm in South Dakota that is managed by PIPESTONE on behalf of farmer-owners. In 2019, they expanded further, investing in Timberwolf, a similar sow farm in Wisconsin.

Investing in sow farms has allowed Justin to connect with like-minded farmers. "We often bounce ideas off each other," he shares. "I'm in a group text with other farmers about the Timberwolf pigs, and it's interesting to see what works for everyone. The exchange of ideas is invaluable."

Beyond the collaboration, the partnership with PIPESTONE provides financial and operational security. "Having multiple sow farms means if there's a disease outbreak in one, we still have healthy pigs from another," Justin explains. "It's a big improvement from the challenges Dad faced growing up."



Justin and Nicole Weber, along with their kids, Peyton, Jada, and Brady; farm with Justin's parents, Irv and Jane Weber near Jesup, Iowa.

Expanding the Farm's Reach

As the farm's workload increased, Justin realized they needed extra support and took a leap with FarmTeam, a service offering through Pipestone Business. At first, he was hesitant about giving up some of the daily tasks, but working with FarmTeam member Luis eased his concerns. "Luis isn't just a body in the barn. He really cares about the pigs and our farm's success," Justin says. "Thanks to him, I thoroughly enjoy choring pigs again and have been able to make it to more of my kids' events."

Despite the changes and growth, the family remains at the core of the Weber farm. Justin's father, Irv, is still deeply involved in the day-to-day operations, while his mother, Jane, is anticipating a more hands-on role as she retires from her banking career this fall. Justin's wife, Nicole, and their three children—Peyton, Jada, and Brady—also help out on the farm, contributing to the daily operations.

Sustainable Growth

As Justin and his family look to the future, sustainability remains a top priority. "You can't sit still



Pig health is top priority at Weber Farms for Justin Weber and Luis Felipe Robles Albores.

in farming," he says. "It takes more pigs or more acres to make a living these days, so we're growing at a pace the family can manage." One key benefit of raising pigs is the manure, which plays an essential role in growing crops. "Manure is vital for fertilizing crops. It creates a cycle—we fertilize the fields, feed the pigs, and start the process over again. Our fields that get manure always outperform the ones that don't. You can never have enough manure, that's for sure," Justin laughs.

For Justin, sustainability isn't just about environmental responsibility—it's about ensuring the farm's long-term success. "Sustainability, to me, means doing what's right for the soil and water so the farm can thrive not just tomorrow, but ten years from now," he says. His goal is to grow in a way that keeps the farm family-run for future generations.

A key factor in this strategy is data-driven decision-making, and Justin has found that FarmStats has become an invaluable tool in achieving this. "Back in the day, you just worked hard and made money, but that's not how it works today," he explains. With FarmStats, a service offering through Pipestone Business, tracking metrics like feed conversion, medication usage, and average daily gain has allowed Justin to closely monitor each group of pigs and make informed decisions. "It's the little things, like adjusting



Data provided through the FarmStats program allows the Weber's to make the most of each decision.

feeders or hitting target weights, that really add up.”

Partnership with PIPESTONE has also proven instrumental in the Weber family’s growth plans. The depth of knowledge they offer—from veterinary expertise to nutrition and financial advice—has been a game-changer. Justin values the research and practical trials Pipestone conducts, which give him the confidence to implement new strategies on the farm. “The trials they do aren’t things we wouldn’t consider trying ourselves, but it’s nice to have someone else to test it on a larger scale,” he says. Together, these resources help ensure that the farm is well-positioned for future growth and success.

The Joy of Harvest and Looking Ahead

Harvest time is one of Justin’s favorite seasons. “It’s rewarding to see the fruits of your labor,” he says. “This fall has been fantastic—yields have exceeded expectations, and the weather has been kind. Plus, it’s a fun time because the pigs come off their summer slump and start really thriving.”

For Justin and his family, farming has always been more than a business—it’s a family affair. The bond between him and his father has deepened through



Brady, Irv, and Justin Weber farm together in Eastern Iowa, raising corn and soybeans and finishing 30,000 of hogs per year.

years of working side by side. Reflecting on his journey, Justin recalls, “I was lucky. During my senior year of high school, our neighbor asked Dad about renting his farm. Dad’s response was, ‘I won’t, but Justin will.’” This pivotal moment set him on his path in agriculture and laid the foundation for growing the farm while honoring that spirit of collaboration.

His vision for the future is clear as he watches his son, Brady. “He’s driving the skid loader around the farm, just like I did when I was young,” Justin says with a smile. “I don’t want him to grow up too fast, but I can’t wait until he’s out here every day with me and Dad.”

Helping Farmers Today Create the Farms of Tomorrow



Health

Pipestone Veterinary Services is helping pig farmers make critical decisions about animal health, productivity and profitability.

- Veterinary Services and Consulting.
- Products: Biosecure animal health products and supplies.
- PART (Pipestone Antibiotic Resistance Tracker): Antibiotic tracking for responsible use of antibiotics.



Management

Pipestone Management focuses on providing a consistent, high health wean pig supply allowing the farmer to maintain ownership, but focus their time resources at home.

- Sow Management
- Wean Pig Facilitation



Nutrition

Pipestone Nutrition is helping pig farmers by providing economic-driven, feed ingredient procurement and performance-based diet formulations.

- Diet Formulation
- Feed Partners Transparent Procurement



Business

Pipestone Business is helping pig farmers by providing resources and expertise in the pig business.

- FarmBiz: Strategic Advisory and Business Planning
- FarmBooks & FarmCFO: Accounting and Financial Systems
- FarmStats: Production Records and Decision Optimization
- FarmTeam: Production Staffing
- FarmPro: Grow-Finish production consultation

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF DISCOVERY

PIPESTONE
Helping Farmers

Celebrating Ag Education at the Sioux Empire Fair

This year, PIPESTONE is celebrating a major milestone with the 10th anniversary of the Discovery Barn at the Sioux Empire Fair in Sioux Falls, SD. While our agriculture education exhibits began with a single local fair, the Sioux Falls Discovery Barn has grown to be the cornerstone of our agricultural education efforts. Beyond this exhibit, PIPESTONE has expanded its reach with additional outreach exhibits at fairs and classrooms across South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa, furthering our commitment to connect with communities.

The Start of the Discovery Barn

The idea for the Discovery Barn concept was born out of a simple yet profound goal—to build public trust in farmers. Sylvia Wolters, Public Relations Coordinator and one of the program's key visionaries, explains, "PIPESTONE was asked to contribute to a different public ag experience destination near a very large city. Instead of writing a check, we chose a route where we designed the message and built relationships. We chose to stay local, locate a property, and build our

own ag experience to showcase ALL of modern agriculture, featuring farmers of the Midwest."

By 2014, the Discovery Barn at the Sioux Empire Fair was launched, quickly becoming a highlight for families and school groups alike. Over the years, the exhibit grew, incorporating live farrowing sows, weaned piglets, interactive displays, and educational material that captivated both children and adults. The success at the Sioux Empire Fair paved the way for additional agriculture education exhibits.



Sylvia Wolters

Adapting and Engaging

One of the keys to longevity is our constant focus on staying relevant and educational. As farming practices have evolved over the past decade, so does our exhibits.

"This year, we revamped the wall signage at the Sioux Falls Discovery Barn," says Taylor Spronk, Public Relations Manager and Research Veterinarian for PIPESTONE. "The old wall signs were 10 years old and needed a refresh. For example, the average number of piglets born per litter is no longer 10-14; it's much higher than that, and that's growth we want to highlight. We updated those displays and are expanding those updates to all our ag education exhibits."



Opening Day of the PIPESTONE Discovery Barn at the Sioux Empire Fair in 2014.



Each year, visitors are invited to watch live births up close. Chicks, piglets and calves are all born during the fair. These up-close encounters help visitors of all ages understand the care and dedication that goes into farming. “What I find really fun about the exhibits is how much kids are drawn to the animals. The animals are truly the stars of the show. While it’s important to keep the space educational, we focus on the animals and the farmers who are there with them, talking to the visitors,” Taylor adds.

Building Partnerships

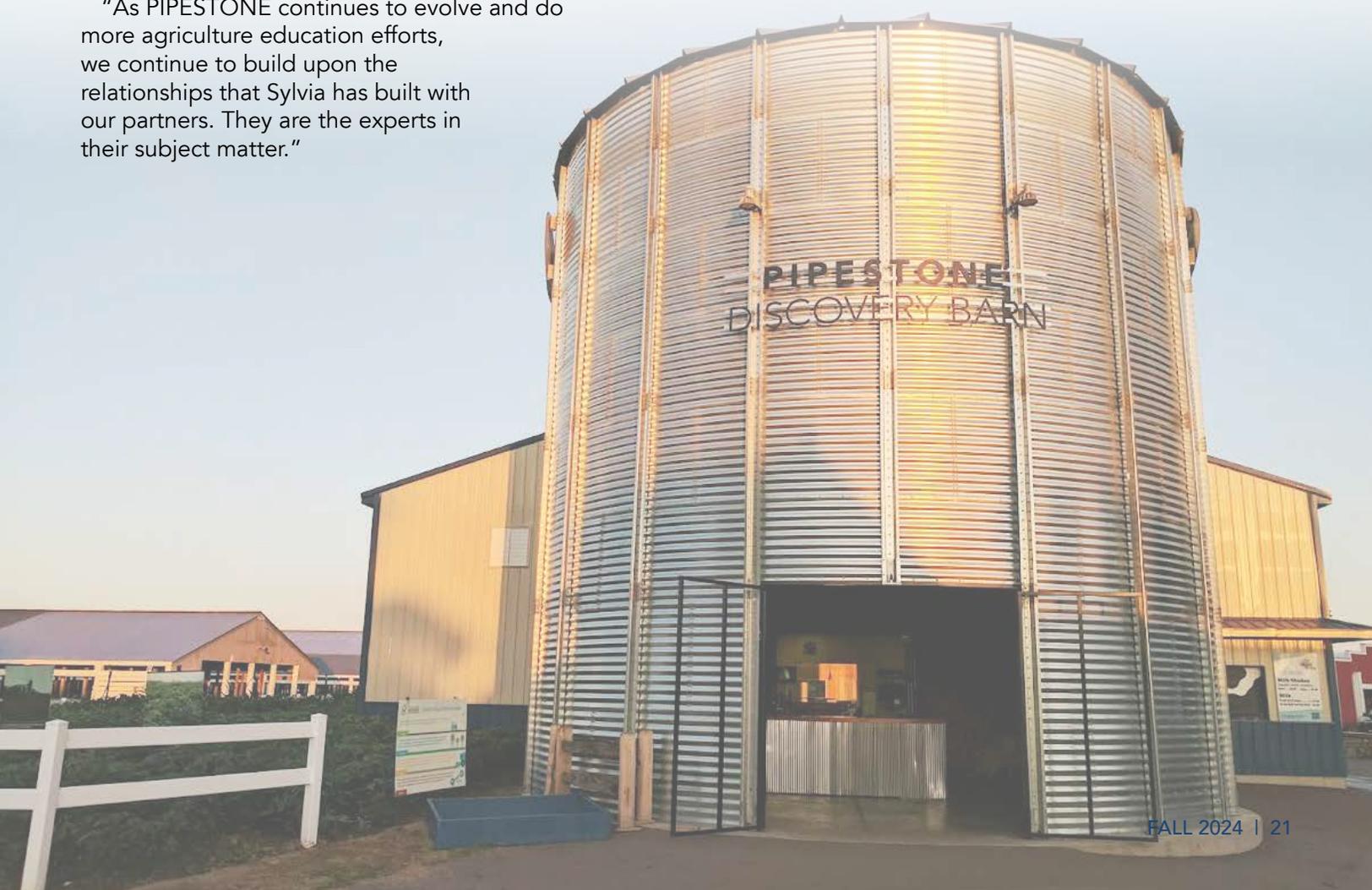
One of the key elements of the Discovery Barn has been its collaboration with local farmers, college students, and organizations like FFA. These partnerships ensure that the exhibits not only educate but also foster meaningful interactions between the public and those who work on the farm every day.

“As PIPESTONE continues to evolve and do more agriculture education efforts, we continue to build upon the relationships that Sylvia has built with our partners. They are the experts in their subject matter.”

A Decade of Impact

Over the past ten years, the Discovery Barn has not only educated, but they’ve also built lasting relationships with fairgoers and the community. From young children to seasoned farmers, the exhibit has fostered curiosity, discussions, and a greater understanding of agriculture.

“The public response has been overwhelmingly positive,” says Sylvia. “We’ve seen attendance grow each year, and during challenging times, like the COVID-19 pandemic, the value of what we were doing became even more evident. People were more interested than ever in learning where their food comes from and how it’s produced.”





Taylor echoes, noting, “We often hear fairgoers tell us that we are the highlight exhibit at the fair. Kids and families have a lot of fun and learn a lot. It’s hands-on and educational.” This feedback underscores the Discovery Barn’s role in not just informing but also engaging visitors in meaningful ways.

Looking Ahead: The Next Chapter

As we look to the future, the focus for the Discovery Barns is clear—continue building relationships, improving the educational experience, and exploring new ways to engage the public.

“In the first 10 years of the ag education exhibits, our focus was on growth and reaching as many people as possible,” Taylor says. “In the next 10 years, our goals will really be to understand what the most efficient ways are to reach people.” This may include optimizing how we connect with diverse audiences.

Taylor adds, “I think 10 years at the Discovery Barn really shows PIPESTONE’s long-term commitment to how important these initiatives are.”

Together we will continue making a lasting impact, one conversation at a time.

Sylvia Wolters 

A Call to Farmers

The success of the Discovery Barns wouldn’t be possible without the dedication of local farmers. These exhibits are more than just educational displays—they’re opportunities to share the real stories of farming, directly from those who live it every day. As Taylor Spronk notes, “We really encourage our local farmers to be involved in the Discovery Barn efforts.”



Dr. Taylor Spronk

Sylvia Wolters emphasizes the importance of farmer participation: “The trust of the farmer and the voice of the farmer carries the greatest amount of impact. Bringing farmers alongside us is influential.”

As we continue to build these connections, we need passionate farmers to help educate and inspire the public. If you’re interested in contributing to future Discovery Barn events—whether by sharing your expertise, providing livestock, or engaging with fairgoers—we encourage you to reach out. Together, we will continue making a lasting impact, one conversation at a time. 



2024 DISCOVERY BARN

53 days

15 SOWS

farrowed and donated to FFA & 4-H families for project pigs

9 locations

Independence, IA
DeWitt, IA
Pipestone, MN
Luverne, MN
Slayton, MN
Marshall, MN
Minneapolis, MN
Sioux Falls, SD
Huron, SD

195 piglets born in public view

10 wean pigs

on display and donated to FFA & 4-H families

THANK YOU TO OUR AWESOME VOLUNTEERS!



PIPESTONE

53 chicks hatched



COMMITMENT *Et* EXPERTISE

Logistics in Action

Tyler Clayton, Order Fulfillment Lead



For Tyler Clayton, Order Fulfillment Lead at Pipestone Veterinary Services, supporting farmers begins with efficient logistics. Having been with the company for six years, Tyler leads a 10-person team responsible for ensuring that the medications and supplies prescribed by PIPESTONE's veterinarians reach farms promptly and cost-effectively.

"We aim for over 99.2% accuracy on all orders, and our current error rate is just 0.7%, which is top-class in the industry," Tyler explains. His team carefully monitors deliveries, making sure that products arrive at the right place, on time, and without damage. This behind-the-scenes work is crucial to PIPESTONE's mission of Helping Farmers by not only diagnosing health and nutrition issues but also ensuring that vaccines, medications, and general supplies are sourced from the best vendors.

Tyler attributes his success at PIPESTONE to the company's strong values and mission. "I enjoy working with a group of people who are truly committed to our mission of Helping Farmers. It creates a great community, and every day is an opportunity for growth." His advice for others? "Find a company whose mission aligns with your values. When you truly buy into the mission, the opportunities are endless." 📈



Good Data Creates Good Decisions

Mandy Matthiesen, Data Management Manager

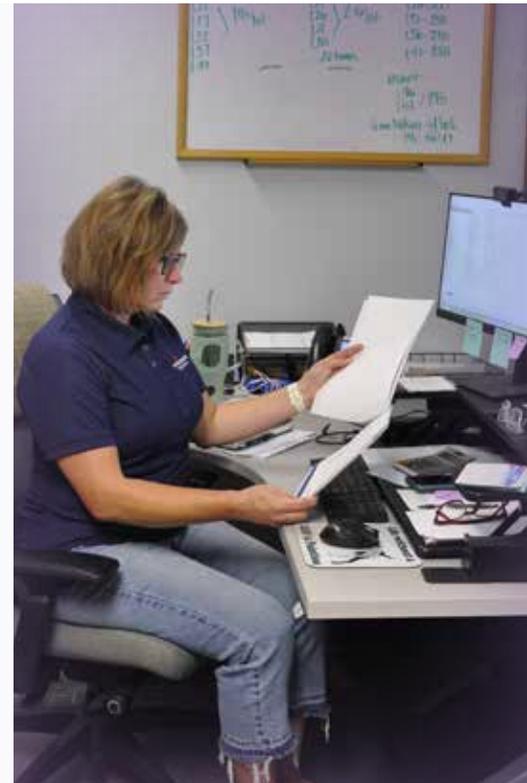


Mandy Matthiesen has been with PIPESTONE for 11 years, rising through the ranks to now manage the Information Bureau. She leads a six-person team responsible for ensuring accurate data reporting across the company's sow farms.

"Good data creates good decisions," Mandy emphasizes, explaining that her team validates the information entered by farms to ensure it is correct and follows protocol.

The reports her team generates are essential for helping farmers and shareholders make informed decisions about farm management. "We take pride in providing data that is accurate, reliable, and actionable," Mandy says, highlighting the critical role data plays in supporting PIPESTONE's mission.

Mandy enjoys the fast-paced, ever-evolving environment at PIPESTONE. "There's always something new to learn, and if you want to grow and advance your career, this is the place to be," she adds. Her advice? "Don't be afraid to ask for opportunities—they are available, and PIPESTONE is a great place to build your career in agriculture." 📈



IN ACTION

Safeguarding Animal Welfare

Kelly Kortleever, Health Tech Manager



For nearly 15 years, Kelly Kortleever has played a key role at Pipestone Veterinary Services as a Health Technician, focusing on auditing biosecurity, safety, and animal welfare at sow farms. "Health is one of the most important drivers of success for farmers, and it starts with the health of their sow herd and wean pigs," she explains. "The team's goal is to help farm staff implement effective disease prevention measures, including training pig care specialists and ensuring proper facility management."

Kelly starts her day before sunrise, traveling between farms to conduct on-farm audits. "We meet with the barn crews to review their audits and provide training on improving biosecurity and welfare practices," she says.

Kelly's love for both animals and people is evident in her work. "The staff at the farms have such unique backgrounds, it's just a pleasure to visit them daily," she shares. Her passion for biosecurity and dedication to her team ensures that the farms and animals she serves remain protected and healthy. Her advice for those in the field? "Farms should start with strong biosecurity practices and lead by example. If leadership doesn't believe in it, it's hard to get the team to follow." 



Biosecurity from the Truck Wash

Dean Lueck, Truck Wash Manager



After 21 years with Frito-Lay, Dean Lueck made a career shift and joined Pipestone Management as the Truck Wash Manager over six years ago. Today, he leads a 12-person team responsible for washing and disinfecting 85 to 90 livestock trailers each week, a critical step in maintaining biosecurity and preventing the spread of disease between farms.

"We follow strict cleaning protocols—pre-soaking, power washing, flushing, and inspecting each trailer to ensure it's 100% clean before disinfecting," Dean explains. His team operates two wash bays, with the goal of pushing out a freshly cleaned trailer every hour. "A clean trailer plays a crucial role in protecting the health of our farms."

Dean is proud of his team's dedication to biosecurity and the positive culture at PIPESTONE. "The company is built on caring for its people, and it's rewarding to see how each person brings their own personality to their role," he shares. "I'm always impressed with the farmers' commitment. It's not a job just anyone can do, so if you're passionate about helping farmers, PIPESTONE is a great place to be." 





One-Stop Shop

As a customer of PIPESTONE, you have access to a wide range of swine health products and supplies to keep your barn running smoothly.



Air Chutes block cold air from entering when fans are not being used and prevent backdrafts. These chutes are tapered by size of fan to prevent whipping in the wind and premature failure.



Pathogen Barrier Durafil filters are proven to reduce concentration of airborne PRRS pathogens. Various sizes to fit your needs.



Durable filter housing designed for easy install and long-lasting protection. Available in two sizes, housing 2 or 6 filters.



Water testing kit includes two amber bottles and one bottle containing Sodium Thiosulfate. Connect with your Vet for more information on water testing.

As temperatures cool down, be sure to follow product labels for proper storage conditions.

Contact your vet or the Swine Resource Team with questions.

Tools of the Trade



**SWINE
RESOURCE
TEAM**

www.pipestone.com

507-562-PIGS (7447)

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Make the most of every walk through the barn with tools to compliment your senses.

An excellent tool for determining wind speeds, the Kestrel 3000 Wind Meter is ideal for ventilation systems.



This Infrared laser thermometer has a LCD backlight display with 0.1° resolution.

“Two tools I carry with me into barns are an anemometer and an infrared gun to measure airspeed and temperature. For anyone watching over any number of pigs, these tools can help identify potential issues in the barn before they become major health problems in the animals.”



Dr. Jeff Blythe
Pipestone Veterinary Services





1300 S Hwy 75
Pipestone, MN 56164

