

Alternative swine housing – opportunities for innovation.

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Over the past decade a variety of innovative swine housing systems have been developed as alternatives to conventional confinements. Many of these systems are a direct response to pressures related to facility investment, the environment, animal welfare, and other concerns of farmers, consumers and the public about the way livestock are raised. This symposium is an opportunity for scientists and engineers working with these systems to share their latest results, and discuss the research needed to ensure these systems achieve their intended goals. Researchers are attending from Australia, Canada, Korea, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ukraine, Morocco, and across the U.S, bringing with them a wealth of experience and ideas to share.

The papers presented at this symposium represent a range of new approaches to livestock housing design and management. Whether inspired by producer experience or more formal methodological approaches, these alternative systems are a work in progress, and offer fertile ground for new generations of innovation yet to come. While these systems are a direct response to changing public attitudes and social concerns, the reality is that practical implementation often falls short of idealized expectations. As with any complex systems, unintended consequences are likely to arise with these new designs, generating new problems that need to be addressed. Rigorous research and critical analysis are essential if these systems are to evolve to achieve their potential.