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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Osborne Awarded Patent for Automated Weighing**

Osborne announces that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has awarded Patent No. 7,210,428 on May 1, 2007, for the company's unique method for automated weighing and sorting of pigs to feed or market. The company introduced this new method to the pork industry in 2002 as the Weight Watcher™ Growth Management System.



According to Osborne, the Weight Watcher System (WWS) tracks growth and the weight distribution in a large pen of 500 or more pigs. This knowledge ensures that each animal is always fed for its proper weight and rank in the pen distribution. According to inventor, Ron Thibault, the WWS concept arose from a research program in automated weighing initiated in 1996 at the Osborne Demonstration Farm, long before auto-sorting became popular. Thibault is vice-president of marketing and engineering for the company.

“We wanted to weigh pigs automatically to eliminate weighing stress,” Thibault noted. “The Weight Watcher System does this, but also puts the manager in total daily control of growth of finishing pigs.”

According to Thibault, the concept was successfully tested for over 3 years at the company farm before being released for commercial use. “Our focus on research caused us to lose the initiative in the market because some of our ideas leaked out and other suppliers quickly introduced the idea for sort barns and automated market sorting to cut sort loss, but the WWS is based on managed growth so the need for market sorting is greatly reduced,” says Thibault.

Osborne reports that the WWS manages 500 pigs or more in one large pen by automatic daily weighing of pigs as they move from a common water area and are sorted into two or more large feed areas based on animal weight and the pen weight distribution. For two-way sorting, the median or middle weight is used and is updated automatically from the daily weight distribution. The WWS automatically adjusts the division of pigs into two or more feeding groups as they grow. Controlled feeding throughout the finishing cycle gives tight weight ranges and improved ADG for its users, claims the company.

“With feed costs at record highs, accurate WWS feeding cuts feed costs while keeping market weight range tight for more facility turns. Our goal is to cut sort loss by growing pigs more uniformly, not just sorting on market day,” says Thibault. “This patent finally recognizes this unique capability of the WWS.”

Osborne Industries, Inc., is a diversified developer and manufacturer of livestock equipment, livestock automation, and custom-engineered composites and elastometric materials located in Osborne, Kansas. For more information, call 800-255-0316 or visit [www.osborne-ind.com](http://www.osborne-ind.com).