

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Osborne's Weight Watcher System is more than just an auto-sort scale. Weight Watcher is a growth management system for large pen finishing and is your complete tool for feeding pigs based upon their actual weights, which produces more uniform loads for your packer. The system will help you match your packer's matrix, cutting market sort loss, and allow you to market more uniform pounds of pork.

### 1 HOW IS WEIGHT WATCHER DIFFERENT THAN A FOOD COURT SYSTEM?

A food court system has several distinct disadvantages that make it different than the Weight Watcher System:

#### **Intimidator pigs:**

Because the food court provides both food and water in a very compact area, dominant pigs in the group have no incentive to leave and can easily control access to the feeders. This almost ensures a wider spread of weights. With Weight Watcher, feed and water are separated, forcing animals to pass through the sorting scale as they pass from the water to feeding area. Feeders are distributed widely, and animals must leave the feeding area for access to water, so dominant pigs can never control feed access.

#### **Training:**

An automatic market scale used in the food court system requires highly accurate weights since market decisions are based on only one pass through the scale. Moving across such a scale with multiple moving gates requires training. Training occurs because feed is the incentive. This means that feed restriction is necessary, often in the final weeks before the market date. However, with Weight Watcher, the sorting scale is always present and for several weeks, pigs move freely through it. By the time weighing begins, pigs are comfortable with the scale and by market time, no special training is required so pigs are always on full feed.

#### **Facilities Utilization:**

Automatic market scales and the food court system both combine to increase facilities utilization costs because increasing the number of "tail-enders" is a likely outcome for the system. The goal of the Weight Watcher system is to minimize the distribution of weights in the group and to arrange the feeding program so that "tail-enders" are actively eliminated.

### 2 HOW MANY ANIMALS CAN BE STOCKED ON A SORTING SCALE WITH WEIGHT WATCHER?

A maximum of 500 finishing animals per auto-sort Survey Scale is recommended. Pigs are on the scale for an average of 5 seconds and pass through it many times a day, so overstocking the system with more animals than recommended can limit the movement of animals back and forth from feed to water through the Survey Scale.

### 3 WHEN CAN PIGS START ON A SURVEY SCALE? CAN IT BE USED FOR WEAN TO FINISH?

Yes. Weight Watcher may be used for wean-to-finish, but it is important that all pens and equipment be open until pigs reach 50 lbs. (23 kg). In finishing barns, at the beginning of the turn, pens and equipment should also remain open for a few days so the animals are allowed to explore. This will also ensure that all animals are eating and drinking, and are able to learn where feed and water are located before the system is set to grow or maintain pig weights. Contact Osborne Technical Service for complete animal training and system startup procedures.

### 4 CAN I USE THE WEIGHT WATCHER SYSTEM TO SORT GILTS?

Auto-sort Survey Scales are RFID-ready. With this option, an antenna inside the Survey Scale records each animal's passage through the Survey Scale. With Osborne's Daily Weigh II software package, gilts can be easily tracked and eventually selected based on their growth rate.

### 5 HOW DO I ADDRESS ANIMAL CARE IN A LARGE PEN WEIGHT WATCHER SYSTEM?

Although the Weight Watcher system requires a specific design of split feeding and watering areas, options like sorting panels or penning can be added in the feeding areas when pig care for large groups is a concern. Osborne's experienced design team can customize each system layout to help address concerns for animal care.

### 6 WHAT HAPPENS IF THE WEIGHT WATCHER SYSTEM LOSES POWER?

It is always recommended that each building have a reliable back-up power source with a transfer switch in the case of power failures. However, the By-Pass Gate accessory automatically opens if the system loses power, ensuring animals have free access to feed and water and preventing pens from overcrowding.

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## WHAT DOES A COMPLETE WEIGHT WATCHER SYSTEM LOOK LIKE?

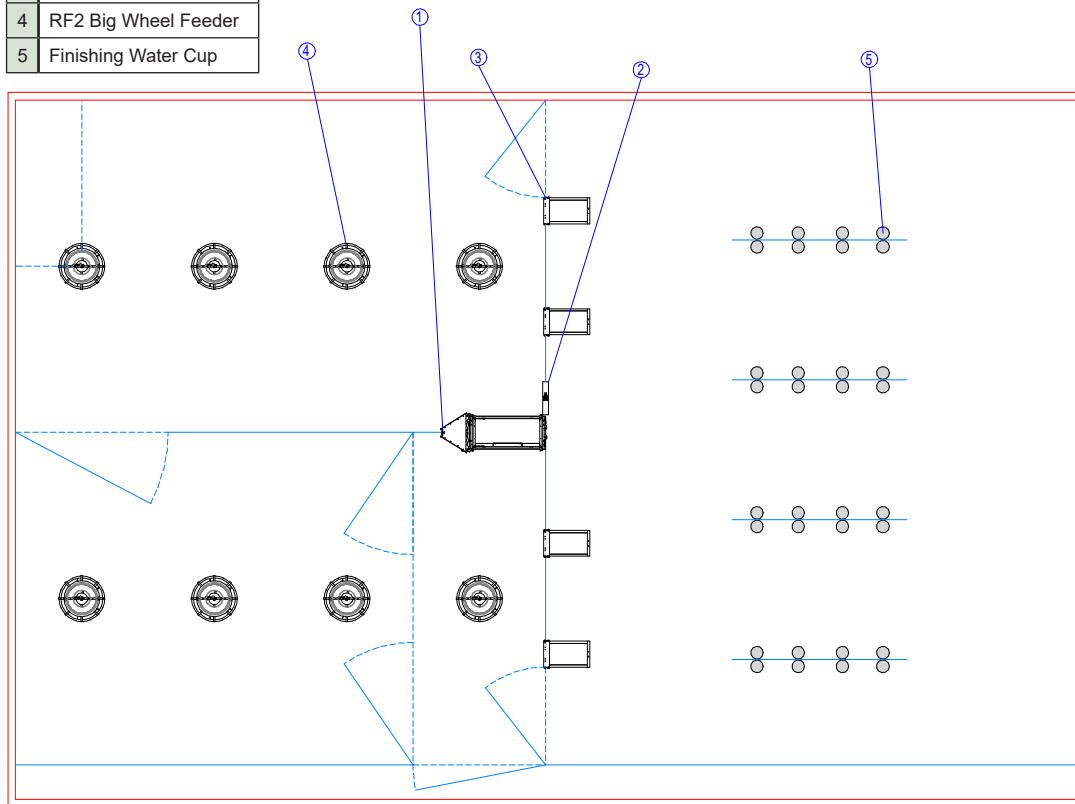
Penning is arranged to partition a room into two zones: a watering zone (about 50% of the room) and a feeding zone (about 50% of the room). This penning contains one-way gates opening into the watering zone, which ensures pigs pass through the auto-sort Survey Scale to get back into the feeding zone.

Penning also divides the feeding zone into two pens: an area for accelerating the growth of “lightweights” by feeding a higher lysine/protein feed, and an area to maintain the performance of “heavyweight” animals. Ad-libitum dry feeders, like Osborne’s automatic Big Wheel® Feeders, are arranged for maximum access in each of the feeding areas. At least two bulk bins supply the feeders, one for each side of the two feeding areas, so that each side can receive a feed that matches the need of the group. Also, because lightweights and heavyweights are split, larger animals cannot prevent lightweight or timid animals from access to feed.

At market time, removable gates can be closed off to create a third pen in the feeding area: the market pen. Those animals meeting the determined weight criteria are automatically sorted into a pen for easy passage to loading for market. The central goal of the system is to feed animals to reach market quicker and at a uniform weight.

1	Osborne Survey Scale™
2	By-Pass Gate
3	One-Way Gate
4	RF2 Big Wheel Feeder
5	Finishing Water Cup

### EXAMPLE WEIGHT WATCHER LAYOUT



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## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FEEDERS IN A WEIGHT WATCHER SYSTEM?



Although any dry, ad-lib feeders may be used, round Big Wheel Feeders are recommended for use in each of the feeding zones. Big Wheel Feeders provide 360° unobstructed access to feed without crowding animals into close contact with one another. To grow pigs quickly, it is important to provide maximum feed trough access, which is easily accomplished with the round design of Big Wheel Feeders. Request the Big Wheel Feeder catalog from Osborne for more information on the optimal way to feed hogs.