



Weight Watcher™

Growth Management System

Technical Note for Sample Room Layouts

Operation of a Weight Watcher™ System for Sorting a Target Weight Range For Market - Layouts Included for Two Types of 500 hd Rooms

The attached drawings show two suggested ways to set up and operate the Osborne Weight Watcher™ system in a barn with loadout at the end of the building.

If the barn is totally stocked with same-age pigs, then two bulk bins can deliver two feeds to all four pens. If the barn is stocked over a longer period, then two sets of two bulk bins would permit more flexibility to adjust the phase feeding program.

An aisle from the loadout chute must be added to provide access to the far room. This is shown as either a side aisle or a central aisle. The side aisle system is easier to operate. By using swing or temporary gates to form these aisles, the space occupied by the aisle could be used as part of the pen until marketing begins. Aisles can be eliminated if loadout is at the center of the barn, but a central loadout is not normal in most existing buildings.

The Osborne Survey Scale™ weighs all the animals several times a day in the Weight Watcher system. The Survey Scale can be set to detect when any percentage of animals (say 5%) of each 500 group (or 25 animals) first exceeds market weight (for example, 250 lbs/113 kg). By comparison of the market weight with the weight distribution for the pen, a marketing decision can be made. For example, if the upper quartile weight is 245 lbs/111 kg and market groups of 125 are desired, then at a rate of gain of 2 lbs/day (0.9 kg/day), determined from the Weight Watcher system, in about 3 days, 1/4 of the pen (125 hd) can be sorted and shipped to market.

To capture market hogs, if less than 1/2 of the group is to be marketed as in the present example, then swing gates are used to form a marketing pen. First, swing gates

divide the water pen, between the heavy-side, one-way gate and the entry to the Survey Scale. Second, a market pen is formed in the heavy feed pen by swing gates between the side and central penning to hold market animals. This market pen (part of the heavy pen and water pen) must include enough space for the anticipated number of pigs (about 125 animals in this case), e.g. with a size that allows about 8-ft²/0.74 m² per animal, and be accessible to the loadout alley.

Next, all animals are temporarily excluded from the market pen so that it can be filled with market-weight hogs. The swing gates in the central partition, between the heavy and light pens, are opened so light and heavy pigs have access to the water pen through the light pen. Since all animals are continuously commingled in the water pen prior to this operation, no social problems are created by this action. The market pigs are captured in the market pen as they return to feed through the scale. All others return to the light pen. After all the heavy pigs are captured (after about 12-18 hours), the controller shows the number of animals collected. While the market hogs are collected, feed to any feeders in that part of the pen can be interrupted so that market animals go to market with an empty gut.

After the market hogs are shipped, the gates are replaced to their normal position and the Weight Watcher system is returned to its original configuration. After one day, the new weight distribution in the pen is accurately remeasured and the weight of the median and chosen top percentile (e.g., 5%) of pigs can be checked. All pigs can now be put on the "fast finish" feed, if desired, to accelerate the pigs to market. Alternatively, another partial shipment can be selected as soon as the Weight Watcher system shows that a reasonable percentage exceeds the target market weight.


This explanation, of the implementation of the Weight Watcher system and the drawings, provides only one description of an example layout with the mechanics for use of the Weight Watcher system at market time. Of course, other alternative ways exist to set up pens for particular barns. This example is meant to show the general Weight Watcher system concept.

The key advantages to Weight Watcher, which are not discussed here, are:

1. The manager can feed two feeds specially designed for heavy and for light hogs.
2. The manager can use the actual percentile weights (median pen weight and the upper and lower quartile pen weights or other percentile weights) to precisely change these feeds for accurate phased feeding.

Using these two advantages of the Weight Watcher system, not only should feeding be more efficient so that waste nutrient levels are reduced in his lagoon, but the manager should be able to control and perhaps decrease the weight spread in his herd. Accurate feeding also should improve the number of turns for the finisher building.

Most of these advantages are almost totally automatic after initially learning how to use the Weight Watcher system as an integral part of an advanced feeding program.

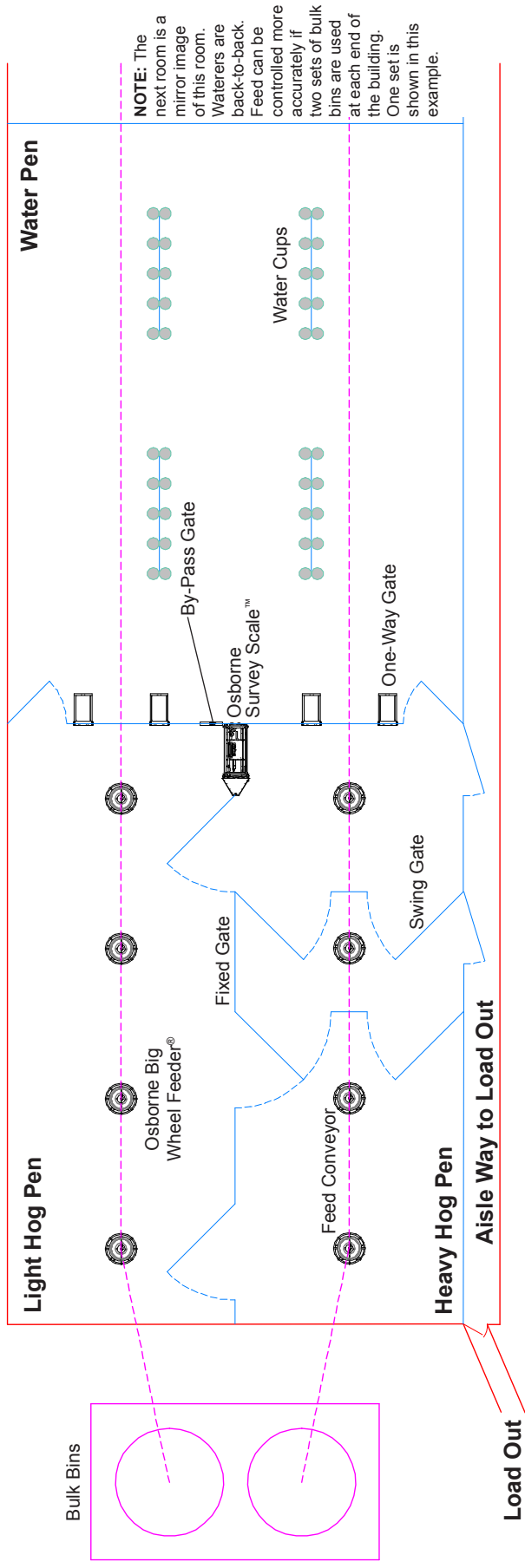


For more information, please contact Osborne:

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Sample Penning Arrangement #1

Normal Grow-Finish Operation (Weight Watcher Mode)
 Mix of Permanent and Swing Gates | Side Aisle
 500-Head System



Sample Penning Arrangement #2

Normal Grow-Finish Operation (Weight Watcher Mode)
 Mix of Permanent and Swing Gates | Center Aisle
 Two 500-Head Systems

