

Group Sow Housing Feeding Systems

PROS & CONS

Determining which group housing system to use can be a daunting task. There are multiple systems to choose from, and no hard rules to follow. This chart outlines some of the pros and cons of each of the different systems. Combined with the Group Housing Decision Tree, this should help you decide which system fits your needs.

Category	Floor Feeding	Shoulder Stalls	ESF	Free-Access ESF	Free-Access Stalls
Space Allowance	Pro: Moderate space requirement	Pro: Moderate space requirement	Pro: Low space requirement	Pro: Low-moderate space requirement	Con: High space requirement
Cost	Pro: Low cost	Pro: Low cost	Con: Moderate to high cost	Con: Moderate cost	Con: High cost
Daily Management	Pro: Low tech Con: High management input to sort groups, find and manage dropouts	Pro: Low tech Con: High management input to sort groups, find and manage dropouts	Pro: Automated management Con: Technical expertise, ear tags	Pro: Automated management Con: Technical expertise, ear tags	Pro: Low management input Con: Low tech
Training	Pro: No sow training	Pro: No sow training	Con: Training required	Con: Some training required	Pro: No sow training
Social/Welfare	Con: High aggression and competition	Con: Aggression and competition	Pro: Individual feeding Con: Sows compete at feeder	Pro: Individual feeding Con: Sows compete at feeder	Pro: Individual feeding Con?: Many sows remain in stalls
Other	Con: Overfeeding used to reduce aggression	Con: Overfeeding used to reduce aggression	Pro: Automated sorting, heat checking, 'precision farming'	Pro: Automated data collection, 'precision farming'	Con: All sows in a group get same feed amount