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CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF FARROWING STALLS

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Baby pigs lost in the critical first hours after farrowing may mean the difference between profit and loss in raising swine. As nervous or clumsy sows cause most of these early deaths by crushing their young, you may reduce the hazard by confining the sow in a stall or crate during and immediately after farrowing. Farrowing stalls have become popular in recent years, and a number of satisfactory models are available commercially. However, you may build them at home easily and cheaply. Bolted construction permits rapid dismantling for storage, so that you can free the pen for other uses after farrowing.

CONSTRUCTION

Figure 1 shows details of two stalls and is also a guide for building a single one. For large farrowing operations, assemble several stalls side by side in a row, or in two rows with a service alley between.

Make each stall 5 feet wide and at least 7 feet long, preferably 8. The center 2 feet will accomodate the sow, and the 18 inches on each side will provide room for the litter to nurse. Have the partitions flanking the sow 10 inches from the floor; if they are lower, the litter cannot nurse properly; if they are higher, a small sow may slip under. If you wish, you may make this space adjustable to handle unusually large sows. Have the top of the finished partition 3½ feet from the floor. To prevent the sow from backing out, place a 2-inch by 4-inch removable stop at the rear; this stop also allows adjustment in the length of the stall. However, keep about 18 inches at the rear of the sow to allow the litter to move to either side.

For the partition panels, use 2-inch planks along the bottom and 1-inch boards or plywood above. Preferably, cleat these together and bolt them to the 2-inch by 4-inch material used for the frame. To ensure rigidity, bolt the front members of the frame to a wall or a pen partition and bolt braces across the tops and bottoms of the rear uprights, or extend the uprights to the ceiling.

Drain the stalls toward the rear. If artificial heat may be needed, hang chains from the ceiling to support heat lamps on both sides of each sow, that is, three lamps for two sows.

The 1-inch by 12-inch partitions shown between stalls in Figure 1 separate the litters. If two stalls are assembled in a pen the two flanking partitions shown in the diagram will be replaced by the pen walls. A 1-inch by 12-inch board placed at floor level across the rear of each stall confines each litter to its own stall.

Two stalls require a space 8 feet by 10 feet. In addition, provide a 3- to 4-foot alley at the rear of the stalls to permit moving the sow and tending the litter. Provide another alley along the front of the stalls to facilitate feeding.

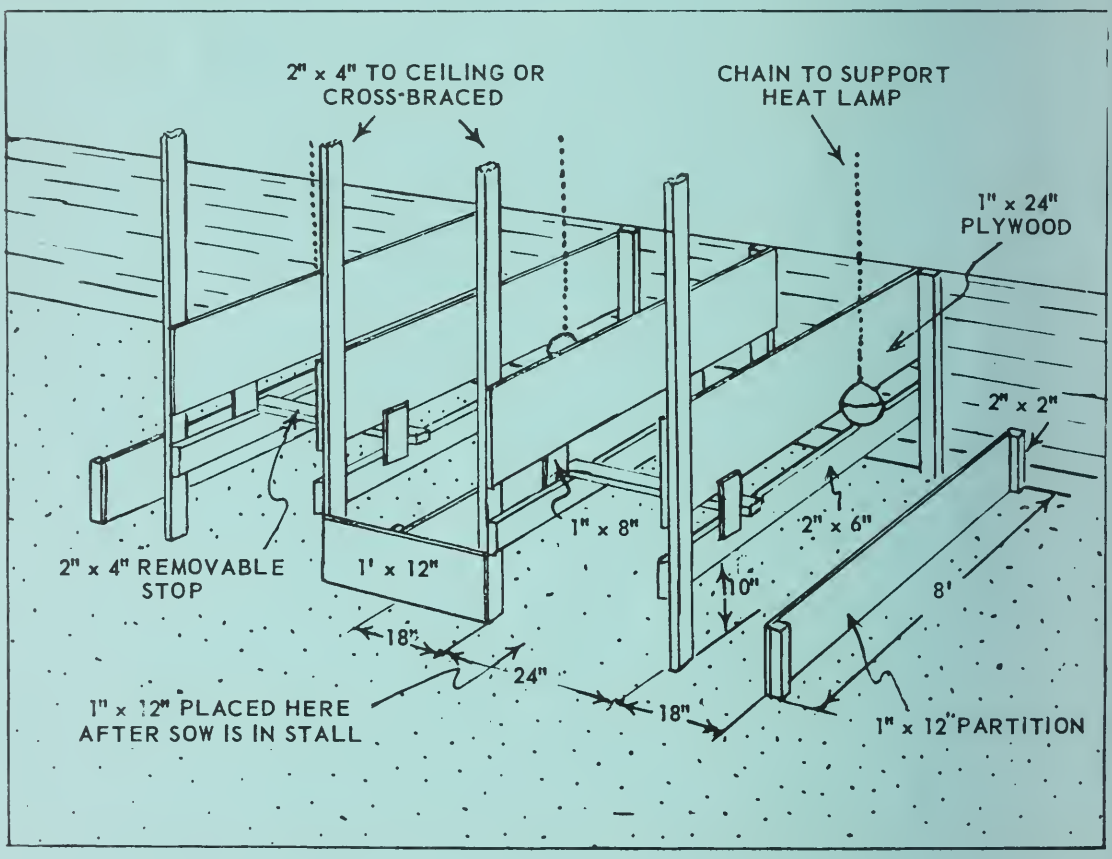

Figure 1— Detail for construction of two stalls.

USE OF STALLS

Do not confine the sow in the stall too long before farrowing as the lack of normal exercise may be harmful at this stage. If possible, place her in the stall the day before her litter is due or, if the due date is uncertain, when she shows signs of preparing to farrow. For bedding, use either cut straw or shavings. Provide the sow with a light laxative feed and ample water. At farrowing time, some supervision is needed to ensure that the new-born pigs are not smothered.

Keep the sow and her litter in the stall for two or three days after farrowing. During this period the sow settles down and the pigs become active enough that, when removed from the stall, few if any may be crushed. If you leave the sow and her litter in the stall for a longer period, let the sow exercise.

Materials required to construct two stalls in a pen 8 feet by 10 feet:

No. of Pieces	Material Size (Inches)	Length
4	2 × 4	8 feet
4	2 × 4	3½ feet
2	2 × 4	28 inches
4	2 × 6	8 feet
4[1]	1 × 24	8 feet
2	2 × 2	1 foot
1	1 × 12	8 feet
1	1 × 12	3 feet
2	1 × 12	2 feet
2	1 × 12	20 feet
4	1 × 8	1 foot

[1] Two sheets of plywood 1 in. × 4 ft. × 8 ft.

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