

WALKING THE ROOM HANDBOOK



PRAIRIE
SWINE
CENTRE

VOLUME 5



EQUIPMENT CHECKS AND MAINTENANCE

There are six critical areas of concern for routine checks and maintenance:

1. Attic and roof
2. Feed system
3. Water system
4. Ventilation system
5. Manure handling system
6. Electrical and heating systems

Assessing equipment in the barn

- During your walk-throughs, carefully observe the ceiling of the room, checking that inlets are not blocked or excessively dirty.
- Ensure that water pressure is right for the age of animals, and that drinkers are not leaking in any areas.
- When checking feeders, make sure that the expected amount of feed is present. If a feeder is low or devoid of feed, make sure that there are no blockages in the feed system. If feed is not running properly into all feeders, there may be an issue with the auger.
- While manure management should be completed on a schedule separate from your room walk-throughs, a noticeable build-up of gases may indicate that there is an issue with manure management.
- If walking in a room with heat lamps, heat mats, or other equipment that is not hardwired, check that wires and plugs are in good condition.



In general, there are three types of maintenance that happen on the farm:

1. Reactive maintenance

- Occurs as issues arise, generally for smaller issues such as a broken gate.

2. Preventative maintenance

- A program used for critical systems such as ventilation, feed, and water systems.

3. Predictive maintenance

- Uses diagnostic instruments to check equipment performance and decide what fixes need to be made.

Deciding when to do maintenance depends on a variety of factors. Some systems need to be serviced on a regular, seasonal basis, like heating systems ahead of cold months. Other systems, such as manure systems, are maintained on multiple schedules. For example, manure pits may need to be emptied at different intervals based on stocking density, while manure pumps and storage systems may only need to be used and serviced at certain times of the year. As mentioned earlier, different challenges arise depending on the season, and the frequency at which items such as fan blades need to be assessed will change based on external factors. If you notice that something is exceptionally dirty, clean it, and make note of this action in the maintenance schedule. Keeping good records and notifying others of issues in the barn can help identify larger problems, or that the maintenance schedule should be altered.

*For more information on how to schedule barn maintenance, as well as information on reducing energy use in your barn, read **Volume 2: Managing Energy Cost in the Barn**. This handbook is available as a PDF at www.PrairieSwine.com, under the **Publications** tab.*