



Animal Welfare

Just like the pets a lot of you have, our pigs cannot talk to us. Because of the communication problem, it takes commitment to ensure the health and well-being of each and every pig. We spend a lot of time with each group of pigs, using our eyes to help fill the void of not being able to directly communicate with them. By walking the pens daily and learning their actions, their movements, the looks in their eyes, how they carry their heads, and how they get up from lying down, along with generations of experience passed on in these observations, we are able to wisely care for our pigs.

We do not name our pigs, but even though in pictures they might all look the same, they are as individually unique as you and me. An experienced and trained eye can see the difference between a healthy pig in a pen and one that may be struggling for any number of reasons. Each barn has what we call “sick pens” where pigs that may need extra care can be accommodated. This provides separation from the other animals, while being helpful for any special treatment needed.

Technology has been invaluable in providing a comfortable environment for our pigs. Computers help us control the fresh air intake and temperature inside our barns. Based on the size of the pigs, we maintain a comfortable temperature inside the barns twelve months a year. The barns are not air-conditioned, but we use misters to add a cooling effect on hot summer days. On a hot August afternoon, it is refreshing to do chores in the barn and escape the heat outside. Pig comfort is by far the largest benefit of today’s production practices. 20 years ago, pigs would just lie around and stay still during the heat of the day. Now it never gets above 90 degrees, with a gentle 7-mph breeze and cool mist to help the pigs stay comfortable all day long. In the winter it never gets below 65 degrees in the finishing barns, and we maintain a constant 80 degrees in the nursery.

