

It Pays to Brood Pigs with Electricity

By

W. J. Promersberger¹ and Richard Witz²

Tests conducted during the past two years indicate that pigs can be successfully farrowed in individual houses during severe weather providing you use a pig brooder. During the spring of 1944, 4 out of 16 pigs were saved at the North Dakota Station in three individual houses without brooders, while in 1945, in these same houses with brooders, 29 out of 32 live pigs farrowed were saved.

Weather conditions during the 1945 season were not quite so severe as in 1944 but part of the 1944 tests were conducted with pigs farrowed in the central house and moved to the individual houses at 3 weeks of age.

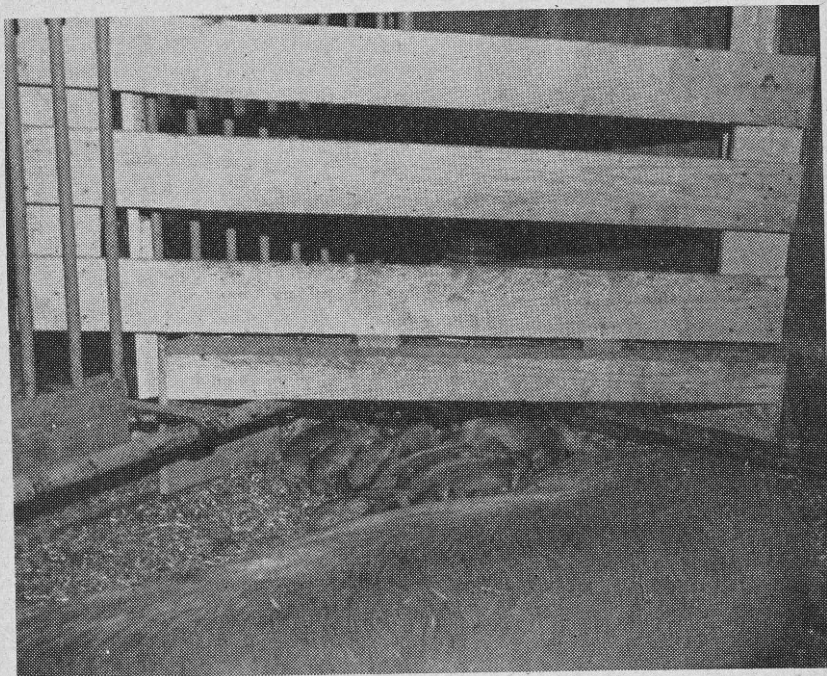


Figure 1.—Hover-type Brooder. Baby pigs spend much of their time under brooder.

¹Chairman, Dept. of Agricultural Engineering
²Ass't. Agricultural Engineer

These tests were considered preliminary and would not be considered significant except for the fact that they compared favorably with more complete tests conducted at other stations. The Purdue³ Experiment Station

tests with 51 litters of pigs showed that the percentage of live pigs raised to 10 days of age was increased from 53.8% to 70.3% by the use of pig brooders. This means an average of one and one-half more pigs per litter.

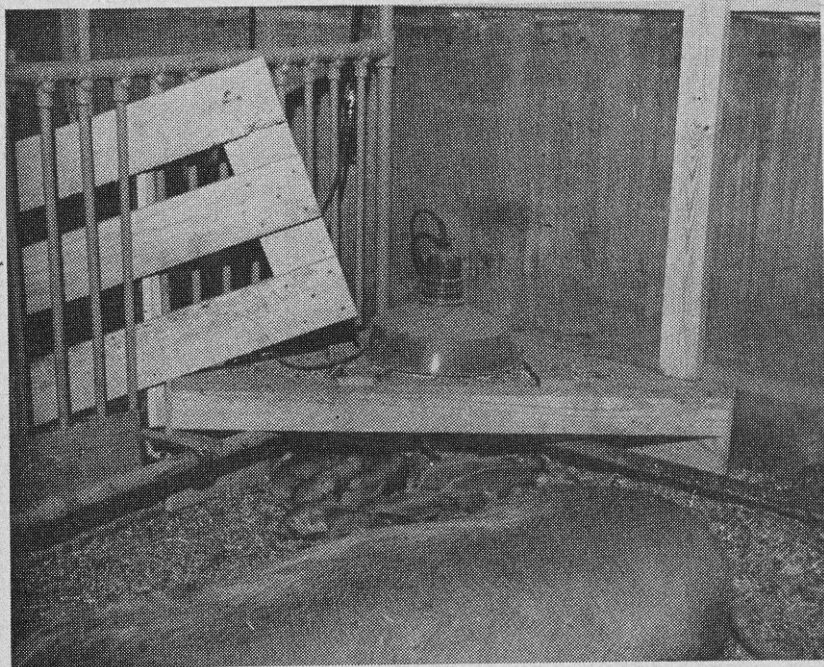


Figure 2.—Hover-type brooder with gate removed to show reflector and brooder construction.

The pig brooder consists merely of a small triangular hover with a reflector and light bulb to furnish the heat. The brooder is securely fastened in one corner of the pen and protected with a gate or planks as shown in Figure 1. Construction of the brooder is shown in Figures 2 and 3. If you have a poor floor in your farrowing house or pen it may be well to put a floor in the brooder. The little pigs should be placed under or in the

brooder immediately after being farrowed. Once the pigs become accustomed to the brooder, little attention is needed, and there is little danger of being crushed by the sow. The brooder should be used during farrowing and for 10 to 14 days after farrowing, depending on weather conditions. The size of the bulb is also determined by the weather conditions. In mild weather a 60 watt bulb is large enough, but you may use as large as 150 or 200

³Foster, G. H. and C. M. Vestal. "The Use of Electric Heat in Farrowing Pens of Young Pigs."

watt during severe weather. ware cloth below the bulb to
 Caution: Be sure to use hard- prevent fires.

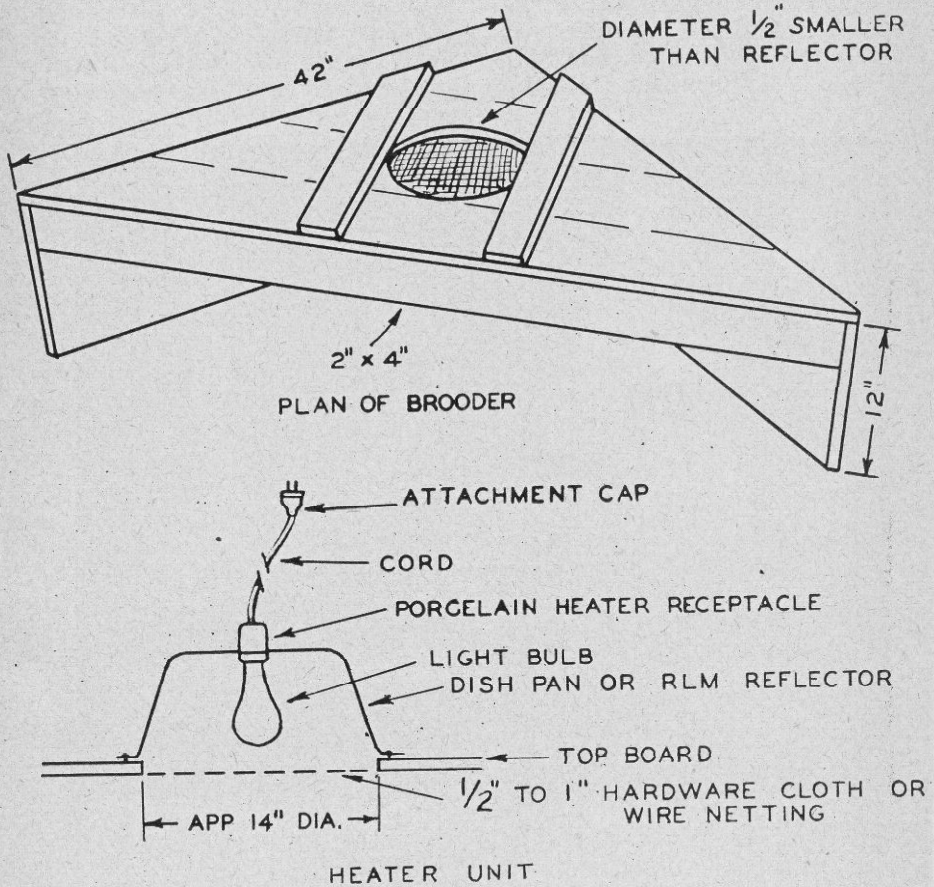


Figure 3.—Detailed plan showing the construction of the hover, and the heater unit using a dish pan for a reflector, and the location of the hardware cloth or wire netting.

The snow cover at Fargo, North Dakota was 16 inches on February 11th, 1946 and the depth of ice on the Red River of the North was 26 inches on the same date. Snow cover at Devils Lake was reported at 10 inches and at Williston 9 inches. (From Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin, U. S. Department of Commerce Weather Bureau, February 12, 1946)