

## Closing Barns for an Extended Period of Time

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Swine facilities require special care if they are being removed from production for a prolonged period of time. The ability of the facility to remain empty safely and be brought back into productive service economically in the future depends on the steps taken immediately after the barn is emptied.

The following chart is broken down into things that a producer should do, could do and things that would be nice to do.

### Housekeeping and Posting Signs

Should Do
Lock entrance doors Post signs at entrances e.g. Do Not Enter Danger Deadly Gases May be Present If the barn is remote from the house close entrance with a chain or gates
Contact propane, fuel oil and deadstock suppliers for example, and advise that the business is closed
Check with your insurance company re possible lower rates while the building is closed and your responsibilities such as the required frequency to check the closed buildings. Also check with them re the coverage rates and levels you can expect after restarting your operation

### The Barn

Should Do
If the barn foundation is well drained, the barn should not need to be heated. If the barn foundation is not well drained, the barn should be kept from freezing - water freezing around a foundation may heave and crack concrete walls and gutters.
If you are not sure if the barn foundation is well drained you might want to call in the contractor that built the barn or seek the advise of another farm building contractor
Could Do
Add heat to maintain barn temperature above freezing
If unvented heaters are to be used, they must be supplied with fresh air and the building needs to have the minimum ventilation functioning to remove the moisture and gasses produced by combustion.

### Rodents

Should Do
Clean up any spilled feed
Bait stations should be maintained as well to eliminate rodents. Check or maintain at least monthly, more often at the start of cold weather. Bait stations need to be placed

where rodents congregate such as near a water supply or in attics.

## Utility Room

### Should Do

Drain and flush the hot water heater

Shut off main switch on main electrical panel - if no fans or heaters are running

### Could Do

If the main panel is under 500 volts and if comfortable with this - remove front cover – after shutting off main breaker - blow out with air and insert some desiccant. Otherwise, call an electrician for this service.

Could maintain some heat in this room to keep moisture away from any electronic equipment

## Penning and Equipment

### Should Do

Clean with a pressure washer

### Would be nice to do

Spray any metal penning and metal equipment with machine oil

## Manure System

### Should Do

Manure left in gutters or tanks under the barn is the main culprit in degrading the metal in penning and equipment, and a source of dangerous gases. Remove as much manure as possible in gutters/tanks under slats using normal procedures and then flush with water to remove any buildup and/or remaining manure: clean and flush gutters until you see bare concrete in the channel

If gutters are left dirty:

- gas may buildup - possible explosion and human safety issue
- gas will degrade metal penning etc.
- manure will dry out and will not re-wet making it difficult to restart gutter

Empty pipes and/or gutters to and from transfer pit

Empty transfer pit if inside barn - gas issue

If transfer pit is outside, pump contents of transfer pit to below frost level

If all manure is not removed - leave minimum ventilation fans running or some natural ventilation vents partially open to avoid human asphyxiation due to gas buildup and possible explosion if a spark is generated

## Outside Manure Storages

### Should Do

Concrete tanks - leave 3 - 4 feet in the bottom to prevent the floor from heaving due to possible freezing or pressure from high ground water in the spring

Earthen storage - pump, but leave ½ full to maintain wall and floor integrity

## Water System

<b>Should Do</b>
Remove nipple drinkers from end of runs and blow lines with air. Remove nipple drinkers from all other drop pipes and allow to drain
Wet dry feeders - disconnect nipple - remove feeder to clean
<b>Could Do</b>
After opening end of pipes flush water lines with water to remove buildup of rust etc.

### Feed Systems - Bins

<b>Should Do</b>
Empty the bins
<b>Could Do</b>
Leave access hatch in boot open to drain condensation or drill a hole in the boot - can be plugged later with a bolt
<b>Nice to Do</b>
Pressure wash inside of bins to remove any feed and dust - this will avoid rust due to condensation

### Feed Systems - Augers, Feeders

<b>Should Do</b>
Wet dry feeders - disconnect water nipple and remove the feeder to clean
Run dry whole grain/sawdust through mix mills, augers to clean out feed containing salts
Grease any fittings on motors and oil any chains
<b>Could Do</b>
Blow dust off motors, switches, etc.
Loosen drop tubes and push aside to make sure that all the feed is out of the auger

### Ventilation System

<b>Should Do</b>
Wash Fans and Louvers
Close fans with a winter closure feature if available - if manufacturer fan covers are not available, tape heavy mil plastic on the inside of the barn over the opening to prevent outside moisture from migrating in and to prevent any in-barn gases from damaging the fan and louvers
<b>Could Do</b>
Close air inlets to avoid moisture entering attic
<b>Would Be Nice To Do</b>
Turn all fans on once per year for 15 minutes - you might want to spin by hand before turning on power to check if they have become seized
Open any controllers and place some desiccant inside - make sure any openings are sealed

### Heaters - Gas or Electric

**Should Do**

Blow out with air - accumulated dust is full of salts and will turn into sludge and cause rust

In Floor Heating System

**Should Do**

Check strength of anti freeze in floor heating system

**Could Do**

Blow fluid out of lines

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