



## Investing for the future is a 'No Brainer'

### Farm facts

**Name:** Patrick Dean Ltd  
**Location:** Boothby Grafoe, N Lincolnshire  
**Farm size & enterprise:** 520 sows farrow to finish

### Benefits

- Reduced pre-weaning mortality
- Improved weaning weight from 7 kg to 8.4 kg (28 days)
- Less time required to feed and clean each day
- Use of power and water has decreased

	Total mortality (%)	Overlaid piglets (%)
Disused farrowing house	15	10
Old farrowing house	9	7
Nooyen farrowing house	6	1

### Background

The now disused farrowing accommodation needed replacing so Patrick Dean Ltd decided to invest in facilities that would improve performance, sow and piglet welfare and reduce the time and, initially, the labour force required to run the department.

The new farrowing accommodation includes 72 Nooyen Balance farrowing crates. However, even these modern crates were fine tuned to give optimum performance.



“ Our mission is to continually reduce our cost per kg liveweight gain. One way is to reduce our fixed costs by increasing our output and improving our labour efficiency. Using the Nooyen farrowing crate has helped us achieve both these objectives ”

*Ian Smith, farm manager*

	No. people	No. crates	Time taken to clean
Old farrowing house	1	12 crates	6 hours
Nooyen farrowing house	1	24 crates	4 hours

### Key to success

Investment - this is the primary reason the unit is achieving nearly 27 pigs weaned per sow per year which, with their 3% post-weaning mortality, means they are regularly selling 25 pigs/sow/year.

The first 48 crates are now six years old and each 24-crate farrowing house is producing an extra 20T finished pig per year compared with the now disused accommodation. With the initial reduction in labour force, payback for the first 48 crates was just two years; going forward payback will still only be four years.

### The Nooyen system

- Gently undulating floor prevents the sow 'dog sitting' and sliding down onto her piglets
- Mobile bottom rail set to allow full exposure of teats irrespective of sow size
- Adjustable width to tailor the crate to the size of the sow
- Side opening crate, which in conjunction with a removable front partition, provides the sow with an easy exit at weaning time
- The crate balance system, which is operated by a sensitive pressure plate under the sow, is switched off after five days as it is no longer required