

In 2009-10 the Berea College Farm completed its transition from conventional confinement hog production to outdoor, pasture-based production. The outdoor system has several economic and environmental advantages. First, no antibiotics are used in the feed and the piglets' tails are not docked. Second, the waste is no longer stored in a lagoon but rather "spread" by the hogs themselves on the fields where they're raised, reducing the need for applying fertilizers. Finally, although corn is still the primary component of the hogs' feed rations, during the winter the hogs are allowed to "graze" their own corn using a controlled grazing system. Electric fencing is used to move the hogs through the field where they knock down the corn plants and eat the grain rather than a combine harvesting the corn, taking it to a mill for grinding, and feed wagons transporting to the hogs. Thus, we reduce the use of fossil fuels in feeding the hogs.

-[Dr. Sean Clark](#) , Farm Director, Associate Professor of Agriculture and Natural Resources