

# A Very "Clever" Cleaner

**I**t follows instructions to the letter. It doesn't need coffee breaks and it doesn't cut corners. It doesn't mind odours and it never mouths off.

Designed and built in Sweden, the Clever Cleaner robotic washer, created specifically for livestock barns, can run up to 48 hours before it needs to recharge its batteries.

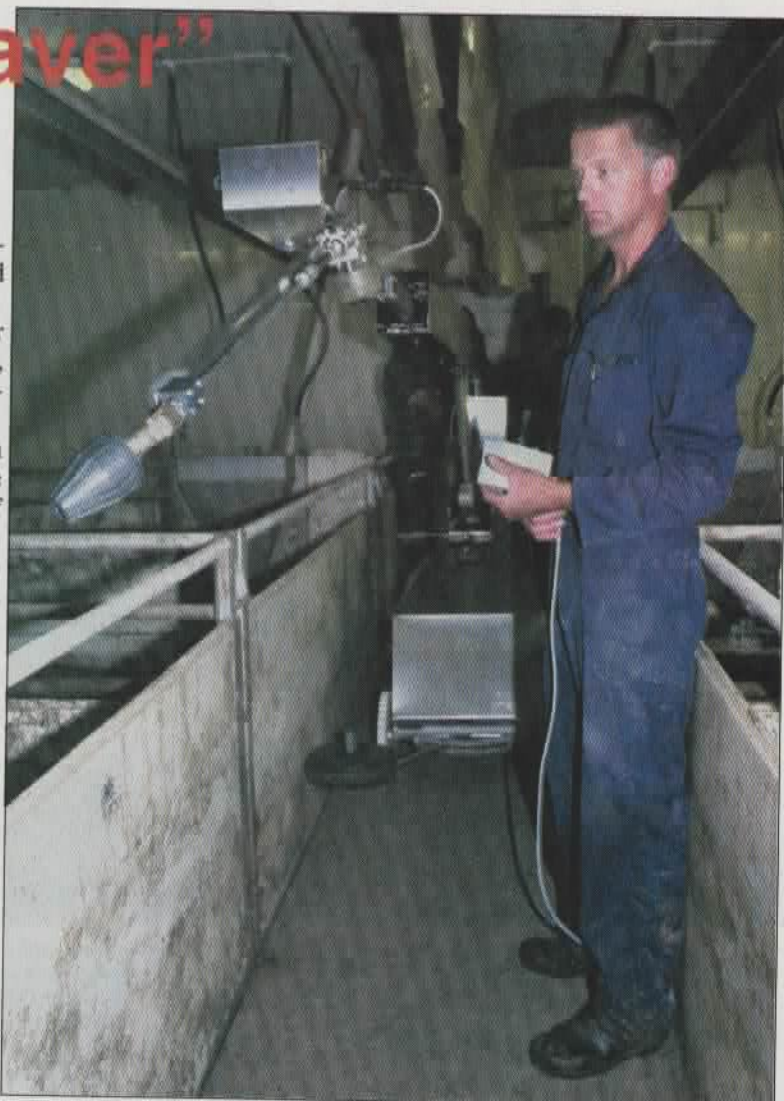
Western Canada's first Clever Cleaner started work on July 1, at the Rupert/Lansink hog barn, southeast of Three Hills, scrubbing down the rooms in between batches of pigs.

Co-owner Marcel Rupert, who came from the Netherlands 11 years ago to set up a hog barn along with his business partner, Tony Lansink, believes the robotic cleaner will do the work of at least one human and perhaps more.

It's not as if the farm operators don't enjoy their human workers. But, like most other hog producers in Alberta, attracting and retaining is a huge challenge.

Rupert and Lansink were looking for solutions to their own labour issues when they viewed videos of a robotic washer at work. The Clever Cleaner looked like a viable option for their barn, said Rupert.

He and Lansink expect the self-propelled machine will help their barn remain viable at a time when some Western Canadian hog producers have chosen or been forced to shut down, while those who remain have to scrape for every penny.



Above: Rupert/Lansink co-owner Tony Lansink learns to operate manual controls on the robotic cleaner.

Left: The cleaning robot at work with human supervisors Marcel Rupert, co-owner of the barn and Jan Sandberg, CEO of Ramsta.



While swine feeders and commercial breeders have depopulated their barns to cope with stresses in the market, similar options are not available for breeders who have built up a pool of valuable genetics that needs to be preserved, said Lansink.

Originally set up as a multiplier, their barn was transformed about six years ago into a breeding farm, concentrating on raising bloodstock from purebred Yorkshire and Landrace animals imported from Holland.

— Continued on page 30

# A Very "Clever" Cleaner, cont'd

— Continued from page 29

The entire operation is now focused on raising and improving those lines, said Lansink.

"Stopping is not an option," he says.

He and Rupert crunched some numbers and decided a robotic washer could be a valuable asset in an operation where cleanliness is vital.

Clean, well-ventilated rooms are comfortable for the pigs and reduce the chance of latent pathogens moving between batches of animals, said Lansink.

But getting the muck out is easily the least pleasant job in the barn. The work is extremely physical and can cause repetitive strain injuries, while exposing workers to material that is picked up and blown

through the room while they are cleaning.

Rupert and Lansink had tried to soften the blow by having everyone in the operation take turns cleaning.

They felt that putting a robot to work would eliminate that part of the job, making the work more attractive to new employees, freeing up hands for other work and reducing by at least one, the number of people needed to run the operation.

They purchased their robot through Schippers Canada, the Western Canadian distributor for Ramsta Robotics, based in Uppsala, Sweden.

Ramsta CEO Jan Sandberg brought the unit with him from Uppsala to set it up and to help the two farm operators learn how to run it.

Part of the setup included teaching the farm operators how to "train" the robot so it would know what to do in each of the barn's various rooms.

Fairly simple in appearance, the stainless steel-clad Clever Cleaner runs on four plastic wheels, with an additional pair of side-mounted rubber wheels that run along the walls of the room it is cleaning. Its telescopic arm aims pressurized water into every nook and cranny in the room, starting at the ceiling and working down to the floor.

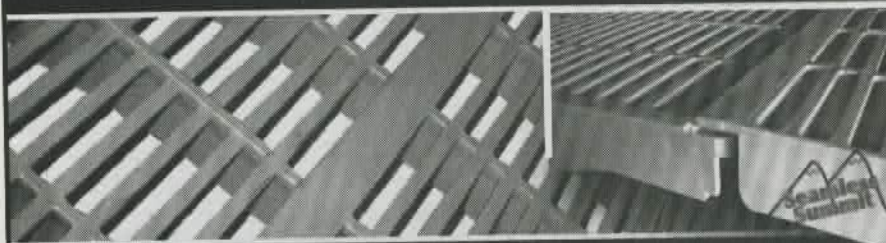
Along with its more obvious advantages, the robot will operate in environments that may not be healthy for human workers, stated Ramsta's promotional material.

Ramsta considers its cleaner to be so clever, the company website includes tips on using it to serve beer during sales events and demonstrations.

One of at least three companies now making robotic barn washers, Ramsta has now delivered 300 Clever Cleaners to farms in Europe and North America. •

— By Brenda Kossowan

## Seamless Summit Flooring



- Unique "Seamless joining" system for easier cleaning
- Manufactured of 100% virgin material - increased strength & durability
- Cost savings - Less rails are required

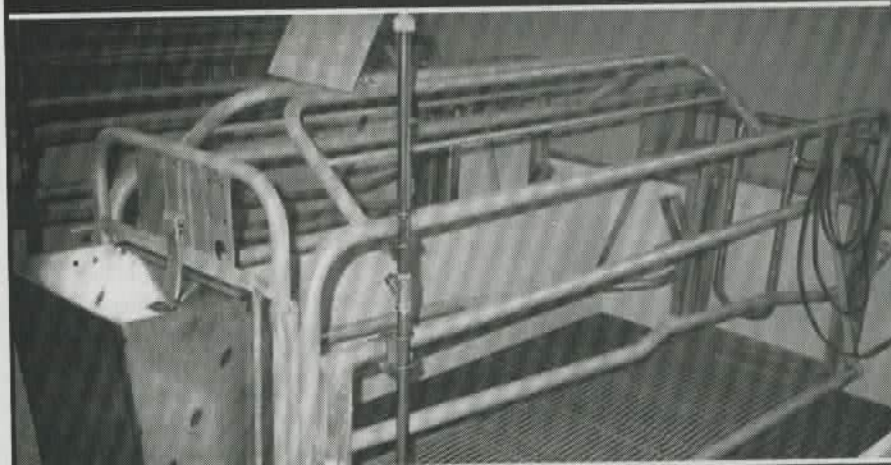
**Corporate Office**  
2157 Parkedale Ave.  
Brockville, ON K6V 5V6  
PH: 613-342-5424  
Fax: 1-800-263-4598  
Email: agsales@canarm.ca



[www.canarm.com](http://www.canarm.com)

**Arthur Manufacturing Facility**  
#7686 Concession 16, RR4  
Arthur, ON NOG 1A0  
PH: 1-519-848-3910  
Fax: 1-519-848-3948  
Email: sales@bsmagri.com

## Farrowing Crates



- Positive action anti-crush bars help ease sow down to the floor and reduce crushing rates.
- Bow bar is easily adjustable to allow sow & piglets to nurse comfortably and reduce pre-weaning mortality.
- Hot dipped galvanized 1 5/16" pipe for excellent durability.

