



Welcome to the August edition of The Pig Issue.

FCR – more important than ever

The industry is facing an unprecedented crisis in input costs. With feed representing a high percentage of these costs efficiency of feed use is more important than ever. Premier nutrition has recently calculated an increase of 0.1 FCR in finishing to be costing around £2.50 per pig.

It's essential that all feeding equipment is adequately maintained and adjusted to reduce any wastage. Feed at this price makes very expensive bedding.

Keeping pigs in their thermal comfort zone is essential to prevent the extra requirements for maintenance in sub-optimal conditions. Though we are now in hot weather this generally means clean dry straw in lying areas. As always watch pigs behaviour – they will tell you if they are comfortable.

A third key point is the impact of disease. The common endemic diseases such as E.P or mild diarrhoea (colitis) impact by at least 0.1 FCR which equates to 100g of extra feed required per kg of body weight.

Diseases mainly impact FCR through activation of the immune system, which uses energy to not only fight off invading bacteria and viruses but also to repair damaged tissue. However, there are other methods for which diseases can increase FCR.

Diseases that affect the lungs (for example EP and PRRS) further increase FCR through affecting the pig's ability to regulate its own body heat. Due to being unable to sweat, pigs use their lungs to expel excess heat. This in turn increases the pigs body temperature which reduces their feed intake and therefore increases their FCR. PRRS on its own has been found to increase FCR between 0.1 and 0.2 depending on severity and the age of the affected pig.

Furthermore, PRRS; as well as other diseases like PMWS and Swine Influenza, not only cause immune system activation but also immune suppression. This in turn allows entry of additional pathogens into the

body meaning more energy and key nutrients must be used reducing their availability for growth. Through this mechanism PMWS causes an average increase in FCR of approximately 0.44. Sarcoptic mange operates via a similar mechanism. As the pig itches it causes damage to its skin allowing entry of more bacteria into the host. Therefore, the immune system must combat both a parasitic and bacterial infection leading to an average increase in FCR of 0.15.

Enteric diseases (for example: ileitis, colitis, and Swine Dysentery) are more advanced in severity, as they decrease efficacy of nutrient absorption by inflicting intestinal wall injury. Finger-like projections known as 'Villi' line the intestines to increase surface area of the gut for optimal nutrient uptake. Diseases of this nature severely debilitate the gut mucosa and villi, downregulating their nutrient absorption abilities, as well as reducing overall surface area. Swine Dysentery is noted as increasing FCR by up to 0.5 whereas chronic ileitis increases FCR by 0.125 on average.

As can be seen, there are multiple different factors that can lead to an increase in FCR. From the environment that the pig is kept in to the disease challenges that the pig faces daily. With this in mind and the increasing input costs it is imperative that the above-mentioned factors be minimised as much as possible in order to maximise the growth potential of our animals. This can be done through proper building, feeder and bedding maintenance as well as the implementation of effective C&D, biosecurity and vaccination protocols. Now more than ever is the best time to look around your yards and see if there are any improvements that can be made in order to help your pigs maximise their growing potential.

Farms for Students

From time to time we receive requests from veterinary medicine students who are keen to experience what life is like in the day-to-day running of a British pig farm. We are aware that a number of clients regularly take students for placements and there may well be others who would be happy to, and we are looking into how we can best help facilitate this as a practice. We are planning to hold a list of a few producers

within the practice who would be happy for us to pass on their contact details to any students that approach us for the purpose of arranging a placement. We would of course only pass out these sorts of details with your express permission and with appropriate due diligence mechanisms in place.

If you would be happy to have your details stored in this way, please contact the office directly to arrange this. Many thanks in advance for helping to support the pig vets of the future!

Clients in the News

Success at the National Egg & Poultry Awards 2022. Very well done to **Matt Donald of Donald Pig & Poultry** for winning the much-deserved title of Young Farmer of the Year. Good news.

New members of the Garth team.

Introducing our two newest vets: Kythe Mackenzie and Dawid Karpiesiuk.

Kythe Mackenzie BVSc MRCVS



Kythe qualified from Bristol University in 1998 and has worked in many different areas of the UK and veterinary profession. She joins Garth after 6 years working for a pharmaceutical company and is keen to get back out on farm.

Outside of work, she helps out, when possible, with the family beef suckler herd. She is a very

keen Scottish rugby fan and can often be found at Murrayfield cheering on the national side.

Dawid Karpiesiuk MRCVS



Dawid qualified as a veterinary surgeon from the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland in 2017. After graduation he started to work in Pig Practice in Poland, where he has worked for 5 years. Dawid brings a wealth of experience and knowledge having worked with different types of pig farms. His main areas of interests are herd health management and farm biosecurity.

YOU ARE NOT ON YOUR OWN.

These are the hardest times the pig industry has experienced for over 20 years, and everyone is under incredible pressure. Please remember that there is help if you need it, and do not be afraid to reach out.

RABI is a leading farming charity and has announced immediate availability of additional support to anyone who needs it. They have a dedicated, professionally trained team who understand the pressures and challenges you face.

If you, or anyone you know could benefit from talking to RABI, or request a call back from a councillor, the charity can be contacted 24 hours a day on a confidential free helpline.

RABI 24-hour helpline: 0800 188 4444

help@rabi.org.uk

NPA Allied Industry Member of the Year

Garth has been nominated! Thank you so much. Please could we ask that you give us your vote? More details can be found on www.pig-world.co.uk