

THE PIG ISSUE



Garth
Partnership

INTRODUCTION

Phew! It's been warm and there is a lot going on in the pig industry. Both things are contributing to a general feeling of well being particularly with so many positive noises around the industry at present. It's good to see Regional Development money being channelled into our industry and it is up to all producers and other interested parties to get involved and ensure the funding is utilised constructively.

Nothing begs for full participation more than the York and Humberside Health initiative where cooperation from all those involved will be vital if it is to succeed. Let's all cooperate and be a combined, strong UK industry and recognise our opposition as those over the water rather than those over the fence

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE GOOD HEALTH MEETING

Over 50 producers came to the meeting on 1st July at Malton Rugby Club, they were joined by vets and other members of the industry.

The main topic discussed was the fact that the overall health status of the region is gradually reducing. This is costing money in terms of production costs of around £6-8 per pig. It was put to the producers what could be done to combat this. A high number agreed with mapping systems – that is a map showing where all the pigs are and the health status of units in relation to Swine Dysentery, PRRS, EP and Mange. Then groups of farms could form clusters and manage the health within their area.

It was agreed that it is critical that all pig producers sign up to this scheme and as many people as possible are invited to come to subsequent meetings.

A trial of this mapping system will go ahead imminently. If contacted you will be asked whether or not your details in terms of location and health status can be made known to the study through your vet. This would not be public knowledge at this point.

If you would like to discuss this any further then please contact the practice or Yorkshire and Humberside Health 01507 313997. Further details on the NPA website.



WELFARE TRAINING

We are to run a training course which is aimed at new/recent entrants to the pig industry exploring and explaining the fundamentals of pig welfare. Very much based around the Five Freedoms laid out by the Farm Animal Welfare Council:-

- ⊗ Freedom from hunger and thirst
- ⊗ Freedom from discomfort
- ⊗ Freedom from pain, injury or disease
- ⊗ Freedom to express normal behaviour
- ⊗ Freedom from fear and distress

We will look how these are applied to modern pig units and provide course participants with the necessary information to apply in the workplace. If you are interested in participating please let either Christine Watts or Rachel Wilkinson know at the practice. Once interest is gauged we will quickly fix a venue and time.

MULTIPLE PICK UP AND DROP OFF

With effect from 13th July the rules governing multiple pick ups and drop offs of livestock in England will be changing. From that date there will be no need for holdings to have prior approval from DEFRA to operate as a multiple pick up/drop off site.

In future all pick ups and drop offs can be made providing that they take place on the perimeter of holdings either by tailgating, use of pens or temporary pens. Full rules can be found in the General Licences for the movements of animals at www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/hd-move/index.thm. It is the responsibility of keepers to ensure that rules are adhered to.

These changes will only apply within England.

AUTUMN INFERTILITY

Every year producers are reminded about reduced fertility in the Autumn period, unfortunately very few do anything to allow for the Autumn drop in fertility.

Currently with the good economic conditions for pigs each litter has a nominal value of circa £500 for a farrow to finish farm – hence losing productivity due to Autumn infertility is damaging your business.

Action to reduce Autumn infertility

- ☺ Serve more gilts/sows
- ☺ Increase services from August to October by 10% minimum
- ☺ Order more gilts
- ☺ If still short reserve potential cull sows
- ☺ Keep service and dry sow well ventilated
- ☺ Clean fans
- ☺ Clean air inlets
- ☺ Provide secondary ventilation
- ☺ Improve lighting 200 LUX minimum
- ☺ Increase feed levels by approximately 15% alternatively provide a better sow diet where less heat is produced to digest the food
- ☺ Consider use of Reprocine (½ ml) in the AI
- ☺ Maintain light levels
- ☺ In hot weather sows tend to wallow and are dirtier at service, hence improve hygiene at service

A large producer with 8 breeding units last Autumn strategically medicated their feed for 10 days towards the end of July. Of the 4 farms medicated a 7.3% higher farrowing rate was recorded in comparison to the other 4 units which had no medication.

DONT FORGET WATER QUALITY

When was the last time that you sampled your water supply? That is the water that the pigs are actually drinking. Inadequate quality of water will as minimum be affecting growth rates by limiting feed intake but may also be actively adding to the disease challenge of the pigs. This is especially important for freshly weaned pigs as a pig that will not drink certainly will not eat.

As the weather is getting warmer make a point of checking flow rates of nipple drinkers, overall cleanliness of drinkers and troughs and quality of your water supply.

CHECK HEADER TANKS

If you were feeding dirty, mouldy food then you would expect to have problems – it is the same with water. Ideally water systems should be cleaned out and flushed through with disinfectant after every batch through a room.

Samples can be sent into the laboratory for analysis. Please contact your vet or the practice for details.

