



Welcome to our August 2024 newsletter – hope you are all enjoying the SUNSHINE – at long, long last!

## Home Mixers

Following the coming into law of the new Vet Med Regulations, we would like to remind all home mix clients that you need both an MFSP (“script”) for the inclusion of the medicine in the intermediate food stuff/premix AND a second MFSP to cover the inclusion of this premix in the finished ration.

We must now issue this latter script for each load of feed that is made up, so remember to contact the office to request these scripts.

## Water Testing

Just a reminder that if you use non-mains water e.g. borehole water for your pigs, it is a Red Tractor requirement to get this tested at least once annually. Please contact the office if you need us to arrange testing for you.



## Infection dynamics, transmission, evolution and persistence of PRRS virus in a vaccinated breeding herd

### (Part one of two articles)

Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) is one of the most damaging endemic diseases we deal with on a regular basis on UK pig farms. The impact of infection is variable, dependant on the virulence of the strain and the presence of other infections, but in general there are high costs associated with disease. This is well recognised, and investment has become available from Scottish Government and Defra to tackle the disease in different ways, which your vet can elucidate further.

After a new infection and initial disease outbreak with severe consequences on sow fertility and piglet viability and mortality, reproductive performance tends to improve and farms enter an endemic infected state. It is commonly believed that vertical transmission from sow to piglet maintains the infection on farm, since it results in birth of infected piglets that remain viraemic and infective for their pen mates for a long time, giving the virus the chance to spread.

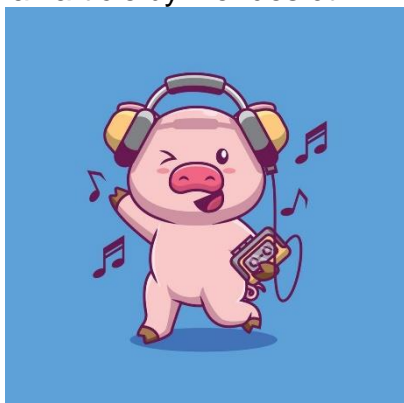
As whole genome sequencing develops, we are starting to gain more insight into how the virus can spread not only from one farm to another, but within the same farm. A team from University of Barcelona (UAB) has published two very interesting

articles following an outbreak on a 300 sow vaccinated farm and consequent viral transmission after the event. The farm was managed on a three weekly batch system, weaning at 4 weeks old with pigs staying on farm in the nursery for a further 5 weeks and then finished off-site. Replacement gilts were delivered at 6 months old from a PRRS negative source and were vaccinated with live PRRS vaccine at the on-site quarantine (minimum 6 weeks in quarantine). Whole herd vaccination was completed with modified live vaccine at least 3 times a year. The outbreak that prompted the beginning of the investigation was seen as an increase in numbers of abortions, stillbirths and weak born piglets, confirmed by isolation of a new PRRS virus to that had previously been circulating. It was presumed this had entered the farm by lateral introduction.

To have such detailed information on how the virus moves around a farm and how it mutates is rare and fascinating. I will try and cover some of the details of these studies in a second article.

## The Calming Effects of (some) Music.

The Journal of Veterinary Behaviour recently published an article by Mendes *et al*, that demonstrated exposure to music was an effective means of reducing stress related behaviours in both dry and lactating sows.



The piglets from these sows also adapted better.

The music used was classical, specifically Bach's symphonies.

Previous work in other species has also demonstrated beneficial effects of classic music.

Rock and Rave music is probably not recommended!

## Decreasing Daylight

Its that time of year again! Day lengths are falling rapidly, and this can be a trigger for autumn infertility with increased sow drop outs.

Now it is time to check all your lights are working, and covers are clean to maximise available light and any time clocks are properly adjusted.

## Staff Updates

A few quick updates:

We have a baby boom at Garth!! **Kirsty** in our commercial office will commence maternity leave on the 6<sup>th</sup> September, and our vets **Dimitrie** and **Dawid** are both going to be proud fathers again in October! We wish them all the very best of luck.

Some of you may have noticed that you have not heard **Sharon's** lovely voice in our dispensary team for a while now. The good news is that she is still with us but is recovering from a knee operation that was a little more complicated than expected! Hopefully **Sharon** will be back with us all very soon.