

Swine Dysentery

We are sure that all our clients in the Yorkshire area, and many elsewhere, will be aware of the current swine dysentery (SD) outbreak. At the time of writing there have been several cases identified in an area roughly outlined by a square that has as its southern edge a line from York to Harrogate.

The outbreak involves clients of several veterinary practices, but BPEX are co-ordinating the monitoring of cases and providing regular updates. We would urge all farms to sign up to the Swine Dysentery Charter, also through BPEX (www.pighealth.org.uk), to try to limit the spread of the outbreak.



Typical SD diarrhoea with blood and mucous

Although SD can cause severe economic losses, it is relatively easy to keep out of a farm by means of good biosecurity as it is mainly spread in muck on boots and vehicles. We saw from a recent outbreak in East Anglia how quickly and easily SD can be spread significant distances by pig wagons that are not properly washed and disinfected.

While farms around the affected area need to be particularly vigilant, for all our clients across the country the current SD outbreak serves as a stimulus to review the biosecurity of your farm. For guidance and ideas you can visit our website (www.garthvet.co.uk). Go to the "Downloads" heading and look at Published Articles, where you will find a piece entitled "Biosecurity: Keeping the Bugs Out", and General Standard Advice Sheets, where there are several protocols on various aspects of biosecurity. If you would like a comprehensive assessment of your farm, call us to arrange a biosecurity audit by one of our veterinary [team](#).

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Movement Licences

It has been the case for a while now that any pig movement (except those between farms covered by a single holding number or within the confines of a Sole Occupancy Authority) must be accompanied by either an old-fashioned paper animal movement licence (AML2) or a new-fangled electronic version (eAML2). Next year the paper versions will cease to be valid, so as from 1st April 2012 all pig producers will need to have access to the internet **OR** arrange to have their licences set up through the eAML bureau service, the British Pig Association or their marketing company. For slaughter pigs the eAML2 combines movement and Food Chain Information (FCI) details to reduce time and effort. Go to the BPEX page www.eaml2.org.uk/ami/about.eb for details and to get set up.



Red Tractor Standards - amendments

There have been some revisions and additions to the Red Tractor assurance scheme standards that came into force in October that have caught out some of our clients. It is not always easy to scour the manual for changes, so we will highlight a few of them for you here.

- ⌚ Piglets must not be weaned from the sow at less than 28 days old unless the welfare of the sow or piglets would be compromised and specialist housing is available
- ⌚ Lamé or injured pigs must be provided with a dry, well-bedded floor or robust rubber mat to lie on
- ⌚ The requirements for tooth reduction and tail-docking are much more detailed than before. Teeth should only have the tips removed and the pulp cavity must not be exposed. Tooth grinding is encouraged over clipping, but any tooth reduction is meant to be assessed on an individual litter basis – speak to your vet about this. Tails must be docked to a uniform length and all personnel performing either of these procedures must be properly trained. Outbreaks of tailbiting must be recorded.



- ⌚ The width of slats and the gaps between them is specified for different age groups of pigs
- ⌚ Mobile feed milling contractors must now be certified under the NAAC scheme or equivalent
- ⌚ Vermin control must be undertaken by licensed external contractors or properly trained farm personnel
- ⌚ Pig carcasses awaiting disposal must be kept in a locked container or a locked building designated for the task
- ⌚ Any material that originates outside the holding that is applied to land must have an agricultural benefit and must be properly permitted by the Environment Agency, SEPA or NIEA
- ⌚ The Visitor Book for the farm must now record the last date and place of contact with pigs (within the previous 3 weeks) for each visitor, and any unknown visitor who is unable to identify him or herself should not be allowed on to the farm – this includes Red Tractor assessors!
- ⌚ Producers with outdoor pigs should consider the risk to the wider water environment when planning and managing paddocks and tracks

Full details can be found in the new scheme standards. These can be accessed via the website www.redtractor.org.uk if you do not already have a copy in pride of place on your coffee table!

Temperature control for pigs

Relative to other farm livestock pigs have a narrow range of temperature in which they feel comfortable – largely due to having negligible hair cover and a low sweating capacity. This means that they are dependent upon the stockperson for the correct temperature provision. But what are the ideal temperatures and what influences them?

The presence of dry straw bedding relative to dry slats allows a 3 to 4°C reduction in air temperature. Similarly, healthy fast growing pigs have a lower temperature tolerance than slower growing pigs. Ventilation rate and air speed also influence perceived temperature; avoidance of draughts and temperature fluctuation is important to minimise vices such as tail or ear biting.

Age/production stage of pig	Weight of pig kg	Temperature range	Factors influencing required temperature in order of importance
Newborn	1.4	32-34°C	Birth weight, heat lamps, floor surface
1 week	2.5	25-30°C	Heat source, floor surface, growth rate
2 days before weaning	7.5	20-23°C	Growth rate, floor surface
2 days after weaning	7.5	27-30°C	Feed intake, floor surface
10 -11 week	30	22-24°C	Growth rate, bedded or slats
16-17 weeks	60	20-22°C	Growth rate, bedded or slats
23- 24 weeks	105	18-21°C	Growth rate, bedded or slats
Farrowing sow	240 kg	18-20°C*	Floor surface, ventilation rate
Lactating sow	220 kg	18-20°C*	Feed intake, milk output, ventilation rate, water flow rate
Dry sow	215 kg	20-22°C	Floor surface, group or individual
Breeding boar	250 kg	20-22°C	Floor surface, ventilation rate

*Optimal for the sow but requires heated creep areas for piglets

Monitoring temperatures

Many stock-people rely on the digital read-out of the ventilation controller, the sensor of which is often not located close enough to the pigs' lying area and may also be 'insulated' in fly muck and dust; - they need regular cleaning. Observing pigs' lying behaviour is a good indicator of comfortable temperatures – but not too many people have time to do this, especially during the night which may account for 50% of the time.

For this reason Garth Partnership are supplying their clients with a max/min thermometer before the winter period sets in, enabling stock-people and managers to be more aware of temperature fluctuations and allowing calibration of control equipment.



Garth Staff News



We are pleased to welcome Sammy-Jo Grantham to the practice this autumn. Sammy has added to our pharmacy team, so now works with Jan and Elaine in that department on a part-time basis. We know Sammy of old as, for several years, she worked for a local pig breeding company, so there is an element of "the better the devil you know"! Sammy is keen to work part-time so that she can spend the rest of the week with her beloved horses.

GARTH'S TOPICAL TIP

As the outside temperature drops, so do ventilation rates. This can lead to respiratory disease and meningitis. To maintain healthy ventilation rates it is important that buildings have effective insulation. Check insulation material and replace as necessary now to give your pigs the best possible air quality this winter.



Garth Partnership
wishes you a
MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

