



The Importance of Good Fly Control



Because most pig farms produce large amounts of either liquid slurry or straw based manure, fly control is always going to be an important issue.



The other factor is that pig housing is generally kept warm all year round creating a perfect environment for flies to breed. This can mean that flies are an issue across all months throughout the year. The common house fly reproduces in warm moist environments which makes slurry pits and manure heaps a perfect environment.



As well as being a nuisance to staff and animals and causing skin lesions at slaughter flies are also major vectors of disease. Common bacterial infections which can be transmitted include pathogenic *E. coli*, Salmonella, Swine Dysentery, streptococci (including *strep suis* which commonly causes meningitis) and rotavirus. Flies can also be responsible for transmitting *Staphylococcus hyicus* which causes Greasy Pig thus worsening any outbreak of this disease.

Identifying and controlling the key breeding sites, such as the crust which forms on top of the slurry tanks, is key. We need to ensure that these are fully emptied regularly otherwise a persistent fly population can develop and be maintained. Careful siting of the muck heap is important on straw based systems as this is another obvious breeding ground. Only having a small muck heap near the buildings, which is regularly carted away to a more remote location, can be a good compromise.



Feed wastage is another important factor, not only is this a waste of money but it will also act to increase fly numbers. This is especially true when it comes to creep feed which is high in milk and sugar.

It is very important that levels of flies are not allowed to get out of control in the first place. Because the female fly can lay up to six batches of 150 eggs in her lifetime, even a short lapse in control at a key time can result in a rapid



explosion of fly population. At the most basic level, fly control revolves around hygiene. With regard to chemicals generally the most effective products are those that are added to slurry pits and muck heaps. These products target eggs, larva and pupa and are also longer acting in nature (larvicides). They are more effective than products which target adults as the majority of the problem will be in the larval stage, in the slurry. By targeting this area you prevent the problem occurring.



However, a combination of products and strategies is generally necessary. Any control should be carried out proactively, to prevent a flare up, rather than reactively because any break in fly control can very quickly lead to an explosion of fly numbers and therefore make getting the problem back under control difficult.

Ventilation systems

Following several incidences recently we would like to remind clients to check their ventilation system is in working order on a daily basis. According to RT standards 'if there is insufficient self-ventilation and forced or automatic ventilation is used there must be an alarm system to warn of failure. The alarm must be tested at least once a week. The unit must also have in place an appropriate back-up provision to allow ventilation of the pigs in the event of failure of the ventilation system.' These checks are particularly important during recent hot weather where, despite adequate temperatures, pigs can succumb to heat stress and/or low oxygen levels with inadequate air flow.



Lameness in Sows



Lameness in sows can be a serious problem and is generally the second greatest cause of non selective culling – after infertility.

However because animals are often unfit to travel, leading to on farm euthanasia, the loss is often total making lameness a costly problem.

The most common time for lameness to occur is around weaning and commonly affects animals whose nutrition did not fulfil their requirements during lactation. Animals which lose excessive condition during lactation will have greater muscle weakness and therefore are more likely to slip post weaning. They also likely have a reduced bone density. This combination of factors increases their risk of fracture, muscle damage and general traumatic lameness.

Problems within the maiden/pregnant gilt population can be caused by joint infections with the likely causes being Erysipelas, Glassers or Strep. All are generally sensitive to penicillin/amoxicillin however the recovery rate is generally poor. Mycoplasma can also cause lameness in these animals and this generally has a good response to treatment. However penicillin/amoxicillin do not kill mycoplasma and Lincoject is a better option. Mycoplasma can be differentiated from the other joint infections as the joint is usually not swollen and the lameness reduces when the animal is encouraged to exercise.

The causes of lameness can be varied and trauma in all its forms can occur at any time. Lameness can be a major welfare issue and the animal's welfare must always be considered. If the limb is excessively swollen then the animal should be euthanized immediately. However when treatment is attempted the animal should be closely monitored for progress. If none is being made then treatment should be abandoned. Thought should also be given to including an anti-inflammatory pain killer such as Metacam/Loxicom in any treatment protocol

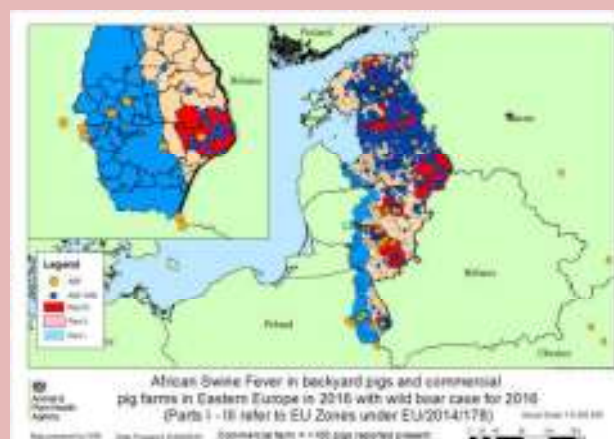
Antibiotic update

The UK Government have adopted a target of 50mg/kg reduction of antibiotic use by 2018. This is across all livestock sectors however individual sectors must formulate their own specific action plan and reduction targets by Spring 2017. RUMA (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture) have already begun work with each sector to deliver this.

An important part in producing sector data is using the electronic Medicine Book (eMB). The target is for 70% of all data to have been submitted by November this year. The use of the eMB is currently a recommendation however it is expected to become a mandatory requirement of Red Tractor from October 2018. Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) have already incorporated the eMB into its Pig Assurance Scheme standards.

Topical Talk

African Swine Fever remains a threat to UK



ASF continues to move across Eastern Europe with several new cases being reported in Poland last month. At the moment, the outbreaks are contained within the restriction zones which means that the threat to the UK remains very low. However, if the spill over into commercial herds becomes more frequent then there is a worry that pigs or products could leave affected premises before disease is reported. This news comes at a bad time when we have just heard that the organised cull of wild boar in the Forest of Dean has failed to control the wild boar population. Despite the culling of 422 wild boar in 2015, the population has exploded from 819 wild boar in 2014 to 1562 in 2015 despite the cull. Pig producers, especially outdoor units, are urged to protect their own units from wild boar access with good perimeter fences.