

RED TRACTOR INCORPORATION OF REAL WELFARE

As I am sure you are all aware, Real Welfare will be incorporated into Red Tractor with effect from 1st April 2013. So just to re-cap on how this will affect you -

Real Welfare is a BPEX-funded **industry led** project aimed at helping producers to demonstrate pig welfare and increase productivity using 5 measurable 'welfare outcomes'. Lameness, Tail lesions, Body lesions, Enrichment use, Hospitalisation

These outcomes will be assessed in finishing pigs only (50kg plus) by your vet on 3 or 4 of your quarterly visits. Prior to visits, your vet will randomly assign sheds, rooms or pens for inspection. Pigs in the selected pens will be examined for the various criteria above. The welfare score results will be collated anonymously and each farm will be benchmarked against comparable farms in the industry.

A poor score alone does not trigger Red Tractor non-compliance. However farms that are within the bottom 25% of units will be expected to have an action plan for improvement written in to their Veterinary Health Plan. Failure to have this action plan may result in Red Tractor non-compliance. We are aware that a vet visit may occur just after mixing of pigs or during a period where there has been an outbreak of vice. To account for this, the data will be looked at for trends over the course of the year.

The data collection will obviously mean additional time taken per visit, the cost of which will be incurred by the producer.

For units with over 900 finisher spaces there are 2 options:

- 📋 Recording of the 5 measures on 300 pigs on 3 out of the 4 quarterly vet visits.
- 📋 Recording of the 5 measures on 225 pigs on 4 out of the 4 quarterly vet visits.

For units with less than 900 finisher spaces the 5 measures are recorded on 1 in 3 of all pigs (minimum of 100 pigs per visit) on 3 or 4 of the quarterly vet visits (minimum of 300 pigs sampled per year).

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There will be a phased introduction of actual on-farm assessments to start to build up of meaningful data set. The aim is to complete this phased introduction by 30 June 2013.

The Red Tractor standards are key to promoting British pig meat and differentiating it from imported pig meat in the eyes of retail and food service customers and consumers. This, in turn, helps the Red Tractor supply chain in trying to secure a premium for this product in the marketplace relative to EU pig meat.

We would like to request that all clients provide us with the following information before 01 April 2013. We have sent out a Garth template which we request that you complete. Alternatively, you can send us a copy of your IPPC farm information or FABPIGS annual farm report. If we receive this information Garth can input the Real Welfare data prior to your vet visit which will save time and reduce your costs.

- Number of finisher space on the unit.
- Kept indoors or outdoors.
- Design of accommodation e.g. open plan +/- internal divisions, trobridge, kennel, other etc.
- Percentage of each building that is slatted.
- Number of each type/design of finisher accommodation.
- Number of pens that are in each building.
- Number of pigs that are in each pen.
- Breed of finishers
- Type of feed e.g. pellet/meal/liquid; floor/hopper/trough; ad lib/meals

Creep Feeding

Convincing suckling pigs to take their first steps towards weaning by eating creep feed can be a frustrating business. The latest science and technology may produce the perfect early nutrition, but if the little blighters won't eat, what can you do?

The vets at Garth were recently presented with some data that may help. The figures showed firstly that new diets can encourage pigs to eat from a surprisingly young age, and secondly that existing targets for pre-weaning intakes are probably far too high.

The latest speciality creep diets are 60% milk-based which make them very palatable for baby pigs and not at all unpleasant for a group of peckish vets in a meeting room! The particular diet we tried is designed to be fed from 4 days old, but it must be fed in a clean trough or dish two or three times a day in small amounts to ensure it is fresh and appetising. To help the freshness it should be stored somewhere cooler than the 18-20°C of the farrowing house. The post-weaning diet should be blended into the creep gradually from about 4 days prior to weaning.

Traditionally a creep intake of around 500g/pig by weaning has been targeted. The feeling has been that there is no benefit if this figure is not achieved. Since intakes rarely reach these dizzy heights there is generally a lack of motivation on farms to put much effort into creep feeding.

However, recent trials have shown that a creep intake of around 250g can lead to reduced pre-weaning mortality (resulting in an extra 0.4 pigs weaned per litter) and increased weaning weights. It also leads to a reduction in post-weaning scour as the physiological changes necessary to cope with a purely solid diet at weaning are at a more advanced stage.

It is generally accepted that heavier weaning weights result in improved performance throughout the rearing and finishing stages. However, a direct comparison between a traditional creep feed and the new high spec version found that there was surprisingly little difference at weaning but still a benefit in post-weaning performance (ADG, Feed intake, FCR) all the way to slaughter after use of the new diet.



As for feed intakes immediately post-weaning (which are usually negligible), it is worth noting that a pig weaned into a nice pen and kept on its own eats well. Therefore, low post-weaning intakes are not a problem with the pig, but a problem with how we keep and feed them.

This new information provides food for thought on farrowing house and weaning management. A little attention to detail with creep feeding should reap longer term production rewards.

Correct use of Regumate

- ❗ Used for oestrus synchronisation in gilts.
- ❗ Regumate acts to suppress the normal sexual cycle, preventing signs of heat and ovulation. Withdrawal of Regumate then allows the natural hormones to be released again and animals return to heat in a synchronised fashion.
- ❗ Regumate must only be used in cycling gilts. If the gilt has not had a cycle, the Regumate will have no effect.
- ❗ Ensure that the full 5ml dose is given orally. Under dosing can cause cystic follicles to form on the ovaries which will prevent cycling.
- ❗ Regumate must be given at the same time on 18 consecutive days. It is the withdrawal of the Regumate that causes cycling so ensure that there are no residues on the floor – consider moving the gilts to a clean yard if Regumate has been floor fed.
- ❗ Shelf life after first opening the immediate packaging of 1 L bottle: 30 days.
- ❗ Pregnant women should not use the product and women of child bearing age should handle the product with care.



How can body condition of my sows affect my fertility?

Maintenance of sow body condition in lactation is vital to ensure good fertility. Sows which have lost excessive weight in lactation are likely to have an extended wean to service interval. Studies have suggested that for every 10kg weight lost in lactation, this will extend the wean to service period by one day. The wean to service interval is very important as it strongly affects your farrowing rate and subsequent litter size. Those sows which have not come onto heat by day 4 post weaning are more likely to return or have poor numbers born alive. So how can we ensure that our sows are maintaining condition?

- ❏ Feed to condition only during gestation. A sow which over-eats in gestation will have a lower appetite in lactation and is therefore more likely to lose excessive bodyweight.
- ❏ Feed lactating sows as individuals. Those with big litters or those leaner should be given more.
- ❏ Feed three times daily if possible – early morning, mid afternoon and evening. Having three meals spread over the day will increase the daily feed intake.
- ❏ Ensure feed troughs are cleaned daily if there is any feed is left over.
- ❏ Consider giving the sow dextrose as an energy supplement via top dressing the feed or via the water from day 5 pre-weaning until service, 100g/day. Please consult your vet if you have further questions.
- ❏ Ensure the lactating and dry sows have ample water supply. They require a flow rate minimum of 2 litres/minute.
- ❏ Concentrate on creep feeding the piglets from 10 days of age. Creep should be offered in small amounts at least three times a day.

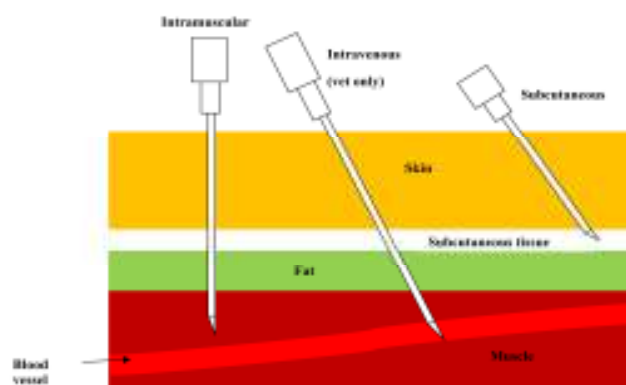
Correct needle usage

Needle choice is something we do on a day to day basis so it is vital that we get it right and it is something that is all too often over-looked. The choice of needle we use must depend on the size of the pig and the type of injection we wish to give i.e. subcutaneously or intramuscularly. It is important that we use the correct needle length to give the substance for injection via the correct route as failure to do so can lead to various problems –

Vaccines may be less efficacious
Antibiotics may be less effective
Injection site abscesses may form

	KG	Intramuscular		Subcutaneous	
Piglet	1-7	5/8"	21g	5/8"	21g
Weaner	7-25	1"	19g	5/8"	21g
Grower	25-60	1"	19g	1/2"	19g
Finisher	60-100	1.5"	16g	3/4"	19g
Adult		1.5"	16g	3/4"	16g

The correct site for injection is 7-8cm behind the base of the ear at a 90 degree angle to the skin and horizontal to the floor.



Going for Growth Rate

Pigs – like most animals have an inherent drive to become larger; in the wild this was to primarily ensure survival. The pig producer is also interested in growth rate as it helps to ensure business survival.

Why is fast growth beneficial?

Within reason the faster a pig grows the more efficiently it utilises feed, this is particularly true up to 70kg live weight simply because the pigs' appetite has not exceeded its lean deposition potential – so excessive fat deposition has not started. Lean meat being 75% water only requires 1.2kg of feed to deposit 1 kg of lean, whereas fat, which is only 25% water and requires 3.5kg of feed to deposit 1kg. Obviously from an FCR and grading point of view fat deposition is not wanted.



1kg of Lean requires 1.2kg of feed
1kg of Fat requires 3.5 kg of feed

How pigs utilise feed

The pig uses feed for growth – which is saleable, and also for maintenance – which is not saleable and so is potentially wasteful. 'Maintenance' includes activities essential to the pig in terms of thermo-regulation, movement, breathing, immune system activation and every other body function which keeps the pig alive. Clearly the slower a pig grows then there are more days of its life - so an increasing part of its daily feed will be used for 'wasteful' maintenance – leaving proportionately less available for saleable growth; the converse being the case for faster growing pigs.

Fast growing pigs –spend fewer days on farm and so may only use 20-25% of feed for maintenance, whereas slower growers could be using 40% of their total feed for maintenance and consequently have poorer FCR's. (See table below)

	Agrosoft Average	Agrosoft Top 10%	Top performers
Weight range	7-101kg	7-97kg	7.8-108kg
Daily gain g/day	648	709	801
FCR	2.50	2.1	2.16

In the next Newsletter we will look at ways of measuring and improving growth rate.

Garth welcomes new vet

Garth Partnership
would like to
welcome a
new member to
the veterinary
team,
Elizabeth Lloyd.



Elizabeth qualified in 2012 and has enjoyed a year working in mixed practice in North Yorkshire. Having come from a family farm of beef and pigs, Elizabeth is looking forward to pursuing her interests in pig health and production.

Outside of the working day Elizabeth enjoys skiing, horse riding and take part in Young Farmers events.