THE PIG ISSUE

July 2015

Garth Pig Practice Ltd

Fly Bite Condemnations are costly!

Given the recent warm weather, it is likely over the next few weeks there will be a rise in the numbers of cases of fly bitten carcasses seen at the abattoirs. This can be costly due to the further processing required. Mild cases are estimated to cost £7/pig, moderate cases £13/pig and severe cases £22/pig. Fly bites are not only costly on the pocket but also remember that flies can transmit diseases among pig populations as well as being a nuisance to the pigs themselves. Some practical points for reducing fly populations includes –

- Instigate fly control programme (baits, sprays, paints – rotate to avoid resistance).
- Keep manure piles away from the pig buildings.
- Scrape out at least twice a week to break the 7 day breeding cycle of the fly.
- Fast carcass disposal.
- Minimise access to feed and clear spillages promptly to remove fly breeding areas.
- Maintain good ventilation and airflow through buildings to avoid humid areas.
- All-in-all-out pig flow with cleaning and disinfection between batches eliminates insect breeding sites.

The BPEX Action for Productivity 36 on insect Control can be viewed at the BPEX website.

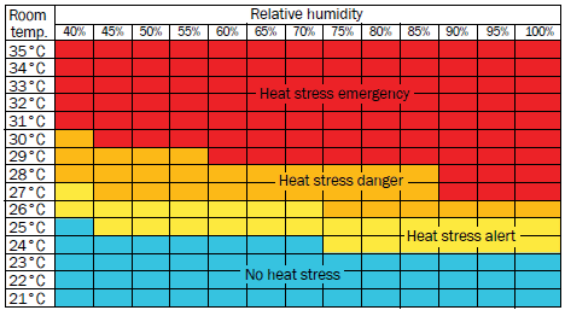
Pig keepers are reminded of the 'no pig meat policy' which should be implemented on all of your units.

This is particularly important as Latvia has just announced its first case of African Swine Fever (ASF) in domestic pigs on 16th June. The affected backyard farm located in Daugavpils county culled all 18 animals on site, 11 of which tested positive for the virus.

ASF can be transmitted directly via infected animals and wild boar are notorious for disease spread, showing no regard for geographical borders – and in the UK we have a growing population. Infected meat is also a big threat to the UK. This virus can survive in meat despite curing, freezing or cooking! So absolutely no pig meat (this includes pork, ham, bacon, pies etc) should be allowed near your pigs!

Heat Stress

Pigs are prone to heat stress because they do not have many active sweat glands and mainly rely on panting to lose heat. When this mechanism is overcome the animal is liable to suffer from heat stress.



Piasite

The above table relates to growers and finishers.

When pigs are affected by heat stress they become more prone to vice. It also has a significant and negative effect on food intakes and growth rates. You will lose 1g feed intake per kg of pig bodyweight for every 1°C it is above its ideal temperature – for a 100kg finisher this equates to a 100g/day reduced feed intake for every 1°C above comfortable temperature! Research has also shown that their digestion becomes less efficient and the gut wall becomes less resistant to bacteria increasing the risk of enteric infections.

Heat stress can be reduced by:

- Increasing ventilation and airflow.
- Check and clean inlets and fans to ensure that they are working efficiently and not limiting airflow.
- Insulating roofs - this keeps heat out as well as in.
- Lifting roof ridges or tiles or installing fans.
- Yorkshire boarding walls (minimum opening of 5% of the floor area on each side of the building)
- Ensuring bedding layers are thin allowing pigs contact with the subfloor which usually conducts heat away from the animal.
- Consider the use of water sprayers over dunging areas.
- Providing shade in outdoor pens.
- Keeping stocking rates down.
- Ensure plentiful access to water.
- Feed sows the bulk of their daily food either before 10am or after 4pm.

Colostrum

Colostrum is the first milk produced by the sow post farrowing. This is different to other milk produced by the sow because it contains high levels of antibodies which are vital for the protection of the piglet. It is only produced for a short window of time and the piglet can only fully utilise it soon after birth. It is vital that each piglet in a litter receives 100ml of good quality colostrum within 16 hours of birth, ideally in the first 6 hours, during which time the gut is optimised to absorb the antibodies.

Adequate colostrum intake is vital for piglet survival through the provision of energy and immune protection and has potential long term effects on piglet growth. On units which vaccinate sows to protect piglets against neonatal scours, adequate colostrum intake is essential to ensure that the vaccine is effective.

It is very difficult to know if adequate colostral antibody transfer is happening as there can be big variations within litters and between sows.

Factors affecting colostrum intake in individual piglets include:

- Sow parity
- Litter size
- Teat number and function
- Piglet vigour
- Piglet birth weight
- Piglet birth order
- Supervision of farrowing
- Illness of sows e.g. mastitis
- Sow feeding
- Use of hormonal controls at farrowing

Garth are pleased to be able to offer our clients an on farm testing kit to determine colostrum intake in piglets.

They are very quick and easy to use. At tail docking the removed portion of the tail is used to transfer blood to a sample card. 6 samples can be collected on one card; one card will cost approximately £45 in lab fees to process. The aim of the test is that it is simple, quick and can be carried out by farm staff. If this is of interest to you then speak to your unit vet.

The results of the tests can be used to determine what factors are influencing colostrum quality and quantity on your unit and management techniques can be discussed with your vet to improve this.

Topical Talk – what we are seeing….

Mycoplasma Lameness

NADIS

Mycoplasma arthritis is caused by the organism *Mycoplasma hyosynoviae*, which can invade the tendon sheaths of susceptible animals causing inflammation of the infected joint resulting in lameness.

Often more than one joint is affected so the animals may present with reluctance to rise and a short, stiff walk which often improves after a few strides.

Infection usually takes place after colostral immunity has worn off between 12 - 30 weeks of age. This organism lives in the upper respiratory tract and often causes disease if there is excessive challenge or stress e.g. moving/mixing, ventilation issues, temperature fluctuations, overstocking.

Early treatment of individuals with a full course of Lincoject or Denegard usually has a good response within 24 hours (Mycoplasma arthritis is not sensitive to Penicillins). Anti-inflammatories e.g. Metacam/Tolfine can also be used in conjunction with antibiotics to assist recovery. If large groups are affected water medication can be used. Control should be based around controlling stressors and ensuring the buildings are thoroughly washed, disinfected and dried between batches.

Tesco is offering farmers of the future a 12 month package of training, business planning advice and networking opportunities. Applicants can be from any farming sector, next generation, new entrant or employees in farming businesses.

There is no requirement to be part of the Tesco supply chain, and the programme is free of charge to participants.

Are you?

- Aged between 20 and 35 years old (inclusive)
- Resident in the UK
- Able to demonstrate enthusiasm, drive and desire to succeed in agriculture (there is no requirement for any specific academic qualification)
- Able to show some farming experience and a vision for you they want to achieve

If yes, applications are open **until the 15th August** – for more information and to apply please visit:

www.tescofuturefarmerfoundation.com

Garth Pig Practice Ltd
Straight Lane, Beeford, Nr. Driffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 8BE, United Kingdom
Tel.:+44(0)1262 488323 garth@garthvet.co.uk