



Experiences of managing a Danish Pig Herd

Dimitrie Leonte is a new vet here at Garth Pig Practice. Before moving to the UK and working with us, he worked as a farm manager on a pig farm in Denmark for 6 years. He was asked to speak about his experience at the Pig Club East Meeting on 10/02/2020. The pig unit itself was a 750 sow herd that was looked after by 3 people, each with their own designated work areas being: the farrowing area, the weaners and growers, and the dry sow and finishers. The staff used were mainly foreign labour on 2yr contracts with the new staff overlapping with the old staff for 1 and a half months to allow for one on one training.

Dimitrie discussed about how they served their sows. Each sow was checked daily for signs of heat. Once heat was detected Dimitrie would introduce the boar to them and would inseminate them with a single AI straw as quickly as possible once they began standing. He would also keep his sows in the serving stalls for 1 month after. This was to make sure that if a sow did return they were picked up immediately and re-inseminated – this is however illegal in the UK under our enhanced welfare legislation.

He spoke about how he handles his sows before and after farrowing with a lot of attention put on the feeding of the sows. Whilst in the farrowing crate, the sow would be fed 3 times a day (7am, 2pm and 8pm) to make sure that there was enough easily accessible energy for the long farrowing process as well as for milk production due to the large litters (approximately 18 piglets per litter). Before farrowing they would spend time making sure that the sow got up to be fed and watered prior to farrowing, to minimise the movement of the sow during and after farrowing to allow piglets to consume more colostrum and reduce the chance of piglet death by crushing. They would also supervise the sows feeding for the first few days post-farrowing to make sure that she was consuming the correct volume of feed for the larger litters.

Some extra measures had to be implemented due to the hyperprolific sows. Dimitrie used 2 methods

to accommodate for this. The first was using a large number of nursing sows to manage the high numbers born and the other was split suckling. So half of the piglets would be removed from the sow to allow the other half to suckle and then the piglets would be switched.

There were a few things that he did just after weaning. He would move the sows into the insemination stables and give them extra light directly in front of them for the first 24hrs post-weaning, bringing the sows to heat quicker. For the weaned piglets, he began with a high quality but low quantity (17%) protein ration with restricted feeding and slowly increased the feed quantity over the course of the first week in order to allow the piglet's gut time to acclimatise to the new ration.

Dimitrie did not have many problems in the way of vice on his farm, but had measures in place just in case. He used long troughs for wet feeding of the finishers and growers to allow them all to feed together and so reduce the incidence of vice. An interesting fact was that when the pigs had a toy; which was later removed, stress could be seen in the pen and vices could appear. Indicating that once enrichment is in place it needs to remain as its removal has a negative impact on the pigs. One particularly good enrichment tool he used were hayracks for his finishers that he would fill with either good quality hay or straw if vice started.

MSD Porcilis Lawsonia Launch

Ileitis has an important economic impact at farm level due to slower growth (up to 19% reduction in ADG), increased mortality (up to 24%) and less efficient feed conversion (7%). Not only are direct costs effected due to lower performance, but there is also an impact on indirect costs due to lack of homogeneity within batches and antibiotic treatment costs. It has been estimated that the cost of ileitis entails a loss of between £2 million and £4 million per year in the UK.

We are pleased to announce that MSD Animal Health UK has now launched a vaccine to control ileitis caused by *Lawsonia Intracellularis* Garth

were the first pig practice in the UK to stock this product.

Porcilis® Lawsonia

Piglets can be vaccinated from 3 weeks of age and a single dose will provide 21 weeks of immunity to control ileitis caused by *Lawsonia intracellularis* infection.

Porcilis® Lawsonia can be added to your existing vaccination program in the following ways:

- mixed with the solvent that comes along the vaccine (100ml) and given on its own
- mixed with Porcilis® PCV M Hyo allowing to have the convenience of the protection of 3 diseases in just one injection
- given at the same time (in a different site) as Porcilis® PRRS

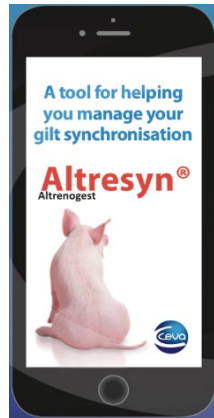
Please discuss with your vet to find out more.

Ceva Animal Health Altresyn APP

Ceva Animal Health has launched the Altresyn app, a tool for helping farmers manage their gilt synchronisation. The app is available from both the App Store and Google Play Store.

Users need to create an account with the farm details and use the De section to calculate the number of gilts to synchronise in each batch.

The app should be used to set up and track batches of gilts while on Altresyn treatment. "Once the batches are created, a to-do-list' is generated by the app that shows the tasks for today and the coming days. This makes keeping track simple and the information can be viewed by multiple people on the farm on different mobile devices," the company said. Email batch information can be kept for farm records and future reference, while alarms can be set up as a reminder to give the treatment. Other app features include a troubleshooter and gilt management pages. For further information contact rachel@garthvet.co.uk who can arrange for further support.



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COVID-19

We have increased our stocks of products and do not anticipate any supply problems and we do have back up plans and increased stock holding ourselves. However, if you have spare storage capacity it might be prudent to store more medicines than normal. Two weeks extra stock should suffice and cover most eventualities.

It is our priority to carry on delivering the best service that we can in these unprecedented times, whilst at the same time ensuring you and our staff remain as safe as possible. With this in mind:

- Please could we ask anyone who plans to visit the practice to pick up medicines, to **phone first** with an estimated time of arrival and **again** once you arrive at the practice. This way your order will be ready for you and we can deliver it outside the building, keeping direct contact to a minimum.
- likewise, if you plan to visit the practice to drop off samples or pigs for post mortem, please could you **phone the practice first** with an estimated time of arrival and **again** once you arrive at the practice. A member of staff will collect all the necessary information from you outside the building, again, to minimise risks for all concerned.
- Remember, if you are self-isolating but need our services, do not hesitate to phone us and we will work out a solution together.

Meet the Team

We thought you might like to meet some of the Garth team who work hard behind the scenes delivering the best possible service to you. Often many of you will have spoken to these people for years, but never met them.

To start off, please meet Elaine Matthewson.

Elaine was born and grew up in Wiltshire and has hands-on practical pig farming experience, moving to Yorkshire to further her farming career. Elaine joined Garth in 1999 to work in the dispensary department, and quickly rose through the ranks gaining her AMTRA qualifications and now managing this very important team.

Elaine is married with a son, has two grandchildren and two dogs. In her spare time, she enjoys showing her Subaru's at car shows, gardening and keeping tropical fish. A busy lady

