



The Pig Issue

www.garthvet.co.uk

Issue 5

2004



New Vet

We are delighted to welcome Duncan Berkshire to the Garth team, having recently qualified from Cambridge University. Duncan joins the team having lived and trained 'down south' (hence the strange accent – his words!). He will mainly be working for the Pig Partnership, but you'll be able to spot him elsewhere as he'll also be sharing some of the mixed animal work. Having grown up in London, and with family in Edinburgh, a midway point seemed about right. His interests include music, especially singing, and he is a qualified ski race coach, both of which he intends to continue here presumably in the Beeford Alps. His move to Yorkshire, from the windy flatlands of Cambridge, is both to fulfil his wish to see more pigs and to find some snow to play in.



Herd Health

Do you know the health status of your pig herd regarding the important diseases affecting sow fertility?

You may think that you know whether your pig herd is PRRS negative or PRRS positive but what about parvovirus, flu or *leptospira bratislava*?

It is becoming increasingly apparent to us that herd immunity to these pathogens fluctuates, often a herd becoming less protected over a period of time. This may be because the herd no longer takes in regular replacements, or because some of the bugs themselves now spread less easily and so "die out".

Unless a representative number of your sows are blood sampled at least annually your herd may be becoming vulnerable to diseases affecting sow performance without you realising it. If we know your present health status, we may be able to help you to prevent a damaging drop in production.

Generally we recommend sampling around 10-15 sows, of a range of parities including gilts, particularly those that have returned or produced poor litters. We test these for a range of pathogens and give advice on your present herd health status and any potential problems looming. Obviously every herd is different, but also every herd changes, so over a period of time it is very useful to be able to look at trends.

We have put together a package of blood sampling and testing, to cover the major pathogens affecting sow fertility in a way that provides considerable savings on the individual tests and we would tailor the testing to individual herd requirements. We are offering a discounted rate per sow for a visit, blood sampling and testing for PRRS, *Leptospira bratislava*, PPV and influenza x 4. Your usual veterinary adviser will discuss the results with you normally within 14 days of samples being taken. For price information that is individual to your unit requirements please contact us further.

To Record or Not to Record

At the recent NPA Autumn Symposium held at Stoneleigh the major emphasis of the meeting was on the UK pig herd and the state of its record keeping. It was quite clear from the evidence presented that the number of units recording has fallen dramatically over the last 5 years, and even the level and detail on those still recording has reduced.

This is evident in the amount of units contributing to the MLC figures, the database on which we present our industry statistics internationally, which is now estimated at less than 200 contributors. This was once the flagship system with the majority of producers contributing.

So where do we go from here? A number of good systems are out there and available and whilst all operate independently it is vital at both a national and individual level we increase the level of recording at the earliest opportunity.

At Garth, in response to what we saw as irregular or incomplete farm data being presented to us, we initiated our own system of herd monitoring. As has been mentioned in this newsletter before it goes under the title of FOCUS (Farm Output Coming Under Scrutiny).

As part of a collaboration with Pork Chain Solutions and Devenish Nutrition, FOCUS is designed not only to monitor the historical trends of the unit but also predict certain parameters, such as kg dead weight produced and replacement gilt numbers, into the future aimed at optimising the output from any particular unit.

It is important to stress that this is not an individual sow recording scheme but fits with existing recording programmes. The weekly monitoring cycle, which is analysed by our internal programme, gives an accurate and frequent picture of trends and whether targets are being attained.

FOCUS operates on a minimum number of performance indicators, those that matter to farm output, simplicity being the key.

It is our firm intention to have a maximum number of our own clients using FOCUS and for the system to be web or paper based depending on your requirements.

We will be contacting you regarding FOCUS but if you want any immediate information or would like to be using it now please contact us at the practice for more information.

Measuring Performance

Following on from recording here is a practical example of how changing management, altering health protocols or in this instance measuring the benefit of a vaccine can be easily assessed if we have all the relevant data to hand. Some of the costs have changed but the principal remains the same.

The value of grower-finisher performance (7-95kg)

- 1% reduction in mortality is worth £0.50/pig
- 0.1 improvement in FCR is worth £1.22/pig

50g/day improvement in growth rate is worth

1. £1.51/pig if pigs are sold at the same weight
2. £3.03/pig if pigs are sold at the same age but heavier weight

Improved performance can occur in multiples of these parameters, also additively.

In order to break-even with a vaccination costing £1/pig then any of the following improvements would need to be achieved:

- 2% improvement in mortality
- 0.08 improvement in FCR
- Either 30g/day improvement in growth rate (i)
Or 17g/day improvement in growth rate (ii)

The value of grower – finisher performance (7-95kg)

Costs and values used

Weaner/store pigs £18/pig + 50 pence /kg. (7kg = £21.50, 30kg = £33)

95kg live weight @ 75% Killing out % = 71.25kg @ 100p/kg = £71.25

Feed cost and performance 7-95kg (Agrosoft date December 2002)

Home mix £120/tonne + £10 M&M = £130, FCR 2.52 or 30.0p/kg, and 586g

Compound £149/tonne, FCR 2.58 or 38.4p/kg and 559g

Home mix/compound mean £139.50/t, FCR 2.55 or 34.2/kg valued at £46.38

Lost margin/pig is 'included' in the value as are the costs.

Disposal at £80/tonne = £4/pig

Total cost (excluding extra labour and medication etc) = £50.38/pig

1% mortality = 50 pence

0.1 FCR improvement

Weight gain x 0.1 FCR = feed eaten x cost/kg = value of 0.1 FCR
 $87 \times 0.1 = 8.7\text{kg feed saved} \times 14.0\text{p/kg} = \text{£}1.22/\text{pig feed saving}$

50g/day Growth rate improvement
Mean growth rate 7-95kg is 573g = 152 days

A growth rate of 573+50g or 623g = 140 days

Feed usage is 22kg or 1.46kg/day at 152 days, a saving in maintenance feed which is assumed as 40% of total daily feed is made for 12 days.

$1.46 \times 40\% \times 12 = 7.0\text{kg at } 14.0\text{p/kg} = 98 \text{ pence/pig}$

Interest on working capital at 7%: $7\% \times \text{£}45 \times (12+365) = 10 \text{ pence/pig}$

Labour cost saving at 25p/week = $25 + 7 \times (12 \text{ days}) = 43 \text{ pence/pig}$

- Extra margin from 50g/day improved growth rate = £1.51/pig

If pigs are taken to a heavier weight in the same time period

152 days at 623g/day = 94.7kg gain, i.e. 7.7kg heavier @ 75% KO = 5.8kg extra dead weight or £5.80 extra output.

Less extra feed 7.7kg @ 3.0: 1 FCR on finishing feed at £120/tonne = £2.77/pig, worth £3.03/pig

- Extra margin from heavier pigs due to 50g faster growth = £3.03

The figures used are snapshots at a moment in time but you can drop your own figures in to the calculations to obtain figures for your own unit.

GREASY PIG

Greasy pig is an infection caused by *staphylococcus hyicus*. It can become 'ingrained' particularly in post weaning accommodation. Commonly a unit can go through sporadic outbreaks lasting up to three or four months. Recent results from swabbing of pens routinely washed and disinfected have showed that the *staphylococcus hyicus* can live in the bio-films. These are the fatty greasy deposits particularly on the walls and wooden boarding in weaner accommodation. We have tried standard pressure washing procedures followed by using a detergent/degreasant and then disinfection have achieved superior results in terms of controlling greasy pig.

AUTUMN SUB-FERTILITY

Now into the lower conception rates and litter sizes from sows served September through to early November. At this period reduce the culling of your sows to increase your services by 5-7%. Alternatively serve extra gilts to try and maintain herd throughput.

Product News

After an absence of over two years Fort Dodge Animal Health have reintroduced an Erysipelas vaccine to the market.

Suvaxyn Ery provides broad Erysipelas cover for protection against serotypes 1 and 2, and is currently available in 2 x 25 dose (50ml) vials. For further information and pricing please contact the practice on 01262 488323.



Water or feed

As the industry, both feed manufacturers and on the back of BPEX initiatives, states a desire to switch more medication to the water route away from in-feed treatment, it is vital that units have the ability to properly deliver water medication.

We are in the process of assessing unit suitability for water and look at the ways we can help to subsidise the cost of setting up efficient water medication delivery systems.

The other consideration is the comparative costs and the gap is closing rapidly due to the willingness of some pharmaceutical companies to align pricing.

We are more than happy to discuss all aspects of water medication please contact us.

Future Newsletters

If you have nay items or news that you would like included in future 'Pig Issues' please forward them to Christine at the practice – all contributions welcome.