



Target

Farm

Action

A monthly digest of practical advice for pig farmers from BPEX

Gaining recognition for the pig skills you already have

The farming industry has launched its new AgriSkills Strategy, to equip all farmers with the skills they need to deliver increased food production while tackling environmental challenges.

The strategy has the support of Environment Minister Hilary Benn and recognises a profession of highly skilled and knowledgeable farmers, in an industry that seeks to be seen as an attractive career of choice.

Even better news is that the pig sector is already leading the way on training and skills development.

Three years ago, PIPR (Pig Industry Professional Register) was launched as a way of providing recognition for skills and ongoing training and development.

The number of pig professionals joining the register

continues to grow.

More than 170 registered training events have been held, with members benefiting in many ways.

All their skills and experience are formally recognised, they have an independent record of skills and there is greater staff development within businesses.

This helps to raise productivity and profitability and promote a professional image of the industry.

If you have not registered for PIPR membership yet, or have not recently had a look at the development opportunities available, then now is the time to do it!

Anyone in the industry can register to become a PIPR member and start building up points from the training activities or



events they attend.

And the way PIPR points are attained has now been simplified further:

Six member categories have been reduced to two

Members will have to collect a minimum of 60 points over three years

For producers who find the PIPR structure useful for appraisals or staff recruitment, benchmark figures are available

to suggest average points targets for different job roles

The way in which points are collected has also been simplified.

Full details of the restructured PIPR scheme, application forms for membership, plus information on all the specific training activities available in the pig industry can be found at www.bpex.org.uk or by contacting Tess Howe: 07779 321078.

Salmonella - take the right action

Producers must have an adequate Salmonella risk control plan otherwise farm assurance will be in jeopardy when inspectors do their checks.

A survey of producer's Zoonoses National Control Programme (ZNC Pig) control plans found that 43% of plans did not include enough effective action towards Salmonella control.

Producers should work closely with their veterinarian to put together a ZNC Pig control plan.

It should detail the specific risks found on their own farm and show what action is planned to control those risks in the future.

The plans should not be viewed like an exam, and if they only repeat general best practice advice, plans are unlikely to have a major impact on the producer's farm. To help work out where the Salmonella risk areas are,

some common problems have been identified on many farms.

● Poor cleaning and disinfection (C&D) in buildings between batches, coupled with poor rodent control, means that newly-introduced pigs are very likely to become infected from this on-farm 'reservoir' of Salmonella.

● Even when C&D is good, the introduction of pigs that are infected with Salmonella can lead to rapid spread through a building.

● Farm environments are often heavily contaminated by Salmonella, especially broken or damaged flooring or concreted areas that accumulate waste run-off including common corridors and pen floors.

A farm hygiene tool is now being developed and will soon be available as a self-assessment tool. For more information and guidance on ZNC Pig, visit www.bpex-zncp.org.uk.



Lactational Oestrus

Many outdoor farms see lactational oestrus from December to April.

There is no evidence to show why this should be, but, anecdotally, units see this issue over winter rather than summer.

There are no practical solutions to this problem but managing piglets is key to stop this problem affecting productivity.

If sows come into oestrus in the farrowing paddocks the piglets must be managed to prevent losses:

● If lactation is disrupted during 1-3 weeks of age, piglets may be at risk of starvation and should be fostered

● If the disruption to lactation occurs after three weeks piglets will probably forage for some of mum's food, but a more appropriate creep feed should be offered to maintain weaning weight

For more advice on this topic, download the BPEX factsheet from <http://www.bpex.org.uk/Article.aspx?ID=296439>.

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