

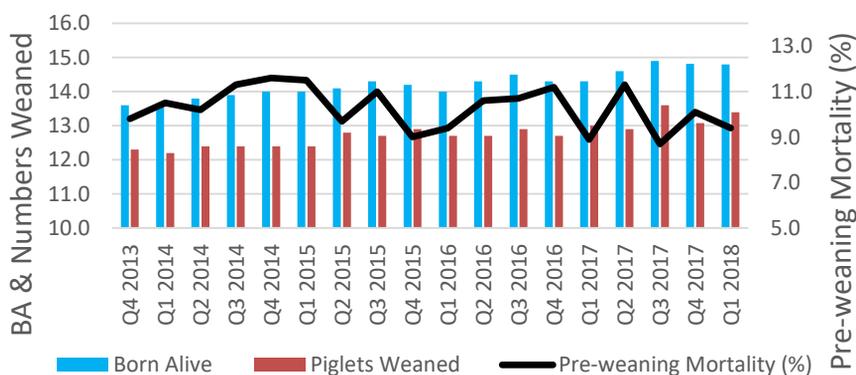
Bishopton Breeding Herd Averages

Analysis from the production data collected from each breeding farm has shown that there has been a slight increase in quarter 1 of this year in the average born alive from 13.0 piglets/litter in Q3 2017 ([click here](#) to see October 2017 newsletter) to **13.5 piglets/litter**. There has been an increase in average pre-weaning mortality so average weaned piglets/litter has decreased slightly to **11.9 piglets/litter**.

We have also calculated the top 10% and the top 1/3 production figures each quarter – these figures are continuing to increase which is excellent. The figures from quarter 1 of 2018 are:

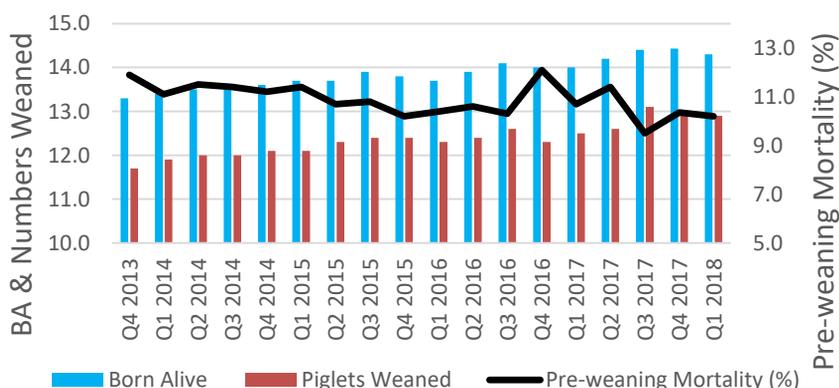
Quarter 1, 2018	Top 10%	Top 1/3
Born alive/litter	14.8	14.3
Weaned/litter	13.4	12.9
Pre-weaning Mortality	9.4%	10.2%

Top 10% Figures



Both of the graphs show that the number of piglets born alive have remained fairly constant, although decreasing slightly for the top 1/3 of farms. Numbers weaned have fluctuated slightly recently also. Overall pre-weaning mortality is decreasing but this is quite variable.

Top 1/3 Figures



The on-going clinical viral issues that we have been experiencing on a number of our farms are likely to be playing a role in the fluctuations seen.

Please contact your vet for help in setting realistic production figures for your herd

Ear Haematomas

Any trauma to the ears of a pig, through mishandling, vice, accidents and even parasite/health-associated headshaking, can lead to the formation of a haematoma. The ear swells as the blood from ruptured vessels fills the space around the cartilage of the ear. Some appear as slight swellings, whereas in more severe cases blood will expand the whole ear.

A recent study from Canada found that leaving ear haematomas untreated was preferable to treating them. The treatment described by the study was to cut into the haematoma, let it drain and leave it to heal. The study looked at three groups: those unaffected by haematomas, those with untreated haematomas and those with treated haematomas. They monitored the average daily gain (ADG), the number of pigs that got an infection and its severity, and how long it took for the haematoma to heal.

In terms of ADG, the treated pigs had significantly lower ADG over the first two weeks than either the untreated or unaffected groups, but in the third week those treated pigs had recovered to having a similar ADG as the other two groups. There was no significant difference between the unaffected and the untreated groups over the three week study period.

Within the treated group, 61% of the pigs developed an infection, whereas only 1.5% of the untreated group developed any. They also developed proportionately more severe infections than the untreated pigs. There was no difference in resolution time, with both the treated and untreated groups having approximately 70% of cases resolve in three weeks.

Despite growing faster than the pigs with drained haematomas, the pigs with untreated haematomas still grew slower than the pigs that were unaffected. Unless there is an obvious cause, such as head shaking after a mange infestation, preventing ear haematoma development is difficult. Handling of pigs by the ears should be avoided and if ear biting is seen, reducing stress to the pigs can help by potentially providing environmental enrichment, decreasing the stocking density, increasing the access to feeders and drinkers, or improving the environmental control.

Ear haematomas will resolve over time therefore, and trying to intervene surgically will not help them resolve more quickly and is likely to lead to infection and a reduced daily gain for a period of time.

Current Clinical Trends – What are we seeing out there?...

At the moment, following the on-going variable daily temperatures experienced, we are seeing some flare ups in a variety of clinical diseases on farm. This is quite farm specific and is dependent on what bacteria or viruses are present. Clinical issues include respiratory signs, such as coughing, as well as some looseness. Some farms are also experiencing some tail biting and ear biting issues in their growing pigs.

Please do contact your vet with any concerns that you may have

