

Red Tractor Wet and Dry Feed Standard

Red Tractor have clarified and revised their standards for wet and dry feeders, with the water source on wet and dry feeders to count towards the total drinking space for a pen. In the current standards, the built-in drinkers found on wet and dry feeders do not count as a separate water sources, but as of the 1st of July 2018, this will change.

A wet and dry feeder is classed as a feeder where water is supplied into feed or where the water is hard to get to without being mixed with feed. Drinkers fixed above a feed trough, so water can be drunk without eating do not qualify as wet and dry feeders.

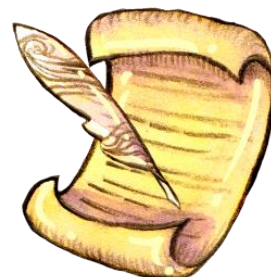
The drinker requirement for a pen now stands at a minimum of one drinker for every 15 pigs, and for every 30 pigs, at least one drinker must be outside of a wet and dry feeder.

This is a minimum standard and we recommend that an increased number of drinking points are available since, in many circumstances, this will lead to reduced competition. Anything that leads to an increase in competition can give a reduced water intake in less dominant animals since drinking is often interrupted leading to less water consumed and more spillage. Reduced water consumption also leads to reduced feed intake and poorer growth, particularly affecting the less dominant animals.

Proposals for the Future Agricultural Policy

As you may be aware, a consultation on the future for food, farming and the environment has been launched by the Secretary for State in Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove.

This proposal shows government plans on how money will be redirected from direct payments under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which is currently based on the amount of land a farmer or farming business owns, to a new system paying farmers under the title 'public money for public goods'. This consultation offers farmers and food producers the opportunity to shape the future of English farming and the environment. We would encourage our clients to read this and contribute where possible.



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This consultation closes on 8th May 2018.

If you would like more information please [click here](#).

Shoulder Sores

Shoulder sores are typically caused by persistent crushing of the blood vessels between the bony ridge of the shoulder and the floor of a farrowing crate, leading to the restriction of oxygen supply to the surrounding tissue which leads to tissue death and ultimately ulceration. A recent paper presented to the American Association of Swine Veterinarians has looked at several studies to try and pinpoint particular risk factors and how to prevent them.

Sows that are thinner during gestation, as well as at the point of weaning, are far more likely to develop ulcers. Sows with higher litter weaning weights, and highly productive first parity animals, are also at higher risk. It appears that sows that give a lot of energy to their litters during gestation and lactation, at a cost to themselves, are the ones most at risk. Keeping on top of the energy needs for these animals is paramount in helping to prevent the development of shoulder sores.

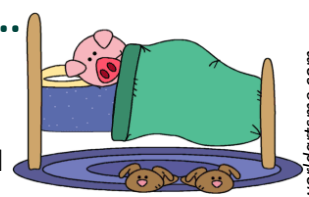
We are coming out of the worst of the cold weather, which can also make high demands on the sow as she tries to keep herself warm and produce the milk her litter needs, so the risk should now be reducing. As the surrounding temperatures increase however, the sows can lose interest in food and hence lose condition. Making sure that your sows are eating well, maintaining condition and are kept comfortable is key to preventing the sores developing.

Shoulder sores are painful – even a healed one can cause long-term pain and, once a sow develops one, she is more likely to develop them again in the future. This can have a long term impact by her being less inclined to lie down on that side, making it harder for her to suckle her litter.

Since these pigs are the ones who are generally giving the most for their litters, preventing the onset of these sores is vital to getting the best out of these pigs.

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

We are currently seeing an increase in respiratory disease within finishers, likely to be due to the colder/variable weather and high winds that have been experienced recently, meaning ventilation systems may have decreased the air throughput below normal to prevent the pigs becoming chilled.



We are also seeing a small increase in tail biting in finishers, which is also likely to be due to the increased stress on the pigs following the recent severe weather.

Please discuss any problems that you may be having with your vet.

Feedback

Please let us know if there is anything that you would like including, or more information on, in a future newsletter.

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