

Sunburn and Heatstroke - Reminder

Please can we take this opportunity to remind our clients about the risks of sunburn and heatstroke (to them and their pigs!) following the recent high temperatures and some very sunny days, along with techniques for managing both.

Although these two conditions can be linked, particularly on a dry, sunny day, they are in fact separate entities. Neither condition is exclusive to outdoor pig production.

Ensuring pigs have access to high water flow rates is important since pigs will normally drink a large volume of water (approx. 1 litre per 10kg bodyweight per day, and at least double that for a lactating sow), but during warm weather this will increase significantly. Since they do not sweat like us, pigs will cool down by passing larger quantities of warm urine generated from this increased water intake. If this mechanism, along with evaporation from wallowing, is not sufficient to control the pig's body temperature, it will be at risk of suffering from heatstroke.

On the whole, pigs are at their highest risk of **sunburn** at the beginning of spring/summer when the skin is not used to the ultraviolet (UV) light in the sun's rays that cause skin damage. Initially the skin will appear reddened, but this can progress to blisters and loss of the outer layer of the skin (epidermis). The resulting pain and discomfort usually causes a decrease in growth rates for the rearing and finishing herd, and a decrease in reproductive performance in sows and boars. Water itself does not protect against the sun, but mud from wallows forms a physical barrier to the light, as can heavy dust. Man-made wallows that are present for 2-3 days at a time are best, particularly for lactating sows, as this provides a mud covering on the skin but balances against the risk of infection from the wallows that can enter the teats and result in mastitis. Providing shade from the sun is also important, although can be technically difficult in the middle of a field!



Pigs with a layer of heavy dust and mud providing a physical barrier to the sun

Heatstroke (also known as hyperthermia) is an increase in body temperature above normal and where the body's cooling mechanisms and behaviour are unable to reduce the temperature back to normal. Humans sweat to decrease our body temperature. As the water in the sweat evaporates from the skin, it uses some heat and cools us down. Pigs cannot sweat except from their snouts, so they tend to play with water drinkers and wet themselves so that the water can then evaporate to cool them. In very high humidity though, the air is already saturated with water and further water will not evaporate so other cooling mechanisms need to be used if possible. These include lying in cooler areas such as dunging passageways, shaded areas and, in extreme conditions, panting. If heatstroke results, feed intakes, growth, reproductive disruption and even death can result. Providing extra shaded areas, increased air flow, and water misting can all help cool hot pigs.

Export of Pork to China – Farm Declaration Update

A China annex certificate is signed on a regular basis for our clients that send their pigs to abattoirs that have this requirement as long as the conditions within this certificate have been met.

The Chinese authorities have requested that the export health certificate used for UK pork exports to China is changed, in order to simplify certain aspects.

This change came into place from the 1st July and the new herd owner or farmer declaration certificate will need to be used from this date. This new certificate has the additional declarations that the premises is not subject to any official restrictions due to a notifiable disease of pigs according to European Animal Health Regulations. It also states that the pig herd is currently free from official restrictions due to notifiable diseases of pigs.

Please [click here](#) to go through to the webpage which has further information, along with access to the new Annex B certificate.

Please speak to your vet about any questions that you may have.



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EXPORT OF PIG MEAT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
HERD OWNER/FARMER FOOD CHAIN INFORMATION DECLARATION TO SLAUGHTERHOUSE OPERATOR

Premises Name: _____
Address: _____
County (Pig herd number (N. Ireland): _____
Pig Association Scheme (PAB) reference number: _____
Site number: _____

I declare that I am the "owner" / manager of the above mentioned premises. To the best of my knowledge and belief the pigs originating from the above premises meet the following conditions:

- The pigs on the premises specified above were born and reared in the United Kingdom;
- The premises above are not situated in an area subject to official restrictions due to a notifiable disease of pigs according to European Animal Health Regulations;
- The above pig herd is currently free from official restrictions due to a notifiable disease of pigs;
- A veterinary declaration of freedom from the disease specified below, as required for the health of sheep, is included and corresponds to the above premises for the last six (6) months;
- There has been no occurrence of anthrax, progressive atrophic rhinitis, Agona's disease, porcine circovirus type 1 or classical swine fever on the above premises for the last six (6) months;
- There has been no occurrence of subclinical *Cytosarcocystis suis* infection in pigs on the above premises for the last six (6) months.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Name in block letters: _____
Address: _____

* Veterinary declarations for these and other diseases are provided following approval issued according to the FSI guidelines, both within and between countries and must be given in these words.

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

At the moment we are experiencing some very hot days with significant differences between day and night temperatures. This not only puts water systems under considerable pressure, as detailed in last month's edition due to the high water intakes that pigs require, but also ventilation systems in order to reduce the large potential fluctuations in temperatures. We would advise clients to check both their water and ventilation systems are functioning as they should be.



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Where this temperature variation has not been so well controlled, we have seen an increased incidence again of meningitis due to suspected *Streptococcus suis* infections, as well as an increase in tail biting. Please [click here](#) to read our article on *Streptococcus suis* for further info.

Please speak to your vet about any concerns that you may have.

ASF in the Czech Republic

There have now been a number of confirmed cases of African Swine Fever in the Czech Republic – more information in the next newsletter...