

March 2017

New Vet Joins the Pig Team

The BVG pig team are pleased to announce that we are now a team of 5 vets, as Michiel Plugge joined as a pig intern in mid-February.

Michiel completed his veterinary degree at the Royal Veterinary College, London, in summer of last year and has moved directly into pig practice. Before studying to become a vet, he completed a degree in zoology at St Andrews and also spent time working in a genetics laboratory at the University of Oxford.

Michiel is keen to expand his pig knowledge, as well as to explore North Yorkshire both on foot and by bike. Welcome to the team Michiel!



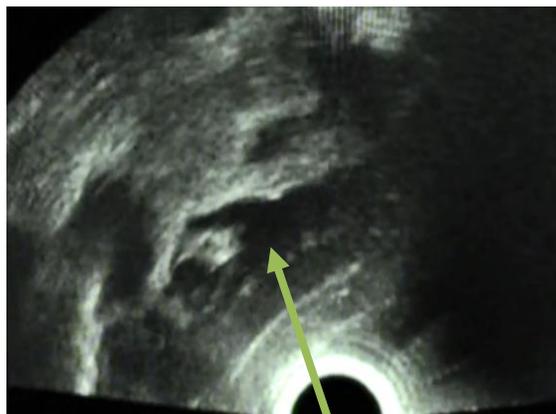
Scanning Training Reminder

Determining if a sow is pregnant can be done at a much earlier stage using an ultrasound scanner than if carried out visually. Most farms carry out pregnancy diagnosis by ultrasound.

A visual ultrasound scanner works by emitting ultrasound waves in pulses, which pass through the sow's body. These waves will meet body tissues of different densities as it passes through, such as air (which is low density) and bone (which is a high density tissue). If the wave passes through a low density area the ultrasound waves continue on, but as they meet more dense tissues some of these waves are reflected back to the scanner. This is shown on the screen as white, so that bone, which is the most dense tissue in the body, reflects back all the waves and so is seen as a bright white light.

Pregnancy scanning sows correctly is an important management tool, and training for new-starters to the technique or a refresher course is available from one of our nurses with plenty of scanning training experience.

For further details please contact Sylvia on 01765 602396.



Scan at 4 weeks of pregnancy - embryo is shown as a white area within a black fluid-filled space



At 8 weeks of pregnancy, the skeleton of the piglet can be seen

Pictures courtesy of 'Sow Scanning' by Richard Wakefield

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Real Welfare Outcome Assessment Baseline Report

Real Welfare Outcomes assessment is a requirement for all Red Tractor (and also included for RSPCA Freedom Foods) finishing farms to have a proportion of pigs assessed by their vet at least twice per year. The scheme was developed as a response to scientifically demonstrate the high welfare standards adhered to on farm and to identify improvements where required, and so assesses various different parameters.

This scheme was established in 2013 following previous trial work, and data collected from 2013-2016 has now been collated and analysed. A report is now available along with a video summary – please [click here](#) to view both.

eMB – use a Red Tractor requirement as of October 2017

Further to our previous newsletter editions, Red Tractor have now confirmed that, as of the 1st October 2017, it will be an assurance scheme requirement to use the eMB (electronic medicine book) to provide quarterly total antibiotic usage data.

From the **1st October** Red Tractor require clients to have **uploaded 6 months of historical total antibiotic usage data, so all data from the 1st April 2017**. We are currently assisting clients upload their total antibiotic usage data on to the eMB and will continue to contact clients to offer assistance, but please phone us on 01765 602396 if you would like help before then.

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

At the moment we are still seeing active Swine Influenza, also known as ‘pig flu’, issues within both sows and finishers. ‘Flu is caused by infection with the Influenza A virus resulting in respiratory signs, weight loss, inappetence and also reproductive issues.



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The virus is spread between pigs through the air and nose-to-nose contact. A pig can be infected for 1-2 days before showing clinical signs but, as it can still shed the virus during this time, disease can spread rapidly. Dependent on the stage of the disease on farm, the process of diagnosis differs. In the very early acute stages of the disease, nasal swabs can be taken from individual pigs showing clinical signs and these swabs would be tested for virus itself. Recent developments in saliva testing from ropes can also detect virus from groups of animals. If the disease is more progressed, blood samples can also be analysed to see if there are antibodies present. Please [click here](#) to read our full article on ‘Flu.

Please discuss any issues 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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