

Summer Days

As people across the country start to enjoy warm Summer days, pig keepers are faced with the practical challenges that this weather brings. Whilst most animals rely on either panting or sweating to keep cool, pigs are only able to sweat from their snouts and although they begin to pant when temperatures rise, the heat loss from their respiratory tract is significantly less effective than in other species such as dogs.

Pigs will often play with water drinkers and try to wet their skin in an attempt to cool down. Unfortunately, if the air is already humid and does not allow this water to evaporate, then further cooling mechanisms will be required. This can be provided by water misting, increasing air flow and providing increased areas of shade.

Heat stress leads to reduction in feed intake, growth and reproductive performance as well as potential issues with vice and deaths in the worst instances. Bigger pigs and pregnant animals are most susceptible to heat related illness.

Prior to hot weather it is useful to ensure buildings are well maintained with good insulation (beneficial for both high and low extremes of outside temperature), any fans are clean and in good working order, alarms are tested and functioning, and that there are sufficient drinkers with adequate water flow rates to cope at peak demand. A pig will drink on average 1 litre of water per 10kg bodyweight (double in a lactating sow) and this will increase significantly during hot weather. For pigs in straw yards, reducing amounts of straw can also help by avoiding the heat production from composting, whilst outdoor pigs benefit from adequate wallowing space and positioning of arcs to utilise natural airflow. It is also important to remember that sunburn is not a condition limited to outdoor animals only.

Covid-19 Update: Quarterly Vet Visits and Red Tractor Visits

As we enter into the next phase of the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, we are able to increase the number of physical visits which we are making to farms. This will still be decided on a case by case basis, taking into account the nature of the herd (breeding, nursery or finishing), any current concerns and also the vulnerability and wishes of those owners and employees on site. We remain cautious with social distancing wherever possible and PPE as required.

Red Tractor have also begun a phased return of their annual inspections to physical visits which will initially apply to new applicants, those identified as poorer performers and those where live video streaming is not possible.



Committed to long term partnerships supporting British livestock farming



Choosing a Disinfectant

Disinfectants are used regularly on farms as a way to kill any harmful disease causing organisms, as well as harmless organisms, from the pens/arcs that contain pigs. Once rooms are emptied, organic matter should be removed and the pens washed out. Ideally disinfectants are applied once the room is dry to avoid any remaining water diluting the disinfectant and so making it less effective, with a set drying period again once the disinfectant has been applied. The drying stage of this process is exceedingly important.

There are various disinfectants available and we would always advise that the manufacturer datasheet is consulted for more information, particularly if there is a particular organism(s) that you are wanting to target with your cleaning and disinfection protocol.

Disinfectants that are glutaraldehyde/quaternary ammonium compounds (QAC) or glutaraldehyde/formaldehyde based work well on surfaces with a high or low organic matter, although removing organic matter prior to disinfection will always be more effective.



Please remember to regularly refresh foot dips on a weekly basis, as they can often be forgotten.

Current Clinical Trends – What are we seeing out there?

Mycotoxins are toxic substances produced by moulds to which pigs, particularly younger pigs and breeding females, are highly susceptible. These toxins target body organs such as the liver and kidneys, as well as the reproductive system so a decrease in breeding herd performance can be seen, amongst other signs.

During the summer months, the feed inside the feed bins becomes hot, can 'sweat', and so can more easily become stuck to the inside. Please can we take this opportunity to remind our clients that feed bins should be emptied and cleaned out at least once over the summer period but ideally twice, usually at the start and end of the summer time. This will help reduce build up of mouldy feed and so potential mycotoxin issues on farm.

Please contact your vet with any questions you may have regarding mycotoxins

Feedback

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



Committed to long term partnerships supporting British livestock farming

