

Lighting

The Welfare Code for pigs states that:

- Where pigs are kept in an artificially lit building, lighting with an intensity of at least 40 lux must be provided for a minimum period of 8 hours per day
- Owners/keepers should routinely check light levels are appropriate and keep a record of levels in pens at all stages of rearing, including farrowing accommodation.
- Animals kept in buildings must not be kept from an appropriate period of rest from artificial lighting.

But what does this mean?

1 lux is the brightness of a 1 metre square surface measured at a distance of 1 metre from a light source that is giving off 1 lumen – this is approximately equal to moonlight outside when there is a full moon. A 60W filament bulb gives off around 800 lumens, so at a distance of 1 metre this would be 800 lux. Unfortunately, the further you move away from a light source, the quicker the lux decreases, known as an inverse square law. The same 60W lightbulb therefore only gives 200 lux at a 2 metre distance, and this has fallen to a very low 89 lux at 3 metres. A bright Summer's day can be 100,000 lux, an overcast day 100-1000 lux and dusk/dawn only 5-25lux. 500 lux is recommended for human offices for work.

We are still awaiting further guidance on what is expected by the new Codes, but the light level must be measured using a lux meter at the animal's eye level as this is where it is experienced by the pigs. There are also lux meter phone apps available to get an approximate reading. Low readings can often be resolved simply by cleaning covers on lights, since dust can reduce the level of light by 50%. We will circulate further information as it becomes available.



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

Red Tractor have now confirmed that, as of August 1st, all quarterly veterinary visits should be carried out in person. The only exemption to this is if there are individual circumstances where this visit would be considered high risk. In these cases, remote visits can be continued until the end of the year if required. A derogation, however, must be sought from the relevant certification body before a third remote visit is performed.

As before, on visits we will exercise social distancing wherever possible and PPE as required. Please speak to your vet if you have any questions or concerns.



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Time to adjust lighting to maintain fertility levels

We are at the time of year where artificial lighting is particularly important for breeding animals. Daylength is currently shortening by approximately 30 minutes per week and fertility naturally reduces at this point, a trait believed to have been inherited from their wild ancestors to avoid sows having piglets at the coldest and most hostile time of year.



Current recommendations are that exposure to light should be for 16 hours per day at 150 – 250 lux from weaning to service, reaching all areas of the pen at pig eye level. Starting to provide this at the time of service is too late and 16 hours of strong 'daylight' will aid in the demonstration of heat. The wavelength of the light is also important so these should also mimic daylight, e.g. bluer spectrum LEDs, mercury and halogen bulbs, while avoiding those which provide an orange glow, e.g. sodium lights.

Current Clinical Trends – What are we seeing out there?

We are currently seeing an increase in grower **scour**, which is suspected to be nutritional in cause from cereals, especially barley from this year's harvest, being swiftly incorporated into the ration. These pigs usually remain bright and active despite the loose muck. Please contact us if you are concerned.

We are also seeing an increase in cases of **Erysipelas**. This skin disease is caused by the bacterium *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*, which can survive for up to 6 months in soil. As farms use straw that is near the bottom of the stacks, these bales can have an even higher soil burden containing the infectious bacteria.

Affected pigs can present in different ways and show a variety of signs:

- Sudden deaths and lethargic/depressed pigs – caused by acute septicaemia
- Red or purple firm, often diamond shaped, raised skin lesions (see photo)
- Lethargy, respiratory distress and purple skin discolouration – caused by lesions affecting the heart valves
- Arthritis/stiffness, sometimes with visibly swollen joints
- Abortion and reduced fertility

For further information please see our article on [Erysipelas](#).



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

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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