



Clear as... slaps!

Farm facts

Name: Midland Pigs

Location: Upper Farm, Warborough

Farm size & enterprise: 700 sows breeding to finish indoors

Benefits

- Consistent clear slap marking for the abattoir
- Better working facilities for the team
- Eliminated need to go into pens of finishers, and thus reduced stress
- Less chance of bruising
- Having a permanent ID on a young pig ensures whole supply identification, especially against theft

The system

The ID marker runs from compressed air; this means piglets can be marked in their own accommodation without having to be moved.

The piglets are marked on each side at 7 - 10 days, in the usual position with standard permanent ink. The piglets are handled by one person and the marking is done by another person. The piglets do look inky initially but this soon wears off.

As the pigs grow the ID marks remain permanent and expand with the pig. Initially the pigs were followed to the abattoir where they were checked on the line and found to have clear ID marks, as you can see in the photo to the right.

It is important to remember that this system is only suitable for one-site farrow to finish units.

Background

The UK industry still has a problem with achieving good clear slap marks, however they are a legal requirement. Clear slap marks also ensure that you get paid properly for your pigs.

On a trip to France Joe Blackstone discovered the weaner ID marker, which was one step up from the early slap marking already taking place on his unit.

“ We had already moved to slapping our growers to ensure we could check the quality of the slap mark through to dispatch and that worked well. Going to a younger pig enables the job to be carried out more easily and has allowed our pigs to be identified for the majority of their lives. ”

Joe Blackstone, farm manager



Key to success

- Easier than entering groups of finishers
- Able to identify any pigs with poor IDs and rectify before dispatch
- Works well in a batch system with "quieter days"
- No issues with ink staining other fittings

For information on slap marking see the [BPEX work instruction on this subject](#)