PROJECT REVIEW

NAME:	**Anne Huting**	**Full Time**	**Year 2**
INSTITUTE:	**Newcastle University**		
TITLE:	**Reduce variability and improve the efficiency of pig production systems**		

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

To develop intervention strategies that allow small piglets to catch up growth without penalising heavy piglets. The strategies will be investigated for their long term consequences both in terms of performance but also in terms of whole system efficiency.

KEY MILESTONES:

	TARGET DATE:	**ACHIEVED DATE:**
Complete experiment that investigates the effect of cross fostering and the availability of creep feed on subsequent performance (e.g. pre- and post-weaning) of small and heavy piglets.	October 15	October 15
Complete experiment that investigates the effect of cross fostering and creep feed provision on the performance unto slaughter for both small and heavy piglets.	February 16	
Investigate the effect of an improved starter regime on the performance of piglets that were light for their age or young at weaning.	June 16	

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

An experiment that investigated the effect of different litter compositions (uniform versus mixed) and creep feed provision (yes or no) on pre- and post-weaning performance of small and heavy piglets has been recently completed. Although the analysis of the experiment is ongoing the following outcomes are emerging.

- Cross fostering to create litters that consist of lightweight pigs only resulted indeed in an improvement in their performance at weaning. The question is whether this effect will persist to slaughter.
- However, creation of uniform litters with heavy pigs, seems to disadvantage their performance than when reared in mixed litter. This seems to be due to increased competition.
- Creep feed consumption was very variable both within and between litters. Its consumption did not seem to be related to litter composition.

To see what effect cross fostering has is on subsequent growth (e.g. grower, finisher and slaughter) piglets will be followed unto slaughter.

In the second year of my PhD I will look at whether piglets that are small for their age need to be treated differently than piglets that are young at weaning, regardless of their weaning weight. This experiment is expected to start early in the New Year.

BENEFIT TO LEVY PAYERS:

Small piglets generally have a poorer gain to feed ratio, need longer time to reach market weight and have a fatter carcass than their heavier counterparts. The increased weight variability, will result in an impaired whole system efficiency and may result in penalties at slaughter. Therefore, has both financial and environmental consequences. This project looks at cost-effective management strategies allowing small piglets to catch up growth therefore will benefit the pig farmers.

SUPERVISOR(S):	**FUNDERS:**	**DATED:**
Prof Ilias Kyriazakis (Newcastle University) Dr Ian Wellock (Primary diets)	AHDB Pork Primary diets	03/11/15