**Real Welfare update for Vets – June 2014          No. 7**

## Headlines

- Unmated 50+kg pigs on 'grow-out' units to be included in sampling until entry to breeding herd.
- The i-pig database is big!
- The i-pig app – testers needed!
- Environmental Enrichment Task Force meets.
- Sampling strategy under review.
- Common data entry mistakes highlighted.
- EFSA scientific opinion explores the provision of enrichment and avoidance of tail-docking.
- 'What's in it for me?' sheet dispels common contentions about Real Welfare.
- Review your clients' results.

## Grow out clarification

Grow outs are a subset of finishing units and are therefore subject to Real Welfare assessments.

*BPEX has confirmed with Red Tractor that the sample for 'grow-outs' is to include all 50+kg unmated pigs, up to the point the producer transfers the animals to the breeding herd and/or the animals pass their last conventional slaughter point.*

This may mean you need to assess units that have not been previously assessed.

## Dirty pigs

If you are assessing severe lesions only you should **not** record dirty pigs – the reason being that severe lesions should always be visible regardless of dirt. If you are only assessing severe lesions, there is no option to record number of dirty pigs on the web-portal or app, so please do not record dirty pigs on the assessment sheets.

## The i-pig database

The Real Welfare database (i-pig) has grown steadily over the last 15 months and now holds results from nearly 1400 units.

Over the last year 1.5 million pigs have been assessed for lameness and requiring movement to a hospital pens. Nearly 900,000 pigs have been assessed for body and tail lesions. These are impressive figures – well done! We will review the database over the next few months to assess whether the number of replicates is now sufficient to produce robust figures for reporting where needed (aggregated data only of course). A data reporting protocol will be agreed with the key stakeholders.

## The i-pig app

We are nearly there now – honest! A number of vets are field testing the beta versions and although some issues are coming to light, many users now use the app for routine assessments. We could still use more testers (android or iOS only), but in order to qualify for the testing fee, we would need 3-5 assessments collected via the app over the next month. The more we test, the better the final product will be, so your help is invaluable. Contact rwtraining@bpex.ahdb.org.uk for more details.

## Environmental enrichment Task Force

The measure of environmental enrichment *use* remains optional, while recording of the *type* of enrichment present is still required.  An environmental enrichment Task Force group has been set up and met for the first time in April. It was agreed that the aim of this Task Force was to advise the Real Welfare Steering Group of a protocol for the assessment of the functionality of environmental enrichment that was robust, reliable, practical, based on sound science and could be delivered cost efficiently.

Members of the Task Force agreed on three candidate alternatives to the environmental enrichment use ratio and currently BPEX is gathering further information about each of these, in order for the group to make an informed decision about how best to proceed.  The Task Force is meeting again later this month and outcomes from this meeting will be communicated shortly after.

## Sampling strategy

Suspension of the requirement to measure mild marks on both the body and tails remains, although producers and vets who see value in continuing to do so can continue to submit data, in the same way that some are continuing to submit environmental enrichment data.

BPEX is funding a scientific review of the existing Real Welfare dataset to determine the accuracy of the current sampling strategy now that measurement of mild body marks and tail marks has been suspended.

This comes following the decision made during the Real Welfare Review meetings to maintain the current requirement to sample up to 900 pigs per year. The review will also determine whether the sampling strategy can be made more simple and practical.

You should already be noticing a reduction in the time spent on completing Real Welfare assessments if you transcribe the data yourself or use the app because we are pre-filling a lot of the necessary information. We still ask paper users to fill in all data to ensure speedy transcription by the bureau service. Further time should be saved due to you no longer being required to collect information on genetics.

## Data entry mistakes

While the majority of datasheets sent to the bureau service are complete and can be loaded onto the database with no problem, there are a few common mistakes that seem to be cropping up. These are listed and highlighted on the datasheet below. Please take a moment to check over each datasheet before sending it to the Bureau so that upload delays can be kept to a minimum. Thanks in advance!

- Enrichment type not filled in
- Slapmark incorrect or missing
- 'Number of finisher pigs today' not entered
- Postcode incorrect or missing
- Other details (e.g. pen design, tail length) not entered

We appreciate that filling in the information on pen design and feed is annoying, but we have found that as buildings are not always named consistently, it is not always clear from previous assessment sheets what the information should be. This may result in the sheet being returned to you for the required information.

| Finisher recording sheet for Real Welfare | Nov 2013 | | | | Bureau use only | Date | Time | | ID |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**System type: (circle any that apply)**

| | | | | | Form received | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Whole farm: | indoor outdoor mix (in & out) | | Visit date | | Input complete | | | |
| Whole farm: | batch continuous | | Farm name | | Notes | | Sheet # | / |
| Number of finisher places (>50kg) | | | Red Tractor # | | | | | |
| Number of finisher pigs (>50kg) today: | | | Slapmark | | | | | |
| *Number of finisher pigs (>30kg) today:* | | | | | | | | |
| Planned RW assessments per year: | 2   3   4 | | Postcode | | | | | |
| Vet practice | | | Vet initials | | | | | |

On completion please post to:
RW Forms Bureau Service,
MLCSL,
Stoneleigh Park,
Warwickshire, CV8 2TL

Forms can also be emailed to: rwforms@mlcsl.co.uk

or faxed to: 02476 692405

| Building name / number : | | | | | | | | Genetics | (1) Bought in (2) Bought in x Homebred (3) Homebred x homebred |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ventilation: (1) Natural; (2) ACNV; (3) Powered, (4) Natural + Fan | | | | | | | | Breeds / crosses e.g. LW x LR x Hamp | |
| Pen type (split building by different group sizes, feed types etc) differentiate as a,b,c,d etc | | | | | | | | | |

| Pen number / ID | | | | | | | | **Pen design menu** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total number of pigs in pen | | | | | | | | (1) indoor - open plan (plain square / rectangle) |
| Pen design (1-7) (see box right) | | | | | | | | (2) indoor - open plan with internal walls |
| Feed type: (1) Liquid; (2) Pellet; (3) Meal | | | | | | | | (3) indoor - kennels |
| Feeding system A: (1) Ad lib; (2) Restricted (meals) | | | | | | | | (4) indoor / outdoor - Trowbridge type |
| Feeding system B: (1) Hopper; (2) Trough; (3) Floor | | | | | | | | (5) indoor / outdoor - Kennels + yard |
| | | | | | | | | (6) Outdoor - shelter + field |
| Approx pig weight: 50kg+ or 30kg+ | | | | | | | | (7) Other |
| Number to be observed this pen for body & tail score (see sampling guidance right) | | | | | | | | **Sampling guidance:** * For pens up to 24 pigs, sample all pigs * For pens of 25-100 pigs sample 25 pigs * For pens of >100 pigs sample 50 pigs * If 50 pigs will not reach target no. (E.g. few very large pens), split amount to sample at least 5 pens |
| Running total of number observed (based on sample number per pen (above)) | | | | | | | | |
| **1. Hospital pigs (whole pen)** | | | | | | | | **Enrichment menus:** |
| Number of pigs that would benefit from being in a hospital pen | | | | | | | | If substrate, select from: Straw, Wood chip or shavings, Other |
| **2. Lame pigs (whole pen)** | | | | | | | | Size: Restricted = Portions dispensed throughout the day Low = Less than 5cm depth or less than 50% lying area covered |
| Number of lame pigs in pen | | | | | | | | Medium = Depth of >5cm over 75% of lying area Deep = Covers >75% pen floor, depth 30cm+ |
| **3. Tail lesions (sample)** - requirement to record number with severe lesions; optional to record mild lesions | | | | | | | | if Objects, select from: |
| Are tails (d) docked; (u) undocked; (m) mix of docked and undocked? | | | | | | | | Chain, Hollow Plastic (e.g. containers, tubes), Solid Plastic, Wood, Cardboard, Wellies, Traffic cone, Other. |
| Tail length (as proportion of full length) (1) <0.3 (2) ~0.5 (3) >0.5 (4) undocked (full) (5) mix of lengths | | | | | | | | Size: Small: Less than fist sized volume; or less than 20cm length |
| Are you recording mild tail lesions? (Y/N) | *If not scoring mild lesions, please complete row for severe lesions; if scoring mild tail lesions (optional), please also complete next three rows.* | | | | | | | Medium: (Between small and large) Large: Larger than football sized volume; or longer than 60cm |
| *Number with lesion present* | | | | | | | | Extra large: Larger than 2 footballs volume; or longer than 90cm. |
| *Number with no lesions* | | | | | | | | Position: Suspended or Floor |
| *Number of tails in sample too dirty to score* | | | | | | | | |
| Number with severe lesion | | | | | | | | |

## EFSA Scientific Opinion

In May, EFSA's Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) published a scientific opinion on the use of both animal and non-animal-based measures for the assessment of pig welfare, in particular regarding the provision of manipulable material and the avoidance of tail-docking.

The Panel's review of existing literature confirmed what is already well-known; that pigs have a need for manipulable materials to satisfy a range of behavioural needs, which can be different in different classes of pig. When these needs are not sufficiently met, adverse welfare consequences result, one of these being an increased risk for tail-biting in weaners and rearing pigs.

Another part of this work involved analysis of welfare data collected elsewhere in Europe. Although prevalence of severe skin lesions was shown to be significantly reduced on farms with straw, this analysis failed to find any animal-based measures that clearly distinguished between farms providing different types of object-based enrichment. This means that there is no simple welfare indicator of the adequacy of environmental enrichment provided.

As a result, the AHAW Panel recommends that a multifaceted 'tool-box' be used to assess the functionality of environmental enrichment on farm, involving both animal- and non-animal-based measures. These measures include enrichment properties and presentation; severe body and tail lesions and exploratory behaviour.

The Panel also recommends that the presence and strength of tail-biting risks be assessed on individual farms. The information and recommendations contained in the report will be considered at the next Environmental Enrichment Task Force meeting so that Real Welfare aligns as much as possible with EU opinion.

To read the full report, click here: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/3702.pdf

## What's in it for me?

To ensure that all interested parties get the most out of Real Welfare it is important that pig producers understand the value of it. A key aim of Real Welfare is to encourage, where needed, on-farm improvements and changes that will enhance the welfare of pigs. Discussing a producer's Real Welfare results with them, including how they benchmark against others in the industry, will contribute significantly towards the achievement of this aim.

An FAQ sheet titled 'What's in it for me?' has been uploaded onto the Real Welfare website. It is aimed at producers and deals with some of the frequently heard comments. Feel free to point your clients in the direction of this sheet online or please contact rwtraining@bpex.ahdb.org.uk if you would like some printed copies of the sheet sent to your practice.

## Register for the i-pig portal

To help your clients get the most out of their Real Welfare assessments, please make every effort to discuss the results with them. This will be easier if you use the i-pig app, as this will give you an immediate visual talking point. If you are not using the app, do register on the i-pig portal to view, download and save your clients' results. It is easy and secure: www.i-pig.org/index/register. ***Remember, the bureau service will come to an end at the end of this year, so make sure you will be ready to use the app (or to transcribe data via the web-portal yourself).***