



A young herd is the most productive



A pig unit should aim for at least 45% of sows to be in parities three to five, as these are the most productive animals. 20–25% of production should be from gilts so it is important there are enough gilts available to serve.

To calculate the *target* annual replacement rate, producers need to decide what the target number of litters per sow lifetime is, ie an average lifetime of five parities. If the farrowing index is 2.33 litters per year, the whole herd turnover is calculated as $5 / 2.33 = 2.15$ years. So target annual replacement rate will be $100 / 2.15 = 46.5\%$.

Actual replacement rate is the number of served gilts introduced expressed as a % of the average herd size for the year.

Alternatively, multiply the average number of served gilts (% of the herd) by the farrowing index, ie $20.5\% \times 2.33 = 47.8\%$. The higher the litters per sow per year and the lower target litters per lifetime, the higher the replacement rate will be. The cost implications also need to be monitored and evaluated.

Know your numbers

Keeping performance records and investing time in interpreting them is a priority for high-performing pig businesses. BPEX is aiming to help more farms make use of performance data in the daily routine to generate more pounds and pence on the bottom line.

Also, national herd performance data for producers are updated every quarter

at: www.bpex.org.uk/prices-facts-figures/

The online tables show how the industry's performance is progressing towards the Two-Tonne Sow target and enable producers to compare their own figures.

Contact the knowledge transfer team for help and information on recording: www.bpex.org.uk/2ts/contact.aspx

MANAGEMENT TIPS

Avoid false economy

When profit margins are reduced, pig producers tighten their belts and look to reduce costs. However, some cost cutting can be false economy in the long term.

Staff development is a valuable investment in any pig business. A more knowledgeable and motivated member of staff is more likely to use initiative and identify areas to improve, helping to reduce costs for years to come.

For information about training and development activities, along with possible funding available, please contact Samantha Bowsher at BPEX: 07976 980753.

