



BREEDING

Focus on breeding

Good service facilities and staff are key to good service management which, in turn, will help increase both farrowing rate and numbers born.

Well-designed service areas help stockmen manage heat detection and artificial insemination (AI) effectively. The service area should be nice and quiet and laid out in a way that aids accurate heat detection and stimulation, without interference from other sows.

It can be more difficult to manage service on an outdoor unit, as batch systems require more than 100 sows to be checked and served. So a producer in East Anglia is trying out a newly developed 'AI pod' for outdoor units, as part of a BPEX field trial.

The pod has individual AI stalls for sows and gilts, on either side of the boar pens. So far, it is helping sows stay calmer and it is much easier to differentiate whether sows are showing standing heat or are not in heat, so it should mean that timing of service is more accurate. BPEX will know more about its effects on numbers born soon.

Good service facilities help boost numbers



For more information on service management, download *Action for Productivity* factsheets numbers 29, 30 and 31 from www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/breeding/

Cleaner water for outdoor sows



A new method of providing clean, fresh water to outdoor sows is being trialled which aims to help improve conception rates, numbers born alive and weaning weights. The trial, on Robert Battersby's unit, is using water tanks to supply clean

water rather than a wallow trough which can become contaminated. Anecdotal evidence so far suggests that the piglets weaned from sows drinking from the tanks are more even in size.

For more information on this and other BPEX Innovation Fund projects, go to: www.bpex.org.uk/2ts/innovationfund/currentprojects.aspx



Breed+3 regional events

Look out for more details about BPEX's regional Breed+3 events coming up in November.

The practical half-day workshops will cover: how to interpret performance records, optimising the number of piglets born per sow per year and reducing pre-weaning mortality. Plus, attendees will hear from fellow pig producers about their on-farm sow feeding system trials and how they manage their units.

The events take place in Exeter, Newbury, Kidderminster, Wetherby and Diss on the 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20 November respectively.