



Focus sow feeding on piglet quality

Feeding the sow to improve piglet quality is key to help wean more piglets from larger litters, said Professor Sandra Edwards, speaking at the BPEX Innovation Conference.

“Fermentable diets, including dextrose or lactose, have been found to produce more mature eggs, higher birthweights, lower birthweight variability and lower mortality,” she said.

“We also need to feed sows to improve the quality of the placenta and thus the number of embryos implanted. Arginine

and glutamine supplementation can help increase placental quality, which reduces birthweight variation as well as the number of piglets less than 1.1kg.”

Piglet vitality immediately after birth is also important; it is not just about birthweight. Early suckling for colostrum intake is important to wean a strong litter.

“The pig industry should look into transition diets to ensure sows can produce the colostrum and milk needed to rear larger litters,” Sandra said.



To view the video of Sandra’s presentation go to: www.bpex.org.uk/news/events/innovation/presentations.aspx



Heat stress can happen at 18°C

Outdoor sows experience heat stress at lower temperatures than previously thought, according to research. Professor Helen Miller gave an update on what we know about seasonal infertility at the BPEX Innovation Conference and said that the upper critical temperature for

heat stress in outdoor sows is 18°C rather than 22°C.

Two or more consecutive days of temperatures greater than 18°C around weaning and during late or very early lactation resulted in a reduced farrowing rate during one trial.

To view the video of Helen’s presentation, go to:

www.bpex.org.uk/news/events/innovation/presentations.aspx

For more information on reducing heat stress, download *Action for Productivity factsheets 3 and 4* from: www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/breeding/Summer.aspx

Infertility farm trials

The BPEX knowledge transfer team has set up some farm trials to try to establish the most suitable methods to help combat seasonality – taking into account both costs and benefits. They include looking at using shades, individual sow feeders and dietary dextrose supplementation.

Other interventions producers can use to help reduce the risk of summer infertility include providing wallows for all stock and adjusting the service routine so animals are served at cooler times of day.



For more information, contact knowledge transfer manager Richard Bows on: 07816 941223.