



BREEDING

Focus on breeding

Accurate heat detection and timing of insemination are essential to achieve a target farrowing rate of 85% and above. It's important to identify the correct signs of heat, to make sure it is not missed or misdiagnosed.

Remember to take your time and know your pigs. Not all signs of heat are exhibited in any one female. The proestrus period is the first signal to watch for, which lasts about one day, just before oestrus. Signs of proestrus include a swollen, red vulva, restlessness, increasing interest in the boar and riding other sows.

Check for a standing reflex twice daily if possible with at least seven hours between checks. Use a designated heat detection pen when taking females to the boar. Fenceline contact with an active, chatty boar is essential and pen design should provide enough room for stockmen to interact with the sow to stimulate her before heat checking.

Aim to heat check no more than two sows at a time. Apply the 'back pressure test' at the same time as exposure to the boar but avoid exposing sows to the boar for long periods. Receptive females will stand rigid and ears often prick up.

Take time to get heat detection right



To download the factsheet, Action for Productivity 29: Effective heat detection, and for more information on the Breed +3 initiative, go to:
www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/breeding/

RESEARCH

Tackling light pig syndrome

Data from 140,000 pigs have been analysed to identify why some grow slower than others and investigate how the problem of 'light pigs' can be overcome.

BPEX-funded PhD student Sadie Douglas at the University of Newcastle hopes to recommend a series of management systems and treatments to help



farmers increase the weight of piglets born under-weight or which have lost weight through illness.

"In the pre-weaning stages, some farmers cross-foster and have all the low birth-weights on one litter or they give supplementary milk. Supplementary milk is great for reducing mortality as it gives small piglets milk without competition but there are different opinions about when it should be provided. We hope to make some clear recommendations when the project results are published."

For more details, go to: www.bpex.org.uk/R-and-D/R-and-D/LightPigSyndrome.aspx

BPEX Innovation Conference

There's still time to register for the BPEX Innovation Conference on 18 June 2013 at Stoneleigh Park. The new, one-day

event will showcase the latest innovation in pig building design and pig breeding as part of the Breed +3 initiative.

For full programme details and how to register, go to:
www.bpex.org.uk/news/events/innovation/