



## Keep sows in a stable body condition



For more information on the Breed+3 initiative and to download the factsheet, Action for Productivity 20: Condition scoring of sows, go to:  
[www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/breeding/](http://www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/breeding/)

It is important to assess sow body condition accurately to ensure that appropriate nutrition is provided to each sow for maintenance, growth, reproduction and lactation.

There should be minimal variation in condition throughout a sow's productive life and producers should aim for an optimal average condition score of 3 (on a scale of 1 to 5) throughout the breeding herd.

Ideally sows should enter farrowing with a body condition score of 3 to 3.5 and complete a four-week lactation scoring 3 to 2.5 as a minimum. Very thin sows may not come into oestrus promptly post-weaning or be able to maintain the pregnancy, or consume enough feed for a good lactational yield.

Excessively fat sows may have farrowing and leg problems, produce small litters and have low feed intakes during lactation. Score sows at key times in the reproductive cycle, eg at weaning and service, mid-way through gestation, pre-farrowing and on a regular basis during lactation.

Consider the shoulders, ribs, backbone and hips, not just one location. Always score the sows by touch, using the palm of the hand as it is more accurate than just scoring 'by eye'.

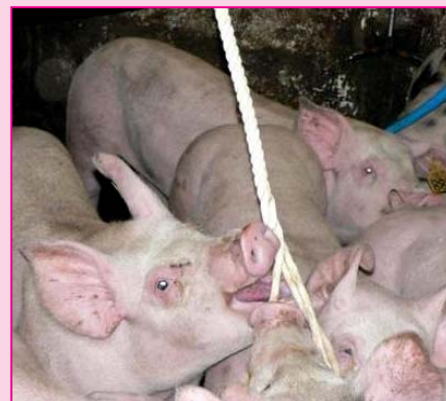
### RESEARCH

#### Showing us the ropes

Pig saliva is being used in ongoing work to develop a cost-effective disease diagnostics tool. BPEX-funded PhD student Lorna Dawson from the University of Newcastle recently visited Iowa State University, which led the original research into providing cotton ropes to groups of pigs as a means of collecting saliva for disease testing.

This non-invasive method of disease surveillance offers potential advantages to the pig industry from both financial and welfare perspectives. Lorna saw how the technical team in Iowa performs routine tests on saliva samples for infectious agents including PCV-2, PRRSv and *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae*.

The knowledge gained from this visit will help Lorna and other UK researchers move closer to establishing a practical diagnostic tool for UK pig producers.



For more about using saliva for diagnostics, go to: [www.bpex.org.uk/R-and-D/R-and-D/HealthMngmtStrategies.aspx](http://www.bpex.org.uk/R-and-D/R-and-D/HealthMngmtStrategies.aspx)

#### New innovation event

The new BPEX Innovation Conference will take place at Stoneleigh Park on 18 June 2013.

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

Go to [www.bpex.org.uk/news/events](http://www.bpex.org.uk/news/events) for full programme details and how to register.