

BPEX Regional Forums

The second round of regional forums took place in March and April 2015.

We started the each forum by going over what the forums aims were and what we wanted to achieve; this was done in the first meeting but we covered it again for the benefit of new members to the group.

It was noticeable that the North and South in particular again urged caution before committing to new trials by double checking that the work has not already been carried out elsewhere in the industry. This was raised in the first round of forums too.

Trial work

Everyone was very keen on the ultra-high frequency electronic identification (UHF EID) tag trial and felt it has the potential to have a massive impact on the industry but pointed out the tags need to match up with a data transfer recording system.

BPEX (now AHDB Pork) took the group through the concerns of the abattoirs with regard to residues and the potential impact on lower prices for the ears.

With regard to the farrowing house best practice trial, BPEX was asked to cover an outdoor aspect of this trial and not just indoor.

On the double feeder space trial, the groups urged for some considerations to be taken into account:

- What is the baseline of requirements? Is it double Red Tractor standard or double Freedom Food?
- What age of pigs are on trial?
- What group/pen size is being used?
- There must be a cost benefit analysis (as with all other trials)

It would be good if the forum members could see trial protocols before they get underway as there is a lot of industry experience in the groups and it may add value. A strict timescale on reviewing would need to be in place though.

Biosecurity Code of Practice

- Good idea, gives the industry a target to aim at/aspire to
- Could help with public perception
- Tougher on an outdoor herd, how can you ring fence and protect?
- It will represent best practice but how do you apply it?
- Has the potential to be quite complex and cumbersome if we are not careful
- Continual education is key and progression
- Can we score the biggest risks (came up in the last forum as well)?
- Can the industry be up-skilled?
- Abattoirs washing points are an area to focus on

Seasonality

- Make sure the body condition score/seasonality trials have a clear aim; there was a feeling amongst the groups that this work isn't showing anything we didn't already know
- Share results whether they are positive or negative

Antimicrobials

It was pointed out that in some cases not all antimicrobials prescribed are actually used, raising the question of whether the data is picked up from the prescription or the amount actually used.

Industry education again was urged. Where many of the producers feeding compounds will be up to speed with requirements, it may be the case that some mill and mixers need to be further educated on areas such as recording.

- Look at other ways to deliver medication
- Find out what is most used at the moment (is it still Tylan?)
- Improving husbandry skills would help negate the usage levels
- Moving to water medication is not necessarily the way forward, when it comes to trial work we need to think outside of the box and look at non-antibiotic products.
- Where are most antimicrobials being used?
- Study tours to Europe and UK looking at antimicrobial reduction

Ideas for antimicrobial trials

- Can we come up with a recording tool that is better than a vet med book?
- Impacts of water wastage
- Impact of vaccines over antimicrobials
- Top dressing – could it work? Are there any guarantees?
- Benefits of needleless vaccine guns
- Create a water manual
- Different water medication and water metered systems
- Which drinkers work well with certain medicines
- Water hygiene systems

Disinfectant

- Could BPEX (now AHDB Pork) put together or update the existing advice sheet or fact sheet on what disinfectants are available and where each one is most effective?

What next after the feeder review?

The feeder review needs further work to make it feel more complete and give more answers than it poses questions. A paragraph explaining how the work was carried out would be good. Some prices of the feeders would be useful and a more thorough explanation/overview of the feeder would be beneficial too.

Once that has been done it would be good to go into a drinker review as it would sit nicely with the antimicrobial work. It would also be very useful to look at how water pressure impacts on drinkers.

Products/approaches to reduce tail biting would also be a good area to look at.

Other trial ideas

- The benefits of using the same dam and sire lines on a unit – better growth, performance, etc?

Regional events

- Gilt workshop needs to go regionally, not centrally at Stoneleigh
- Nobody knows who the events are aimed at so more clarity is needed