

# Improving efficiency



## Allied Industry Group – July 2008

### Practical suggestions for improving efficiency within your business

#### Production

- Improve or start recording FCR in all stages of production to allow better decision making when looking to invest (such as in new buildings, feed systems or washing systems). The information will help you determine the best return on capital and how to invest money most effectively.
- Know the output capacity of your unit in kg of pig and work as close to that optimum as possible. Farrow numbers that will match that capacity. Empty farrowing crates carry right through to finish.
- Make sure that your pigs have access to enough clean drinking water. Check water flow rates, height and type of delivery units and maintain cleanliness of drinkers, especially bowls.
- Put lights on timers – electricity is expensive!
- Send your staff to a BPEX KT workshop.

#### Health

- Improve the use of vaccinations. The price for slaughter pigs is increasing but vaccination costs are static. Cost efficiency has never be better and mortality more costly
- Have and use a herd monitoring/recording programme. It is impossible to measure improvements unless you know starting point.
- Undertake a thorough clean and wash down of all windows/fans/inlets/louvers etc so they can work efficiently. This will enable the housing to function better.
- Look at strategic medication where possible with a targeted approach - treating sick animals rather than blanket medication. This would require will from the vets and feed companies etc as well as some investment in a system capable of delivering medication via water. However, strategic water medication will often be more economical than the in-feed route.
- Use and maintain a well constructed biosecurity plan for all parts of your production system. This will break potential for disease transfer by human and mechanical means. Higher health = Higher efficiency
- Join the new BPHS scheme.

#### Feed

- Order larger delivery load sizes, preferably full lorry loads (up to 27 tonnes). If this means that you require additional bulk bin capacity, speak to your feed supplier who might be able to help.
- Allow wider delivery windows - preferably 24 hours.
- Work with your veterinary group and the feed industry to reduce number of medicated feed variations.
- Use less bespoke diets. Both this and the point above would reduce the number of rations produced and therefore reduce factory downtime making feed production less costly.
- Reduce feed wastage on farm – check bulk bins, auger operation and hoppers. Ensure that your feed troughs have the right amount of feeder space, are in the right position and are of the right design for the pigs that you have. Currently average wastage is estimated to be 10 to 20%.
- Invest in wet feed systems and make use of by-product feeding to reduce feed costs.
- Think about the impact that raw materials in the diet have on your pigs – e.g. rape seed inclusions, soya, peas / beans, lactose levels for young piglets etc - and the impact that formulation specifications have on feed intake - gut health is very important in terms of production efficiency.

#### Sending pigs to slaughter

- Provide a thorough and accurate forecast of numbers in advance.
- Keep your processing customer informed as to changes that are occurring on your farm e.g.

change of breeding stock, packing up etc.

- Maximise transport by only taking full wagons to slaughter. One of the ways this can be achieved is to look at batch farrowing, to increase the number of pigs in a batch.
- Pass on accurate information at time of booking pigs e.g. numbers, slaps, delivery times, FCI and ALM2 documents.
- Select pigs to meet the processing requirement and try to get as many pigs in the top weight band on the contract specification. The grading matrix is there for a reason.
- Deliver what you said you would deliver at the time you said you would deliver them. This dramatically helps the processors planning and therefore saves cost!