



How to defend against pig disease

Robin Brice from Rattlerow Farms invested several years eradicating PRRS from one unit. At the 2TS Focus on Health conferences he highlighted some of the ways the business aims to maintain good health status.

Vermin control

He said: "An all-in/all-out system with good cleaning and disinfection is important to our biosecurity, but that alone is no good if there is a risk of vermin reintroducing disease. Vermin control has to go hand in hand with cleaning and disinfection."

Stockmanship

Good stockmanship is also central to managing pig health. "It helps us spot clinical signs of disease as early as possible so we can get any tests done, work out what the problem is and decide how to deal with it quickly."



Prioritise the pig

Thirdly, Robin emphasised his view on vaccine use: "We make sure we vaccinate at the optimum timing to benefit the pig, rather than just to suit our own routine. We see all vaccinations as insurance." All the speakers' presentations, along with

BPEX factsheets, are available to view at www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/conferences.aspx along with BPEX factsheets. The national Pig Health Improvement Project now provides the structure and resource for producers to work together. Go to www.pighealth.org.uk

Smart feed use pays dividends



Being smarter with feed not only improves the bottom line of a pig business but also pays dividends when you need to present your unit in the best environmental light to customers, neighbours or authorities.

Feed accounts for around 60% of the cost of pig production and a similar percentage of its greenhouse gas emissions.

Producers should aim to:

- Improve FCR and growth rate
- Reduce wastage and poorly-digested feed
- Pay attention to precise formulation.

Improved feed use can reduce odours, ammonia emissions, nitrate leaching, phosphate build-up in soils, carbon footprint and, importantly, it benefits pig health.

Download *2TS Action for Productivity no. 18: Efficient feed usage* for more advice: www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/resources.aspx



Get Christmas covered

It is time to plan the Christmas staff rota to ensure all jobs are covered during the celebrations and avoid a drop in pig performance. The 'to do' list includes:

- Collect staff preferences for days off over the Christmas period
- Put together a (fair) plan to ensure adequate cover on the unit between Christmas and New Year
- Train any staff who will be covering areas different from their usual responsibilities
- Write checklists so everyone knows what needs to be done in each department and standard operating procedures for things like treatment of sick pigs.