



PIG TALES



*Wishing you all a
Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year*

Introducing new genetics to your herd – minimising the risks involved.

Written by Julia James

Taking advantage of the genetic improvement achieved by pig breeding companies is a key component of efficient pig production. For this reason, the regular introduction of gilts, boars or semen, is something that should be planned into every farm breeding programme. However, whenever the 'gate' is opened to take in new stock there is inevitably a risk, and thought should be given to the various ways of minimising this. Below is a summary of action points to minimise this risk.

- Keep the number of sources of pigs or semen to an absolute minimum. The more herds you draw stock from, the greater the risk.
- Ask us to discuss the health status of any new sources of supply with the vet representing the breeding company. We can assess the degree of security that the breeding company apply to their production pyramids and transport.
- Minimise the number of times that stock is introduced. Synchronise boar and gilt deliveries, bring in larger groups of gilts at split-weights, in order to limit the number of times you have to do this, or consider within-herd multiplication, which will radically reduce the number of gilts that need to be introduced to the herd.
- Always isolate incoming stock away from your herd, in order to allow time for any developing disease to show itself.
- Bring replacement stock in younger, to allow a longer isolation period. For instance, gilts purchased as maidens are generally around six weeks away from their first eligible mating date. This gives limited time for isolation before they need to be integrated into the herd and served. Purchasing gilts at lighter weights allows isolation as well as thorough integration before they are due for mating.
- Stock in isolation should ideally be looked after by someone who has no contact with your unit. If this is completely impractical, they should be visited at the end of the working day, wearing overalls and boots dedicated to the isolation site. The stockmen involved should not return to the main herd until the following day, having had a shower and a change of clothing.



- Before stock are removed from isolation, consider whether any screening tests should be carried out, e.g. for PRRS or EP. Check with the breeding company that supplied the stock, that the multiplication herd has had no health problems, since delivering gilts to your isolation unit.
- Consider the health status of studs from which semen is purchased – again, ask your veterinary surgeon to discuss this with the breeding company. Some diseases can be spread in semen, particularly viral diseases such as P.R.R.S.

Sadly, many breeding herds fail to take note of these points, and still work on the principle that the responsibility rests only with the breeding company they are purchasing from. The reality is that precautions need to be taken at both ends of the chain, if the risk of disease transmission is to be kept to an absolute minimum.



New Partners for Larkmead

We are delighted to announce that Jennie Batt (along with Alex Cumiskey from the small animal team) will be joining the partnership from 1st January 2008. Jennie started with the practice when she was still at school and doing her work experience. At the Royal Veterinary College she spent time on some of your farms, and many still claim to have taught Jennie all she knows!! Jennie qualified with distinctions in 2004 and then joined us at Larkmead. Although very omniscient, she is already establishing herself as one of the leading pig vets in the country.



Welfare of Livestock During Transport Regulation—Certificate of Competence. What's involved?

On 5th January 2008 anyone transporting cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, horses and poultry more than 65km by road will be required to hold a certificate of competence to do so. Defra are sponsoring a series of meetings across the country organised by ADAS to highlight what the requirements are, the differences covering the under and over 8-hour journeys and to discuss the 19 competencies drawn from the Regulation that form the basis of the competence assessments.

The meetings are free of charge and will run from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm at various venues around the UK, with the closest meetings being held on **Wednesday 16th January** at Salisbury Agricultural Centre, Salisbury, Wilts, and **Wednesday 23rd January** at Cirencester Livestock Market, Cirencester, Glos. Please speak to your vet if you are interested in attending one of these meetings or would like more information.

FOOD CHAIN INFORMATION

A reminder that as from 1st January 2008, new legislation will mean that producers will be required to provide information – Food Chain Information – to the slaughterhouse about pigs sent for slaughter.

Give us a call if you need any help with this
or go to www.bpex-fci.org.uk

