



# pigbytesnewsletter

FROM THE NSW DPI PIG INDUSTRY GROUP

ISSUE 1 APRIL 2009

## FREE PIG WEBINARS IN MAY

Following the successful APL Roadshow, NSW DPI in conjunction with APL and Pork CRC will be coordinating two webinars in May. This opportunity to gain cutting-edge information without leaving home is not to be missed.

- Tuesday 5 May, 1.00pm EST - Yvette Miller

### Management strategies to improve the performance of gilt progeny

- Tuesday 12 May, 1.00pm EST - Frank Dunshea

### Consumption of selenium enhanced pork reduces colon cancer

A broadband internet connection and telephone is all that is required to participate. You will see the presentations via your internet browser and hear and ask questions of the presenter via a simultaneous teleconference.

An easy, cheap and time effective way of accessing information on pig production and having your questions answered. Each webinar will have a 15 minute presentation followed by 15 minutes for your questions.

If you wish to find out how to participate, register by sending an email to [greg.mills@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:greg.mills@dpi.nsw.gov.au) or giving Greg a call on 0488 491 648.

## IT'S TIME FOR MAINTENANCE

Which piggery repairs will provide greatest return?

Replacing worn out shed roofing with insulated panel will generally pay for itself in 1 year through better climate control and improved feed efficiency. Refer to textbook *"Plan it - Build it"* page 121. Likewise, repair and automate shed ventilation blinds.

Do you still have any *old style feeders*? Replace them with modern wet and dry competition feeders with catch trays.

This will reduce feed wastage by about 5% and pay for the new feeders within six months.

## SOW LOSS IS A MAJOR CONCERN

Recent Danish research showed that 85% of sows with leg problems returned to the main herd after an average 22 days stay by correctly using hospital pens.

Ideally, sows should remain in the herd until parity 6-7. Excessive pre-mature sow loss means that many sows are lost herd before they are their most productive (at Parity 3-4).

Sows can leave the herd early due to death (particularly in the farrowing house) or unplanned culling. Most deaths are due to heat stress or gastro-intestinal disorders. Most unplanned culls occur due to reproductive failure (not coming on heat) or due to leg problems. To minimise sow loss due to leg problems:

- Select gilts with good leg conformation. Avoid knock knees, "ballerina" toes etc.
- Give selected gilts ample space post-selection. A stocking rate of 2m<sup>2</sup> is ideal and will increase the likelihood that they will display oestrus.
- Avoid totally-slatted floors. This is a consistent cause of lameness in sows.
- Do not allow sows to become over-fat. A condition score of 3 is ideal.
- Avoid fighting among sows. Keep groups stable. Allow plenty of access to feed (most fights occur around feeding time). Consider feeding stalls or electronic sow feeders.
- Inspect pregnant sows as closely as you would weaner pigs. Walk through pens to increase the chances of detecting any ill or injured animal.
- Set aside at least 5% of the gestation pen area for "Hospital" pens and always have 1 empty pen ready for use.
- Situate hospital pens within the gestation room for ease of access.
  - 2/3 of the hospital pen should be soft.
  - House no more than 3 sows per hospital pen.
  - Space allowance should be at least 2.8m<sup>2</sup> but the pen should be at least 3.5m<sup>2</sup>.
  - Move sick or injured sows into the hospital pens as soon as they are detected.
  - Treat infections with the appropriate antibiotic



## PARTICLE SIZE OF PIG FEEDS

When feeding mash feed to pigs it should be milled as fine as you can handle in your silos and feeders.

Particle size reduction has a great influence on the efficiency of feed utilisation. By decreasing particle size of feed the surface area is increased, which allows for more efficient action of the digestive enzymes to improve digestibility of nutrients.

Improving nutrient digestibility should improve feed conversion. Also, particle size reduction can influence feed uniformity when mixed and reduce the amount of segregation occurring from mixing to the animal.

More detail can be found at the following sites;

Kansas State University - *The Effects of Diet Particle Size on Animal Performance*  
[www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/grsci2/MF2050.pdf](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/grsci2/MF2050.pdf)

Mississippi State University Extension Service  
[msucare.com/livestock/swine/particle.html](http://msucare.com/livestock/swine/particle.html)

Dept. Of Ag & Food Western Australia *PigTales*  
[www.agric.wa.gov.au/content/AAP/P/pigtales64.pdf](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/content/AAP/P/pigtales64.pdf)

CSIRO Publishing, *Effects of article size, processing and dry or liquid feeding on performance of piglets.*  
[www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view\\_file&file\\_id=AR03105.pdf](http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=AR03105.pdf)

## SWINECAST VIDEO SERIES

The SwineCast website ([www.swinecast.com/](http://www.swinecast.com/)) is a web site from the United States that has audio and video downloads on a range of pig related topics. The video section of the site ([www.swinecast.com/video-series](http://www.swinecast.com/video-series)) has a range of topics including free access gestation systems, dealing with compromised pigs and carbon footprints. You will need a broadband internet connection to view the videos effectively.

## PORKCAST WEBINAR SERIES

The PorkCast Online Webinar Series is presented by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. PorkCast involves quarterly seminars providing management level research-driven information to pork producers and managers. All past webinars are recorded and available on the website for viewing. Topics include

- Creating and Animal Welfare Program
- Pricing & Buying Feed in 2009
- Prioritising Your Energy Investment
- Bringing & Keeping Gilts in the Breeding Herd.

See [www.extension.umn.edu/swine/porkcast/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/swine/porkcast/) for more topics.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

24/6/09 PigLink – Economic impact of 3 major pig diseases in Australia (Ross Cutler)

28-29/7/09 Victorian Pig Fair – Bendigo VIC

12/8/09 PigLink – Feeding today's growing pigs (Tony Edwards)

14/10/09 PigLink – Climate change, what will it mean for pork producers (TBA)

21/11/09 Pork CRC Annual Conference – Cairns QLD

9/12/09 PigLink – Virtual piggery visit, Myora Farm SA (Jeff Braun)

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