



# pigbytesnewsletter

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## COMING EVENTS

APL/Pork CRC Roadshow will be in **Wagga on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November**. Guest speakers are Dr Mike Brumm from Brumm Swine Consultancy and Dr Joe Connor from Cathage Veterinary Consultancy in the US. Dr Brumm's topics include mistakes on feed, water and air, and technology directions in the US. Dr Connor will focus on control of respiratory disease. Other topics include animal welfare research, APIQ program, APL marketing, early piglet nutrition and weaning, and weaning to mating interval research. The final session will be "ask the expert" – where you get a chance to grill Mike, Joe and other experts present on "best practice group housing of pregnant sows" in an open forum. So please come along with questions!

Farmers attending the Roadshow are also eligible for 3 free AusScan grain analyses. Simply bring 3 x 100 to 200 grain samples labelled with your name and address and sample identification.

The seminar will run from 1pm to 5 pm and is followed by drinks. To register your attendance, or for more information, please contact Emalyn Loudon at APL on 1800 789 099.

## SOWS IN GROUPS OR STALLS

If you intend modifying your facilities for group housing get as much information as possible – poor group housing facilities can result in a much worse welfare outcome for some sows. Trish Holyoake has recently completed a Primefact on Guidelines for group housing pregnant sows

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/pigs/housing-environment/group-housing>

Contact Trish Holyoake at [Trish.Harvey.Holyoake@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Trish.Harvey.Holyoake@industry.nsw.gov.au) or telephone 02 69381993/mobile 0419 231 534 for further information.

On the US Pork Checkoff website there are audio and powerpoint presentations from the 2007 Sow Housing forum. Topics include managing different systems to meet sow nutritional needs, impacts of

different systems on labour requirements and impacts on sow longevity. There are also a couple of farmer experiences.

<http://www.pork.org/Resources/985/SowHousingForum.aspx>

## LAMENESS IN SOWS – THE IMPLICATIONS MAY BE GREATER THAN YOU THINK

The recent PigLink topic "Strategic Interventions to maximise piglets born alive per litter" by Mark Wilson emphasised the major negative impacts that sow lameness can have on herd performance. You might be thinking what does a sore foot have to do with piglets born alive?

Sow lameness can have a variety of causes and can occur in any piggery environment whether it is an outdoor or indoor operation. It is also worth noting that it is not just the lameness per se that affects sow performance but it is the accompanying inflammatory response (heat, pain and swelling) that has unseen effects on both reproduction and piglet growth.

Lameness may result from conformation defects such as uneven claw size and shape, injury due to environmental hazards (usually wet, dirty, poorly drained floors), injury due to fighting, infections and dietary deficiencies which predispose sows to injury and infection.

The inflammatory response results in production of various chemicals which begin the healing process, **but** these chemicals also signal to the brain that something is wrong and the reproductive system is depressed. The longer the inflammation persists the greater the effect on reproduction. Lameness in boars will affect their fertility also.

So what can you do if you have a lameness problem?

1. Check for possible causes such as excessive fighting among sows or environmental factors causing injury and take steps to eliminate these. Lameness may be more of a problem for group-housed sows, due to riding and/or mixing of unfamiliar sows. Early detection and



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appropriate treatment of lame sows is important here to keep these gals in your herd.

2. Check the sows' diets. Are the sows eating enough and in good body condition? Do the diets have enough calcium, phosphorus, copper, zinc, manganese and biotin?
3. Revisit your selection criteria for sow selection – do you have the right emphasis on leg and foot conformation?
4. Early intervention is the best way to minimise the effects of lameness and also gives a greater likelihood of these sows returning to the herd.
  - a. Identify lame sows through daily inspection of all pigs
  - b. Remove lame sows to a hospital pen with dry floor and straw bedding for comfort.
  - c. Treat with anti-inflammatory drugs and antibiotic if needed. Consult your vet for the most suitable products.

## WHAT TO DO WITH RECTAL PROLAPSES?

There was a recent case where a pig was photographed at a saleyard with a rectal prolapse. Questions have been asked about whether it is standard practice to transport pigs to saleyards to be sold, or whether this is a welfare concern.

Pigs with prolapses should not be transported for sale at saleyards. If in doubt, seek veterinary advice and/or humanely euthanize pigs with rectal prolapse.

Rectal prolapses occur in grower, finisher and breeding stock (occasionally) if there is excessive pressure put on the abdomen and/or due to anal irritation. This can result from persistent coughing, cold (pigs huddling on top of each other), labour contractions during farrowing, zearalanone (mycotoxin) contamination of feed and straining associated with diarrhoea. Some prolapses resolve by themselves. However, most become dirty, dried, damaged (particularly from other pen-mates) and infected.

Prompt action is required to fix prolapses. Mild prolapses can be replaced if they are noted early with a concentrated solution of sugar placed on the area. The rectum is then kept in place with a purse-string suture - seek advice from your veterinarian on this. Older prolapses may be surgically removed (again, seek veterinary advice). Pigs with small, fresh rectal prolapses may be sent direct to the abattoir for salvage slaughter; however, these pigs should be trucked individually. Be aware that prolapses are very

prone to further damage during transport particularly if the affected pigs are mixed with other pigs.

## DID YOU KNOW?

It is illegal for a person to transport an animal in a manner which unreasonably, unnecessarily or unjustifiably inflicts pain upon the animal. Individuals who do so risk a fine of \$5500 or imprisonment for 6 months or both.

If a pig arrives at the saleyard and has to be destroyed because it was cruel to keep it alive, this could be deemed as "Aggravated Cruelty" and result in a fine of \$22,000 and 2 years jail.

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