

Producers for Profit

Business improvement through staff development

Jan 08

In this Issue:



Reaching their potential



Time for Change



Friend and ally?

Plus:

- Work Instructions
- New Training calendar for SW
- Environmental Knowledge hub established
- News in Brief

pigtrain



Two out of three for Bowes of Norfolk

Bowes staff dominated the final of the Pfizer Pig Trainee of the Year Award 2007, with employee Paul Hume taking home the prestigious award.

This year's award was presented to Paul by Lord Rooker, Minister of State, Defra, at the Farmers Club in London.

The award, organised jointly with Pig World and the National Pig Association (NPA), recognises the growing importance of workplace training.

Previously the competition has only been available to the Agskills network. However, this year it was opened to all producers resulting in staff across the country competing for the title.

In addition to £500 cash, Paul received a £2000 training grant which he intends to use extending his knowledge of pig physiology, nutrition and develop his career.

The judges — Stewart Houston CBE, chairman of BPEX and the NPA, David Roberts of Pfizer Animal Health, and industry consultant Gerry Brent — were impressed by *'the determined way that the winner has developed rapidly following a career with a major retailer to a position of seniority leading a five-man team on a 1000-sow enterprise'*.

Paul is keen to acknowledge the training he has been given by his employers to gain the skills required to care for the animals and to manage and motivate others.

Congratulations also to the runners-up William Vernal (JSR Farming) and Hayley Watson (Bowes of Norfolk).



■ From left: Alan Doyle and Emmeline Randall of Pfizer Animal Health, Stewart Houston CBE, Marie and Paul Hume, Lord Rooker, Kevin Bowes and Jim Burling of Bowes of Norfolk

Winning ways

With no previous experience of the pig industry, Paul joined Bowes in December 2003. He has worked on the outdoor unit in north Norfolk since it was opened three years ago and became manager in February last year. Paul has benefited from the in-house schemes run by Bowes for all their staff and also by attending external courses organised through the East of England Pig Training Group based at Easton College, Norwich. He credits his success to a combination of hard work and investment in his development by his employer. The judges' citation of Paul stated:

'He is a good example to others that having the right attitude towards learning can offset lack of previous experience and that a motivation to continue personal development both increases interest in and satisfaction from a job and can extend the contribution that the individual can make to the business in which that person is involved.'

Work instructions

Uniformity is a key aspect of pig production, but how do you ensure that staff carry out a job in the same way?

Work instructions ensure that **all** staff have a clear idea of what to do and how to do it. Simple instructions, detailing a particular task, can help new and old staff alike.

Writing these documents provides a valuable opportunity to assess current tasks and look for more efficient ways of doing them.

They should be written in conjunction with the staff responsible for a particular task and should be reviewed regularly.

BPEX has started developing a series of these for use by the industry.

Each one will cover the general steps involved, so that they can be used as a template and adapted to fit your own specific requirements. To download your copy visit the BPEX web site.

www.bpex.org.uk



Monthly workshops

A new initiative has started in the south west, allowing both stockmen and management the opportunity to take part in regular knowledge transfer workshops.

Starting in February, the workshops will take place on the first Tuesday (Bodmin) and Wednesday (Exeter) of the month.

The workshops will be delivered by a combination of Vets, industry experts and BPEX.

Initially, the workshops will be based around production principles (with specific sessions in Exeter for outdoor production), but there is scope for participants to lead the direction of future meetings.

Helen Thoday, KT manager for the region, is setting up the workshops in answer to the increasing number of requests being received for staff development in this area.

The workshops provide the opportunity for staff to meet on a regular basis and have fun whilst improving their pig production knowledge and effectiveness on the unit.

Further details contact Helen: 0797 3701202

'Many of the producers have young staff keen to develop their careers. They see these workshops as a good way of improving the commitment of their employees to pig production and the business'

Helen Thoday, BPEX

Environmental knowledge hub

Environmental legislation challenges are coming at us from all angles.

Can we really turn this around and develop our business through improved production or capitalise on product differentiation?

The impact of IPPC implementation was softened by BPEX working with the relevant parties to develop a clear understanding of all views and help move forward in a practical manner.

In light of this successful approach, BPEX is now leading the development of a Pig Environmental Partnership so that this model can be used in the future.



Central to the partnership will be a knowledge hub dealing solely with subjects having a direct environmental impact. To be successful and provide information to advisors and producers, knowledge must flow to and from the hub.

Developing this forum, and trust amongst stakeholders, could potentially lead to a cut in inspections and other bureaucracy.

The Partnership is currently being developed, and looking to start implementing its ideas during 2008.

To be involved either providing input or by requesting information, contact Nigel on:

Tel: 07990 507 281

Change nothing and nothing will change

Constant monitoring to maintain good productivity and remain in profit was the keynote for more than 60 delegates at the George Vet fair.

The key areas of this year's fair were: economic benefits of improving the finishing house and Salmonella control.

At a time when efficient feed utilisation is vital to keeping costs down, the impact of disease and ventilation on growth rate were explained.

Animals fighting disease or having to adjust to their environment will use feed to maintain their vital body functions rather than growth.

In order to minimise these effects, and improve efficiency of production, maintaining a good health status and correct environmental conditions are essential.

Monitoring conditions on a regular basis AND making changes as appropriate could make a big difference to your production figures.

The second session focused on the nutritional management of Salmonella and current levels in the industry.

The use of certain acids may prove to be a successful way of reducing Salmonella, but this would only work if the sources of Salmonella were also controlled.

One of the major causes is rodents; controlling them and removing their faeces could help you see a **decline** in your ZAP score.

kt@bpex.org.uk



Using a simple smoke machine can help identify air flow or lack of it!

Key points

Whatever the ventilation system, it will only be effective if:

- It is appropriate for the number, size and weight of animals in the accommodation
- The environment surrounding the pigs (not the alleys) is monitored
- Equipment is maintained in good working order
- All staff understand how to use the system and what to do in a breakdown
- The system is monitored regularly

Establishing the weaned pig

A fall in growth rate at weaning is a common problem, preventing many pigs from reaching their potential and reducing your profits.

Producers attending the BPEX Autumn workshops discussed the wide range of factors that impact on piglets at weaning and worked together to look at the options available to minimise these losses.

Practical observations and experience were combined with research results to identify some of the simplest, but most effective, ways to minimise this temporary halt in production.

As a result key points about preparing the piglet for the process and also what to do in the first week after weaning were talked through.

An information pack on 'Establishing the Weaned Pig' is now available or if you would like a workshop to be run in your area contact the KT team:

kt@bpex.org.uk

Key points

- Produce a heavy, healthy weaned piglet
- Minimise the challenges – maintain health
- Provide the correct environment
- Maximise feed intake and growth as soon as possible
- Measure growth rate to ensure your pigs are achieving their potential



Producers and students working out the best way to look after weaners with Vet Roger Blowey.

Don't fear the media - they can be a help to your cause

Talking to a journalist, either on the radio or on the TV, may seem like a daunting task, but for a group of producers, the task has got a whole lot easier following their media training.

BPEX and the NPA have been working hard to increase press coverage of the pig industry problems. However, pig producers speaking to the local press will significantly improve this campaign.

In order to help producers step up to this challenge BPEX has run two media training courses for producers, with a third planned for January.

The aim of training was to develop awareness of the media, preparing appropriate responses, and to enhance the presentation style when dealing with the broadcast media.

Following an introduction and discussion of the different types of media, the producers got straight to work giving mock interviews and reviewing each other's performance. Throughout the day, the focus moved from radio to tv, with the final interview simulating a studio appearance.

As a result, the participants are now capable of providing clear and coherent messages to the media, which will have an impact on the effectiveness of the message going out but also help improve the image of the industry to the public.

If you are interested in this kind of training contact:
tess_howe@bpex.org.uk

Speaking to the media - Checklist

Thinking about the following points will help you get your point across effectively.

- 1 Who is the reporter?
- 2 Which organisation do they represent?
- 3 Who is the interview for?
- 4 What do you want to talk about?
- 5 What's in it for me?
- 6 Am I the best person for this interview?
- 7 Am I authorised to speak about this?
- 8 Is it live or pre recorded?
- 9 Where will it happen?
- 10 Remember you are in control - they need you!



Lizzie Press undergoing the final interview of the day.

In brief:

Cash for development

BPEX is working with the Regional Development Agencies to secure financial support for the industry. Funding is available for both business and staff development. If you are thinking of investing in your business, you may be eligible for support. Contact Tess on 07779 321 078 for further information.

If you would like more information about staff development, or have an article for the newsletter please contact Tess:
tess_howe@bpex.org.uk or 07779 321078

Educating careers choice

Jobs in the pig industry were on display at the recent *Careers in the Countryside* event organised by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society. The event attracted over 800 children and careers advisors, giving them an insight into the wide and varied roles in agriculture today. Not to mention meeting a real pig farmer!

Pig to Plate

The latest Young NPA meeting took place at MLC headquarters. The group gathered to observe practical demonstrations in carcass classification and cutting. The afternoon session reviewed current consumer buying habits and provided an opportunity to discuss potential marketing strategies.