



## Kennel conversions cut days to slaughter by 4 days

### Farm facts

**Name:** Blanchard Enterprises Ltd.  
**Location:** Southmoor, Abingdon, Oxford  
**Farm size & enterprise:** 500 sow farrow to finish

### Benefits

- Days to slaughter have been reduced by 3-4 days (currently 135 days from birth to slaughter)
- Strawing up is now a one-person job as opposed to two
- Staff are happy as the kennels can still be strawed up via the roof (which was their main concern regarding the conversions) and it is easier to do as they can straw up through the holes

### Background

At a health meeting in Oxford the farm manager of Blanchard Enterprises Ltd, Steve Newing, raised issues he was having with the pigs dunging in the lying areas and wallowing in the liquid feed. He wanted to improve the finishing environment to overcome these issues.

### Key to success

- Holes and chimneys have been put into the top of all the kennels in the finishing accommodation
- Min-max thermometers have been installed and are checked daily
- A humidity meter has also been installed
- Six pigs are tagged at each weaning and are weighed each week to measure the ongoing performance in the finishers
- Improving staff moral

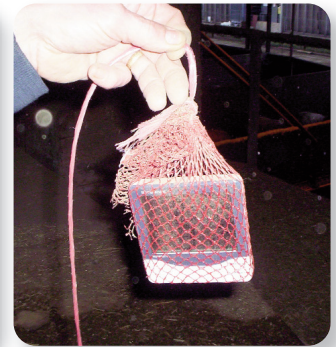
### Time spent within optimum temperature zone

Logger number	1	2	3	4	5
Time within comfort zone before conversions %	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Time within comfort zone after conversions %	13.1	8.5	15.4	3.8	10.0
Improvement following conversions %	10.8	6.2	13.1	1.5	7.7

“ We knew the temperature was not ideal but the information has showed us how extreme it was. Making the changes has been a good motivator for the staff and the system has improved. ”  
*Steve Newing, farm manager*



Closed 'chimneys'



Digital thermometer

### The system

Steve placed temperature loggers in six kennels and made a number of conversions, including adding chimneys/vents, to five kennels. He kept one kennel unchanged to act as a control.

We analysed the data collected over 65 days, logging the time spent within the optimum temperature zone (Table I), taken from the Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock Pigs. Steve and Jennie Batt from Larkmead Vets then used the data collected to get to grips with the extent of the problem and instigate the appropriate changes.