



Target

Farm

Action

A monthly digest of practical advice for pig farmers from BPEX

Getting a pig's eye view of moving

A finishing pig will be moved at least twice and often up to six times during its life.

Some of these moves may involve loading onto a vehicle or into a weigh scale and all will involve wanting the pigs to keep walking forward!

However the reality can often be pigs stopping and refusing to move, or panicking, trying to escape or stampeding back from whence they came ie towards you at the rear.

If this is a situation you recognise, then perhaps it is time to look at the whole operation from the pig's point of view.

First it is necessary to understand that throughout the whole procedure, you have to remain calm.

Trying to move a large group by standing at the rear, crowding them or yelling will invariably not work.

The more excited the pigs become, the more difficult it is to move them.

So what can you do? Three simple steps:

1. Prepare the route. Make sure the route is escape proof and clear of any distractions that they will stop and explore, ie objects lying on the ground, dangling chains, brushes etc. Ideally the barriers should be solid and high enough to restrict their field of view.

2. Make it pig friendly. If there is a right angled bend ahead as shown above, introduce a curved partition to guide the pigs through the bend. Any change of surface

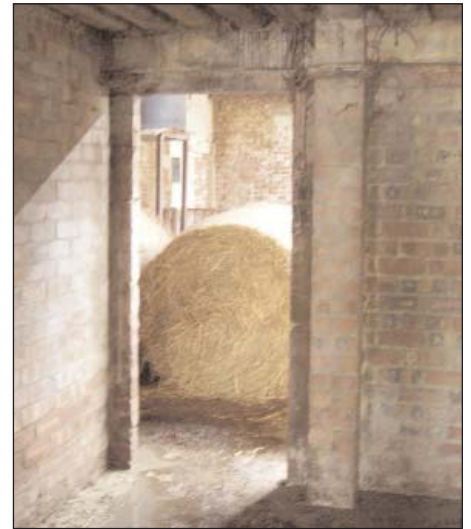


● **Moving from a dark area to a light one - or vice versa - can stop the animals moving**

under foot will cause them to stop, typically when leaving their pen. Where appropriate use straw on the passage way to encourage the pigs to keep moving.

Also moving from a dark area into a bright light and vice versa, or along a section of the route that has strong shadow and bright spots can cause the pigs to stop.

Try to manage the internal light intensity around the exit and screen the openings causing the shadow if possible.



● **If it looks like a dead end pigs won't want to keep going**

3. Use the pig's behaviour to your advantage. They have a natural tendency to follow each other and maintain visual or bodily contact. Allow the group to produce a 'lead pig' and the others will follow.

It is imperative that you only move small manageable groups and let them move at their own pace.

Remember the old saying, 'more haste, less speed' next time you are chasing escaped or stampeding pigs!

New KT manager joins BPEX

A new Knowledge Transfer manager has been appointed by BPEX to cover the Eastern region.

Colin Stone has spent most of his working life at the 'coalface' and most recently managed a large operation at Thetford.

He has a comprehensive knowledge of breeding and finishing pigs kept in large numbers both indoors and out.

He said: "I am delighted to be joining BPEX and keen to use my existing skills and knowledge to tackle new challenges.

"I have spent much of my spare time visiting other countries to gain a wider view of husbandry and management



systems. These visits have included trips to the USA, Spain, Holland, Denmark and more recently China which has given me an insight into the problems facing the industry worldwide."

BPEX Director Mick Sloyan said: "The practical knowledge and skills Colin will bring to the post are exactly what is needed.

"Knowledge Transfer involves making sure best practice is applied on units and he is ideally placed to do this."

Colin is a former director of the East of England Pig Training Group and in his spare time enjoys photography, walking and country sports.

Grants up for grabs!

The BPEX Innovation Fund has already given grants to half a dozen projects and new ones are now being sought. We are specifically looking for projects which could mitigate the effects of environmental legislation, particularly IPPC, and projects to improve pig growth rates.

Outdoor producer Steve Hart received one of the first grants, and developed a handling and weighing system incorporating the Pharmweigh Auto Drafter, for easier selection of slaughter weight pigs in outdoor systems.

Steve said: "I would recommend anybody who has a good idea but not enough money to develop it to get stuck in. The BPEX KT staff are very helpful."

Guidelines and the application form can be found on the BPEX website, or contact the KT team (kt@bpex.org.uk) to discuss your idea.

For more information contact Miriam Drewett on 01908 844749 email miriam.drewett@bpex.org.uk

