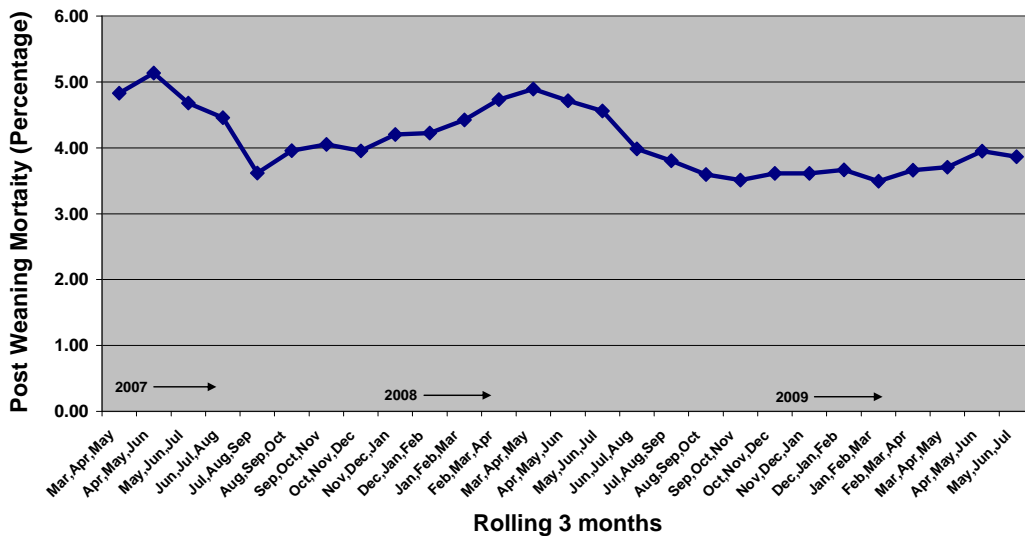


NADIS BPEX Commentary – August 2009

. As part of the NADIS surveillance system, specialist pig Veterinary Surgeons around the country report on both disease prevalence and production parameters. Over two years, data has now been collected and annual trends are starting to emerge.

One of the most important parameters measured is mortality of growing pigs from weaning to slaughter. Over two years the mortality recorded from the surveyed population (graph 1) has dropped from over 5% (consistent with the BPEX Yearbook figures for 2007) to 3.5% by the beginning of this year – an improvement of 30% coinciding with the widespread uptake of PCV2 vaccines during the first half of 2008. The spring of 2008 and 2009 has seen a seasonal rise in mortality – rising from 4% to 5% in 2008 and from 3.5% to 4% in 2009 – which would represent winter born pigs.

Graph 1 - Post Weaning Mortality 2007 - 2009

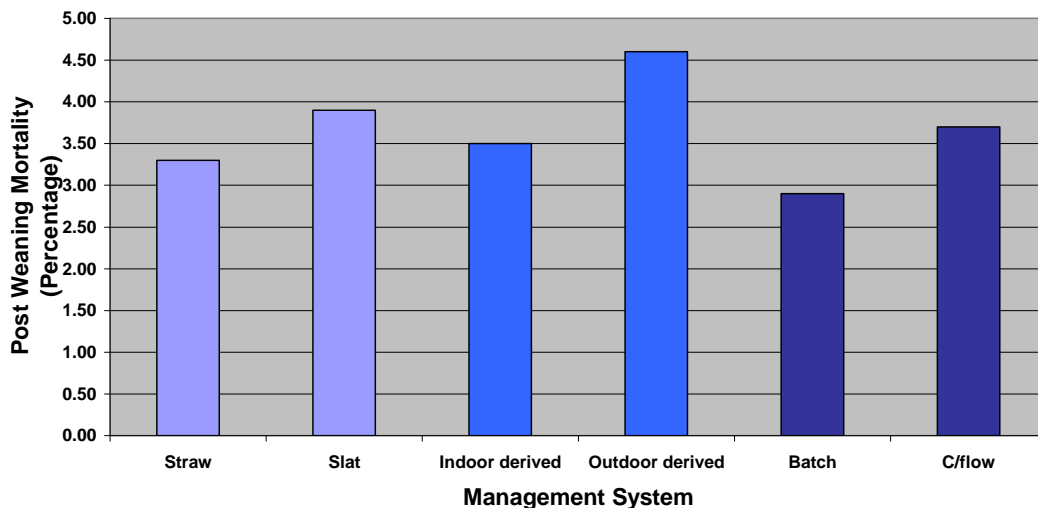


It should be noted that the month in which figures are collected represent the preceding three months production and thus the rise is a genuine winter feature.

It will be interesting to see if the downward underlying trend and seasonal variation are continued over the next twelve months.

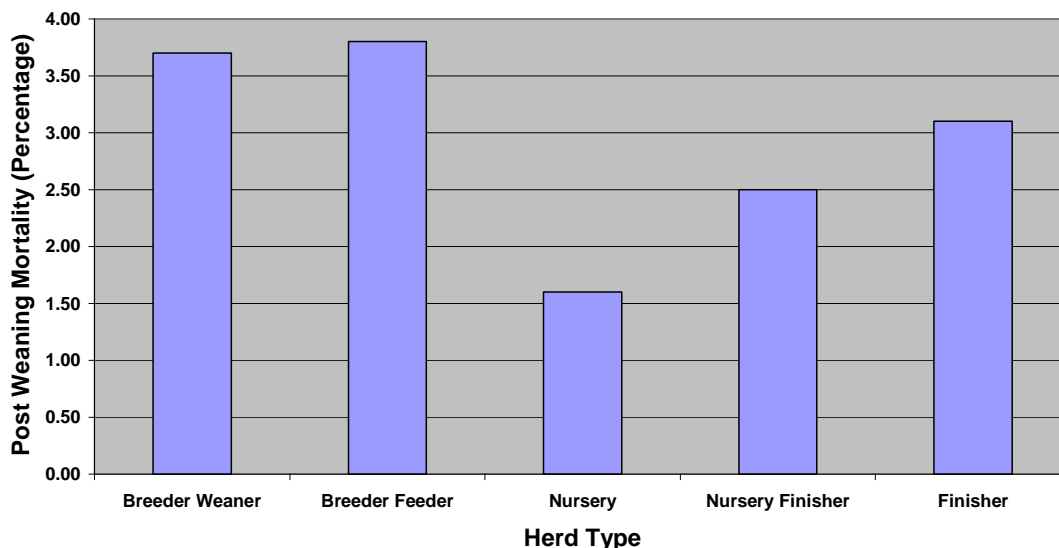
Within systems, variations in mortality are also shown in the data. (Graph 2.) As would be expected batch production experiences 20% less mortality than continuous flow systems and the higher death rates on slatted compared to straw based systems may coincide with batching of pigs. However, recorded mortality in outdoor derived pigs over the last year has been 30% higher than in indoor derived pigs.

Graph 2 - Post Weaning Mortality - by Management System



Separation of growing pigs from sows (graph 3) also throws up interesting patterns. Removal of weaners (weaning to 30kg) to a separate nursery yields mortality levels vastly lower than that seen in herds where pigs remain on the breeding farm to 30kg (1.6% versus 3.7%). Similarly, separating pigs to a nursery/finisher site appears to lower mortality when compared to a breeder/feeder farm (2.5% versus 3.8%).

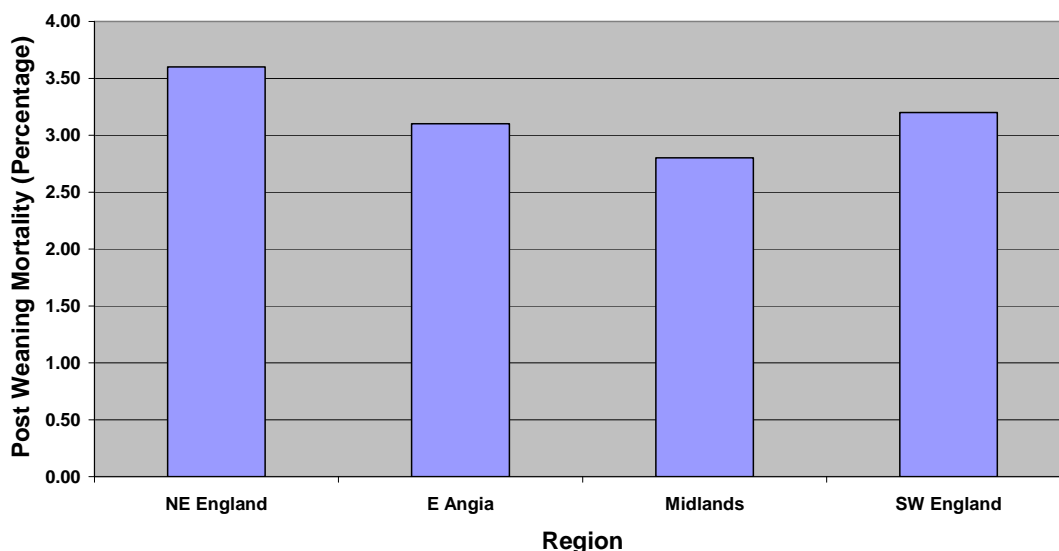
Graph 3 - Post Weaning Mortality - by Herd Type



Rather surprisingly, however, breeder/weaner and breeder/feeder farms in the surveyed population have experienced similar levels of mortality suggesting that deaths occur predominantly in the younger pigs. This may represent a significant change from experiences of the last 5-7 years in the face of PMWS/PDNS.

There are small differences in regional mortality levels with North East England seeing the highest levels (graph 4), which may also coincide with the greater number of slatted systems compared to East Anglia.

Graph 4 - Post Weaning Mortality - by Region



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