

TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Pig Industry Training Strategy, From Sustainability to Sustained Ability

Throughout 2007 BPEX has continued to work on implementing the recommendations of the 2006 Pig Industry Training Strategy, From Sustainability to Sustained Ability.

The three main objectives of the strategy are:

- Develop skills and qualifications structure that is relevant to industry needs and accessible at all levels and flexible in structure
- Provide and promote an attractive environment for a progressive career in the pig industry
- Promote skills development as being central to business improvement

Certificates of Competence

As part of the strategy the pig industry has, in association with the NPTC produced three qualifications:

- Stage 1 Certificate of Competence in Basic Stockmanship and Welfare (pigs)
- Stage 2 Certificate of Competence in Pig Husbandry Skills
- Stage 3 Certificate of Competence in Pig Unit Supervision

These practical qualifications allow staff to be assessed on individual modules, which are relevant to their everyday working requirements. Although training may be required for some staff, for many stockmen and supervisors these qualifications can be based on their previous experience, with assessment simply providing official recognition of their skills and knowledge.

Unlike other qualifications, the assessment of these Certificates of Competence is built around the individual. Assessment is a combination of multiple-choice tests, practical observations and for stage three, written assessments.

To overcome a further barrier to achieving qualifications - that of time, the Certificates of Competence are in a modular format that can be delivered either formally in college or on-farm. To aid people through the certificates three comprehensive, easy-to-use manuals have been produced, which cover all the information required and includes tasks and checks to monitor progress. In addition, to help those staff doing the certificates on farm, a fourth manual has also been developed for trainers. This handbook covers all three qualifications and will guide any manager through the training process. The manuals are also proving valuable since they frequently refresh trainees' and trainers' knowledge or bring something new to discussions.

Both the pig husbandry skills and the supervisory skills certificates offer scope for further development, as there is a range of optional modules to be taken beyond the requirements of the certificate. Each further module will receive recognition from the NPTC.



In May 2007 the Pig Industry Professional Register (PIPR) was officially launched with the support of Lord Rooker, Minister for Sustainable Food and Farming and Animal Health, Defra. Both Jack Ward (NPTC) and Richard Longthorp (producer and pig industry training champion) introduced the new scheme to an invited group of producers, government, allied industry and funding bodies.

PIPR has been established to encourage lifelong learning and to recognise professionalism of the pig industry. It aims to record, recognise and reward training and professional development undertaken within the industry. PIPR seeks to encourage progression within the industry whether it is to become more skilled in the same role or moving onwards to a higher role. By joining the scheme individuals receive an independent record of their personal development and commitment as well as receiving full recognition for all aspects of their professional development including previous experience.

To take part in the scheme applicants need to register their current qualifications and/or experience and decide which of the four categories they fit into:

- Skilled stockman
- Supervisor
- Manager/owner
- Advisor associate

PIPR points are allocated to courses that have registered their course with the NPTC. On receiving a completed application form, the NPTC allocates points based on the event duration, how many people will be there, and how participative it is. As an example, knowledge transfer workshops generally get 8-10 points, pig discussion groups 4, conferences 10 and specific participative training such as the media courses run by BPEX can achieve 24.

Points are also available for such activities as being involved in the quarterly veterinary visit on farm or through visiting exhibitions.

Management training

Whilst much of the effort so far in implementing the training strategy has focused on stockmanship skills, there is a clear need for all levels of staff to engage in professional development.

Businesses using management training find their managers can develop and retain staff better and are able to promote internally, helping to maintain consistency and efficiency of the unit. As a result of increasing requests, BPEX is now offering training opportunities for management and supervisory staff such as:

- Coaching and developing staff
- Introducing supervision (2 day)
- The self-manager
- Getting the most out of people

Rural Development Programme England

Implementing the training strategy across the nation is an expensive task. With this in mind, BPEX is working with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to ensure that financial aid is available to producers to help improve their competitiveness and increase involvement in staff development.

Under a programme launched by DEFRA in 2006, over £3.3 billion is available through the Rural Development Programme (England) (RDPE). This scheme is jointly funded by the EU, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Government. England are also making use of Voluntary Modulation funding through this programme. The programme runs from 2007-2013.

Of this budget some £600 million will be made available to make agriculture and forestry more competitive. The livestock sector in particular is focusing on three key areas: competitiveness, nutrient management, and animal welfare.

Potential funding ideas include:

- Vocational training, information actions; farm modernisation
- Adding value to agricultural products
- Development of new products, processes and technologies



Unfortunately a national application for this funding is not possible, as each region is handling the programme differently with slightly different priorities. As such BPEX will be working with each of the eight regions to ensure funding for all producers. The main principles behind the applications are:

- Assessing training needs (business and personal)
- Delivering relevant, flexible training to farmers in suitable formats
- Ensuring there are sufficient trainers and assessors available in the region, and where insufficient, identify potentials and provide appropriate “train the trainer”/assessor skills
- Recording formal and informal skills development via an established CPD scheme (PIPR)
- Using the PIPR scheme to encourage ongoing development
- Providing training for all levels of staff (production and non-production issues)
- Demonstrating business benefits of skills development and new concepts by case study examples
- Expanding the use of producer groups to small ‘self-help’ groups that can share practical advice and improve the productivity of similar businesses
- Improving communication and understanding throughout the supply chain
- Improving resource use efficiency and environmental management including recycling
- Improving staff awareness of health and welfare issues

For more details in each region, contact Tess Howe, BPEX Training Co-ordinator or email tess.howe@bpex.org.uk

Producers for profit

A training newsletter, Producers for Profit, is printed six times a year to keep you up-to-date with all training activities and with progress on the training strategy. The newsletter is distributed through Pig World; copies are also available from BPEX and the latest edition can be found in the training area of the BPEX website.



Work Instructions

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 experienced 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 is 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 specific requirements. To download a copy, visit the BPEX website.

Media Training

The importance of media training has never been more important for the pig industry than it is today. 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. To help producers step up to this challenge BPEX has run three media training courses for producers. The aim of the 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 participants 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 situation.

As a result, those trained are now capable of providing clear and coherent messages to the media, which has had a positive impact on the effectiveness of the message being delivered and improved the image of the industry.



Participants putting theory into practice