

Herd Health Focus Of LanChester Pork Council Meeting

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speaker at a LanChester Pork Council meeting Tuesday.

Rodibaugh, DVM, Swine Health Services, Frankfort, Ind., was one of several speakers at the 44th annual meeting and pork production forum. The meeting drew approximately 80 producers and industry representatives to Yoder's Restaurant.

By definition, nonproductive days (NPD) are any days that a sow or gilt is not gestating or lactating. Reducing the NPD improves herd efficiency and decreases costs per pig produced on such factors as feed, facility, genetics, and labor.

The components of NPD are:

- Preservice intervals (entry to service, gilts) (wean to service, sows).

- Postservice intervals (days from service until detected non-pregnant).

- Removal intervals (cull, death); (wean to removal); (Service to removal); and (entry to removal).

Although establishing a benchmark is difficult, targets would be (the data is a little optimistic, said Rodibaugh):

Gilts:

- Entry to first service: 10-20 days.

- Entry to removal (no service): less than three days.

- First service to conception: less than three days.

- First service to removal: less than three days.

These numbers are a little higher for sows.

Total NPD numbers are ideally between 30-50. The interval from service until detected as open is a leading predictor of NPD, and "that's what we probably work on more than anything," said Rodibaugh.

"Putting NPD knowledge into practice is not rocket science, and

you already know them (good management routines). It's just a matter of knowing the tools."

Estrus detection, real time ultrasound at three days, and gestation management, such as nutrition, watching sow conditions, checking for physical problems, and stress are part of shortening the NPD number.

Numerically, the value on one NPD might have on an operation is about .05 pigs per female per year. "NPD is an indicator of female throughput, which has economic consequences," he said.

Dr. Nate Winkelman, swine consultant and owner of Swine Services Unlimited, Inc., discussed not only the diagnostics of ileitis but also the treatment, control, and prevention of the disease.

"The disease has been around for a while," said Winkelman. It was first described in scientific journals in 1931, but it was not until 1993 that the cause of ileitis — *Lawsonia intracellularis*, — was first cultured.

In 2001 the first vaccine went on the market.

The disease also occurs in rats, hamsters, horses, rabbits, deer, fox, ferrets, emus, ostriches, and monkeys but not humans, he said. It has worldwide distribution.

In addition, it is considered the most common cause of diarrhea by U.S. veterinarians.

According to Winkelman, outbreaks cost producers \$3.50-\$7 per pig in lost performance and mortality. The disease peaks at 18-28 days with a lot of diarrhea from the animal, but it may have a long incubation period. The animals, he said, may not test positive for two to six weeks.

In its chronic form, found in animals 10-20 weeks old, the pigs have a dramatic weight variation as they go off feed and have soft-to-watery stool. It is transmitted

fecal-to-oral contact, but mainly through pig-to-pig contact, although boots and vehicles may also spread the bacteria. It can live in the pit for 13 days.

Its acute forms, in young adults 4-12 months, may cause sudden death with no apparent clinical signs. The pigs may be pale and anemic looking, plus have black or bloody feces.

A variety of tests run on tissue cultures from the small intestine can show whether the animals had ileitis. Besides postmortem examinations, tests can be run on pea-sized fecal samples.

The samples must be taken directly from the rectum (as opposed to the floor) and kept on ice before taken to the lab within 24 hours.

As for treatment and control, there are four feed-grade antibiotics approved by FDA, and several pending approval. Feed additives are much better to use as a prevention and control measures rather than as treatment, he said. "You have to get ahead of the disease."

In addition, there are several water medication options. Injectable antibiotics have worked well in trials, he said. Feed antibiotics may not be as effective if the animal has ileitis, since they eat less when they have the disease.

"You want to pulse them with feed antibiotics before you see clinical signs," he said. Also, too many stressors can overwhelm a feed-grade antibiotic.

"If you've got an outbreak, you need to be using water medication — that's what is going to stop that outbreak." Pulse the antibiotics ahead of time, since the disease is harder to control with increased severity.

"Be aggressive with effective injectable and water medication," he said.

Disinfectants that kill the bacteria are ammonium chloride or

an iodine-based disinfectant, though most importantly the facility needs to be cleaned with a hot water wash to get rid of the fecal matter, said Winkelman.

In fact, prevention includes designating a clean and dirty zone in the barn for boots or barn clothes. Change boots between barns, and clean off boots before dipping into a footbath, he said.

Follow up with appropriate feed-grade antibiotics.

National Pork Board spokesman Nicole Boettger highlighted pork checkoff efforts.

Success in the industry, she said, has been achieved as producers evolved to meet consumer demand, since there is 31 percent less fat on hogs than 20 years ago. She also noted that the "Pork. The other white meat" campaign, launched in 1987, is the fifth most recognized tagline in marketing history.

The organization also helped the industry make strides in exporting. America has moved from being an importer to a large-scale exporter of pork. Also, the pork board's efforts have helped to increase pork in foodservice 17 percent in 2001.

Other efforts by the board include rebranding — giving a new look to — the pork checkoff. In addition the board offers a Producer Service Center — 1-800-456-PORK — for questions, education, and market reports.

The afternoon consisted of PQA Level 3 recertification by Chet Hughes, Lancaster County livestock extension agent. Hughes highlighted animal handling procedures that are part of the Trucker Quality Assurance Program (TQA).

Hughes wanted to enhance the PQA program by bringing to pork producers information presented to livestock haulers "so that you can understand what you need to do before the hogs get on the truck, and what hap-

pens until they get to the plant," he said.

One example of proper animal handling procedure is the spare use of electric prods, which can cause stress which may lead to a heart attack and perhaps death.

Although Hughes did not say that the prods should never be used, "learn to minimize use and find better ways to handle hogs without the abusive use of electric prods," he said.

As for loading ramps, they should generally be 20-25 percent slope or less.

While the hogs are being loaded, "it's not a race to get the pigs on the truck — it's not a contest," Hughes said.

"Give them time to find their way, and it's a little smoother." Move the animals in smaller groups (3-5 animals) for easier handling and less stress.

The goal, he reminded the audience, is to "get the pigs to the packing plant not all banged up and bruised and stressed."

Do not load downer pigs that cannot stand; rather, put them on a sled to move to a pen, Hughes said.

Also, "make sure that your load-out crew understands how to load pigs, and what you're trying to accomplish," said Hughes, recommending to "put the dog away," and not hang a jacket on the loading chute.

Producers should also inspect the loading chutes for anything that would bruise or tear the hogs.

Opening the barn curtains 15 minutes prior to loading allows the hogs to get acclimated to the outside temperature.

"This animal handling issue is one that is in the front burner right now. It's something we have to think about.

"It's to your advantage that you get the hogs there safely — it's important to have a good relationship with your truck driver."

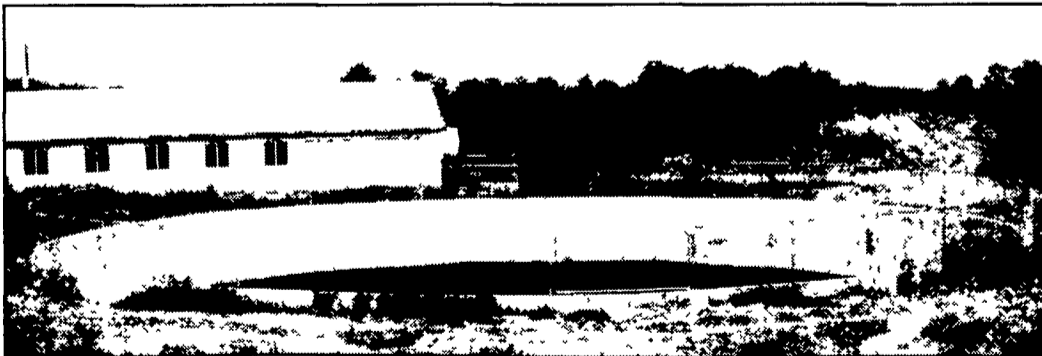
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