



## North Pig Monitor Farm Group

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Report on 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting held Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Provisional date of next meeting: Wednesday 22nd July 2009

**Facilitators:**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This was the inaugural meeting of the new North Pig Monitor Farm Group which met at the Lochter Centre, Oldmeldrum. There was an excellent turnout of nearly 40 people representing producers, pig staff, vets, advisers, feed companies and the wider pig industry. Joint-facilitators were Jim Booth and Jamie Robertson.

The Pig Monitor Farm is a representative commercial pig farm who opens up their business to the Community Group. The programme is about improving the performance of Pig Producers through setting goals, recording progress, benchmarking, sharing information and ideas, adopting best practice, having a market led approach and ensuring knowledge transfer to the wider Scottish pig industry.

### **The aim of this first meeting was to:**

1. Introduce the Group to the Logierieve pig unit
2. Review the Logierieve business by undertaking a SWOT analysis
3. Identify possible future meeting topics
4. Outline and discuss the Pig Monitor Farms Project

## **2. THE LOGIERIEVE PIG UNIT**

The Group was provided with a detailed handout describing the unit, analysis of the past year's grading, performance summary from Agrosoft, Benchmarking results from Prime Numbers and financial analysis from the previous two years. – see appendix 1.

Roderic Bruce and Jamie provided an overview of the Logierieve business, which included video footage of the buildings and facilities. The business comprises two units, Logierieve and Corthiemuir (4 miles apart), and extends to 200ha (495ac) all owned. Roderic runs the business with 2 pigmen and 1 tractorman. The pig unit comprises 350 sows on an indoor system, with the progeny all finished to bacon weight and marketed through SPP. Feed is home mixed using wheat and barley grown on the all-arable farm with a further c450t of purchased cereals.

## **3. SWOT OF LOGIERIEVE**

Following the buffet, the Group re-convened to undertake a SWOT on the Logierieve business. This was undertaken by four separate sub-groups.

### **Strengths**

- Roderic's ability and drive
- The quality of the staff, their experience & motivation
- Excellent physical performance; in top 20% of units
- Profitable business, excellent financial performance, very high return on capital
- Home mixer – saves up to £30/t?
- Operate closed herd, good health status
- Produce own gilts
- Keep batches together through the system; no mixing
- Good grading results (85% in band Q & 1)
- Maintains good records which aids management
- Sufficient slurry storage for NVZ Regulations

### **Weaknesses**

- Operates on two sites; 4 miles apart
- Have some old building which are labour intensive
- Low growth rate (655g/day) in 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2008
- The genetic improvement in the herd
- Herd health good but could be improved

### **Opportunities for improvements**

- Investigate reasons for low growth rate (genetic limitation? diet? health?, etc)
- Box first two feeds
- Consider partial de-population
- Variability of performance through the system
- Use of older building – invest to replace
- Pre-weaning mortality – crushing?
- Still room to improve grading
- Major Investment
- 3-week batch farrowing
- induce the sows
- additional grain storage

### **Potential Threats**

- Pig price volatility
- Major disease breakdown
- High feed and protein prices
- Loss of labour; either accident or leave for some reason
- Changes in the Vion contract
- Poor genetics, how maintain the dam line
- Some consumer health issue affecting demand for pigmeat
- Fact single Scottish processor - VION
- Increasing imports
- Sterling strengthens against Euro; currency fluctuations
- Poor harvest and increased mycotoxin risk

## **4. FUTURE MEETING TOPICSS**

The Group considered topics for future meetings, these included:

- The Group need further information on pig performance at different stages / buildings and cause of mortality in Roderic's unit.
- The cost: benefit analysis of different hygiene practices
- Need to identify the area which would provide the greatest return if improved
- Develop and agree a robust production costing model
- Identify and monitor the key performance indicators for a pig business
- Improve the daily LWG and FCR.
- Monitor and contrast the performance of pigs on straw

- Investment appraisal and payback for new buildings
- Restricted versus ad lib feeding
- Improving grading through effective weighing systems (contrast Gask and Baluss)
- Effective AI; impact of different catheter size

## **5. THE SCOTTISH PIG MONITOR FARMS PROJECT**

The facilitators provided an overview of the Scottish Pig Monitor Farms Project

There are two pig monitor farms (North and South) and the aim is to try and cover both units at future meetings

The South Monitor Farm is Strathmore Farms, Glamis (David Soutar), who operate a 630 outdoor sow unit selling progeny under the freedom food banner.

Each Monitor Farm Group will meet at least 4 times per year.

The venue, day and timing of future meetings were discussed by the Group. It was agreed Lochter was a convenient venue. The preferred day would be either Monday or Tuesday. The current time of 4.00-7.30pm was acceptable.

The project will establish a 'Management Group', comprising of representatives from the Community Group (CG). The purpose of the Management Group is to represent the CG, provide feedback and guidance to the project. It will comprise of 5-6 reps who would normally serve for a year. Nominations or volunteers to serve on the Management Committee should contact either Jim or Jamie within the next two weeks.

### **Date of next meeting**

A provisional date has been set for Wednesday 22nd July.

## **APPENDIX 1**