

# Adoption of a Biosecurity Tool

Point of production: Farrow to Finish

Country of origin: Ireland



A 300-sow farrow-to-finish unit that was positive for PRRS, APP, Mycoplasma and influenza and previously had other problems, including diarrhoea, respiratory disease and meningitis adopted the University of Ghent Biosecurity Scoring Tool. The tool enables farmers to review

biosecurity and improve performance on their farms through reviewing their unit management. It scores different aspects of biosecurity and allows farmers to identify areas of weakness to address. The ultimate aim is for improvements in biosecurity to translate into better pig health and performance, along with lower costs.

## The tool - Biocheck.UGent ®

The Biocheck.UGent risk-based biosecurity scoring system is a tool available online that allows users to assess the biosecurity level of pig herds in a quantitative and objective manner. The scoring system is based on a questionnaire that can be filled in online and which provides immediate and detailed feedback on the biosecurity situation of the herd.

## The solution - Best practice

A series of management and biosecurity practices that have helped improve pig health and performance and reduce costs. Improvements enabled:

Review and identification of problems on farms is important prior to taking action. Veterinarians, advisors and nutritionists, along with the farmer, were involved in the discussions to find the most cost-effective way of addressing issues on farm. As a result of these discussions, changes to the farm included:

- Reduced stocking density in particular areas.
- Changes in the flow of animals.
- No longer mixing of piglets.
- Introduction of footbaths and other hygiene measures.

A key change was to build extra accommodation to have the right proportions between the different production stages and allow pigs the right space. Thus, the 'all-in-all-out' system is undertaken correctly and re-mixing of pigs is now avoided. Although this change required an initial investment, it paid off very quickly – seen in the 9.3% decrease in production costs per kg slaughter weight.



Scoring of piglet housing.



Hanging creep feeders to reduce contamination.

## Cost/Benefit analysis

- ✓ Control of most of the respiratory and digestive problems and meningitis
- ✓ A reduction in antibiotic use by 90%
- ✓ Removal of zinc at therapeutic levels
- ✓ A reduction in days to slaughter of two weeks, with no change to final carcass weight
- ✓ Production costs per kg slaughter weight dropped from 1.66 €/kg to 1.5€/kg, a decrease of 9.3%

- Changes took two years to implement
- An initial financial investment was required to enact changes, e.g. new accommodation was built, additional cleaning and disinfecting implemented.

## Additional information

The farm has been adapted to ensure the thorough cleaning, disinfection and drying of all materials.

Clear instructions and blackboards are available on each door for all staff to be able to follow protocols and leave feedback.

## Further Research & Project Links

[https:// www.eupig.eu/](https://www.eupig.eu/)

Link to technical report

Biocheck scoring tool

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