A new research project has been funded by Defra for a three year period to help improve our understanding of the factors that contribute nationally to risk of pig disease. The goal is to develop cost-effective strategies for the British pig industry that will promote animal health and welfare, leading to improved productivity and to a reduced incidence of foodborne zoonoses such as Salmonella.

The industry currently collects a lot of different information on aspects of pig production and health which, if brought together, has the potential to improve our knowledge of the epidemiology of clinical and sub-clinical disease on farms. The project team will be pooling their knowledge and resources to achieve this outcome of better value from the efforts which are already taking place. The work is co-ordinated by Newcastle University, with a scientific team from SAC, Veterinary Laboratories Agency and Livestock Management Systems, and industrial partners including BPEx, NPA, Assured British Pigs, Genesis Quality Assurance, Quality Meat Scotland and Agrosoft.

In the first stage of the project, we will bring together existing information on different disease conditions of economic importance to the pig industry, by integrating data captured in abattoir screening for the BPHS programme and the ZAP scheme, with information on farm production characteristics held by the Farm Assurance providers. Whilst assuring anonymity for all individual units, by using a coding system, the project team can investigate patterns in the data across many different farms to look for the interactions between seasonal, geographic and production factors which appear to be associated with greater severity of health problems.

In follow up studies, the team will work with volunteer farms to develop better electronic data capture systems for health conditions at farm level, and combine this with performance records to assess the economic impact of different diseases in individual herds and for the British industry overall. Such information will be important in evaluating the different prevention or control strategies which might then be considered. Results will be reported to producers as they become available through regular updates by the industry partners.

ABP, together with Assured Food Standards (AFS), has been successful in persuading both the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) that enforcement inspections should be targeted at non-assured farmers.

“This is excellent news for assured farmers,” said Philip Richardson, ABP Chairman (Designate). “At last the credibility of the farm assurance system and the work farmers put in to meeting the schemes requirements have been recognised by regulators. This is a major benefit to ABP members who are fed up with lots of inspectors visiting the farm to check up on them.”

With input from ABP and AFS, the FSA evaluated the farm assurance scheme standards and concluded that they met the requirements of the new General Food Hygiene Regulations. At a series of recent training courses Local Authorities have been told to follow an inspection regime targeting 25% of non-assured farms on an annual basis and reducing this to only 2% for assured farms (unless there is additional evidence which they need to act on).

At the moment these arrangements only relate to the General Food Hygiene Regulations and are covered by a Memorandum of Understanding between AFS and LACORS, which also outlines the process for Local Authorities to feedback information on the use of the Red Tractor logo on food to AFS.

AFS and ABP recognise that this is just the tip of the iceberg and will continue to lobby organisations responsible for enforcement such as DEFRA, FSA, Veterinary Medicine Directorate, Environment Agency and Local Authorities to try to get more of them to adopt this type of approach for other legal requirements.

**Risk factors for pig disease**

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During 2006 the National Pig Association considered the role and effectiveness of Assurance in the pig sector. There were concerns at the relatively low level of understanding of Assurance by many producers, and a realisation that without continuous development the scheme could lose advantage to competitor schemes in other countries. Since a number of Government Departments and Agencies are now examining whether Assurance scheme membership can help reduce the bureaucracy and the cost of regulatory enforcement, there is a clear need for these schemes to demonstrate their effectiveness in improving industry self-regulation. Arising from these discussions a new ‘blue sky’

From the Chairman  
Philip Richardson

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AFS and NFU try to alleviate the burden of IPPC

At the request of the Minister the Director General of the NFU has conducted a review of Environment Agency (EA) arrangements for implementation of these new regulations and AFS pig and poultry sectors have been involved in joint industry / EA meetings as part of the review. This involved some intensive activity during the 4 weeks around Christmas.

As producers are aware, at the primary level these regulations impact upon pig and poultry units above a certain threshold size. The industry perspective is that the costs (EA is obliged to recover enforcement costs from producers) are disproportionately high and might be significantly damaging to the two sectors. There is evidence of producers scaling down pig and poultry operations so that they fall below the threshold.

One suggestion is that any farm inspection work might be done more cost effectively on behalf of EA by the assurance scheme inspectors hence AFS sectors’ involvement with the discussions. However the exercise has identified that a very high proportion of the EA charges cover their office and support costs rather than front line farm inspection. Industry has challenged these costs and also the treasury principle of full cost recovery from producers. The implication for AFS is that the opportunity to make savings at the level of farm inspection is limited.

Furthermore EA wants to cover the first tranche of inspections during 2007/08. There is a firm proposal that farm assurance inspectors might pick up the routine annual report after April 2008 to provide a modest cost saving. Dialogue is continuing with EA to develop this opportunity.

A RED TRAC
The new EU Regulations (EC 01/05) regarding the Welfare of Animals in Transport came into force on 5th January 2007. The UK refers to these regulations as the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 2006. These regulations have an impact on all farmers and hauliers transporting livestock as part of an ‘economic activity’ including all transport of a commercial nature and taking livestock to shows. There are some exemptions to the regulation, such as journeys:
- Not in the course of business or trade;
- Not for hire or reward;
- Involving one person moving one animal, two moving two etc: A female with dependent young will be considered as a single animal;
- Taking animals to/from veterinary surgery or clinic under veterinary direction;
- Where pet animals are accompanied by their owner on a private journey;
- Where pet animals are taken to or from a specialist show or competition and the primary purpose is for pleasure rather than as part of a business.

The main changes/requirements for farmers/haulers is determined by set distance/time thresholds and outlined below:

### Journeys up to 50km

- General conditions of transport (as per current transport requirements)
- Animals must be fit for the journey, however:
  - ewes or cows that have given birth during the preceding 48 hours,
  - female stock likely to give birth on the journey,
  - new-born lambs, piglets and calves, until their navel has completely healed, may not be transported.

### Journeys over 50km and up to 65km

- Animal transport certificate (or AML/delivery note) detailing:
  - Origin and ownership of animals
  - Place of departure
  - Date and time of departure
  - Intended destination
  - Expected duration
- Animal must be ‘fit for transport’

### Journeys over 65km and up to 8 hours

- Specific Authorisation (short journey) required from SVS
- Certificate of competence for all drivers (From Jan 2008)

### Journeys over 8 hours

- Specific Authorisation (long journey) required from SVS
- Vehicle approval (via Defra appointed body – can be done in conjunction with assurance inspection) (certificate lasts 5 years).
- Examples of vehicle standards include:
  - water provision
  - ramp angles
  - temperature and ventilation
  - navigation
- Some of these requirements will only apply to new vehicles built after January 2007, existing vehicles will have to meet the requirements from January 2012 – please see http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/farmed/transport/pdf/vehicle_spec_livestock.pdf for full details.
- Certificate of competence for all drivers (From Jan 2008).

### New ABP/ABM transport standards

ABM/ABP have revised the ABP/ABM Transport Scheme to be in line with regulatory requirements (WATO 2006) as well as updated the format of the standards. The standards have undergone a public consultation period (November 06-February 07) and are due to be issued to hauliers shortly. Your certification body will send you a copy of the new standards in due course. Inspections are due to begin against the new standards from May 2007.
Consumer website – tell your friends

Red Tractor has launched a new consumer microsite. The site has a great new look and contains fun food quizzes and facts for children, information on what's in season and what's hot at the moment and great recipe ideas for every occasion.

To find out more visit www.myRedTractor.co.uk. Don’t forget to tell family and friends about it.

Red Tractor sponsorship rolls on

Ever since the launch of Assured Food Standards, Massey Ferguson has been playing a pivotal role in helping to promote the image and the values of the Red Tractor brand. Sponsorship activities have included events, awards, competitions and publications – with a real red tractor, supplied by Massey Ferguson, never far from the scene.

Massey Ferguson are committed to continuing their support into 2007, with red tractors already scheduled to make appearances at county shows, road-shows and photo-opportunity events throughout the year. Massey Ferguson’s own UK product advertising in 2007 is giving prominence to the red tractor logo, with ads in Farmers Weekly and Farmers Guardian now appearing.

David Sleath, Sales Director and Country Manager, UK and Ireland commented: "We are proud of our association with Assured Food Standards. We recognise too that the Massey Ferguson brand benefits strongly by being linked to the values of a positive and successful force for the good of British farming."

Red Tractor week

Following the success of Red Tractor Day this year’s event will take place over a week from 9-15 July 2007. Activities will include a press launch with the Red Tractor ambassador, a survey on what people are eating, stories for consumer and trade press including stunts for regional press and in-store promotion.

Keep watching www.redtractor.org.uk for more information on what is planned.

Massey Ferguson sponsors this newsletter as part of its continuing support of British agriculture and commitment to the Red Tractor Scheme.

BBC Good Food Show 2006

The BBC Good Food Show 2006 received over 130,000 visitors and the Red Tractor and partners were there to greet them. Along with the Love Pork campaign, Yes Peas, the British Carrot Growers Association, the Home Grown Cereals Authority, the Milk Development Council and EBLEX, Red Tractor sponsored the Great British Food Festival and Theatre.

The Great British Food Theatre saw delicious demonstrations from celebrity chefs’ James Martin (pictured), Brian Turner, Phil Vickery. The Red Tractor stand nearby which proved to be a great success creating a chance to sample, and talk to people about, great tasting assured British food.

Red Tractor Information Service

AFS has launched a Red Tractor consumer information service. The aim of the service is to provide stories, surveys, ideas to help mums with teatime and delicious recipes, to magazines including Woman’s Own and Good Housekeeping and to national and regional press.

For any queries relating to ABP standards contact:
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useful contacts

Assured British Pigs