

August 2018

The past few months have not been without challenges for the livestock industry, and the pig industry in particular. It seems much has conspired to make life and work just that little bit more awkward. I, for one, bemoaned the lack of cool, wet days over the summer as I either cooked in boiler suits on indoor units or burned on outdoor visits while enviously watching sows enjoying their wallows.

The weather, and the negative impacts it has had, is hardly avoidable. No less challenging has been the man-made difficulties some producers have faced from both official visits and illegal incursions. This summer has seen an unprecedented level of activity from animal 'rights' activists in the media, often using footage gathered over a period of time. Added to this we are facing increased regulatory restrictions and 'enhanced' interpretation of existing regulations is likely to create more challenges in the very near future.

After a period of relative calm, welfare issues are once again coming to the forefront of discussions at all levels, prompted or encouraged by well-funded, articulate and highly connected groups who are opposed de facto by what we do. The issue of tail damage, which encompasses both tail docking and tail biting, is once again taking centre stage with pressure being brought to bear on all producers who dock to explore every possible alternative. This is gathering momentum as the publication of the new Welfare Codes is expected.

We will be addressing some of these challenges at this year's GVG Pig Fair and hope, with your input and imagination, we can provide some innovative solutions for problems we have previously regarded as impossible.

The pig industry is a resilient and imaginative group of people. Our challenge, as I see it, is to be confident and proactive in facing some of these issues head on, confronting them where necessary, but also adapting to ensure we are working at a productive, profitable and sustainable level.

We look forward to seeing you on the 2nd October at Exeter Racecourse or the 3rd October at Wincanton Racecourse.



On a positive note, The George Pig Team are delighted to announce that Alex has had her baby. Thomas Oliver Moss was born on Sunday 2nd September weighing in at 7lb 10oz, Mother and baby doing well. We wish them all the very best and look forward to meeting him very soon.

Annie Davis BVMS MRCVS

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