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PIG EDITION

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FarmWatch warns of Disease in Weaners

Pig producer, Arne Braedder, is very pleased with FarmWatch as it detects many cases of diarrhoea before symptoms are visible.

There are approximately 2,200 weaners in the controlled environment units at Arne Braedder's farm in Nysted, Lolland in Denmark. If they drink more water in one or several sections - more than they actually should, FarmWatch warns of increased consumption. It warns of increased consumption because it is an indication of something being wrong e.g., that disease is on the way.

- When we turn on the PC in the morning, we can immediately see whether alarms have been generated based on increased water consumption. Subsequently, we inspect the sections but time and time again, we can verify that we have the alarm 12-24 hours before the pigs have diarrhoea. Thus, we have time to initiate treatment against stomach trouble and some times, it is enough to throw some potato flour on the floor in the pen, says Lars Oesterholm.

He is in charge of the day-to-day operation of the pig production together with Arne Braedder's son Carsten, who is his brother-in-law.





The operation was extended in 2006 from 140 sows to the present 420 sows with production of 30kg (66lb) weaners. In connection with the building activities, it was decided that FarmWatch should be integrated in the controlled environment units.

- Our ventilation and high-pressure cooling in the new building is from SKOV and therefore it was obvious to have FarmWatch as well, says Lars Oesterholm.

Calculates the expected water consumption every hour

FarmWatch automatically records the water consumption in the various sections. The drinking pattern of the pigs is analysed by FarmWatch and the expected water consumption is estimated every hour. FarmWatch warns of deviations between the actual water consumption and the expected water consumption. Then we can take measures against the problem already before the symptoms are visible.

A quick intervention against diarrhoea results in a reduced use of medication, better daily gain in weight and a lower mortality rate.

- We have benefited from FarmWatch as we have fairly many alarms. It is because I have set the alarm limit rather low - but it is better to have many compared to too few, says Lars Oesterholm.

Most alarms are generated when the pigs in the weaner section change feed after approx. 14 days.

- It typically starts in one or two pens but it means that we have time to initiate the treatment before the entire section has diarrhoea. Normally, we do not have many alarms later on in the batch even though the pigs change feed again at approx. 18kg (40lb). The change is not as critical as the first time and the pigs handle it better, says Lars Oesterholm.

31 pigs per farrowing sow

The production results in the extended herd are fine.

- After the production site was expanded, we had the first farrowing sows in January 2007 and the last three months we have weaned 30.7 pigs per farrowing sow on an average. Furthermore, we have a daily gain in weight of 500 grams (1.1lb) in the controlled environment units and according to the veterinarian, our use of medication is very low, says Lars Oesterholm.

