Wageningen Pig Discussion

Wednesday 10 March 2021

1900 – 2006

Date:	Wednesday 10 March 2021
Time:	7:00pm – 8:06pm
Location:	Teams Meeting
Attendees	
Subcommittee members:	NAWAC Pig Subcommittee (Chair Included)
MPI Secretariat:	MPI Representatives
Invited Guests:	Industry Representatives Wageningen Representative
Apologies:	MPI Representative

Meeting Summary:

On Wednesday 10 March the NAWAC pig subcommittee met with a representative from Wageningen and invited representatives from the code working group to attend.

The space requirements for grower pigs was discussed. Stocking density is usually described in m^2 per animal, but this does not account for animal age and weight. That is why Petherick et al in 1983 described an equation: A (space) = kW (weight) $^{2/3}$

Different k values can be derived for animals. E.g. for sternal lying, k = 0.019. For lateral lying, k = 0.047. k values should be defined per animal and depend on other factors too such as ambient temperature and complexity of the environment.

EFSA has released on opinion defining k value for lying + dunging + eating space and recommended k = 0.036. This did not consider space for social behaviour such as fleeing aggressive pigs.

Various papers have indicated that below 0.034, growth will be affected. Below 0.039, pigs on slatted floors will lie less. Below 0.047, not all pigs can lie laterally.

Animals appear to stay active for longer on solid floors (including flooring with deep litter), which may be because there is more for them to do.

Pigs will choose their lying area before choosing their dunging area. They will look for an appropriate temperature, and an area where they can be undisturbed. When separating dunging and lying areas, these preferences need to be considered.

Farrowing systems were discussed. It was reported that EFSA is drafting a risk assessment to support the European Commission's response to the 'End the Cage Age' Citizen's Initiative.

Enrichment material was discussed. The Netherlands, like New Zealand, struggles with loose material and slurry systems. What is favoured at the moment is the use of hessian sacks. The idea is to have a sack attached to the crate to accommodate some nesting behaviour. If they are on the ground, pigs will dig against it. They have the added benefit that they will eventually smell of the sow and that can be used to move piglets to one area of the pen. One animal protection society has even handed out free hessian bags to farmers. From a pig point of view, loose materials are still preferred. Straw appears to be the best material to reduce tail biting and to allow nesting.