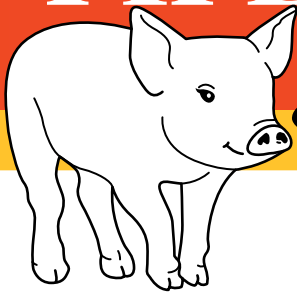
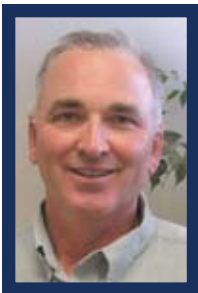


# PIPESTONE

## System



## MARK THE MILESTONE: SET GOALS FOR 2008!



BY GORDON D. SPRONK, DVM

Our family meets at the beginning of each year to review our progress toward last year's personal goals and to set new objectives. Most (if not all) goals are achieved, but there are also goals which are not reached.

During these meetings with our children, it has been fascinating to see how a target may change in light of 12 months of maturity and growth. It's also valuable to look back on benchmarks from five, 10, or even 15 years ago, and recall why and how those objectives were set.

Setting and evaluating goals annually can be a valuable family interaction. I'd encourage you to implement a similar process into your personal life, and maybe apply the same constructive dreaming to your business goals.

These are a few helpful parameters for goal setting:

- Goals must be written down; any goal worth achieving is worth writing down.
- A goal can be either short-term (completed within the next 12 months) or long-term (more of a dream, but worth achieving in the next five to 10 years).
- You increase your chance of success when you share your goal. Others may be in a position to help you achieve your goal, provide encouragement when it looks impossible, and hold you accountable when a goal may not be easy to attain (losing weight, for example).
- Once you reach a goal, determine what steps led to your success. When a goal is not achieved, ask whether the goal was unrealistic or if you simply need to change your approach.

- When you achieve your goal, reward yourself with a celebration!

These guidelines apply equally to personal, professional, and business goals. We should all schedule new year's meetings to review our swine business operations and goals. I always enjoy those yearly think-sessions, which allow us to reflect: What worked? What did not work? Which goals did we meet or exceed? Which goals did we fail to meet?

Annual goal-setting meetings also enable us to plan for the future. What goals need to be set for 2008? What is the plan to achieve these goals? Are the goals written down? What additional resources will help you achieve these goals? And lastly, how can the rest of us in the Pipestone System help you meet your objectives?

Wishing you all the best in the new year and hoping you achieve all your goals! ■



SWINE LINE

# THESE MANAGEMENT STEPS WILL OPTIMIZE PIC GENETICS

BY NOEL WILLIAMS, PIC TECHNICAL SERVICES

An efficient and profitable wean-to-finish system should maximize throughput and profitability. Throughput is defined as the pounds of pork produced in a given period of time, while profitability is throughput multiplied by the margin (revenue minus cost).

The two factors don't always work together. Thus, it is necessary to understand all of the factors that influence both throughput and profitability in order to improve system performance.

**TABLE 1. INFLUENCE OF PRODUCTION TRAITS ON MARGIN AND THROUGHPUT**

Trait Change	Margin/Cwt.	Pounds/Sow/Year
.05 lb improvement in WF daily gain	.80 ¢	150
.05 improvement in feed conversion	.33 ¢	0
1 % improvement in WF mortality	.29 ¢	42.7
.25 increase in number born alive	.28 ¢	108
.05 increase in litter/sow/year	.21 ¢	96
2.0 % improvement in pre-wean mortality	.20 ¢	73.8
5 % improvement in farrow rate	.12 ¢	20
2 % improvement in sow mortality	.12 ¢	20

Table 1 describes the influence of production trait improvements on margin and throughput. Traits are ranked according to the impact on margin because a trait can influence margin, but have a limited impact on throughput.

Data from Table 1 indicates that improved wean-finish performance can have the greatest impact on overall system profitability. Are you concentrating on improving wean-finish performance? Start by establishing benchmarks for what is achievable. PIC has established the benchmarks for wean-finish performance displayed in Table 2.

Once you establish your own standards, you can measure performance against those criteria to determine whether intervention is required. Here are some PIC management

recommendations you may want to consider:

- Provide a minimum of 2.8 square feet per pig up to 50 pounds.
- Offer a minimum of 7.0 square feet per pig up to 265 pounds.
- Assume a minimum of 8.5 square feet per pig at weights from 265 pounds to market.
- Allow for no more than 12 pigs per feeder space for wet or dry feeders, with a minimum of 14-linear-inches per individual space.

**TABLE 2. PIC WEAN-FINISH PERFORMANCE THRESHOLDS**

Production Trait	Expected Performance	Intervention Level
Average Daily Gain		
Nursery, lb/day	> 1.0	< .85
Finish	> 1.9	< 1.70
Wean-Finish	> 1.7	< 1.55
Feed Conversion		
Nursery, lb/day	< 1.45	> 1.65
Finish	< 2.6	> 2.8
Wean-Finish	< 2.3	> 2.6
WF Mortality, %	< 7.0	> 10
Yield, %	> 76	< 75.5
% Lean	> 54.5	< 54

- Calculate no more than 20 pigs per drinker.
- Sort for no more than seven days age spread within a room.
- Strive for all-in and all-out, by site.
- Minimize feed outages through preventative maintenance.
- Insist on proper feed particle size (700-800 microns should be your target).

Insuring these minimum guidelines will help you achieve throughput and profitability benchmarks. ■

# IF IT ISN'T ONE THING, IT'S FOUR



BY BARRY R. KERKAERT, DVM

Before our industry knew anything about PCVAD (Porcine Circovirus-2 Associated Disease), there were already plenty of respiratory challenges to go around. In 1996, prior to the first reported case of Porcine Circovirus-2 (PCV2) in the U.S., pork producers battled porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRSv), swine influenza virus (SIV), *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae* (*M. hyo*), and various bacterial pathogens. Still, researchers made room on their agendas for PCVAD, focusing intently on a possible cure.

Time in the lab led to commercially available PCV2 vaccines, but that doesn't mean all respiratory problems are solved, does it? For one thing, PRRS continues to challenge our industry—whether or not we are able to control PCV2.

Current vaccines don't eliminate PRRSv, but typically reduce its severity. Additional biosecurity and herd management strategies aren't difficult to implement, just hard to maintain. Preventing aerosol spread and controlling other forms of PRRS contamination for an extended period of time can be very difficult in swine-dense regions.

SIV is another viral challenge, intensified by the presence of PCV2. For one thing, there is more than one swine influenza strain and vaccines don't provide adequate cross-protection between the various strains. Immunity doesn't last long

enough, the maternal antibody interferes with piglet vaccination, and new strains spread. Today's vaccine technologies are inadequate, since genes recombine monthly to produce new strains and quickly become more virulent than previously identified strains.

Fortunately, we have a good vaccine to immunize against the *M. hyo* respiratory pathogen, which means we should be able to continue the containment of this disease. Vaccination timing will be the hurdle and we'll want to know whether combination products (with PCV2) will provide effective immunity against each disease.

As the swine industry attempts to reduce or eliminate antimicrobial drugs, bacterial respiratory pathogens may become a greater concern. Bacterial respiratory pathogens appear in association with a primary viral disease, and it's important to realize some secondary bacterial infections occur thanks to a poor management technique.

While PCV2 vaccine has certainly been a great addition to tools for fighting PCVAD, it will likely get us back to where we were approximately five years ago. We'll still be confronted with other viral pneumonia agents and secondary bacterial infections. The vaccine will give us a chance but it will not make raising pigs easy. We will still have challenges from acute PRRSv breaks, SIV breaks, pig flow issues, and poor management practices. ■



# HEALTH MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE ALLOWS SYSTEM MEMBERS TO COMPARE RESULTS

BY CAMERON SCHMITT, DVM, MS

True success in pig production is measured across the entire farrow-to-finish enterprise. Sow farm performance, though critically important to the overall enterprise, doesn't tell the whole story.

Additionally, performance measurements only have value when they are reviewed and shared. That being said, the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic and Pipestone System inaugurated its Health Management Initiative (HMI) to collect and report weekly mortality information from shareholders and producers in the Pipestone System. (Several sow farm flows already contribute data.)

Sow farm managers who participate in HMI communicate weaning events (pig numbers and destinations) to Hannah Walkes at the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic. Hannah enters information in the MetaFarms database, which launches production groups. Every Monday, managers in HMI receive a

report that tells them how many pigs died in the past week. For now, we're measuring mortality only—enabling producers to monitor their performance against others who get the same pigs. We also use HMI results to alert PVC vets to any health challenges, whether they're isolated events or consistent trends in a flow. Collecting and monitoring this information allows for better and more timely health interventions at the sow farm, which should make the entire farrow-to-finish production system more successful.

We evaluate this mortality information using very sophisticated software that collects and compares parameters, such as average daily gain and feed conversion. Eventually, we'd like to see all farm flows participate in HMI.

At Pipestone System, we constantly strive for outstanding farrow-to-wean production. We focus on familiar production and performance measurements, such as farrowing rate, pigs born alive, P/S/Y, and total pigs weaned in a given period. We look at abortion rates, pre-wean mortality, and PRRS PCR results at weaning. These and other factors measure (and contribute to) successful production. Seeing these comparisons will enable you to evaluate your performance and compare your success to results from other operations.

Pipestone System sow farms exist to provide high quality weaned pigs to shareholders' and producers' nursery and finisher pig feeding operations. Introducing tools such as HMI will improve the performance of the entire farrow-to-finish production cycle for the success of all stakeholders. ■



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Join our *Pipestone Pig Care Meeting*  
at the Sioux Falls Convention Center  
on *March 28!*



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