

Editor: Amy Quinn

Welcome to July's Newsletter

Ciarán Carroll



Welcome to the July edition of our monthly newsletter. Pig prices took an unexpected drop during the month, with some farms regaining part or all of this price drop. The price has stabilised again with further increases expected in the month ahead. The harvest has started in earnest. Reported yields for winter crops are good and this looks promising for pig feed prices.

July has been busy for the Pig Development Department. The new Lean project has kicked off with over thirty farms involved to date. There are still some places available so if you'd like to get involved contact your Specialist Pig Advisor ASAP.

A worrying development in the past month was the break-in by a group of activists to an Irish pig farm. This was a very traumatic experience for the farmer and his staff, and the consequences for the health and welfare of both staff and animals is untold. The risk to farm biosecurity in these situations is a real threat, given that the same protestors were at a meat plant a few days prior to this break-in. As a result of the recent

break-in I thought it would be useful to find out more about what we can do in these situations and how we can help prepare ourselves for such activities in the future. The key group leading the way in this area in the United States is the Animal Agriculture Alliance. As the United States' largest and oldest coalition speaking for the entire animal agriculture industry, the Alliance provides information and support to their farmers and associated industry. I've had some very informative discussions with their President and CEO, Kay Johnson Smith. In collaboration with Kay and her team we've put together some articles for Irish pig farmers in this month's newsletter that you should find useful.

In this issue:

- Tail Biting Risk Assessments up and Running
- The Animal Agriculture Alliance
- Preparing for Activist Activity on Farms
- Wrapping up the PathSurvPig Project

Tail Biting Risk Assessments up and Running – Get Yours Now!

Keelin O’Driscoll, John O’Gorman (DAFM) and David Graham (AHI)

Since last summer, Teagasc, DAFM and Animal Health Ireland (AHI) have been working together to tackle the challenge of rolling out an effective protocol to assess and manage risk factors for tail biting, which is suitable for typical Irish production systems. As you all know, routine docking of pigs’ tails is not permitted in the EU, and there has been a strong push in recent years by the EU Commission to determine the level of compliance with the law. As part of this, all EU Member States have been requested by the Commission to create an action plan. This has to include information on how they are moving towards ensuring that routine docking doesn’t continue. It also needs to provide details on how the Competent Authority in each country (i.e. DAFM in Ireland) will verify that producers have taken all steps possible to reduce the risk of biting, before docking pigs’ tails.

Fortuitously, Animal Health Ireland (AHI) is in the process of developing the pig side of their activities, and is recruiting a programme manager for their activities in this sector. As such they have been in a good position to take the lead on developing a tool to identify and manage risk factors for tail biting. The team in Teagasc are also involved, as we have quite a bit of expertise in tail biting and enrichment research in the Pig Development Department. Through this work we have also had a lot of contact with other groups in the EU who are also working in the area, so are keeping up to date with progress in Europe.

In the immediate term, pig welfare experts from Teagasc and DAFM got together and worked on creating a protocol for assessing the presence of risk factors. This was trialled in the Moorepark research unit; and then developed into a template for data capture by AHI. The next stage is to roll this out for use on commercial units.

During July, AHI organised two training days for private veterinary practitioners (PVPs), who will carry out the assessments, one in Moorepark, and one in Co. Louth, to facilitate PVPs in the north and south of the country, respectively. There was very good engagement by PVPs at the training days, with a further training session taking place in the near future. The training covered the regulatory aspects of risk assessment (John O’Gorman, DAFM) followed by some background on risk factors and assessing these on farm (Keelin O’Driscoll, Teagasc). Following this, there was a classroom-based introduction to the risk factor assessment tool, before venturing out onto a pig unit to practise using it and troubleshoot any queries. The tool involves the PVP assessing 6 pens on the farm; each pen assessment will last only about 10 minutes, and will involve answering some questions about facilities and the pigs, and 5 minutes of behaviour observation. Where factors are identified that represent risks for tail biting, there is the opportunity for the producer and vet to discuss these and agree prioritised management changes.

The risk factor assessment is now available to producers, who can request the service from vets who have completed the training. A listing of these vets is available at:

http://animalhealthireland.ie/?page_id=11041.

The service is funded under the Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health under the Rural Development Programme, with payment made directly to the PVP following completion of the assessment. This is the second RDP-funded activity developed by AHI and available at no cost to producers, joining the Biosecurity Review that was launched earlier this year.

The importance of identifying risk

Leaving pigs' tails intact can lead to severe animal welfare and performance problems, as undocked tails are one of the biggest risk factors for tail biting. Nevertheless, there are in fact many other risk factors as well, so even if tails are docked, if other risks are present, then biting can still occur. This is evidenced by a survey carried out in 2015 by Teagasc, where producers reported that even though most pigs in the country were docked at the time, 96% of them had still experienced biting on their farms during the previous year. The same survey questions were also put to Finnish farmers in 2015, so we are able to compare how producers from both countries perceive risks, and what they do to prevent and stop tail biting. In Finland docking is completely prohibited, so these producers need to be very in tune to reducing risks. One of the most interesting outcomes of

the survey, is that the Finnish producers experience seem to make them more aware of factors that increase the risk of biting than Irish producers; for instance they ranked issues such as feeder space, exposure to noise, conditions in the farrowing crate etc. as very important risk factors, whereas Irish producers didn't rank these as highly. This could be a contributory factor as to how Finnish producers are able to manage pigs without docking. Teagasc are planning a series of workshops to help producers understand risks, and how to deal with them, in the coming months.

Take home points

- The AHI risk assessment is designed to help producers to identify risks on their own unit that might stimulate tail biting and manage changes to address these. The aim is to use it as a tool for the PVP and producer to develop tailored approaches for each unit to manage these risks with the ambition of moving to a position where routine docking can be stopped.
- The risk assessment is carried out at no cost to the producer, so contact your PVP for further information if you are interested.
- Teagasc advisors will also be trained in the risk assessment protocol, and will be able to provide further advice and guidance on how to mitigate risks and implement management changes agreed with your PVP.

We would like to especially thank Colin Marry for facilitating one of the training days, and allowing us access to his farm.

The Animal Agriculture Alliance

Peyton Johnson, Communications Consultant & Kay Johnson Smith, President & CEO Animal Agriculture Alliance

Since its launch in 1987, the Animal Agriculture Alliance has been a central voice in the animal agriculture industry, bridging the communication gap between farm and fork. As the United States' largest and oldest coalition speaking for the entire animal agriculture industry, the Alliance celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2017. In the last three decades, the animal agriculture industry has battled campaigns from anti-animal agriculture groups across the U.S., a misled public, and "undercover" activists. While many of these groups have changed courses over the years, the animal agriculture industry works to better inform the public every day.

As the animal rights movement in the U.S. began to focus on agriculture in the early 1980s, leaders in animal agriculture met regularly to discuss activist groups. These groups' campaigns were targeting farming, ranching and the animal protein industry. In 1986, the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) formed the Animal Industry Foundation (AIF) to have an organisation solely dedicated to monitoring the activist groups' efforts, informing the animal agriculture industry of the activists' actions and coordinating a unified effort to correct misinformation. The AIF launched in 1987 and later became formally known as the Animal Agriculture Alliance in 2001. This Alliance brings all stakeholders together to provide a unified voice on behalf of animal agriculture.

Since its inception, the Alliance has represented a diverse array of entities in the animal agriculture industry, ranging from farmers and ranchers, to companies and associations, to scientists and dietitians. Because there are so many voices within one industry, the formation of the Alliance was crucial to unite stakeholders, creating one strong voice to represent all sectors of the animal agriculture industry.

In order to share information within the animal agriculture industry and to be a resource for the media and the public, the Alliance launched its first website in late 1995 – far ahead of most others in agriculture – establishing the organisation as a leader in communication and outreach.

In early 1996, the Alliance produced its first public service announcement that aired on TV and radio stations across America. Then the Alliance sponsored a kids' cooking TV show that showcased recipes featuring animal protein and provided farm tours. These shows aired in classrooms across the country as well. The Alliance targeted children to provide them with necessary resources to form strong, fact-based opinions about the animal agriculture industry at an early age. In 2009, the Alliance started its College Aggies Online (CAO) scholarship competition which trains college students with an interest in agriculture to be confident communicators to share agriculture's story.

College campuses are hotbeds for activists, so the CAO program helps provide a counter voice for agriculture.

This industry was and still is in great need of a united voice because trends in agriculture narratives are constantly evolving. Today, there is a large need for open conversations between consumers and producers surrounding food sources and the treatment of animals before they become food.

By facilitating engaging dialogue between consumers, influencers and producers, the Alliance has helped to shift the animal agriculture industry toward open, transparent conversations to engage with consumers. The Alliance emphasises engaging instead of simply providing educational materials. All voices are heard and all understand the processes chosen by the other. By focusing on the long-overlooked relationship between consumers and producers, the Alliance has established itself as a thought-leader and an educational resource inside and outside of the animal agriculture industry.

The Alliance continues to demonstrate leadership in the field by utilising social media and by engaging agriculture and mainstream media. In 2014, the Alliance, along with the pork industry, invited 12 influential food bloggers – only one of whom had ever been on a farm – to tour a swine farm, meat lab and pork production facility. From that tour, there were more than 20 million positive impressions or views of content produced by the bloggers about their visit.

In recent years the Alliance modernised its website and all educational materials to focus on their updated motto, “Connect, engage and

protect”. The organisation writes regularly for some of the industry’s leading publications; is actively engaged on all major social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat); writes its own weekly blog “Animal Ag Engage” which gets tens of thousands of hits – and has provided hundreds of presentations and media interviews nationally and internationally as a recognised expert on farm animal welfare issues.

The Alliance has several committees that work to connect and unify the animal agriculture industry as a whole. Through its Issues Management Committee, the Alliance informs stakeholders on industry-related trends, upcoming issues, current media narratives and strategies to combat misinformation from anti-animal agriculture groups. The Alliance’s Communications Steering Committee monitors current and upcoming media stories and creates resources on how to be proactive with science-based information. The Alliance speaks at many industry-related events and blogs on the topics regularly to share trends and strategies.

One very unique role is its monitoring and reporting on activist groups and creation of numerous resources for members to protect against the real threats to farms and food producers. Through our farm security mobile app, we can provide real-time alerts of suspicious activities, as well as extensive recommendations to help protect against undercover activists or mass protests. We provide reports from activist conferences, profiles on activists’ real agendas and other resources to manage challenging situations to prevent further impact.

While the Alliance has grown immensely over the past 30 years and made its impacts felt throughout the industry, it also understands that there are always areas for growth. The anti-animal agriculture groups are not going away, which gives the Alliance a *raison d'être*. It is

important for all stakeholders in the animal agriculture, feed, animal health, biotechnology, meat and food industries to work together because changes caused by activist groups impact stakeholders, up and down the food chain.

Preparing for Activist Activity on Farms

Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Director of Industry Relations with the Animal Agriculture Alliance

With the threat of activist activity increasing internationally, here are a few pieces of advice to help those working in animal agriculture prepare

Review your operation's security procedures and ensure all appropriate measures have been taken. Establish check-in procedures for visitors at your farm and make sure all employees and family members know what to do if an unauthorised visitor or group arrives. All visitors should be asked to present identification and verification of their purpose to come on-site. Visitors should be escorted at all times. If someone does not have the proper credentials and cannot establish that they are authorised to be on your property, they should be told to leave. Call the Gardai if they will not leave when asked to do so. Maintain basic security: lock all doors (barns, offices, cabinets), have proper lighting (consider motion sensor floodlights), install alarms and security cameras, and post signs for restricted areas and "no trespassing." If feasible, install fencing and gates around your property.

Keep an eye out for suspicious activity. Activists will "scout out" a location several times before deciding to hold a large protest there. Keep a record of any strange occurrences (gates left open, doors unlocked, items out of place, strange

vehicles watching your property from the road, drone sightings, etc.). If you feel you might be a target, notify the IFA and appropriate state/local contacts (Gardai) right away.

Proactively connect with local law enforcement. If needed contact local Gardaí and ask them what you can do to protect yourself and who you can contact if you suspect a protest will be held in your area. Consider contacting legal counsel to review state laws regarding suspicions of animal cruelty and trespassing. Contact local Gardaí in the event of any incident.

Make sure employees at every level **know how to handle unexpected and unauthorised visitors.** Activists often approach farm or plant employees first when arriving at a facility. In one instance, activists entered a dairy processing plant office and demanded the receptionist tell them where the dairy farms producing for that plant are located. In another situation, a woman brought a young child to the gate of a plant and pleaded to be let in for the child to use the restroom. Once they were inside, she began running around taking photos and trying to access secure areas.

Do not engage. Whether you encounter a protester at an event or on a farm or if an activist

approaches a truck transporting animals, it is always best to ignore them and immediately contact law enforcement. Keep your cool and always assume you are being recorded or live-streamed online in your interaction, regardless of what you are told or whether a camera is visible. In one incident, the activists falsely claimed they were not recording the conversation at a poultry plant as they were live-streaming on Facebook.

Do not comply with demands to release animals, even “just one”. While it may be tempting to try to get the group to leave by allowing them to take an animal, we strongly urge farmers and companies to not do this. Giving this group an animal significantly weakens the industry’s attempts to convey why their actions are unacceptable. Some activist group members have appeared on camera stating “how can they press charges against us for taking animals when they gave us one?” Negotiating with an organisation who wants to see animal liberation and the end of animal agriculture will not be productive.

Like most things, **it’s best to be prepared.** If you haven’t done so already, you need to create or update your crisis plan. The Alliance recommends having a full crisis management and communications plan in place.

Make sure that anyone who may encounter activists – employees, family members, truck drivers, etc. – knows your policy. Have a plan in place for how to respond to a large-scale protest. Assign clear roles and responsibilities, including:

- a) Contacting law enforcement
- b) Locking all doors
- c) Monitoring activist activity
- d) Contacting trade associations and other key industry partners

e) Responding to media inquiries

As part of your plan, make sure everyone knows to keep cool and to not engage the protestors. It is best to avoid a dramatic incident – farmers or employees engaging in arguments will only do that. Do not confront them and do not respond to their demands. Remember that you may likely be recorded and or live-streamed.

Security and crisis resources are available to Alliance members. Membership is open to countries outside of the United States. You will find out more information on how to join on the website <https://www.animalagalliance.org> Further information is also available to anyone about animal rights activism at <https://www.AnimalAgAlliance.org/Protect>.

Threat Monitoring

The Alliance conducts extensive monitoring of animal rights activist groups and provides members with alerts about potential incidents. If you would like to review who receives alerts and other members-only content from the Alliance, contact Allyson Jones-Brimmer, director of industry relations, at info@animalagalliance.org and reference Pigs Knowledge Transfer as how you learned about the Alliance. You can also take steps to monitor for potential activist threats in your area. This includes:

- Google Alerts: Visit www.google.com/alerts to set up alerts for certain keywords appearing in news stories. We recommend setting these up for your company name, farm name and local chapters of activist groups.
- Facebook: Some activist groups use Facebook pages to organise protests and other events. Search for their pages every few weeks to see if there are upcoming events.

Wrapping up the PathSurvPig Project

Julia Calderon Diaz, Maria Costa & Edgar Garcia Manzanilla



After four years of intensive research activity, the PathSurvPig (PSP) project was officially closed on June 27th with a very interactive, hands-on end of project dissemination day where we showcased some of our main results regarding diagnostics, biosecurity, lung pathologies, disease economics and farmers' engagement during the project. The event was held in the FBD Hall in Teagasc, Moorepark with over 50 farmers, industry and government representatives attending the event and it followed a stand based dissemination approach.

Participants were divided into six groups and visited PSP stations (See images above) where researchers, supported by a series of infographics

(see example in Figure 1), guided the participants through the main results of the project and lessons learnt. While waiting to start the tour, Dr. Edgar Garcia Manzanilla discussed six different case studies on topics such as vaccination strategies, animal movements, farm facilities, among others. Overall, the feedback was very positive with farmers complimenting the organisation and interactive approach of the event.

We would like to thank all the farmers, veterinarians and slaughterhouses who took part in the project – none of this would have been possible without you!

All the material presented on the day is available online on the Teagasc webpage under the title PathSurvPig project page and can be found at: <https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/pigs/research/research-projects/pathsurvpig/>. Additionally hard

copies of the online material will also be made available (See examples below) in the coming weeks. Over the coming months we will be producing videos and infographics on biosecurity, good practices and ways to reduce the need for antimicrobials.



Fig. 1 Sample material from the PSP project that is currently available online.

TASAH Funded Biocheck.UGent Scoring

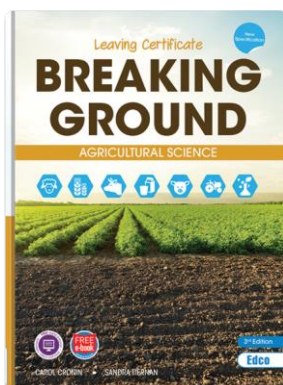
We would like to remind you that Animal Health Ireland (AHI) is delivering the TASAH-funded Biocheck.UGent biosecurity reviews on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). To avail of this free service, visit the TASAH section of the AHI website:

http://animalhealthireland.ie/?page_id=11040,

or contact AHI by telephone (071 9671928) to access a list of trained, participating vets and their contact details. If you haven't already availed of this I would encourage you to make an appointment to have this review carried out as a matter of urgency.

Breaking Ground

The 3rd Edition of the Agricultural Sciences Leaving Certificate book "Breaking Ground" has recently been published. PDD's Ciarán Carroll contributed to the updating of this book which includes a dedicated chapter on "Pig breeds, management, nutrition and production" as well as references throughout other chapters.



QQI Level 5 Pig Course

The Teagasc PDD is now looking for expressions of interest for the part time QQI Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture in Pigs. This course is aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of farm operatives. Please email amy.quinn@teagasc.ie if you or any of your staff are interested in completing this course. The course will be run on a demand basis so make sure to express your interest. It is expected that

this course will be run 2 days per month for 12 months. On successful completion of the course students will be awarded a component award in the 5 QQI Level 5 modules.

Lean Initiative Spaces Available for Farms

The Pig Supply Chain Lean Initiative is aimed at supporting the application of lean principles in pig production in Ireland to address current and future challenges for the pig sector. It is a collaborative effort by Teagasc, Bord Bia, DAFM and Enterprise Ireland. It is composed of two components, firstly the on-Farm component, which is currently on-going, where there is currently a large roll-out of Lean Start and Lean plus projects on pig farms. The second component will be the Bord Bia market research component.

Limited spaces have just become available on the on-farm component. It is available to all ROI pig producers who are members of the Bord Bia Pigmear Quality Assurance Scheme (PQAS). Participants will work with a carefully selected panel of lean consultants established by Bord Bia and Teagasc. If you would like to enrol your farm in this initiative please contact ciaran.carroll@teagasc.ie or your Specialist Pig Advisor as soon as possible.

Save the Date

The Teagasc Pig Farmers Conference will take place on the 22nd of October in the Horse and Jockey Hotel, Co. Tipperary and on the 23rd of October in Hotel Kilmore, Cavan. Further details will be made available in the coming weeks. Details will be available on our webpage: <https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/pigs/upcoming-events/pig-farmers-conference-2019/>



For more information:

Please visit our webpage at:
<https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/pigs/>

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