

# Deadline for odour rules is not to be sniffed at

The deadline is drawing closer for permits under new Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) rules, with farmers advised to apply no later than 15 January to ensure they can be checked and cleared by the end of this month.

One aspect of the regulation is odour control. Measures must be taken to prevent or minimise odour emissions so that 'sensitive receptors' – people in houses, hospitals and schools close by – are not affected by the smell. Some farms will have to prepare an odour management plan, which once written up, must then be adhered to.

How farmers manage their slurry systems to prevent or minimise emissions is being looked at closely. Regulations abound for new slurry systems, such as minimum tank storage capacity recommended at four months production, including rainwater, and tanks must henceforth be covered.

But existing storage systems, without covers, haven't escaped the regulator's eye. New rules include minimising the stirring of slurry, as this increases the release of odour into the air, even though it's recognised that slurry needs to be mixed in order to spread it on the land.

While composting and slurry separation are options for complying with the new IPPC rules, both can prove time consuming and expensive. Another route is to use a slurry additive. These products liquefy and deodorise slurry at the same time, significantly reducing odour and making slurry more manageable and valuable by boosting its fertiliser value.

One such product, Epizym Pigs, has been proved to reduce gross odour emissions by 53% and by 55% per kg pig liveweight. The Silsoe Research Institute ran the odour assessment trial in their dynamic Olfactometer unit, using pig slurry taken from a trial run at the ADAS Climate House.

"The results were superb - proof that odour levels can be halved. This product can really help pig farmers meet their IPPC odour levels quickly and simply," says Giles Dadd, Epizym's principal agricultural consultant.

Through its controlled microbiological and enzymatic activity, Epizym reduces odour formation through removing the floor solids where odours are formed and stored and also by acting on odours generated.

It differs from conventional odour suppress-



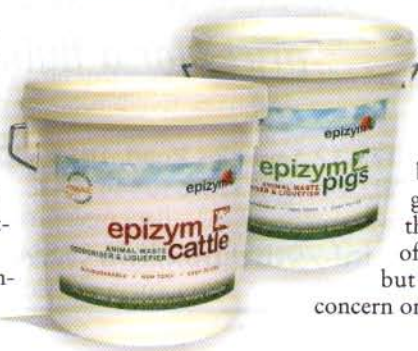
Jean Gray's farmhouse conservatory is now free from flies.

ing chemicals in that it functions directly on the source of the odour by enzymatically changing the molecular structure of the odour-causing compounds. Indole and skatole, two of the most potent, penetrating odourisers found in animal waste, are enzymatically reduced to odourless compounds through bio-oxidation with Epizym. Organic amines, which produce some of the most offensive odours, are totally destroyed in the process.

John Gray, who farms 18,000 pigs per year on Mersea Island, Essex, has been using the slurry additive since 1996. "I installed slatted accommodation and very soon the neighbours complained about the smell. I saw an advert in *Pig World* and called up to get some advice. I'd never go back to not using it."

The smell on John's farm cleared up within six weeks and complaints became a thing of the past. And his wife was a lot happier too – the farmhouse conservatory is now free from flies.

"The reduction in odour was the main thing for me, but the crust reduction and the saving of £6,000 I make annually on bagged nitrogen came as a bonus. IPPC has given me plenty to think about in terms of storage systems, but I've much less concern on the odour front."



## Revamp for dairy website

Milkbench, the dairy industry benchmarking website, has been redesigned so farmers can more easily see where they can drive down costs and improve profits.

Among the changes is a mini taster of Testbench – a programme offering producers a snapshot of how their culls for lameness and fertility compare with those of other farmers. It utilises basic information most producers will have at their finger-tips.

Milkbench manager Michael James said: "It's been three years since Milkbench was launched and, like every product, it has had to change to match the needs of today's dairy farmers."

Mr James said the company retained the essence of Milkbench, which allows farmers to compare costs confidentially with hundreds of other dairy producers so they can see which areas of their business they need to work on.

Other improvements to the site include simplified navigation, explanatory graphs which give users easy to understand bite-size reports and guidance to what needs to be focused on first.

Mr James said: "Cash-pressed farmers want more than ever to be able to see at a glance where they could be making savings and easy-to-understand guidance on how to improve their profits."

For details, visit [www.milkbench.org.uk](http://www.milkbench.org.uk)

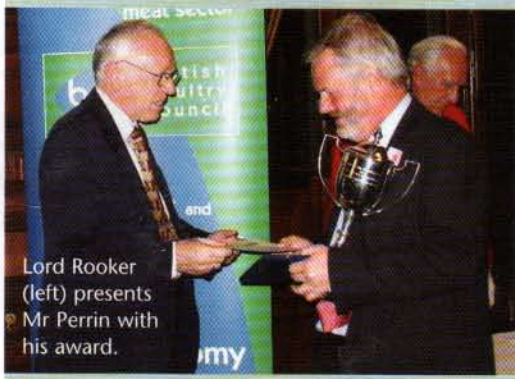
## Top award for poultry expert

The British Poultry Council made a distinguished award to David Perrin, whose advice to chicken producers over several decades played a prominent role in the success of UK poultry breeding.

Mr Perrin, who lives at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, worked for Cobb, one of the world's leading poultry breeders, for almost 40 years and was its European technical manager until his retirement.

Mr Perrin began working for Cobb in 1965, managing breeder farms and the company's pedigree unit near Southwold before joining a technical service team set up to provide customer support.

BPC chairman Edward Wright said Mr Perrin's advice remained in practice on many farms to this day. The award was presented by farm minister Lord Rooker at a recent ceremony in the House of Commons members' dining room.



Lord Rooker (left) presents Mr Perrin with his award.