

# Bacteria-based additive produces stir-free

Producer Martin Lewis, of Bodenham, Herefordshire, doesn't have to stir his slurry store any more. He is using a additive to ensure it stays liquid all year round.

'I installed a new liner in

an existing slurry store last year and I wanted to avoid stirring the slurry in case it disrupt the lining,' he said.

Having read an article about the success of such products, he decided to try

bacteria-based slurry additive Epizym.

'Initially I was sceptical, but that vanished when I saw there was no need to stir the slurry, and I have not had to do so in over 12 months.' There

is no crusting on the top at all, and no sediment either.'

He's also found the consistency of the slurry is more even when he spreads it on growing crops. It is easier to spread the required width, and there is

## By appointment to... Norvite is awarded Royal Crest

By Sam Walton

Sole distributor of SCA creep in Scotland is Norvite, which is one of the sponsors of the spring show at Thainstone and which also sponsors the Royal Northern Countryside Initiative, which aims to get school-children more involved with farms and farming with a view to a career in agriculture.

The company's specialities have always been ruminant blends and pig supplements. It manufactures on three sites, two in Aberdeenshire, and one

in Ayrshire, which specialises in dairy nutrition.

It makes 400 bespoke cattle blends, some farm specific and others area-specific where deficiencies in the soil can be rectified, with the help of frequent soil sampling and analysis.

Norvite's plant at Blackbog, near Oldmeldrum, is just for ruminants. Farmers mostly collect in bulk.

One side of the huge store shed is divided into bays which hold the raw materials. At the far end is a barley bruiser, a



large tank for molasses and another for Loch Lomond Gold.

As the site is on the side of a main road, the company has added a large shop which sells clothing and caters for livestock and pet requirements. Although only opened in December, it has already built up

a roaring trade.

Norvite's original site at Insh is where it makes pig and cattle supplements and blends in bags, some ruminant also in tote bags, and where it has its original shop.

The company really does specialise in pig nutrition and is involved heavily with the home mill-mix market, offering a mobile service with its Boucshoff machine.

Norvite has recently been awarded the Royal Crest as it has supplied the Balmoral Estate for over 30 years.

## Southern England sees resurgence in pig production



Len Phoenix has joined JSR as key account manager for the south. Before joining JSR he worked for Norbrook, the veterinary pharmaceutical company, and before that for Malcolm Easey. 'Demand in the south-east for outdoor gilts is at its highest for many years,' he said.

## New nursery unit from Ikadan

By Sam Walton

Recently I visited Ikadan, at Ikast in Denmark, a company that makes cast iron, concrete, rubber and plastic pig flooring.

They make heated slats and a range of pig penning. And they have designed a new nursery unit with a glass creep lid sloping downwards to leave a smaller gap at the front which does not need to have a curtain on, yet keeps the heat in.

Under the slats on which orphan, sick or extra piglets are reared from birth to 14 days, there is a reception tray for the dung.

The company's Multiflex pen divisions are available as solid, half-slatted and vertically-slatted. In wet-feed operations the feed delivery pipe is

inside the panelling division to avoid being damaged by pigs.

They have also developed Biterite plastic fingers for fun and enrichment in pig pens. It looks a bit like a cow udder with extra teats. Danish law now stipulate that toys have to touch the floor and not be left swinging.

They originally got round this by tying a rope on the end of the Biterite and having a piece of wood attached which did in fact touch the ground.

Now they have developed a dual plastic sleeve which fastens to the side of the pen and in these sleeves they insert soft wood stakes.

At the bottom of the sleeves, the stakes are visible and accessible for the pigs to chew at and comply nicely with legislation.

In farrowing crates at the rear of the pen, they always incorporate a two-inch gap between the end of the flooring and the rear partition.

To prevent new-born piglets getting their legs down or trapped, the rear division is simply lifted and can be moved forward into another slot which gives it a sloping effect. It can be left like that for the first day or two; simple and effective.

Not more than 50 percent of flooring can be slatted in Danish weaner houses and two-thirds for finishers.

The remaining one third cannot be more than ten percent void so they have developed a self-draining slat that covers the legislative requirements.

**ONLY IN THE PIG INDUSTRY** When Anna Longthorp-Oates, of Anna's Happy Trotters, arrived in the office recently, dad Richard Longthorp asked her what she was doing today. She replied, 'I'm off to Hull first to get my bridesmaid's dress and then I'm going to the abattoir to check on my pigs being slaughtered.'

# slurry for Herefordshire pig farmer

less scorching and residue on the plant.

'I have been able to cover all the oilseed rape and wheats this year, saving thousands on fertiliser.'

His farm is close to a resi-

dential area. He used to avoid spreading in the fields next to the houses for fear of complaints about smell.

'The smell was definitely less on emptying. I now spread in all of my fields, as it no longer

smells anywhere near as bad as it did.

'It must be a great improvement, as my wife no longer mentions the smell. In fact she comments on how much less the slurry smells.'

• For more information about Epizym (or to become a distributor, call Stuart Aitkenhead, 01892 506950, or visit [epizym.com](http://epizym.com).

## Pig producers should soon have a quicker and cheaper way to analyse solids

An innovative technique that could improve analysis of pig manures and provide local testing facilities for producers is being investigated by the BPEX knowledge transfer team.

While producers can already get special on-farm test kits to analyse slurry for total and available N content, all solid manures have to be sent away to a laboratory for testing.

This is costly and time-consuming, so BPEX is now looking at a new method using near infrared reflectance spectroscopy and the Bruker Optics Matrix-I NIRS instrument, said Nigel Penlington, BPEX environment programme manager.

He pointed out that this machine was already used to scan samples of forages such as silage and grain in the arable sector, as well as to analyse engine and transmission oils in plant and machinery.

'We are now checking to see if we can adapt it to analyse a wide range of manures from very dilute dirty water through to well-rotted FYM. Its improved accuracy and speed will help pig farmers save money and time by reducing the costs of the analytical service needed for them to make best use of the valuable plant nutrients.'

BPEX is working on this project with other levy bodies and the Defra sustainable arable Link research programme.

Results from initial laboratory tests look promising.

BPEX hopes the project will deliver:

- Sample preparation or homogenisation - manure analysis that can be assessed without the need for sample preparation.
- Conventional analysis range - robust assessment capability for DM, pH, total N, total S, total P, potassium and magnesium.
- Mineralisation of manure organic N - results from studies on grass N offtake following manure applications to soil will be used to develop a predictive capability for the release on N from the organic components of manures.
- Flexibility - the portability of the instruments and the transferability of developed calibration models will allow the technology to be widely available and easily applicable.
- Reduced analytical costs - the transportability of the instrument, ready applicability and rapid scanning capability will reduce costs significantly.

'The project has another year to run and we are fairly confident we will be able to calibrate the first machines for pig slurry and manure soon,' said Nigel Penlington.

## 'Greater than the sum of the parts'

Pig industry training chief Richard Longthorp has been appointed chairman of NFU's Agri Skills Forum. His role will be to help create an industry-wide training strategy which will be simple to use, because 'the wires have been hidden'.

It won't be easy, or quick, he said. 'But it will, when successfully developed and implemented, offer huge rewards for all.'

The Agri Skills Forum is evidence of pan-industry (including Defra) recognition that skills development is key to a dynamic, successful and profitable industry that can feed the nation whilst conserving the environment in the years ahead, he said.

'From many meetings, discussions and simple observations it is quite clear that not only is the agricultural industry, as we already know, highly skilled but there is also a massive amount of skills development already taking place.'

'The problem is that it is not always recognised as such. This is probably because much of it is currently ad hoc and disjointed and hence does not lend itself to wider recognition.'

'What the situation is crying out for is a simple yet comprehensive industry-wide strategy to pull together all the current elements and extract a value that is far greater than the simple sum of the parts.'

## Plum pudding

A 15-year-old boy proved there is virtually nothing a teenager won't eat, when he consumed pig testicles during his biology class, on a dare. The student made £50 for the stunt and won a trip to the hospital after school officials became concerned about the possible effects consuming formaldehyde soaked testicles might have on a growing young man. 'It was just like swallowing a pill,' said the boy. 'It wasn't that bad.'

## Changes in Danish agriculture representation

The main Danish farm and cooperative organisations have agreed to merge into a new single body, the Danish Agriculture and Food Council. The merger is a result of a desire in Denmark to lower costs for members and increase efficiency. The organisations involved are:

- Danish Agricultural Council.
- Danish Farmers' Unions.
- Danish Bacon and Meat Council.
- Danish Dairy Board.
- Danish Agricultural Advisory Service.
- Danish Farmers' Unions' Media.
- Danish Pig Production.

Peter Gaemelke has stepped down as president of the Danish Agricultural Council after 14 years. He is succeeded by vice-president Michael Brockenhuus-Schack, a 49-year-old arable farmer, who becomes first chairman of the new Danish Agriculture and Food Council.

# continues to see-saw

Wheat is falling, as the fundamentals suggest it should, but buyers must still contend with crazy swings



World wheat prices... responding to the fundamentals now?

exchange rate may improve, which will help pull prices down.

'So it is quite a difficult picture at the moment in terms of where prices are going to go,' said Tony Bell. 'You will probably say that wheat at £130 for November recently was a relatively high price. But then some people saw it jumping maybe £20-£30 a tonne if we get factors affecting yield.'

Once thing was for sure, he said. The current volatility was going to continue. 'Daily price movements now are more than we used to see in a year.'

The drivers of volatility were lower world stocks of wheat, maize and soya, significantly higher world demand, predominantly from the Far East, and the use of maize, wheat and rapeseed for bio-fuels.

'On top of that we've got much higher freight costs.

Even though in the last six months they have fallen quite rapidly, they are now easing up again.'

Looking at the fundamentals of the world wheat market, Tony Bell sees a steady increase in demand to far higher levels than the almost static figure of just below 600m tonnes, ten years ago.

'In 2006-07 demand was pushed down because we did not have enough wheat and prices moved to cut demand. This year we've got better production and as a result demand has been allowed to increase again.'

Over the last ten years the world has seen only three years when wheat production was greater than consumption — last year, in 2004 and in 1997.

'So during the last ten years we have seen significant falls in stocks. We used to have stocks of 200m tonnes, compared to last year when stocks were as low as 115m tonnes, the lowest level worldwide since 1947.

'As a result we got very high prices and high prices led to greater production so stocks recovered and are now more like 167m, which has given us some relief from those high prices.'

Around the world the acreage planted for harvest 2009 has reduced as a result of the lower prices and difficult drilling conditions last autumn.

The United States Department of Agriculture estimates production will be 1.6 percent down. In the United Kingdom autumn plantings are down by about 14 percent.

But in theory worldwide production this year should still be greater than consumption and stocks should go up by another 20m tonnes.

'This should mean lower prices but it's not happening at the moment because obviously we haven't got the crop harvested yet and there is a great deal of concern that we won't get the forecast crop of 650m tonnes.

'There is a view that bad weather, such as drought in Eastern Europe, could depress yield to 620m tonnes. Some

people say it could go below 620m, and if that happens supply and demand starts to get tighter and potentially the price will go up.

'So the fear factor is at the moment being built into prices and we are seeing November wheat at £10 a tonne more than June prices.'

Turning to Britain, Tony Bell reminded producers the Ensus biofuel plant on Teeside would be coming into production this autumn and would require 1.1m tonnes of wheat a year.'

So what we are starting to see is a north-south divide where prices in Yorkshire are higher than in, say, East Anglia, because of the Ensus plant potentially making Yorkshire a deficit area for wheat.'

Ethanol production was becoming a major factor in price, he said. For instance, maize was the major livestock feed around the world and the amount of maize now going into ethanol was rapidly approaching the amount that goes into feed.

'So maize production and ethanol production are a huge influence on world supply and demand for cereals.'

## Danish exports fall over 12 percent

Danish pigmeat exports dropped over 12 percent in January and February. Exports to other European Union countries were particularly badly hit, with the biggest falls being to the United Kingdom, and Italy. Among third country exports, those to Japan and Russia showed the strongest decreases, although there was a small increase in exports to China. Exports of live pigs and sows were almost the same during this period.

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