

British producers get the message – be mean and lean

British pig producers have been told to face up to the fact that they **MUST record and share performance data with breeding companies as well as each other if they want to boost production.**



British pig producers during a refreshment break at their recent Innovation Conference.

They should also invest in new buildings incorporating innovative designs, the latest equipment and modern techniques developed in other pig-producing countries, or used by other industries.

These were among the messages spelt out to British producers at an “Innovation Conference” organised by the British Pig Executive (BPEX) at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire, England, on Tuesday (June 18).

The technical conference was aimed helping producers pull the UK out of the bottom three of the league table of pig-producing countries with an average 22.9 pigs per sow per year in 2012, compared with 28.8 in Denmark and 28.2 in the Netherlands (the two top countries).

Dr Jan ten Napel, senior genetics researcher at Wageningen UR Livestock research in the Netherlands, told delegates they should be providing the average technical performance of all their crossbred sows to their breeding companies.

They did not do this at the moment and it showed in the country’s overall performance, “Information is the key to both genetic and herd improvement, as has been shown in Denmark and the Netherlands, where producers share information and have one breeding programme,” he said.

Other speakers included process engineering expert Dr Barbara Sturm, from Newcastle University, who urged producers to look at what other industries were doing to boost

production with improved building designs, new materials and modern mechanised products to save costs and recycle waste heat.

Danish ventilation expert Niels Veng, of Veng Systems A/S, suggested the farmers should consider new CO₂ controls, which he claimed could reduce demand for heat by 50% without affecting production, “intelligent heat lamps” and Hi-lo controlled air outlets.

Summing up, BPEX environment programme manager Nigel Penlington called on UK producers to become “mean and lean – and committed to continuous improvement”.

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