

Creating Homogenous Groups Before Slaughter

Point of production: Finishing

Country of origin: The Netherlands



The pig industry aims to standardise the final pig meat product and variability in pig weight at slaughter is a major issue. Producers often speak of a weight average, which treats a batch of pigs as if it were a single animal, however, when pigs are evaluated at slaughter they are considered individually, meaning that only a few may fall inside the optimal weight range. There are economic penalties to falling outside of the optimal range and differences in pig weight at slaughter affect the optimal management of a farm and the implementation of an efficient all-in-all-out system.

The solution - Best practice

The farm: Rick Bosgoed invested in a new barn housing 3000 pigs, in groups of 375, which are managed with the Nedap automated pig sorting system. The Nedap system makes management of finisher pigs in large groups more efficient and more accurate through optimal feeding, therefore Rick can deliver his pigs to the slaughterhouse at exactly the right weight.

The system: It consists of a weighing unit with individual identification and three exits. The combined feed and sorting station weighs and identifies each pig and automatically leads it to the right feed type or to the separation area. Smart technology adjusts the feed type and amount to each pig automatically to ensure the group stays as uniform as possible, therefore reducing feed waste.

Rick monitors the activity and health of the animals and records growth and the number of visits to the feeding station.

Heaviest 40% of pigs receive grower/finisher feed. Lightest 60% of pigs receive starter feed. This reduces feed costs and waste on heavier animals.

Cost/Benefit analysis

Benefits:

- ✓ Average daily growth increases by 20g/day when using the Nedap system
- ✓ Feed conversion rate improves by 0.1
- ✓ Mortality rate drops
- ✓ Saves 0.50ct in feed costs per slaughter pig
- ✓ Better feed efficiency and a higher price per optimal weight pig results in a gross margin increase of 6.8%

Costs:

- Initial investment cost of €30 per slaughter pig
- Additional labour input for weighing is 5 hours a week for 3000 pigs
- Increase in production cost of 1.7%

Additional information

Average daily growth may vary from farm to farm. Labour input will also vary as it will relate to the size of the pig farm. Pigs require acclimatisation to the Nedap system - use becomes easier over time.

Homogeneity of pigs throughout the fattening period may result in a better conversion ratio and avoid the need for split marketing, which has a negative effect on animal welfare.

Further Research and Project Links

<https://www.eupig.eu/>
 Link to technical report
 Contact RPiG (The Netherlands):
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