



WALES & BORDER COUNTIES PIG BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter September 2014

FROM THE CHAIR

As a committee we are working to arrange several events for you during the winter months. These will be posted on the website and if you haven't become a member of our Facebook page then please do so as a lot of the press information is shared there. Please come and support as many of the events as you can, and also let us know what you want us to arrange for you.

The summer season of shows is just about over now, and congratulations to all our members who took rosettes home.

I had the honour of judging the best pig pen at the Royal Welsh this year, a much more difficult task than I thought it would be! But I was very pleased to see so many competitors had made the effort to promote their breed, and herd. We must remember these shows are our shop window, for new and future generations of pig owners and breeders.

Sue Howe

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUE HOWE – GENERATING ADDED VALUE WITH YOUR PORK

September Sunday 28th 2014 at Talgarth Church Hall, Hay Road, Talgarth

Cost £10 per person

10.30 for 11.00 finish at 3.00 approx.

Buffet lunch is included

The morning session will concentrate on the added value to your pork products, the afternoon will be more of a Q&A regarding legislation and selling.

Contact Sue Howe directly (07801 577072)

BOB STEVENSON – PIG POST MORTEMS

November Sunday 2nd 2014 at Greenmeadow Community Farm, Cwmbran, NP44 5AJ. Numbers limited & booking is essential – and book early!

Cost £20 per person (lunch available)

10.30am-3pm

This is our last opportunity to hear international pig vet expert and celebrity Bob. He has given us many talks over the years, has high regard for the Association, and has kindly agreed to one more course before he steps down and retires properly.

Bring clean clothes & footwear

Part funded by Farming Connect

Contact Sue Howe directly (07801 577072)

Come to our main annual event
**AGM + Sunday Lunch +
Special Charcuterie
Tasting**

on Sunday 23rd November 2014, 11am-
3pm
at The New Inn, Newbridge-on-Wye
£10 / head only

- 2 - Course Lunch and coffee
- Association Annual General Meeting
- 'Tutored Tasting' of Trealy Farm produce with prize-winning Charcutier James Swift

*Booking essential – telephone Sue
Howe on 07801 577072*

Part funded by Farming Connect

SHOW TIME!

As another showing year draws to a close it's time to look back and also to plan for next year!

The weather this year has certainly been kind to us.

If you are thinking of showing for the first time your small local show may be the place to start but if you are feeling brave why not consider the best of the big shows?

The **Royal Welsh Spring Festival** is one of the first shows of the season in May. Everyone is always very friendly and helpful, especially to newcomers. This was our first show three years ago and it remains one of my favourites.

This year's show was once again a great success. The W&BCPB stand was manned by pig breeders ready to answer questions and provide much needed cups of tea and coffee. There was also a programme of talks about every aspect of pig keeping. Of interest to beginners and experienced pig keepers alike.

This show was especially memorable for us because we took the Interbreed Supreme Championship with our Tamworth sow , Martha. A one off and totally unexpected!



Royal Three Counties Show

Surely one of the most enjoyable shows – nestled in the Malvern Hills.

Again it was really well attended this year and also included the Rare Breeds Show on the Sunday –so two shows in one. The ring was packed full of quality pigs for most of the classes.

One of the drawbacks in the past has been crossing a water gully to get from the pig shed to the show rings. Often a challenge for both pig and owner!

However this year the show rings were moved to the side of the building and a large green carpet was put down for the pigs. A very novel idea but difficult to keep clean! We should all be thanking Andy Greedy and his brush and shovel! I wonder what happened to that carpet? Any offers?

Congratulations to Judith Simms and her beautiful Gloucestershire Old Spot sow, for winning the Interbreed Supreme Championship.

Royal Welsh Show

The highlight of the year. Pig entries were high with most breeds both modern and traditional represented. The sun shone and the temperature soared to nearly 30 degrees but there were no problems for the animals in the shed as there is good ventilation but the same can't be said for outside in the show ring! Both pigs and owners were wilting in the heat and needed reviving with plenty of drinks.

The crowds all added to the atmosphere and even David Cameron graced the show with his presence on the Monday! It's a pity he didn't come and visit the pigs!

During the course of the day and evening there was plenty to see. The Kings Troop Artillery put on spectacular displays every day and drew large crowds.

Congratulations to Catrin and Lilly Nicholas and mum Rachel for winning the Interbreed Supreme Championship with their beautiful British Lop sow. The traditional pigs have certainly done very well for themselves this year!

Then all too soon the week was over and it was time to load up the pigs and it has to be said that the Royal Welsh have got it down to a fine art. The speed at which the pigs are loaded is amazing! A great end to a wonderful week.



Best pen presentations.

Congratulations are also in order for Barbara Warren for her wonderful display boards at all the shows. She was first at the Spring Festival and the Three Counties against very strong competition and second at the Bath and West and the Royal Welsh.

Well done Barbara for showcasing your pigs and Tamworths in general.

Sharron Nicholas



A FEW QUESTIONS FOR

Wendy Scudamore (Committee Member)

- 1. When did you first have an interest in pigs?**
In 1998 when I was opening my farm to the public
- 2. How long have you kept pigs?**
Since 1998
- 3. What breeds?**
I started with 2 GOS then found Kunekunes. Later I moved in to Berkshires and have since imported two more breeds – Little Swedish Pigs and Chinese Meishans. I don't keep GOS any longer
- 4. How many do you have and how often do you breed them?**
Today I have 45 plus followers. They are not all breeding pigs – I am too soft and keep all my retired breeders! I breed my Berkshires (4 sows) twice a year. And my Kunes once a year. Meishans twice a year and currently not breeding the Swedes as sadly I can't find suitable, sensible homes for them.
- 5. Do you show?**
I love showing and usually come out with Berkshires and Kunes but this year plans have gone awry! Did well with a Kune at the Spring Festival though!!
- 6. Do you have other livestock?**
Yes
- 7. Are your pigs / livestock part of your occupation or just a hobby?**
They are part of my occupation
- 8. How much land do you have?**
I have 15 acres
- 9. What outlets, if any, do you have for your pigs / meat?**
Friends, family and occasional locals
- 10. Any pearls of wisdom?**
Start small and increase slowly! It's never easy the other way around. And don't start at all if like me you find the parting difficult!!

PIGS IN WARTIME

During WW2 bacon became a highly prized rarity. With rationing, meat became scarce , consequently this increased the need for ordinary people to keep animals.

The small pig keeper's council persuaded local councils to allow people to keep pigs in their back yard and certainly every farmer had them.

The bacon fat many years ago was up to three times thicker than now due to the pigs being fed leftover milk.

A family's pig would munch away until the fateful day arrived. Killing the pig was an annual event and friends and neighbours joined in. However my mother-in-law said she always left the house that day and stayed away!

After killing, a stick fire would be lit underneath a large pan or bath of water to scald the hair off the pig. It was then left to hang for a couple of days before being cut up into two shoulders , two fletches and two hams. Then it was salted and left for two weeks on a cold slab often slate and then hung and ready to use.

Not so long ago this photo surfaced in a local magazine. My mother-in-law saw it and suddenly said 'That's my father and grandmother at Ysguborwith near Whitland , where I was born!' She still has the original photo.

We are not sure who the man on the left is – probably the butcher and it was taken some time during the war we think.

Ysguborwith still has pigs there today because by coincidence the present owners have bought Tamworth weaners from us for the last two years! They also slaughter at home. So nothing has changed very much!

Sharron Nicholas



PIGS IN THE NEWS

100 Swansea 'micro pigs' culled for public safety (©BBC News)



More than 100 so-called 'micro pigs' living in the wild have been shot in a cull by Swansea council.

It is understood that the pigs, which have been made popular by celebrities as pets, were living on the 'Welsh Moor' area of common land in Gower.

The animals appear to have escaped from captivity and may have cross-bred with other species of farm pig.

Local farmers and parents raised concerns about the danger they posed to children and livestock.

A council official said they had tried to find the original owners but nobody was prepared to take responsibility for the pigs, which may number as many as 300 animals.

"These animals presented a serious risk to other livestock in the region in the event of a disease outbreak, and because of this we were left with no option but to carry out a cull," said a spokesperson.

"This was carried out by a licensed professional and with full support of local farmers in the area.

"We also liaised with animal welfare officers in the Welsh government to keep them informed of our actions."

Micro pigs have become popular pets recently, with famous owners including Victoria Beckham and Paris Hilton.

While the animals are selectively bred to remain small, some varieties can grow up to 5ft long and 3ft tall (1.5m by 0.9m), weighing up to 155lb (70kg).

This has led to many being abandoned as they become unmanageable in the home.

The RSPCA said the cull highlighted its concerns over the animals being kept as pets.

"Although these pigs are advertised as being 'micro', people might not be getting what they think they are expecting," said an official.

"Anyone considering purchasing a micro-or mini-pig must first consider carefully whether they will be able to provide for a pig's needs for the whole of his or her life."

The charity also said there were regulations and laws about keeping pigs as pets which include disease control measures, movement notices, registration, identification and feeding.

"Owners should note that, even if kept as pets, pigs remain farm animals in the eyes of the law," the spokesperson added.

"Due to their complex needs, the RSPCA is concerned about how well micro and mini-pigs can be cared for by non-specialist and inexperienced keepers."



This lady says her 'micro pig' just kept 'growing and growing and growing'
©BBC News

Pigs & Places

Send us your photos of what your pigs are doing inside and outside the show ring. All photos are gratefully received and acknowledged! Contributors this month are Andy Zambanini (with his 'micro pig' - not!) and Barbara Warren.



RESEARCH PROJECT

Sarah Harrison is a distance learning student with Bristol University completing her Masters project which is all to do with the prevalence of the pig worm, *Ascaris suum*. As you may or may not know, this worm causes damage to the liver sometimes ending with liver rejection at slaughter for the farmer which in small holder type set ups/extensively farmed units can be a significant cost. There is very little work published on prevalence data and management practices which this study would aid in identifying.

She is looking to recruit farms to her study which have any history of liver rejection or down grading or have this worm on their farm that they know of. If you have a recently farrowed litter (not older than 10 weeks) or a sow about to farrow (depending on how long you rear for, they would need to be going for slaughter no later than March) then she would like to follow these pigs through to slaughter getting a group faecal sample every 6 weeks to do a faecal egg count on them. She would then want to travel to the slaughterhouse and get any liver grading data on those pigs and examine their small intestines for the presence of worms.

Is this something you would be interested in partaking in? She would greatly appreciate it if you are in a position to participate and if you have any other small holder friends who might be interested, please let her know. She would be happy to do faecal egg counts on other animals on farm as a thank you! Her email address is sarahksquires@gmail.com and number is 07595678761 if anyone is interested.

ADVERTS

- If you would like to place an advert in the newsletter, on our Facebook page or our website then contact Andy Zambanini (andy.zambanini@btconnect.com)

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

All contributions to the newsletter are gratefully received. Send us your pig related stories, achievements, photos or jokes.

FACEBOOK

For the latest information regarding up and coming events, stock for sale, new equipment, and everything else pig related join our Facebook page. We have over 90 people subscribed to our Facebook page so this may be a great opportunity for you to share information about your pigs.

Our Facebook page is found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WBCPBA/>

CONTACTS

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