

Larger sow units show key advantages

By METAFARMS ANALYTICS TEAM

METAFARMS has been providing *Feedstuffs* with a quarterly analysis of the MetaFarms Production Index based on closeout performance data for nursery, finishing and wean-to-finish groups.

Starting with this issue, MetaFarms will provide semiannual analyses of sow barn performance to more fully provide the swine industry with performance benchmarks.

The MetaFarms Summer Sow Performance is based on performance metrics for sow farms and how they compare with the year-ago period. Data were scrubbed and made anonymous to protect confidentiality. Data are from pork producers using the MetaFarms Enterprise Agriculture Management software solution, representing more than 500 pork production companies in the U.S. and Canada. Sow data include more than 340 farms with around 700,000 sows.

Sow information for 2015 and 2016 was gathered from May 1 to Oct. 31 and was then categorized into three different groups — up to 2,000 sows, 2,000-4,000 sows and more than 4,000 sows — based on average mated inventory during the period.

Overall summary. It would be remiss not to point out the very noticeable difference in pigs weaned per mated female per year (PVMFY) between the smaller units with fewer than 2,000 sows and the larger units with more than 4,000 sows. In 2015, larger units had a 1.8-pig advantage, and that spiked to 3.4 more pigs in 2016 (Table).

To accomplish this performance increase, several key metrics were better in larger units versus the smallest units. For example, the live born average was 0.5 pigs higher (12.9 versus 12.4), farrowing

Sow Barn Analysis

Sow farm performance by herd size (May 1-Oct. 31)

	Herd size					
	--Up to 2,000--		---2,000-4,000---		---4,000-plus---	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Number of sows	182,584	176,545	298,449	298,583	242,966	209,278
Pigs weaned/mated female/year	24.0	23.4	25.2	25.6	25.8	26.8
Litters/mated female/year	2.18	2.21	2.35	2.34	2.41	2.45
Weaned sows served in under 7 days, %	76.3	75.1	76.4	79.3	79.1	82.4
Repeats, %	9.8	10.1	8.9	8.0	7.1	6.2
Gilts, %	20.3	19.4	17.6	16.3	18.8	18.2
Matings/service	1.94	1.94	2.02	1.95	2.03	2.04
Weaning to first service interval, days	6.9	7.3	7.1	6.8	7.0	6.6
% pregnant at day 35	90.6	91.2	90.7	91.7	91.9	91.8
Farrowing rate, %	83.1	81.5	84.2	85.2	86.3	84.6
Avg. total piglets born	13.5	13.9	13.6	14.1	13.7	14.1
Birth loss, %	10.2	11.0	9.5	9.6	8.4	8.6
Avg. live born	12.1	12.4	12.4	12.8	12.5	12.9
Avg. farrowing interval, days	147.7	148.1	147.2	146.2	145.9	146.4
Prewearing mortality, %	12.1	12.9	12.1	13.0	12.6	12.8
Pigs weaned/sow	10.4	10.5	10.5	10.7	10.5	10.8
Avg. weaning age, days	20.5	20.1	19.9	19.6	19.3	19.0
Avg. mated female inventory	976	978	2,713	2,851	5,282	5,139
Herd parity (without gilt pool)	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.8
Sow culling, %	49.4	59.9	44.2	44.8	43.6	44.4
Sow mortality, %	5.0	5.9	5.7	6.1	5.0	6.4
Entry to first service interval, days	56.9	30.9	22.8	21.4	16.4	23.4

rate was 3.1% better (84.6% versus 81.5%) and birth loss was 2.4% lower (11.0% versus 8.6%).

Inside the numbers

• **PVMFY.** In 2016, PVMFY for units with more than 4,000 sows (26.8 pigs weaned) was 3.4 pigs better than units with up to 2,000 sows (23.4 pigs weaned).

• **Farrowing rate.** The farrowing rate in 2016 for midsized units (2,000-4,000 head) was 85.2%, the highest among the categories.

• **Prewearing mortality.** The percentage difference in preweaning mortality

was 0.2% among sow unit sizes — 13.0% for the largest units versus 12.8% for the midsized units.

• **Days to weaning.** In 2016, larger sow units were weaning pigs 1.1 days sooner — at 19.0 days — than the smaller units, which weaned at 20.1 days.

• **Total born.** In 2016, 14.1 total piglets were born in midsized and larger units, and both groups had noticeable increases from 2015 (13.6 and 13.7 piglets, respectively).

• **Open females.** After breeding, nearly 10% of the mated females in smaller units were falling out after day 35. ■