analyzed for weanling pigs

web-based application offering valuable information to hog producers.

The troubleshooting and management guide, built in a user-friendly and intuitive format, contains extensive information and support for pork producers, including more than 1,000 fact sheets and references, the center said.

"This guide is designed to help producers identify the source of the reproductive problem they are experiencing and, through research-based fields, provide information directly related to that problem," said Chris Hostetler, animal science director at the National Pork Board.

The guide uses a reproductive decision tree that begins with three categories: gilts, sows and boars (semen). After selecting a category, a list of potential issues are available from which to choose, such as "low farrowing rate" or "too small of a gilt pool."

Once the topic is selected, the decision tree helps narrow the search on the issue through a series of available questions. After choosing the question that best fits the original problem, an answer is provided in the form of a fact sheet with viewable references.

The guide is available only as a web application via www.usporkcenter.org and may be accessed through personal computers, smartphones and tablets. ■

Swine Barn Analysis

Finishing pig closeout performance improves

By **TOM STEIN***

STARTING with this issue, I will be reporting closeout performance for nursery, finishing and wean-to-finish groups and showing how it compares with the same period a year ago.

Data come from pork producers using the MetaFarms software system and represent more than 500 pork production companies in the U.S. and Canada. The data were scrubbed and made anonymous to protect the confidentiality of the software users.

For the third quarter of 2013, nursery growth and conversion performance — average daily gain (ADG), feed conversion ratio (FCR), average daily feed intake (ADFI) and days on feed (DOF) — showed no change from a year ago (Table). However, nursery mortality was up 10.4% in relative terms, or 0.25% in absolute numbers. Perhaps this reflects the effects of porcine epidemic diarrhea disease virus?

Growth performance in finishing closeouts was up significantly in 2013. In the third quarter, the average finishing pig needed 16 lb. less feed to reach market weight, grew 4.3% faster, converted 3.7% better and needed four fewer days to market. This was in the face of a not insignificant increase of 2.4% (relative) in finishing mortality.

Wean-to-finish closeout performance was in between nursery and finishing results. The average pig in wean-to-finish barns grew 2.2% faster, converted 2.4% better and needed about two fewer days to market.

Mortality followed the same pattern and was up slightly, but keep in mind that wean-to-finish mortality should be compared with the combined nursery and finishing mortality numbers. The relevant comparison is 6.69% in wean-to-finish barns versus 7.04% in standard nursery finishing systems, i.e., pigs move from a nursery site to a finishing site. That's 5% less mortality (relatively) in wean-to-finish barns than the typical nursery finishing system.

I've seen the same relationship in other benchmarking analyses over the past three years. Maybe there's something protective about placing pigs in wean-to-finish barns compared with nursery move-to-finishing systems.

*Dr. Tom Stein is chief innovations officer, executive chairman and chairman of the board of directors at MetaFarms, which provides software systems to help farmers better manage livestock data.

Closeout performance

	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	% change
Nursery			
Closeouts	1,459	1,444	
Total pigs started	2,492,956	2,845,430	
Avg. initial weight, lb.	12.8	12.8	
Mortality, %	2.49	2.75	10.4
Avg. out weight, lb.	55.1	55.4	
Total feed, lb./head	68.2	68.0	
ADG, lb./day	0.85	0.85	
FCR	1.63	1.61	
ADFI, lb./day	1.39	1.38	
Avg. DOF	49.1	49.3	
Finishing			
Closeouts	1,578	1,882	
Total pigs started	3,062,429	3,345,426	
Avg. initial weight, lb.	53.2	53.0	
Mortality, %	4.19	4.29	2.4
Avg. out weight, lb.	267.0	269.1	
Total feed, lb./head	622.3	605.9	-2.6
ADG, lb./day	1.70	1.77	4.3
FCR	2.94	2.84	-3.7
ADFI, lb./day	5.00	5.02	
Avg. DOF	124.3	120.4	-3.1
Days to first market sale	108.7	104.7	-3.6
Wean-to-finish			
Closeouts	283	396	
Total pigs started	594,430	913,662	
Avg. initial weight, lb.	13.2	13.3	
Mortality, %	6.55	6.69	2.0
Avg. out weight, lb.	265.8	268.6	1.1
Total feed, lb./head	670.7	661.8	-1.3
ADG, lb.	1.50	1.54	2.2
FCR	2.67	2.60	-2.4
ADFI, lb.	4.01	3.99	
Avg. DOF	167.2	165.4	-1.0
Days to first market sale	153.1	152.2	-0.6