

Swine Barn Analysis

Nursery mortality drops

By TOM STEIN*

THE following is a report of the fourth-quarter 2013 MetaFarms Production Index based on closeout performance for nursery, finishing and wean-to-finish groups and how it compares with the same period a year ago.

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

Nursery growth and conversion performance — average daily gain (ADG), feed conversion ratio (FCR), average daily feed intake (ADFI) and days on feed (DOF) — showed almost no change from a year ago (Table).

Surprisingly, despite porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) activity in the U.S., nursery mortality dropped by almost 6% in relative terms or 0.18% in absolute numbers: from 3.09% to 2.91%. A rise in nursery death loss was expected, but instead, it showed a small decrease.

So far, it would appear that the main effect of PEDV is at the sow farm prior to weaning. It'll be interesting to see if the 2014 first-quarter results show the same thing or if there will be an increase, which I would expect.

Growth performance in finishing closeouts was up substantially in the 2013 fourth quarter compared with the same period a year ago. Consistent with what the U.S. Department of Agriculture is reporting on liveweights, in the MetaFarms database, the average liveweight sold was up 2.3% —

275.0 lb. versus 268.9 lb. a year ago.

Pigs grew 2.2% faster, had 1.1% better feed conversion and had 1% better average feed intake while taking about 1.5 fewer days to get to that 275 lb. average market weight. More surprising, weight gain and feed conversion improved at the same time finishing mortality increased by 5.3% (relative basis), from 3.78% to 3.98%.

The same trends can be seen in wean-

to-finish barns as in finishing barns:

The average market weight was up by 5 lb. — 269.4 lb. versus 274.6 lb. — reflecting a little better ADG and a little better FCR.

Mortality was lower by 6.6% (relative terms) in 2013 compared with 2012: 5.75% versus 5.37%. Overall, mortality was lower in wean-to-finish barns by 22% — 5.37% for wean-to-finish versus 6.89% for nursery and finishing combined.

Fourth-quarter closeout performance

	2012	2013	% change
Nursery			
Closeouts	1,372	1,327	—
Total pigs started	2,582,161	2,600,146	—
Avg. start weight, lb.	12.9	12.8	—
Mortality, %	3.09	2.91	-5.8
Avg. weight out, lb.	55.7	56.0	—
Feed per head, lb.	68.9	70.1	—
ADG, lb./day	0.87	0.87	—
FCR	1.62	1.64	—
ADFI, lb./day	1.41	1.43	—
Avg. DOF	55.9	56.7	—
Finishing			
Closeouts	1,584	1,901	—
Total pigs started	3,108,677	3,417,809	—
Avg. start weight, lb.	52.9	53.5	—
Mortality, %	3.78	3.98	5.3
Avg. weight out, lb.	268.9	275.0	2.3
Feed per head, lb.	607.5	615.4	1.3
ADG, lb./day	1.81	1.85	2.2
FCR	2.84	2.81	-1.1
ADFI, lb./day	5.14	5.19	1.0
Avg. DOF	133.3	132.0	-1.0
Days to first market sale	103.8	104.5	0.7
Wean-to-finish			
Closeouts	371	372	—
Total pigs started	737,773	770,174	—
Avg. start weight, lb.	13.4	13.2	—
Mortality, %	5.75	5.37	-6.6
Avg. weight out, lb.	269.4	274.6	1.9
Feed per head, lb.	663.2	670.7	1.1
ADG, lb./day	1.58	1.59	0.6
FCR	2.60	2.57	-1.2
ADFI, lb./day	4.11	4.10	—
Avg. DOF	184.0	184.6	0.3
Days to first market sale	149.3	149.7	0.3

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