

Book Reviews

Pigs: A Guide to Management, Second Edition

N Benyon (2014). Published by The Crowood Press, Ramsbury, Marlborough, UK. 240 pages Paperback (ISBN 978-1-84797-752-6). Price £20.00.

This is a book which all those who are interested in pigs will enjoy reading. It provides an excellent introduction to those new to the subject area. It is a welcome update to the book first published in 1990, written by a great pig enthusiast with a lifetime of practical experience. The book is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of pig production for students and pig-keepers and is full of practical advice and information on all aspects. An academic reader or experienced professional pig-keeper may find some of the opinions expressed in the text debatable, and often unsubstantiated by evidence, but the enthusiast will revel in the many fascinating snippets gleaned from research or from the author's practical experience. The book is written in a chatty and accessible style and is packed with attractive and informative colour pictures and diagrams to illustrate and explain the points made in the text. This makes it easy to read for the new practitioner or student and it will engage and sustain interest in a way that would not be achieved by a more formal textbook. However, the book would have benefitted from more careful editing. There is a degree of repetition between the different chapters and small typographical errors throughout the text and figures which have been missed.

The introductory chapter gives a fascinating trip through the history of domestication of the pig and development of the British industry, which is followed up in the subsequent chapter by an explanation of how market requirements for efficiently produced quality pigmeat have shaped the breeds and breeding systems in use today. The next two chapters review the nutritional and environmental needs of pigs, explaining some of the underlying science, but giving greater emphasis to practical delivery of appropriate feed and housing across all stages. Striking a balance between science and practice is sometimes difficult, for example the terms Lower and Upper Critical Temperature are used without ever explaining what they actually mean, and unexplained terms such as 'ringing' or 'hydraulic crates' may initially baffle the uninitiated. However, even a person unfamiliar with pigs will have little difficulty in understanding the important messages, which are clearly and carefully explained using simple language. There then follow a series of chapters dealing with each stage in the production process: breeding, piglet management after birth and at weaning, finishing pigs, and finally sow and gilt management. These chapters describe the key principles to be considered at each stage, and are packed with good practical and illustrated advice about equipment choice, management strategy and how to carry out day-to-day stockman tasks. The book is completed by a chapter on health and welfare, and two short chapters on showing pigs and on future perspectives for the industry. The suggestions for further reading at the end of some, but not all, chapters are supple-

mented by useful appendices. These provide a good selection of website links for key documentation and important industry organisations and will provide an invaluable reference source for those new to pig-keeping.

The importance of delivering good pig welfare is implicit throughout the book, although any mention of the word 'welfare' is completely missing from the index. The chapter on 'Health and welfare, is rather narrow in focus, comprising a list of health disorders and their common causes, and outlining practical disease control measures which can be taken. Although welfare legislation is highlighted, there is very little discussion in this chapter of the behavioural needs of pigs and the implications of these for housing design and management. Such information has to be gleaned from other places in the book. However, there is no doubt that any new pig-keeper who follows the recommendations in the text will look after the day-to-day welfare of their animals by applying good practical management and stockmanship. In a period when we have seen the growth of hobby farming and pet pigs, where welfare issues often arise through well-intentioned but poorly informed ownership, a book such as this one has a very important role to play and should be on the bookshelf of every amateur pig-keeper.

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Animal Welfare: Focusing on the Future

Edited by DJ Mellor and ACD Bayvel (2014). Published by the World Organisation for Animal Health, 12 Rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France. 360 pages Paperback (ISBN 978-92-9044-929-4). Scientific and Technical Review. Volume 33(1), April 2014. Price €65.00 www.oie.int.

This volume is the latest in a series of publications by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) on animal welfare dating back to 2003. It builds on previous publications, and the papers are prepared for non-specialist readers. Most papers also consider potential future developments for improving animal welfare.

The book is divided into twelve sections plus the Preface and Introduction, with 30 papers in total, plus the summing up. Each paper is presented in English with one also provided in French and one in Spanish. The summing up is in English, French and Spanish. The summaries for all the papers are given in the three languages.

The first section comprising seven papers deals with the drivers for animal welfare policy on a global basis. The first presents a brief overview of the development of animal welfare as a topic of global concern. This is followed by papers on the drivers for animal welfare policy in Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Far East and Oceania and the