

Practical Pig Keeping

P Smith (2001). Published by The Crowood Press Ltd, The Stable Block, Crowood Lane, Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 2HR, UK. 208 pp. Hardback (ISBN 1 86126 388 0). Price £18.99.

One of the side effects of the current economic decline in farming, and especially in livestock farming, has been the seeming reluctance of publishers to put out books on the production side of stock keeping. It is still possible to find scientific texts on animal nutrition or animal environments or animal welfare, but new books dealing with straightforward animal production matters seem to be in short supply. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome a new text on pig keeping that is aimed at the people who are actually running, or are going to be running, pig production units. We must never forget that the welfare of the pig largely depends upon the stock keeper's attitude, knowledge and skill. This new book could help to improve all three of these attributes.

After a short introduction dealing with the overall pattern of pig production around the world, there is a chapter entitled 'Getting started'. Here the emphasis is on animal welfare requirements, on the acquisition of the necessary skills and knowledge and on the decisions that have to be made when selecting a production system that will both suit the available land site and produce meat which is wanted by the consumer. Next is a chapter on 'Breeding for future generations' covering the new genetic and biotechnological techniques that are being increasingly used in pig improvement schemes. Then follows 'Making the most of nutrition', in which the applied aspects of pig nutrition are most clearly laid out. 'Management: pigs and people' is dealt with next, with emphasis being placed on stockmanship, the environment, people welfare and pig welfare. The care and management of 'The breeding sow' is well covered in the succeeding chapter, and the requirements for 'Raising piglets' are fully discussed in the following one. There are then two good chapters on 'Market considerations' and 'Pig health matters'. The text is completed by 'The way forward', which looks at the possible application of new ideas and techniques to pig production. There is finally a section entitled 'Further information', which includes addresses of useful contacts, a list of websites and a short bibliography. This is followed by a well-thought-out glossary and a three-page index.

There is ample and efficient use of photographs, diagrams and tables in each chapter. Boxes containing listed information are used to great effect and each chapter ends with a short clear summary and boxed 'Notes for novices'. All in all, this is a good, well produced book.

There are, of course, points that the reviewer thinks ought to have been included and there are aspects that the reviewer believes should have been dealt with in a different way. It is unfortunate that there is, seemingly, no mention of foot-and-mouth disease, and yet there is much coverage of other diseases, hygiene and biosecurity in many places in the text. A slightly annoying habit of the author is the tendency for him to introduce novel, fascinating and possibly important concepts and then to give only an off-hand sort of reference to the sources, thus making it difficult for them to be followed up. Notwithstanding these minor criticisms, what is impressive is how much has been covered in 203 pages and how well it has been covered.

My other somewhat pedantic criticism is directed towards the title of the book. Paul Smith displays considerable skill in showing how modern scientific findings can be deployed to increase health, well-being and productivity in commercial pig keeping systems. He has the knack of making science understandable and therefore useable to the practical pig farmer.

And he has done all this well in this book. Its title, however, should perhaps have been 'Practical Pig Science' or 'Science and Pig Keeping'.

Whatever its title, this is a sound, well-informed, well-written book that I suspect could go through many editions. The ideas put forward so skillfully by the author have the potential to improve both pig production and pig welfare.

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Farm Animals in Research: can we meet the demands of ethics, welfare, science and industry?

Proceedings of the ANZCCART conference, held at the University of Adelaide, Australia, from 30 November to 1 December 2000. Published by ANZCCART, Department of Environmental Biology, Adelaide University, SA 5005, Australia. 128 pp. Paperback (ISBN 0 9586821 5 1). Price \$A40.

The collection of papers and reviews in these proceedings does not disappoint in terms of exploring the range of issues suggested by the title. The 'we' can, however, be taken to refer to 'we as scientists' rather than 'we as humans'. As such, and not surprisingly for the proceedings of a scientific conference, the book will appeal primarily to those using farm animals for research, whose professionalism and freedom is subject to ever-increasing pressures.

Right from the start it was acknowledged that there is a wide range of standpoints on these issues, yet the views of industrialists, philosophers, welfarists and others are here represented predominantly from the perspective of the scientist and academic. Nonetheless, the scientists themselves present diverse views. Somewhat controversially, John Barnett and Phil Glatz argue for the inclusion of housing systems that are no longer used by industry on ethical or animal welfare grounds as negative controls in experiments examining alternatives. In considering cloning, Simon Walker finds the science exciting and rewarding, yet recognises that ethics will almost certainly dictate the speed of progress. In this fast-moving area of science, yet more controversy — such as Dolly's arthritis — has arisen since he wrote the paper. Thus, his conclusion that it is unlikely that all needs can be satisfied, and that progress should therefore be slowed to consider all the implications, is even more pertinent. Several other papers recognise the pressure on scientific quality and integrity from industrial sponsors who not only demand a fast pace of progress but also may claim ownership of techniques and even of such things as genes and intellectual property. This may well impede future scientific progress.

There is full consideration of the ethics of animal experimentation and, particularly in the fields of biomedical research and surgery, the probability that models and computer simulation will dramatically reduce the need to use animals. Only one paper, by Carol Petherick and Bob Kilgour, mentions the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement). These authors also consider the importance of knowledge transfer in research that is intended for uptake by (the farming) industry, which, if it does not occur, renders the results of the experiments worthless and the use of the animals unjustified.

Similarly, many authors address issues of animal welfare. An interesting angle on this, which is not considered sufficiently often, is the reduction in the quality of the scientific results if the social and other needs of the experimental animals are *not* met. Similarly, the effects of human contact on experimental animals are also thoughtfully addressed in papers