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## Wild birds

Pig diseases can be carried by wild birds and especially those that frequent pig farms or outdoor pig production sites. Thus, we need to segregate our pigs from wild birds – something which is quite easy to achieve with modern housing, but impossible to achieve with outdoor production.

## Droppings

When we talk about wild birds we really mean wild birds and their droppings. You need to consider how wild bird droppings can get into the pig house, for example on bedding materials. Is your bedding material store wild bird proof? Do not drag bales of shavings or straw over the ground outside the pig house as this may be contaminated with wild bird droppings. Thus, the move from dry sow stalls to batch grouping in pens on straw could be viewed as a retrograde step in biosecurity terms! Wild bird droppings can contaminate feed and water before either ever reaches your farm!

## Mycoplasma

The wild bird which gets into your pig house represents a greater risk.

A good example of this was with poultry and *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* in the USA a few years ago. There was widespread infection with *M. gallisepticum* in the wild finch population – if the wild finches were kept outside the poultry house (even if just by wire netting) the poultry remained healthy; if they got into the house the poultry often succumbed to mycoplasmosis. This was probably because the finches were contaminating feed and water rather than transmitting the *M. gallisepticum* via the respiratory route.

Thus, it is very important to keep pigs in houses which wild birds can not access – special attention needs to be given to houses with external dunging areas.

## Control

Control has three facets Firstly, siting the farm away from free standing water that attracts wild waterfowl, secondly, making the pig site as unattractive as possible for wild birds and, thirdly, having wild bird proofed pig houses.

The second of these includes avoiding feed spillages, having no water available, such as leaking taps, and having no roosting or nesting sites available. Remember to wild bird proof your bedding materials store.

When it comes to wild bird proof houses they should be regularly checked to see that they are secure. On such checks, common findings include badly fitting doors, holes in wire netting and having a 4" diameter hole for a 2" pipe. Roosting points can often be identified by wild bird droppings on the floor immediately beneath them.

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