

Zambia – a real African success story!

One does not usually look upon Africa as the centre of the pig world, but one would be foolish to think that pig production does not occur there. Recently, International Pig Topics went to Zambia and visited one of that country's larger pig farms.

The Kyindu Piggery is part of Zambeef, which is one of the largest agriculture based companies with interests in beef, milk, maize, animal feeds, poultry, leather and food retailing.

The Kyindu Piggery is located close to Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, and its sister company, Masterpork, who processes the pigs.

Landrace x Large White hybrids

Currently, the farm has some 165 sows, which are predominantly Landrace x Large White hybrids. At the time of our visit, 92 sows were pregnant, eight had just been served, 55 were lactating with litters and 10 were dry.

These sows were being augmented by 92 gilts, of which 32 were pregnant and 17 had recently been served. The remaining gilts were still too young to be bred from.

The unit has 11 boars, of which four are Landrace and seven are Landrace x Large White and four new boars. These are Berkshires and were sourced in Zambia, but it is likely that there is some imported semen in their lineage.

The piggery is very much of a traditional design and in the farrowing house the farrowing pens and creeps are all brick built.



The Kyindu Piggery near Lusaka, including pigs in the lairage at the abattoir below.



The creeps have an infra red lamp which is turned off when the temperature in the creep area exceeds 28°C, which is quite often in the hot season when outdoor temperatures can reach the high thirties.

Control of environment essential

In addition, each creep area has three loose wooden panels as its roof. One, two or all three of these can be removed when there is a need to dissipate heat. Each creep area has its bedding and feed changed daily.

In the case of the latter, any feed that

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 remains is fed to the sow and not wasted. Lactating sows in the farrowing area are fed three times a day – in the morning, at lunchtime and at 4.00pm. The first and last feeds have molasses added to them. Gilts are penned two weeks early so they can receive more feed.

Careful management of runts

The piglets are weaned at 35 days and, where practical, litter integrity is maintained in the fattening house.

However, any runts are retained in the farrowing house in an empty pen until they have reached a size at which management feel they would be able to fend for themselves in the competitive world of the fattening house.

The pens in the farrowing house are cleaned out twice a day and those in the fattening house are cleaned out daily. All the waste is washed away through a purpose built network of waste drainage channels.

Sows receive the lactation feed for three weeks after service and for two weeks pre-farrowing and for the remainder of their pregnancy they receive dry sow feed. Dry sows receive 3kg of dry sow feed per day. Zambia is a hot country and so all pigs have access to all the water that they need.

Currently, the unit is weaning just over 20 piglets per sow per year which is a good figure when one considers 35 day weaning and the fact that this is Africa.

Many litters are of 12 or more piglets and the largest litter contained 19 piglets. Of these 19 piglets, 17 were weaned and only five were fostered.

All piglets are tail docked and tooth clipped in the first 72 hours and no castration is undertaken. Piglets are given access





to creep feed from their seventh day. In the fattening house there are almost 1,000 animals and all are in walled pens.

At the end of each batch all the walls are limed. This practice also occurs in the farrowing house each time a litter is weaned.

The fattening diet is maize based and trials are currently being run to see if some of this maize can be exchanged for sorghum without adversely affecting performance. At 15 weeks the finisher feed is introduced and this is fed to the pigs until they leave for the abattoir.

The goal is that all pigs go to the abattoir by their 25th week and all pigs are currently going to the abattoir at the desired weight of 80kg by their 24th week.

Typically, these pigs stay on the creep feed until they are seven weeks old, when they switch to a grower feed. At 15 weeks the finisher feed is given.

Most weeks see over 50 pigs from Kyindu Piggery go to the Masterpork abattoir, which is also operated by Zambeef and supplies a variety of pork, bacon and sausage products to Zambeef's retail outlets across Zambia.

Masterpork process some 250-300 pigs a week and produce 10 tonnes of sausages a week and another five tonnes of bacon.



Pork increasing in popularity

Zambians typically like poultry and beef, but pork is increasing in popularity. This change will speed up when take home pay increases, as it inevitably will. This is because the first things Zambians will do with their extra income is to buy more meat as this is very much a status symbol in their culture.

Pig meat, and especially sausage, will be one of the means by which this can be done and so the future for pig production in Zambia looks reasonably bright. ■

