

JSR takes its top genetics into Russia

Investors backing a brand new pig project in Belgorod called upon JSR Genetics, for their wealth of experience and expertise, to complete the huge, complex and, some would say, daunting task of restocking an entire region of Russia.

JSR has supplied more than 40,000 pigs to the Belgorod region of Russia since its first shipment in June 2005 and, in doing so, has helped set the region's pig breeders and producers on course to dramatically improve feed conversion efficiency from an average of around 4.8 towards the more impressive 2.5 achieved by JSR's stock.

Major step forward

This is a huge step forward for a sector where feed is the major cost for producers and where, historically, pigs have been inefficient animals with, by modern western standards, far too much backfat.

The contract with the Belgorod investors is the first that JSR has signed with Russia and it followed an enquiry that came via Big Dutchman – the German company that designs and installs modern pig feeding systems and housing equipment.

Big Dutchman was already working on a huge project in the region and recom-



A modern Russian breeding farm.

mended that JSR stock should be considered for the project.

"I was well aware of JSR's excellent reputation in this field and knew of their expertise in shipping stock and their ability and commitment to providing an excellent support service for their customers," commented Simon Grey from Big Dutchman.

"We thought that they were the obvious choice to recommend for stocking the new buildings and facilities in Belgorod."

The Belgorod venture is backed by investors keen to exploit the huge potential offered by efficient pig production in Russia.

The first contract is just the beginning of a move towards efficient production across the whole of Russia for which UK genetics will be playing a significant part.

The catalyst for change came from the top

– President Vladimir Putin. He instructed the Russian pig industry, in line with all Russia's food producing sectors, to initiate a total overhaul so that it can become self sufficient, as soon as possible.

The investors were immediately impressed by the presentations illustrating the potential quality of the genetics and the continued improvement over many years.

The technical expertise and on-going support offered by JSR was very thorough and professional and the package that they delivered was very much tailored to the specific needs of the Belgorod business.

Preferred supplier

How that 'package' was delivered starts back in March 2005 with Peter Shelton's, JSR's genetics sales director, first trip to Russia, following an enquiry to supply a large quantity of animals into the Belgorod region – 350 miles from Moscow.

The enquiry was for a total of 50,650 sows comprising 45,000 parent sows, 5,000 multiplication sows and 650 nucleus sows.

JSR Genetics was chosen as the preferred supplier due to the quality of its genetics, its impeccable health standards and its scale.

The whole project is now nearing completion with the most recent delivery of the nucleus herd taking place in August 2006.

In total 300 dam line Landrace, 300 dam line Large whites and 150 sire line sows were delivered as a complete package to operate as a closed nucleus herd.

A tremendous amount of work and planning went into each shipment throughout the project.

In the latest shipment five wagons were loaded – extremely carefully – taking into

Inside a Russian farrowing house.



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Another weaner house is commissioned.

Continued from page 7 consideration weather conditions, stocking densities, distance of travel and the very high financial value of the shipment.

The pigs had to be isolated in the UK, where blood testing was carried out and quarantine restrictions were followed, before they could begin their journey.

Peter's role throughout the project has very much been one of overseeing the contract – being the eyes and ears – and ensuring that everything runs as smoothly as possible.

First class travel

Ensuring that the highest standards of stockmanship and welfare are maintained throughout this and all deliveries, a pig husbandry and welfare specialist travels with the pigs to ensure that their every need is met. It is vital that someone who understands the exact needs of the pigs accompany them on their journey, since they are travelling long distances and through changing climates.

The journey from the UK to the Belgorod region takes between eight and nine days, including all the stops, lairage and rest periods required along the way.

This is accompanied by a huge amount of paperwork and a large amount of time at borders, which is spent checking, verifying and stamping all the paperwork.

A similar amount of time was spent clearing customs once the pigs arrived at the unit.

All the animals are now safe inside the unit and have settled into their new surroundings very well.

They are housed at a brand new farm, which was built to an extremely high standard in line with the entire programme for this huge operation.

Much thought was given by all concerned as to the location of the site and the design, particularly regarding the requirements for

successfully managing a nucleus herd and the high levels of biosecurity that this entails.

The pig facilities are very modern and well constructed, and are designed to take into account the huge fluctuations in temperature that are typical of the Russian climate.

But, just as importantly, the facilities are designed to ensure that growth rates and feed conversion efficiency are both maximised and that labour requirements are kept to a minimum.

Where would be the sense in housing high genetic merit pigs – capable of high feed conversion efficiency and fast growth rates – in inadequate housing?

The housing and facilities had to match the superior quality stock to get the best out of both.

The biggest consideration for the new unit's location was its proximity to the feed mill. This cut down on the cost of hauling feed to the unit. It is also well away from any other existing pig units.

Pigs leaving the UK.





Pigs en-route to Belgorod in Russia.

The mating of these animals has already begun with all progeny going through a thorough testing programme.

Animals selected through the testing programme will first be used to replenish the nucleus farm and then to replace stock at multiplication level with any surplus being available for sale within the region.

The nucleus farm is linked into JSR's genetic programme in the UK, with a five-year support package that is tailored to perfectly match the requirements of this huge operation.

"Knowing how to manage the pigs to maximise performance is just as important as the genetic quality of the pigs themselves. JSR recognises that the on-going support we have from the company helps us to iron out any management problems we may encounter – or, as is usually the case, prevent them arising in the first place – and stay on track," Belgorod's Vladimir Zotov told International Pig Topics.

Full support package

The package from JSR Genetics includes training and advice. JSR have visited the units to ensure that everything is running

smoothly as part of their on-going commitment to the units.

Advice and training is provided on, among other things, production, veterinary issues, and AI techniques. JSR will also focus on sales and marketing in the near future, to further enhance and support this growing operation.

The demand for superior genetics across Russia is at its highest ever level and JSR can see this continuing, certainly for the next five years.

This is just the first of many similarly sized operations in Russia for JSR as they are one of the few organisations that could successfully deliver a contract in this country on such a scale.

Following 15 successful shipments, it is not surprising they have seen a huge amount of interest from other regions of Russia and other countries in Eastern Europe.

It was no mean feat and JSR's work is not yet complete. JSR's work in Belgorod is on going and senior JSR staff visit on a quarterly basis to ensure that everything is continuing to move forward as it should.

That is all part of the service. JSR take as much pride in their service, back up and technical expertise that they provide as they do in their pig genetics. ■

