

Intro

I am delighted to introduce our Autumn Genetics Newsletter.

This issue focusses on the benefits of increased teats and the success a well planned restock can deliver.

Our genetics keep going from strength to strength with the TN70 being a market leading mother and our Tempo and Tempo Gold sire lines delivering exceptional on farm performance.

As we are all very well aware current market conditions are extremely challenging so it has never been more important to keep looking at the efficiency of your on farm performance and in particular the FCR in the growing and finishing herd.

This all starts with the mothering and rearing ability of the breeding herd producing a good strong quality piglet at weaning which you will read is very much the case with our producers using the TN70 indoors and out.

Good health is an important part in allowing modern genetics to express their full potential so perhaps now is the time to look at a restock to get these benefits.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact me or your account manager for more information.



Giles Christie
Sales Director
JSR Genetics

Teat Number

Numbers of teats on parental sows is arguably more important than ever with more producers having larger litters and with these large litters occurring more often, cross-fostering options are limited. This is why Topigs Norsvin and JSR emphasise that a sow should be capable of rearing all the pigs born alive without artificial interventions such as milk supplements and rescue decks.

When piglets are born they are without the protection of maternal Immunoglobulins (IgGs) and must get these from the colostrum in their mothers milk to give them immune protection until their own system is able to produce IgGs at 3-4 weeks of age. IgG levels in sow milk however halves in the first 12 hours after the first pig is born and is 70% lower after 24 hours. Ensuring all piglets can therefore access a teat at the same time in the first 12 hours of life is critical to survival. Studies have shown IgG levels in piglets are positively correlated with piglet survival.

On JSR Genetics nucleus and multiplication farms as well as the wider Topigs Norsvin breeding programme teat numbers of piglets are counted at birth to ensure all teat data is included within the breeding programme. This means genetics producing larger numbers of teats can be rewarded but also poorer teat numbers can be penalised.

In addition, the selection teams will also inspect older animals prior to deliver to recount teats in case any become damaged during the growth stage or fail to properly develop. Our selection team takes pride in ensuring all customer gilts are selected with a minimum of 14 teats although the reality is that many gilts are supplied with more than this.

This has been possible due to the balanced breeding approach from Topigs Norsvin who have adopted the policy of an extra piglet in the breeding goal must be match with an extra teat. Heritability of teat number is relatively high compared to many traits that we work with and the genomics applied to our damline populations has allowed the identification of individual genes associated with increased teat numbers. This development is possible because of the way the nucleus populations connect with millions of teat records collected every month around the globe in related animals.

At JSR we ensure all parent gilts are supplied with a minimum of 14 teats. As can be seen from the graph many will have 16. The attention to detail on this trait allows our TN70 to rear a larger proportion of her progeny without management intervention as part of our contribution to long term sustainable balanced breeding goals.



Percentage of gilts born with 16+ teats

Restock Success

Restocks are big decisions and take a lot of time and thought to get right. We explore the reasons why and benefits from doing a restock with a 270 sow Scottish Farrow to finish producer.

There are several reasons to undertake a restock and like many this restock was driven by general poor health, in particular APP and the genetic lag from a long term Criss Cross system, which was highlighted when the producer compared their performance to others in the local benchmarking group. These factors combined were not only affecting the business performance but staff moral was also being affected, something this producer was unwilling to accept.

Having made the decision to restock the producer undertook research to ensure the best genetics were used for health, performance and ease of management. During the research phase the producer looked at other genetics which had no more than 12 piglets milking per litter.

They then visited Topigs Norsvin in Holland and a JSR unit with Giles Christie. Having visited these they were very impressed with the numbers weaned, mothering ability, general temperament and robustness of the TN70. The TN70 gilt is supplied with 14 teats or more allowing her to suckle large strong litters.

Another key factor in the decisions to go with the TN70 is the high health supply and rigorous procedures in place for the restock with close contact between vets.

Once the decision was made to restock with JSR the task of clearing the unit and making alterations began. This is a key phase with any restock and one that needs thought and planning to ensure all cleaning and refurbishments can be made prior the new stock arriving. The producer used this time to create a new service area with free access stalls to improve serving efficiency. Installation of automated sow feeding was completed and a new staff welfare area was created. Further to this a new loading bay was built to help improve the biosecurity of the unit and maintain the new health status.

Having restocked the unit and moved from a weekly to 3 week batch system, the producer has been very impressed with the performance. Following the initial restock the producer was using the TN70 x JSR400 and then onto a TN70 x Tempo.

The old herd was producing 12.8 born alive, 10.9 weaned, 650g/day wean to finish with an FCR of 2.8 and a dead weight of 81.5kg. The new herd performance jumped with the TN70 x JSR400 producing 15.09 born alive, 14.19 weaned, 795g/day wean to finish with an FCR of 2.41 and dead weight of 90.46kg. As you can see, these are significant improvements from the previous herd and more are to come as the TN70 x Tempo moves through the production system with early indicators showing an increase in numbers weaned currently up to 14.5, with 850kg/day and an FCR of 2.3 within their sights. The staff have noted the excellent temperament of the TN70 x Tempo.



The Producer had these things to note about the TN70: she is an incredible mother with great milking ability. The temperament is excellent making her a joy to work with and a strong teat lines means she can rear her own piglets without supplementary milk.

The restock has gone very well and the producer said they should have done it two years earlier. They also stated the importance of planning and organisation to get the best out of the restock with as little disruption as possible. Thanks was passed onto JSR and Checkmate for the help during the planning phase and implementation. Thanks to the support and prior planning the restock went very well as can be seen in the figures and they are looking forward to seeing the results from the Tempo.