

Estimating the costs and benefits of reducing pig aggression

Researchers have been studying **regrouping aggression between pigs** since the 1970s (aggression that occurs following regrouping of unfamiliar pigs). As a result, several ways of **reducing aggression at regrouping** have been identified. For example, aggression may be reduced by:

- Housing pigs in large social groups (100+)
- Allowing litters to mix prior to weaning

We want to conduct **cost-benefit analyses** to see if these strategies are **financially profitable** for farmers. This cost-benefit analysis involves: (1) calculating the financial **costs** of employing each strategy, (2) calculating the financial **benefits** of employing each strategy, and (3) subtracting the costs from the benefits. If the benefits outweigh the costs, employing that strategy would result in **increased profitability for farmers**.

We would greatly appreciate your help and expertise in estimating the financial costs and benefits of employing aggression control strategies.

What are your current costs per slaughter pig lifetime?

Roughly how many of the following do you have on your farm at any one time?

Weaners:		Growers:	
Finishers:		Sows:	

When do you routinely mix unfamiliar pigs on your farm? *Please circle all that apply*

<i>Never</i>	<i>At finisher</i>	<i>Other, please specify:</i>
<i>At weaning</i>	<i>At slaughter</i>	
<i>At grower</i>	<i>Sows</i>	

What is your average group size for growing/ finishing pigs?

Do you currently allow different litters to mix prior to weaning (i.e 'co-mingling' or 'socialisation')?

Yes / No

Do you currently apply any chemical additives to feed, water or air e.g. appeasing pheromones, citronella sprays, herbal remedies?

Yes / No

Housing pigs in large social groups

Please imagine that you are going to start housing growing/ finishing pigs in groups of 100 or more on your farm:

What initial investments/changes would you need to make? (e.g. would you need to make any specific changes to your farm?). Please list below.

How much do you estimate that these changes would cost? Please make it clear how these costs are described e.g. per pig or per pen

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After the initial investment costs:

Can you envisage any on-going costs associated with housing growing/ finishing pigs in groups of 100 or more? (e.g. increased labour requirements).

How much do you think it would cost? Please make it clear how these costs are described e.g. per pig, per pen or per year

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Allowing litters to mix prior to weaning

Please imagine that you are going to start allowing litters to mix prior to weaning:

What initial investments/changes would you need to make? (e.g. would you need to make any specific changes to your farm?). Please list below.

How much do you estimate that these changes would cost? Please make it clear how these costs are described e.g. per pig or per pen

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After the initial investment costs:

Can you envisage any on-going costs associated with allowing litters to mix prior to weaning? (e.g. increased labour requirements).

How much do you think it would cost? Please make it clear how these costs are described e.g. per pig or per pen

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Please imagine that you see a reduction in regrouping aggression of 50% in your growers/ finishers. What benefits would you expect to see? please circle all relevant responses			
<i>Improved growth rates</i>		<i>Improved feed efficiency</i>	
<i>Reduced skin lesions/injury</i>		<i>Reduced veterinary costs</i>	
<i>Reduced labour requirements</i>		<i>Improved job satisfaction</i>	
<i>Easier animal handling</i>		<i>Reduced mortality</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>			
How much money would you expect to save if you saw a 50% reduction in regrouping aggression in growers/ finishers? Please make it clear how these costs are described e.g. per pig or per pen			
How are growing / finishing pigs housed on your farm? please circle			
Growers:	<i>Indoor</i>	<i>Outdoor</i>	<i>Combined</i>
Finishers:	<i>Indoor</i>	<i>Outdoor</i>	<i>Combined</i>
Are you a member of a Quality Assurance Scheme? Please circle all that apply			
<i>No scheme</i>	<i>Scottish SPC accreditation</i>	<i>Genesis Quality</i>	
<i>RSPCA Assured</i>	<i>Quality Meat Scotland</i>	<i>Red Tractor</i>	
<i>Soil Association</i>	<i>Assured British Pigs</i>	<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
Gender (please circle)	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Prefer not to say</i>
Roughly how many years have you worked with pigs?			
Location (please circle)			
<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	
<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Other</i>	