

SUMMER 2021

RED WATTLE HOG ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Image courtesy of Russell Lee

It's HOT in the Summer!

Summer is here! For many of us the heat has been at record highs for a record number of days and the rain in my area has been sparse while in others over abundant. I can't think of one area that hasn't had some challenges this summer. No matter the challenge that you face this summer, and no matter how many or few hogs that you raise, there will be adjustments that need to be made to help keep your hogs cool.

Hog are like humans in many ways but the way that we compensate for higher temperatures and humidity are very different.

Hogs rely on evaporation to keep cool, but since they don't sweat effectively, they must have moisture added to their skin to try to keep their temperatures down through evaporation. Hogs also have comparatively smaller lungs based on body mass. This means that while they pant to help heat escape their bodies, their lungs simply are not able to release enough heat through panting to make a noticeable difference when under stress from heat.

The optimal air temperature for hogs from 100 lbs and up, finishers, breeding stock and developing gilts is between 50 and 75F. Temperatures over 80F can be life threatening if care is not taken to help them release body heat. High heat and humidity that comes in waves can be even more taxing because they do not have the time to adjust to the temperatures. During waves like this, it isn't long before feed intake is reduced by as much as 50% and sometimes, in cases of extreme stress, they refuse to eat altogether.

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Image courtesy of Keith Clinker

It's HOT in the Summer!

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Heat stress can cause increased illness and death rates, increased incidents of endotoxemia (mostly in younger and faster growing pigs). You will also see reduced growth rates due to reduced feed intake and feed efficiency. It can delay estrus and reduce pregnancy rates, farrowing numbers and thriftiness. Boars may have a lower sperm count and quality. If you are seeing lower farrowing numbers and/or smaller and less robust piglets this fall and winter, you might want to try other cooling methods next summer. All in all, weather is a factor that we cannot control when we have pigs out of doors as most of us do. We can, however mitigate damage from those high temperatures and humidity.

To help your pigs through the worst of it there are some things to keep in mind:

1. Provide plenty of fresh, clean water. I know....as soon as you fill a pan, they dump it or lay on it and dirty the water but they cannot maintain proper cell function if clean water is not available. Offer your pigs at least twice as much water as they would normally drink, twice as often as you normally would when days get hot and oppressive. You can add ice blocks during the day. This will encourage the pigs to drink more water.
2. Use sprinklers, drip lines, pools and wallows. A good suggestion is to use a cheap lawn sprinkler and affix it to the side of a building out of reach of the pigs. Put the hose on a timer so that it periodically starts to "rain" on the area where they are resting. After they are wet, make sure that there is enough room for them to lay down separately and let evaporation do its work without them being crowded.
3. Provide shade. If you can, put your pigs in the woods. Our wooded areas are at least 15 degrees cooler than the barnyard. If you cannot put them into the woods, provide shade in the form of trees, or a shed that has at least 2 open sides for ventilation.
4. Fans are a big help if you have your pigs in a barn. Place the fans so that they exhaust the hot air out of the building and keep the inflows free from blockage. Adjust your feeding times. Feed during the early morning and late evening hours when the temperatures are coolest. This will encourage more feed consumption. Make sure that you check their feeders often in very humid weather. Mold forms quickly and can cause a whole separate set of problems.
5. I have used frozen melons and ice blocks during the day. These "popsicles" will offer more water and sugar for energy.
6. When you have to handle animals try to do it slowly and in the early morning hours when it is cooler. Stress from the heat, humidity and handling can only be made worse when you force pigs to move.

"A farmer is a magician who produces money from the mud."

AMIT KALANTRI



Image courtesy of Kaylee Lynch

Call to SERVE!

It is that time of year when the association calls for members that are willing to step up and help shape the direction of the association into the future.

This year the seat of President will open. This position entails a 3-year commitment. As president, you will be required to call and preside at quarterly and annual meetings, appoint committees and generally acting as CEO according to the by-laws of the association.

We also have the annual call for board members at large. These two board members participate in the meetings and in the decisions of the board. Each of the At Large board members serve for one year.

Each of the board members are a bridge between the membership and the board as a whole. Members can bring their comments, suggestions and concerns to board members to have them presented for discussion at board meetings. In turn the board works as a whole to protect the breed and promote both the breed and the association. If you are interested in acting as a board member for any of the above positions, please send a short paragraph or two that tells the membership about you, your farm and your vision for this association and the Red Wattle breed. It doesn't have to be fancy, just let us get to know you better!

These short introductions will be featured in the next newsletter followed shortly there-after by ballots that will be snail mailed to each member for voting. Those chosen by the membership to serve on the board will be announced through email and facebook and will begin their terms on the 1st of November of this year.

The deadline to get your introductions in will be August 20th.



Suggestions?

If you have any comments or suggestions for the board, we are happy to hear from you and put your suggestions up for board consideration. You will find our contact information on the Red Wattle Hog Association website (RedWattle.com) under the "Contact Us" tab!

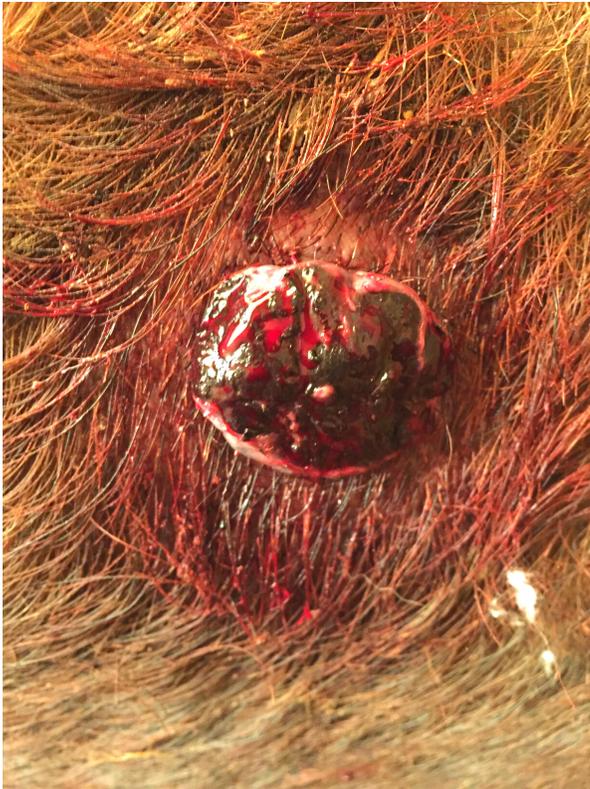


Image courtesy of Charles & Viki Richter

Medical Inquiry

A breeder sent me this picture of a sore that she found on her hog. They had tried penicillin, blue coat, red coat and various other remedies but it just wouldn't heal. In fact, it became more of a "raw wart" type of sore. I showed it to my vet, who specializes in hogs. He said that without actually looking at the wound he couldn't do an actual diagnosis, however he said that this looks like a form of skin cancer. He recommended that this hog, if not given a diagnostic test for cancer, should be removed from her breeding pool and processed. The meat will be ok for human consumption but the hog should be kept out of the gene pool. This breeder chose to play it safe and process the hog.

She allowed me to share this picture and story with you so that others could learn from her experience. If you find a sore that won't heal on your hog, you don't have access to a good vet you might want to reach out to the nearest veterinary college or university for help. If you can't find the help that you need and nothing else works, processing may be your safest option.



In Other News

There have been no meetings so there are no minutes to share but at the time of this writing, there is a \$15,440.76 balance in the bank.

Thank You!

I want to thank all of the members who submitted subject ideas and pictures for this newsletter. I wish that I could have used all of the pictures but lack of room dictated that only a few could be published. This association has some very talented photographers! PLEASE keep the pictures and the subject suggestions or written articles that you have written coming! I truly appreciate them all!