

## Season 2, Episode 11: Industry Changes, the Post-Wean Transition, and More

Dr. Jim Pillen, Pillen Family Farms, on how the industry has evolved, facility management, and promoting herd health. Dr. Deborah Murray, New Fashion Pork, discusses setting your operation up for success and the post-wean transition.

### ***How the industry has changed***

Dr. Pillen, as part of a multigenerational family farm, has been fortunate enough to see the evolution of the pork industry. He recalls how his grandfather's diversified farming operation was focused on pork as a byproduct, primarily utilizing pigs as clean-up for lard and soap. Advancements in health, reproductive, and facility management strategies have propelled the pork industry forward as a leader in feeding the world.

### ***Importance of people and proper barn management***

During Dr. Pillen's time as a veterinarian he gained a deeper appreciation for how husbandry and facility management are essential for promoting animal health. Factors such as air quality and temperature cannot be overlooked, always strive to meet the pig's comfort zone. *"The pig needs us seven days a week, even on Christmas morning."*

### ***Herd health and survivability***

Animal health has the largest impact on survivability. Focus on keeping disease out of your operation, PRRSV for example could cause losses of 10% in the nursery and 10% in the finisher, no matter how well you are managing your pigs. Ensuring proper sow body condition will improve feed intake during lactation, transferring to improved weaning weights. When working to improve practices on farm, Dr. Pillen stresses to not make it overcomplicated. Strategies and practices must be executed correctly 100% of the time.

### ***Back to the basics***

Dr. Murray believes in order to set your operation up for success you must do the very basic and necessary things well. At the gilt level starting those pigs off right with a focus on improving immunity. Ensuring vaccine protocols are in place at the sow level so piglets receive antibody rich colostrum. Also, maximizing wean age can help reduce mortality at weaning.

### ***Set your barn up right***

There are four key areas you should focus on when setting your barn up for new pigs. Thoroughly sanitize the site and inspect for completeness. Prepare ahead of time including environmental temperature, feed, and brooders if necessary. Ensure vaccination protocols are in place. Lastly, stringent biosecurity measures are important to reduce the opportunity for pathogens.

### ***Post-wean success***

Vaccinating the day prior to weaning can help reduce stressors. Having a staging room in your barn gets pigs familiar with feed and water also allows transport of larger groups to the nursery. It can be beneficial to test effectiveness of new management strategies because constraints specific to your operation cannot always be replicated in research settings.

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