



## Breed Improvement and Conservation



### **2011 Bloodline Survey to start on January 10th**

The 2011 Bloodline Survey will be carried out in January. Members who use the BPA's on-line services will be prompted to complete their Bloodline Survey on line. Paper forms will also be sent out. Our team of volunteer surveyors will be contacting members in January to help complete the survey. Please remember that they are giving up their time from their own busy lives to help secure vital information for our breed conservation projects. It only takes a few minutes to update your records so that we know how many breeding sows we have in each breed and the strength of the bloodlines within each of the breeds. Even if you are busy it costs nothing to be polite!!

### **DEFRA Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee survives spending cuts.**

The much heralded bonfire of the Quangos has taken place and we are very relieved that the National Standing Committee on Farm Animal Genetic Resources (FANGR) is being reclassified as a Departmental expert committee. This is excellent news! There are various consequences and more will follow on this, but essentially, the Committee - which has been recognised to be of considerable value to the Department - will continue to provide expert advice.

The Farm Animal Welfare Council has also been reconstituted as committee of experts. For more information visit <http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/news/2010/10/14/public-bodies/>

### **Breeds at Risk Threshold for Pigs Raised to 1500 sows**

At the last meeting of the FANGR committee it was agreed that thresholds for Breeds at Risk would be raised to take account of the increased threat from emerging diseases. The new threshold for native pig breeds has been raised to 1500 sows. The FAO guidelines will continue to apply. The threshold for breeds with less than 80% of the sows purebreeding is increased by 20%.

### **Exercise Silver Birch to test Breeds at Risk Policy**

A major national exercise involving Animal Health, Defra, and the Scottish and Welsh Assembly Governments, will test Britain's ability to deal with a significant outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.

Exercise 'Silver Birch' will simulate a significant foot and mouth outbreak to test existing plans and policies for the control and eradication of exotic notifiable diseases of animals.

Organised by Animal Health and running over two days (9-10 November 2010), the realistic, real-time simulation will establish Britain's state of readiness for dealing with outbreaks of exotic disease of animals. 'Silver Birch' will also help to identify how plans, structures and procedures for managing disease can be improved.

As part of the exercise a National Disease Control Centre (NDCC) and multiple Local Disease Control Centres (LDCCs) will be established; as they would be in the event of a real, major disease outbreak. In addition, a Disease Strategy Group (DSG) will be set up in Edinburgh, and an Emergency Coordination Centre (Wales) (ECC(W)) in Cardiff.

Breeds at Risk Policy will be tested during the exercise to assess methods of identifying breeds at risk on farm and establishing the criteria for special measures to be applied. As part of this exercise the BPA is working closely with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, Animal Health and Defra to develop the biosecurity requirements and procedures that might be used during an outbreak.

Objectives have been established to determine the success of exercise 'Silver Birch', and an exercise evaluation report will be published in early 2011.

For more information visit the Animal Health website, [www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth)

## Geoffrey Cloke Memorial Herdbooks



Almost 30 years ago Geoffrey Cloke was advertising his Clobred Herd in the NPBA Gazette. As well as being a defender of tradition he was also a great innovator always open to new ideas. Those early advertisements promote the Matson Welsh and the Clobred Duroc. Geoffrey was one of the pioneers of the Duroc breed in this country and it was as a Duroc representative that he was first elected to serve on the Joint Breed Management Committee in 1980 following the adoption of a new constitution.

In 1984 he was elected as Chairman of the Council having stepped in as Vice Chairman the previous year following the resignation of Mr Hunter Rowe due to ill health.

Geoffrey held the office of Chairman for eight years until 1991. He took over in the Association's centenary year and steered the NPBA through some

stormy waters as Britain joined the EU single market and the NPBA was forced to accept new regulations from Brussels governing pedigree breeding. It was during this time that the NPBA was reformed as the BPA and membership was opened up to commercial and allied industry members to compensate for declining pedigree income.

After retiring as Chairman, he was elected President for two further years. Having worked tirelessly to support the UK pig industry in all its forms and championed many new breeds such as the Duroc and the Chester White he turned his attention to our native breeds which were in serious decline. He was president of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Breeders Club for many years and further helped the breed to make its comeback. He was also Chairman of the Oxford Sandy & Black Breed Society and was instrumental in negotiating the merger of the OSB herdbook with the BPA. He was also instrumental in establishing the first semen bank for Rare Breed Pigs.

In recent years following the re-establishment of the BPA as a pedigree association Geoffrey continued to be active within the BPA as an Honorary Vice President. He supported the re-introduction of printed herdbooks and newsletters which had ceased to be published. He also was very active in rewriting the BPA's promotional material. During Foot and Mouth he helped many breeders by acting as an independent valuer for pedigree pigs and thanks to his efforts many breeders were able to secure compensation that reflected the true worth of their animals.

He remained active as both a judge and commentator at county shows and had been scheduled to judge the Pig of the Year Final in 2004. Unfortunately he was unable to do so due to failing health.

In recognition of Geoffrey Cloke's contribution to pedigree pig breeding over more than a quarter of a century a memorial fund was established. The fund is used in aid of some of the causes that his family know he would have continued to support. These include a trophy for the Pig of the Year competition and a specially bound herdbook that will include the previously unpublished volumes from 1978 to 1998.

The first of these missing years herdbooks will be published before Christmas. The first breed to be published will be the Middle White. The Memorial Herdbooks will contain all the previously unpublished volumes of the Middle White Herdbook. For the first time there will be a complete set of herdbooks for the breed running from 1884 to 2009. Other breeds will follow in 2011. Taking the data from old computer print outs and adding it to the modern BPA pedigree database has other benefits. It allows pedigrees to be traced back on-line to the 1970's and means that this information can be included in any genetic analysis of the breed. It has taken a long time to get to the point of publication due to the complexity of the project and special thanks are due to Andrew Robinson, Deputy Chairman of the Breed Improvement and Conservation Committee, who has done an incredible amount of checking and proof reading using his own complete set of Herdbooks.

The Geoffrey Cloke Memorial Middle White Herdbook will be available in time for Christmas priced at £50. An order form can be found on the last page of this newsletter.