



Family farm continues to thrive

The Mills partnership has been with BQP for over 20 years, farming 850 sows on light land at Narford Estates, near Swaffham, Norfolk.

The family run farm is operated by three generations. John Mills has over 50 years experience in the pig industry. He is ably supported by his two sons, Carl and Tony, who in turn both have son's Nathan, Ben and Harry, who are active members of the team.

The Mills family have always enjoyed a close relationship with BQP that began in December 1991. John commented that, "BQP is very supportive to us in our business" and feels that having such an excellent resource is "of paramount importance in today's volatile market place". Carl, who manages the family farm, looks after the day to day management, reviewing both targets and production methods to help stream line the business. He also, along with mum Judy has the responsibility of keeping the recording data on Winpig up to date. This was recognised at the BQP Annual Awards in November 2012 when the farm was the winner of the 'Best Recorded Farm'.



Left to right: John Mills, grandson Nathan and sons Tony and Carl

One of the top priorities on the farm is to make sure the pigs stay free from disease. Many of the jobs, that some people may use contactors for, are done 'in house' to help reduce the risk. Repairs to machinery and equipment as well as straw bailing, moving and stacking, is all done by the family. As well as helping to maintain biosecurity, it also reduces cost which is vital to the success of the business. Last year the pigs were moved to a 100 acre field with the whole family being involved with the move. Carl planned the layout of the paddocks, then all the moving of pig accommodation, erection of the fences and the laying of water pipe, was done by 'Team Mills'. Once completed, the farm looked a picture. It is on a gentle slope and the thought that went into the paddock design has been rewarded as the operation is now much easier to manage.

All the team gets involved with the major production tasks; such as serving, weaning and the care of the new born litters, with everyone knowing all aspects of the operation. Each person is capable of doing any job. Carl and Tony enjoy the farrowing, tending to the care of the sows and litters while John and Nathan are usually feeding the dry sows and making sure the pigs are comfortable with adequate bedding in all the arcs.

It is nice to visit the farm and see the three generations all working together. The commitment they have for the welfare of all the pigs they care for has become the cornerstone of the business. The dedication and compassion is always evident . . . making the Mills a real example of a true 'Family Farm'.