

EXPERIENCES OF A BREEDING COMPANY: 2. GILT SALES AND COMPLAINTS

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Introduction. In an earlier paper gilt selection rates were discussed. This paper deals with complaints as a percentage of 18,957 hybrid gilt sales over a period of 33 months by a major pig breeding company in the UK.

Methods and Results. Sales and complaints were analysed and they are presented on a yearly basis. The reasons for complaints are all expressed as a per cent of gilt sales. All gilts were hybrids, crosses either way between Large-White and Landrace.

In Table 1 are shown the complaints on a yearly basis, those for 1981 being for the nine months from January to September only.

Table 1

Complaints: Expressed as a Per Cent of Gilt Sales

Year	No.	Complaints as a % of sales	No. of multipliers
1979	249	3.6	20
1980	334	4.4	17
1981*	130	2.9	14
TOTAL	713	3.8	

*Jan. to Sept. inclusive.

In Table 2 complaints are broken down into their main causes and it can be seen that although reproductive inefficiency heads the list, locomotor problems are a strong second.

Table 2

Complaints:The Main Causes Expressed as a Per Cent of Gilt Sales

	1979		1980		*1981	
	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺
Reproductive inefficiency	99	1.4	122	1.6	61	1.4
Locomotor problems	77	1.1	55	0.72	39	0.88
Conformation	14	0.20	33	0.43	15	0.34
Poor teats	11	0.16	31	0.41	10	0.23
Miscellaneous	48	0.70	93	1.2	5	0.11
TOTAL	249	3.6	334	4.4	130	2.9

* Jan. to Sept. inclusive

+ As a % of sales

Let us look at the main causes of complaint in more detail. Complaints for reproductive inefficiency are set out in Table 3 and it can be seen that failure to breed was the main cause and accounted for about a third of all complaints. Other complaints for reproductive reasons were rare.

Table 3

Complaints: Reproductive Inefficiency

	1979		1980		*1981	
	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺
Infertile Sold in pig (N.I.P.)	71	1.0	108	1.4	58	1.30
Genetic defects	6	0.09	-	-	-	-
Savaged litter	10	0.15	1	0.01	1	0.02
Small litter	2	0.03	-	-	-	-
Difficult farrowing	-	-	9	0.12	-	-
Abnormal vulva	5	0.07	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	1	0.01	4	0.05	1	0.02
TOTAL	4	0.06	-	-	1	0.02
TOTAL	99	1.4	122	1.6	61	1.4

* Jan. to Sept. inclusive

+ As a % of sales

The breakdown of complaints for locomotor problems is shown in Table 4 and, although the second major cause of complaint, no causes stand out with the exception of lameness and possibly leg defects. The miscellaneous causes in order of frequency included fighting on lorry, "dog-sitters", bursitis of the hocks and bad backs.

Table 4 Complaints: Locomotor Problems

	1979		1980		*1981	
	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺
Lameness	40	0.58	18	0.24	11	0.25
Leg defects	6	0.09	27	0.35	6	0.14
Arthritis	5	0.07	-	-	-	-
Feet defects	2	0.03	1	0.01	3	0.07
Miscellaneous	24	0.35	9	0.12	19	0.43
TOTAL	77	1.1	55	0.72	39	0.88

* Jan. to Sept. inclusive

+ As a % of sales.

Complaints for conformational faults in the three years were uncommon but included, bad general conformation, "poor doers" and ear infections in this order. Poor teats, despite rigorous selection, was a cause of complaint from time to time.

Table 5 shows a breakdown of the miscellaneous causes and, apart from cough and other respiratory problems, erysipelas infection and underweight, there were no common conditions. Hopefully erysipelas infection can be controlled by double vaccination.

Table 5

Complaints: Miscellaneous Causes

	1979		1980		*1981	
	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺	No.	% ⁺
Cough/other respiratory	23	0.33	27	0.35	1	0.02
Erysipelas	5	0.07	26	0.34	-	-
Sudden death/haemorrhagic syndrome	3	0.04	5	0.07	3	0.07
Underweight	14	0.20	30	0.39	-	-
Abscess	3	0.04	4	0.05	1	0.02
Miscellaneous	-	-	1	0.01	-	-
TOTAL	48	0.7	93	1.2	5	0.11

* Jan. to Sept. inclusive

+ As a % of sales.

Action on Complaints. Approximately 50 per cent of complaints were settled without argument (infertile gilts being automatically replaced), 25 per cent were settled after discussion and in 25 per cent of cases claims were rejected.

Summary. Apart from reproductive inefficiency which cannot be assessed at the time of selection, complaints tended to pattern the main causes of rejection at selection, with locomotor problems the second main cause of complaint. This emphasises the need for a rigorous selection policy.