

# Pig Farmer of the Year

Sponsored by **Waitrose**

## WINNER

### Martin Barker

Midland Pig Producers, Staffordshire

➔ To suggest there wouldn't be intensive pig production in the UK in 10 years time without the help of Martin Barker, may be going a step too far. However, this man is battling all the issues facing the industry at the moment, resulting in the creation of a revolutionary "ideal housing template" that could eventually be adopted by all.

Undoubtedly, Martin is a shrewd businessman; taking a company that was losing thousands of pounds a year ago to one that is expected to make in excess of £500,000 a year from the sale of biogas alone is astonishing.

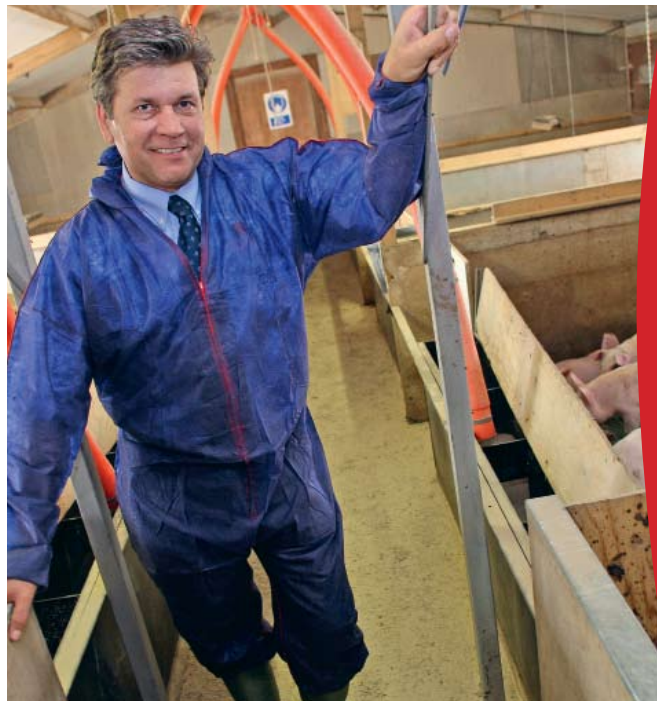
As managing director of Midland Pig Producers, which consists of 3000 sows across seven farms, Martin plans to transform them into high welfare, low environmental impact and odourless facilities, with the first 2500 sow site nearing completion.

The first new site contains innovative underground anaerobic digesters, high welfare housing developed with welfare groups and an on farm feed mill with local farmers being provided with seed and fertiliser on a buy back contract.

Costing £140 a pig place after a 40% grant you could be forgiven for wondering how Martin calculates a payback period of just two years.

But with the margin a pig on the new site £53 compared to £16 currently, plus the £500,000 a year being generated from biogas production, it doesn't take long to work out how.

By 2011 the plan will be to have



#### FARM FACTS

- 3000 sows over seven farms
- 3100 acres
- Landrace x Large White sow x Hampshire and Pietrain terminal sire
- Marketing through Tulip

#### WHAT MAKES HIM A WINNER?

- Bridging the gap with welfare groups
- Creating an approved housing template that could be adopted by others
- Sustainability by removing market pressures

11,000 sows increasing 2000 a year after this.

But, despite overhauling Midland Pig Producers, production figures across the seven sites are still some of the best you will see.

Figures like 15.4 born alive, average daily gains of 738kg a day from weaning to slaughter with a feed conversion of 2.87 – who knows just what they will be in the new units.

But not taking second best is what gets them these results. For example all semen is checked and if sperm levels are not promised then they will be sent back.

Martin is hoping that by improving welfare and the environment on the new units, they can also get 10p a pig more for an environmental premium.

## SPONSOR'S VIEW

➔ The innovation and market-focused approach of these three finalists should be an inspiration to all. In our winner, Martin Barker, we have a truly outstanding ambassador for the British pig industry.

**Duncan Sinclair**  
Waitrose

# Waitrose

## RUNNERS-UP



### Rob Mutimer

Woodlands Farm, Norfolk

- 566ha spread over three sites, 600 sow outdoor unit, breeding output 22.8 pigs weaned a sow a year, farm shop and also marketing local restaurants.



### Richard Hooper

Harper Adams University College, Shropshire

- 232-sow unit, research and commercial, new welfare and environmentally friendly finisher unit, above average performance.

*Martin is the driving force of a business that is setting out to prove indoor pig production can be competitive and environmentally friendly. Many techniques being used in the construction of the new units may prove useful to others.*

IAN CAMPBELL – *Independent judge*