

KEITH THORNTON
International Consultant in Pig Production

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SUMMARY OF CV

Keith Thornton was born in 1934 and comes from a Lancashire farming family. He was educated at Kirkham Grammar School and went straight from school into the army where he held a National Service Commission in an infantry battalion and served in Trieste, Italy.

For a number of years he then gained practical farm management experience on two farms in Lancashire. In 1960, with a wife and three children, he gave up his job to take a Degree in Agricultural Science at King's College in the University of Durham, and graduated in 1963.

From 1963 to 1973 he established and managed the Pig Demonstration Area at the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, UK and came into contact with pig producers throughout the world.

From 1973 until 1977 he worked for Manorcros Consultants Ltd and was involved in specialist consultancy work in pig production throughout the UK and was also involved in projects overseas, including South Africa, Nigeria and Brazil.

In 1977 he joined Pig Improvement Company Ltd and was responsible for a wide range of technical services and information in the United Kingdom. In 1979 he joined PIC Inc., based in Spring Green, Wisconsin, USA as Production Manager and then later as General Sales Manager working with large-scale hog production in the Mid-West as well as contracts in Mexico, Venezuela, Australia, Canada, Chile, South Africa, Korea, Taiwan, Argentina and Denmark.

In 1977 he was a member of the team with Dr Tom Alexander of Cambridge University, which developed the Medicated Early Weaning (MEW) technique. This work was published in the British Veterinary Journal in 1979 and was the basis for modified medicated early weaning (MMEW). This in turn led to the development of multi-site weaning now widely used in commercial production in USA.

From 1985 to 1987 he was resident General Manager for PIC for a joint-venture project in Guangzhou in the People's Republic of China.

Keith Thornton then returned to England where he has made a special study of outdoor pig production and established an independent consultancy. He has recently directed and produced a Video on Outdoor Pig Production and is considered one of the world's leading authorities in this area of pig production.

Recent projects include consultancy work for the European Community in Poland and Hungary and work for the Food and Agricultural Organisation in China. Consultancy visits have also been made to clients in South Africa and Mexico. Between 1991 and 1996 he was consultant for SHUSA helping to establish Seghers in the North American Market.

During 1996 he was working on an EU contract in Bucharest, Romania as Deputy Team Leader and Long-Term Pig Consultant: "The Restructuring and Privatisation of Pig, Poultry and Feed Industrial Complexes (RO 9203-08-05)." Main contractor Agri-Livestock Consultants Ltd., Amsterdam and Vakakis International SA.

In 1997 Keith Thornton was appointed International Consultant to PIC and works in both Europe and North America. He is also Consultant to Pioneer-Hi-Bred International, INC and recent work includes: Consultancy visits to Mexico, and a visit and report on the Slovak Republic, PIC in USA and EC contract in the Ukraine

In January 2000 he presented a paper entitled "Where will the Pork be Produced? – A European Perspective" at the 29th Banff Pork Seminar in Alberta, Canada. In January and March he also produced two articles on "The Outlook for World Pig Meat Production" which were published by International PigLetter of St Paul Minnesota, USA.

In May 2000 he presented a paper entitled "The Future of the European Pig Industry" at a meeting in Trikala, Greece for the Hellenic Pig Producers' Federation. This meeting was sponsored and organised by the European Officers of the American Soybean Association.

In May 2001 he made a regular visit to a large producer in Sonora, Mexico for consultations on management and husbandry and advice on the setting up of a training program for staff. He returned in September 2001 for work on a ten thousand sow breeding unit in Guadalajara: advising on training and trouble-shooting. He also worked with USA veterinary advisers.

In 2002 Keith Thornton was responsible for the organisation and preparation of Training modules for PIC USA meetings held in Kansas City and Des Moines, Iowa, for groups of 30-40 senior sales and technical staff.

2003 Consultancy work continued with PIC on large accounts in Missouri and Iowa. Private visits were made to Sonora Mexico and staff training for a large outdoor unit in Georgia, USA.

Visits were also made to Europe for updates on various aspects of recent technology.

2004 Special projects in 2004 involved the study of Animal Welfare and qualification as a SWAP instructor under the National Pork Board program.

Consultancy work for PIC continues on large accounts with special interest in group housing of sows and the E.S.F. system. Visits to Mexico continue.

With a PIC colleague he was responsible for writing and producing technical support information, especially on Gilt Development for producers in the field.

2005 In May/June and October he was an Agri-Business volunteer for Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs (CNFA) based in Washington His assignment was pig production in Belarus, Eastern Europe where farm visits were made.

2006 He was appointed as Consultant to Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), a non-profit educational organization established in 1951. In this capacity he provides technical support to Niman Farms, USA and in June 2006 made a study visit to Sweden with this organisation.

In July 2006 he was an Agri-Business volunteer for Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs (CNFA) based in Washington, advising and training small farm co-operatives in Moldova.

With his farm background and rural upbringing he has always been concerned and involved in Animal Welfare, and especially in pigs. He has frequently acted as Consultant to producers in the United Kingdom and North America on alternative systems to gestation stalls for housing sows in pregnancy. He has also made a special study of straw-based housing methods in all stages of pig production for the benefit of both animals and farmers.

PERSONAL

In 2000 he married Carolyn Lynner of Des Moines and moved to Des Moines, Iowa in October 2000 where he still lives.

He is a regular contributor to journals and magazines, including Pig International. He has published two books, Practical Pig Production (1973) and Outdoor Pig Production (1987). He is also a frequent speaker at meetings and seminars in both Europe and the USA.

He has a grown-up son and two daughters. Interests include travel, reading, walking, watching sport, gardening and a wide range of countryside interests.