**Stockman of the Year**

**TOM BLANCHARD, DL BLANCHARD**

Tom Blanchard runs a 1000-place finishing piggery in Lincolnshire. A new contract finisher for BQP, he runs a wean-to-finish system, with the pigs coming in at four weeks/7kg and leaving at approximately 110kg for slaughter. After graduating from Reading University in 2013, Tom wanted to find a way to increase his income on the family arable farm, so it could support both him and his parents.

He took part in BQP’s Fresh Start Pig Academy, which provided him with training and ideas on how to diversify his business. Then, in 2015, he put up a new build and in June of that year, he started his first batch of finishing pigs. Always keen to try new ideas, he has designed a railway style track and trolley to make strawing up easier. He has a keen eye for detail when it comes to pig health, including separating smaller piglets and individually treating ill pigs.

**GARY CHADWICK, BRADSHAWS**

Gary Chadwick is head sow man at Bradshaws, a North Yorkshire farm, which has 950 sows and operates a farrow-to-finish three-week batch system. He has worked at Bradshaws for 20 years, having first started as a schoolboy at weekends, before joining full-time once he left school. Gary carries out all vaccinations and works effectively with the farm manager to improve and streamline the vaccination programme. For example, at 18 weeks, the gilts were getting pneumonia, so he suggested vaccinating at 15 weeks instead of 21, which solved the problem completely.

Described by his employer as ‘one of the best stockmen I have worked with’, he covers other departments at weekends and holidays, and describes himself as ‘totally committed, dedicated and willing to work 24/7’. This attitude has had a positive impact on other members of staff, especially the younger generation.

**JESS GRAVES, GROVE FARM**

Jess Graves, farrowing/weaner manager at Grove Farm, a 700 sow farrow-to-finish business in York, won the 2016 Trainee of the Year award. Three years on and she is now a finalist for Stockman of the Year. The farm runs a four-week batch system, farrowing, on average, 124 sows and weaning a 7kg piglet.

She has worked at Grove Farm since 2017 and with her enthusiasm and ‘can do’ approach has helped generate a positive attitude within the team.

She has single-handly increased the farm’s creep in take at pre weaning by 100 grams and a change towards an all-in, all-out farrowing system has improved the overall health of the herd. Previously, Jess completed two years at Bishop Burton College (2012-2014), where she studied pigs and passed her veterinary medicine qualification. She went to work Shredden Farms, where she undertook the Stockman + course and supervisor development training, coming out highly commended in both.