



This Knowledge Notes series examines boar management through behaviour, biology, and systems thinking — focusing on what farms often overlook, but boars never forget.

Knowledge Note 1 – Libido is a brain issue, not a reproductive organ issue

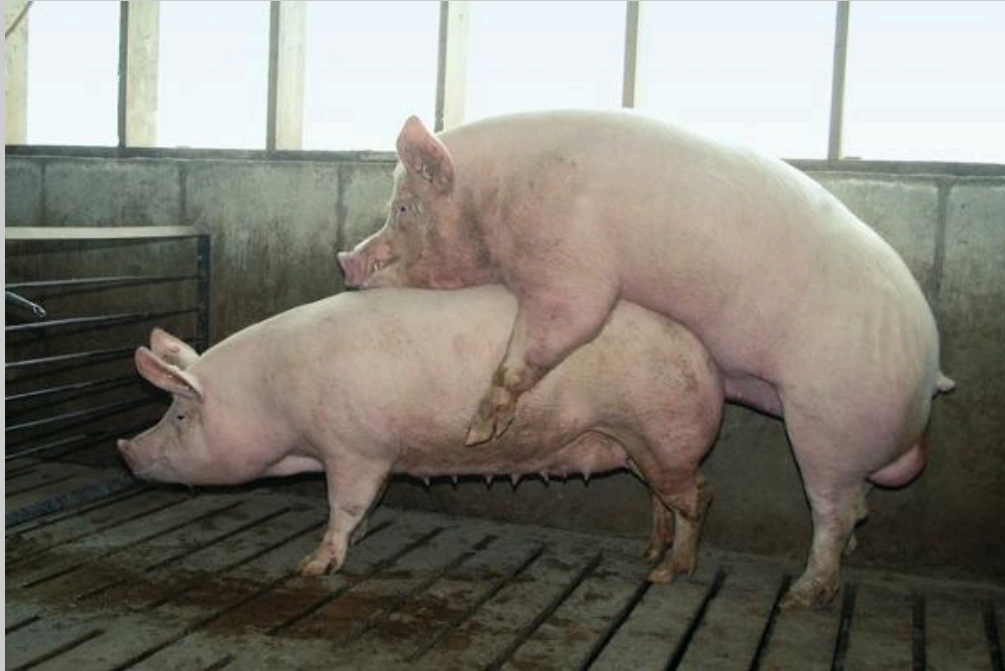


A boar can have perfectly normal testes and still show poor libido if his brain is under pressure. Heat, noise, rough handling, inconsistent routines, or unfamiliar people can all interfere with the neural signals that support sexual behaviour. This is why pharmacological “quick fixes” rarely solve libido problems, while changes in stockmanship often do.

Libido, in simple terms, refers to a boar’s **willingness and readiness to mate or perform during semen collection**. On farms, libido is not only about mounting, but about how a boar approaches, interacts with, and sustains sexual behaviour.

A common assumption is that libido is driven by the reproductive organs or hormone levels. In practice, however, **libido is primarily controlled by the brain**. And the brain is highly sensitive to environment, routine, and human interaction.

Good libido is usually expressed through behaviour well before ejaculation occurs. Salivation, investigation of the collection area, vocalisation, repeated mounting attempts, and sustained engagement indicate that the boar is mentally settled and focused. These signs are more informative than speed, force, or apparent aggression.



Natural mating behaviour offers important insights into libido, focus, and how the boar perceives his surroundings.

Conversely, avoidance, nervous attention toward the stockperson, lying down instead of interacting, or erratic movement within the pen are not personality flaws. They are **early indicators that the boar is struggling to cope with the system around him**.

It is also important to recognise what libido does not predict. Strong libido does not guarantee high fertility or large litters. Libido simply tells us whether the **system supporting the boar is aligned with his biology**.

Managing libido, therefore, is not about forcing performance. It is about creating conditions in which the boar's brain can function properly. When that happens, behaviour stabilises—and reproductive outcomes often follow.

Take home message:

When libido declines, the system and human interaction should be examined before blaming the boar.



Source note: *This Knowledge Note is a reinterpretation of field observations and technical insights from Dr John Carr, a swine health and production consultant who consistently emphasises the role of stockmanship, behaviour, and systems in boar reproductive performance.*