

experience of these initial demonstration barns for the benefit of other producers. Factsheets on management of sows in group housing, focusing on practical, science-based information will also be prepared. The longer term goal will be to expand the scope of this project on a national scale, with demonstration sites located in each of the major pork producing provinces.

Progress to Date

As of April 1, 2013, two demonstration barns have been selected (one each in Manitoba and Saskatchewan). The pre-conversion documentation of each site will take place in April and May, followed by the development of conversion plans and blueprints.

Funding is being sought to continue this work and expand it to a national level. As the project expands, a National Sow Housing Working Group will be established to coordinate farm selection and documentation of barn renovations across the country. Currently, no funds are available to aid producers with barn renovation costs, however the research team will work with producers to help secure funding to assist with barn conversions.

The Bottom Line

There is substantial pressure for Canadian producers to convert to group sow housing systems. This is a daunting task for many, and due to the cost involved, it is imperative that those who are making the change do so based on sound scientific information to ensure that pork production remains sustainable and sow productivity and welfare are maintained. By assisting producers in the conversion to group housing, the project will help to ensure Canada's role as leading producer and exporter of high quality pork.

The NSHCP will provide a network of support to producers, advising on sow housing conversions and developing information resources to encourage the successful adoption of group housing. By documenting the experiences of a few early adopters, the project can leverage this information to the benefit of other producers. Beginning with these initial pilot projects provides an opportunity to refine the data collection and information dissemination techniques before expanding the project to the national level.

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Feeding Green to Save Green



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Pork producers are always looking for new ways in which they can increase their efficiencies through reducing feed costs. Feeding coproducts from the fuel ethanol industry like distillers dried grains with solubles (DDGS) or from the wheat flour industry like millrun can reduce feed cost and spare inclusion of imported soybean meal. But these coproducts have reduced starch content that propels pigs to grow. Calories thus need to come from other sources instead like fat. One high fat feedstuff that can spare calories from starch is green canola seed. It might be available as close as your own farm or the neighbours.

When feeding full-fat canola seed it should be evident that it won't be cw1 canola as the price alone would be prohibitive. Green canola seed is not available year round and the quality varies greatly, but it is an opportunity feedstuff. Generally there isn't much wrong with it, except that was planted late or harvest early and didn't mature entirely. Oil content won't be >45% like regular canola seed, but may range between 20 and 30%. Feeding seed with a high green count may be cost competitive as feedstuffs for pork producers.

Simple questions that need answering is how to process it and what levels to feed that won't compromise pig performance. To look at the potential of feeding green canola seed, a project funded by the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) led by Malachy Young at Gowans Feed Consulting, Eduardo Beltranena at Alberta Agriculture, and Ruurd Zijlstra at the University of Alberta examined feeding increasing levels (0, 5, 10, or 15%) of green

canola seed (90% greens) to 1100 hogs in a commercial scale study. The green seed was ground together with barley and wheat to avoid plugging the hammer mill screen.

Feeding increasing inclusion up to 15% green canola did not reduce daily feed disappearance or weight gain. Feed efficiency was better for controls fed diets without it, but pigs fed 5% green canola were heavier than controls. Days from first to last pig marketed was only higher at the 15% inclusion level. Dressing percent for pigs receiving 15% green canola was lower than control pigs diets due to greater dietary fibre content. Backfat thickness, loin depth, pork yield and index did no differ across hogs fed green canola. Feed cost decreased as green canola level increased being lowest at the 15% inclusion.



The Bottom Line

Feeding up to 15% green canola resulted in satisfactory performance and carcass characteristics. Green canola can provide another opportunity to reduce feed cost although it may not be available year round. Producers should look out that the seed hasn't been too overheated as the risk of containing mycotoxins increases. Payback of feeding green canola will be greatest in grower diets when concentrating dietary energy will return producers the most.