

Canadian Hog JOURNAL

Canada's national hog magazine



Canada Pork in Asia,
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Message from the editor



My first full edition of the Canadian Hog Journal is here! Thanks to everyone who helped steer me through the process—a bit like using the gutter bumpers on a bowling lane. One of these days, I might even graduate to 10-pin, but let's not get ahead of ourselves yet.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as I enjoyed putting it together. From my perspective, I

have received a blank slate, but at the same time, this publication's reputation precedes itself, and these are big shoes to fill.

There was certainly no shortage of topical information to include with this edition. Many exciting and important events and pieces of news meant that there is plenty for us all to talk about.

Producers and processors in the western provinces have experienced growing pains with the introduction of the Canadian Pork Excellence (CPE) program. Almost everyone agrees the program is a step in the right direction, but implementation requires some constructive, down-to-earth discussion among all parties.

Canadian delegations visited both Japan and China to sell the Canadian pork industry's value proposition to buyers and diplomats. This appears to be especially important timing given the news of China's re-opening and our large competitor to the south's recent negotiations with Japan.

An important milestone celebration for Alberta Pork's 50th anniversary was held, with special guests from past and present in attendance to ring in the next half century. And across the country, symposiums and workshops, networking events and industry-building initiatives were as popular as ever, and we are covering some of those in this edition as well. As always, research in this edition focuses on eliminating castration pain in piglets.

What would you like to see in upcoming editions? What are your thoughts on the topics covered in this edition? I am reachable with just a few keystrokes by emailing andrew.heck@albertapork.com. Send in your feedback for me alone, or write a "letter to the editor," and I will consider publishing it! ■

Andrew Heck
Editor



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Canadian Hog JOURNAL

HOT ISSUES

Quality assurance brings value, but who pays?

By Andrew Heck

Financial sustainability in any industry value chain depends on a viable business model in each part of the chain. In the pork industry, quality assurance programming has long been hailed as a victory for the producer, processor, retailer and consumer alike, representing how the industry's efforts are responsible for delivering a safe, nutritious, environmentally friendly, high-quality product.

Few would doubt the inherent value of an effective quality assurance program whose benefits are realized by everyone affected by it. But in between the barn and the dinner plate, quality assurance both adds to the end cost for the consumer and adds cost for each stakeholder in the value chain.

Processors' contracts with producers over the years have become increasingly detailed and directly market oriented. In fact, many contracts outline very specific production conditions and assign dollar values to those conditions, which include things like pharmaceutical usage, feed additives and even shelter costs. Quite conspicuously, costs directly linked to quality assurance are omitted.



Quality assurance program materials are a familiar sight for producers.

Historical pork production quality assurance programming

Between 1995 and 1998, the Canadian Quality Assurance (CQA) program was developed as a national quality assurance standard for pork producers. In some jurisdictions, the cost of

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implementing CQA was jointly shared by producer organizations and processors.

In 2004, the CQA program became more stringent in its criteria, following a review of food industry HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) principles, which were originally created for food processing operations, not production. Nearly a decade later, the Animal Care Assessment (ACA) program, based on the National Farm Animal Care Council's (NFACC) Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Animals, was made compulsory for CQA-certified producers, further adding to the rigour.

To the chagrin of producers, by the time CQA had been fully fleshed out, any processor funding to assist with program validations had disappeared. In the meantime, CQA certification had become a requirement for producers to ship pigs to any federally inspected processor in the country. The processors argued that this requirement was becoming necessary to satisfy the increasingly specific demands of foreign markets. For most commercial producers, certification was a given, and processors no longer had incentive to reward behaviours supported by the CQA program that were essential to the industry's reputation for more than a decade.

Introducing the Canadian Pork Excellence program

After several years of development, in 2017, the Canadian Pork Excellence (CPE) program was launched with a foundation of three pillars: PigSAFE (representing food safety), PigCARE (representing animal welfare) and PigTRACE (representing traceability). The program was created with the intention of phasing out and modernizing the CQA program.

Among many characteristics, the program represents producers' commitment to the judicious use of antimicrobials and the desire to develop a producer-led quality assurance program, rather than falling back on government regulations or processor requirements alone. The program has also been designed

to address Canadians' concerns for transparency in animal agriculture, which translates into public trust for consumers here at home.

CPE is the basis on which the Verified Canadian Pork brand is being built. You can already find the handy visual identity on select pork products in grocery stores domestically, but its true potential lies in what the brand promise means to global consumers.

The brand is meant to recognize Canadian pork producers' commitment to high quality and represents a modern approach to addressing consumer habits and beliefs, especially in the lucrative

Japanese market, where a certain prestige is affiliated with Canadian pork. To that end, value for the program has been realized and capitalized upon.

And few are arguing against the importance to establishing such a brand. In many ways, the industry has worked for a long time to cultivate a positive reputation in overseas markets, where this brand will further enhance the presence of Canadian pork. The expectation is that the brand will boost sales, thereby turning profits for processors and producers at home.

CPE is actively being implemented across Canada, despite some timing setbacks. Validators are being trained, and producers are being introduced to the program specifics, which is the domain of each province. The program's objectives are clear in principle, but in practice, CPE implementation has faced challenges in some provinces.



The three pillars of the CPE program.

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Producers ask for compensation

From early 2017 to late 2018, however, anxieties and questions started to be raised by producers who were still uncertain about how the program would benefit their bottom lines. Exacerbating these concerns was a history of feeling forgotten when it came time to share in the value of quality assurance program implementation.

Compared to their processor contracts, in which every aspect of production is assigned a dollar value, there was no consideration for the new program, despite having overhead costs associated with its implementation. To date, these overhead costs have gone effectively unaddressed by most processors in western Canada.

At various provincial producer meetings, rumblings turned into resolutions, and several provincial producer organizations—including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec—demanded compensation for CPE, anywhere upwards of \$9 per pig.



Producers in four provinces, including Alberta, have sought compensation on a per-head basis.

In Quebec, action was taken most quickly, given that province's unique single desk selling system. The Quebec system also includes the use of a price control mechanism, which helps stabilize the market by raising up or bringing down the amount paid to producers, according to the conditions at any given time.

"Producers in Quebec have been reaping the benefits of shared value for their pigs," said Vincent Cloutier, Director, Economic Affairs, Les Éleveurs de porcs du Québec. "The price control mechanism has given producers renewed confidence in the system, and the premium paid for quality attributes, in-

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cluding CPE, was independently determined, which was a fair process. At the same time, the result is a renewed relationship with processors, which opens a new growth path, which is desperately needed.”

Under Quebec provincial law, an independent arbitrator was commissioned to evaluate the proposed disparity of cost between producers and processors, and to determine if the ask for compensation was fair. The arbitrator concluded that, while important, producer evidence was insufficient to build a case for compensation at \$5 per pig. Ultimately, the arbitrator did recommend an amount of \$2 per pig to be added for some specific production attributes, such as tattooing, stomach content and the presentation of clean animals at slaughter. On the other hand, it was decided that the processor could also apply demerits for sub-standard animals.

For pork production in Quebec, \$2 per pig accounts for the province’s added favourable market situation. But in western Canada, other underlying factors seem to be lacking in consideration.

“Quality assurance programs have been a contentious issue for producers following years of negative margins. It translates into a drain of our time and resources, with no compensation being offered to us in return,” said Stan Vanessen, a producer near Picture Butte, Alberta. “I consider this highly upsetting since our uniquely Canadian pork brand is so highly appreciated in overseas export markets. Currently, the quality assurance programs add nothing to the bottom line financially for producers, but there is extra value going to and staying with the packer-processors and exporters.”

He continued, “This is insulting to struggling producers, as many of the program requirements and practices are implemented on the farm level. We recognize the marketing value these Canadian programs have, but our industry cannot afford to support them if there isn’t shared value for the pork producers.”

Moving the industry forward for mutual benefit

While producers have asked for compensation specific to CPE, larger considerations remain on the table that could satisfy all parties.

If the issue of shared value is separated from CPE specifically, all parties may be able to come to the table and negotiate with open minds. Pig producers want to get paid fairly for the pigs they sell. Processors want to pay appropriately for the pigs they receive. But when producers are asked to continuously improve and better their products but experience shrinking and mostly negative margins, it is difficult to consider this a sustainable relationship.



Verified Canadian Pork branding already features prominently on some consumer products domestically and abroad.

The result of this unsustainable relationship appears to be a push back from producers, as many are now advocating that they and their fellow producers refrain from signing long-term contracts with processors, as a manner for gaining leverage in the situation.

What’s at stake?

When producers see the value of their efforts realized by fair compensation, the industry benefits by encouraging increased production—sorely needed by processors who often operate under capacity at their facilities. And when processors take initiative to reward producers, it fosters stronger relationships for mutual benefit.

In the wake of the current pricing dispute, it is unfortunate the CPE program and the Verified Canadian Pork brand have been caught in the middle. They are universally recognized as important tools for the industry, but they are also readily available targets when it comes to pricing discussion. This has been a major stumbling block for producers, especially in western Canada, who have felt the need to bring CPE into the discussion. When western Canadian producers see their counterparts in Quebec sharing in the value of their pigs, it sticks like a thorn in the side.

The CPE program is much more valuable to the industry than a sticker on a package. We can only hope calmer heads will prevail and that the entire industry realizes something must be done to address the pricing issue before permanent damage is done to the brand and long-term goodwill that has been developed with global customers. ■

A black and white advertisement for Genesis. On the left, the website 'www.genesus.com' is written vertically. The main image is a stylized pig head in profile, facing right, with a lightning bolt striking behind it. Below the pig head, the text reads 'The First Power in Genetics' in a small font, followed by 'GENESUS' in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom, it says 'World's LARGEST registered purebred herd' in white capital letters.

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Missions to Asia enhance value for Canadian pork

By Andrew Heck

Relationships are crucial in business, and the pork business is no different. In many Asian societies, the importance of relationships is elevated even higher than other parts of the world. If you are doing business in Asia, like the Canadian pork industry, face-to-face interactions are priceless.

In November 2019, two separate Canadian pork delegations visited Japan and China with two separate yet similar goals of convincing buyers that they need our product. While the consumer needs and desires differ between the countries, the importance of these markets to our value chain cannot be overstated.

Canadian embassy in Tokyo full to the brim

More than 40 representatives of the Canadian pork industry visited Japan in early November 2019 to attend an event organized by Canada Pork International (CPI) at the Canadian embassy in Tokyo.

The representatives were on-hand to extol the virtues of Verified Canadian Pork, the consumer-facing brand for the Canadian Pork Excellence (CPE) quality assurance program, which is being implemented by many producers across the country as a value-added identity for premium Canadian products.

In 2018, Canada's pork exports to Japan totalled \$1.3 billion, making it our second-most value market, just behind the U.S. Japanese buyers have a great deal of respect for the Verified Canadian Pork brand and what it represents. In fact, CPI uses more than one million branded stickers every month to distinguish our pork in that country.

"Canadian producers can be proud to know just how appreciated their efforts are overseas," said Neil Ketilson, Chair,




Brochures are used to explain the value proposition of Verified Canadian Pork to Costco Japan customers.

CPI. "Japan's culture for quality and detail is known around the world, and it's a testament to the work our producers and processors do to ensure our product is the best in the world. The Japanese appreciate quality and consistency, and the Canadian industry delivers to their specifications."


The embassy event featured a news conference, information seminar and pork tasting reception to excite guests. Speeches and presentations were delivered by CPI and CPC officials. Reportedly, the embassy had never hosted an event of this magnitude and scale, with the crowd of eager Japanese buyers overflowing into the hallway outside the theatre where the event was being held.

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Touring Japan to gain a first-hand consumer perspective

Following the highly successful embassy event, some members of the delegation returned to Canada, while others stayed behind to embark on a series of tours highlighting the Japanese pork consumer market.

The first tour was scheduled to take place at Costco Japan—a major buyer of Canadian pork. Costco Japan is a wholly owned subsidiary of Costco U.S., with 26 locations in the country since expanding there in 1999. In contrast, Canada has 100 locations. The deal-breaker: Japan has more than three times as many people as Canada and a higher proportion of its population as Costco members.

In Costco Japan's meat coolers, Canadian products are featured distinctly from lesser-quality, lower-priced products, which speaks to the power of Canadian pork. The competitive sales levels, relative to Japan's own domestic product, reinforces that understanding.

The second tour brought the delegation to HyLife Pork Table—a direct-to-consumer marketing concept that separates the company from many contemporaries in Canada. HyLife's pork, raised mostly in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, is processed at the company's plant in Neepawa, Manitoba, then shipped worldwide, with a strong emphasis on Japan. The Pork Table draws a direct line from the Canadian producer to the Japanese consumer, creating a narrative around the product that sets it apart in the market.



HyLife Pork Table is a concept restaurant in Tokyo that introduces HyLife's products directly to Japanese consumers.

“Pork restaurants are unique in Japan. Generally, Japanese consumers think of pork as more of a daily food to be eaten at home. But actually, they recognize that things like pork steak and dry ribs are very attractive for them. We can also provide these meats at a reasonable price compared with something like beef,” said Nick Funakoshi, Chief Marketing Officer, HyLife Pork Asia. “We also serve Canadian maple syrup, ice wine, whisky and beer. As a business, HyLife Pork

is constantly growing, and we now have customers from Hokkaido to Kyushu.”

African Swine Fever has China hungry for Canadian pork

Right on the heels of the Japan visit, a separate delegation of representatives from the CPC and Canadian Meat Council (CMC) made its way to several locations in China with strategic trans-Pacific shipping positioning: Tianjin (near Beijing), Shanghai, Shenzhen (near Hong Kong and Guangzhou).

The delegation went to China to make connections and talk about where improvements can be made, given some of the recent barriers to trade. The delegation had a goal to rectify any issues that could cause hurdles for Canadian pork's entry into China in the future.

In June 2019, China banned

all imports of Canadian pork products after the discovery of a fraudulent veterinarian's certificate that indicated a product of supposedly Canadian origin contained ractopamine—a feed additive that is legal in many countries, including Canada, but banned in China.

More than four months following the declaration of the ban, just as the Canadian delegation had arrived in Japan, an announcement was made signalling that the ban in China had been lifted.

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Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil spoke at the Canada-China Business Council's annual general meeting in Shanghai about the importance of relationships.

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In 2018, Canada's pork exports to China totalled \$514 million, making it our third-most valuable market, just behind Japan. Sales in 2019 were on pace to double 2018 levels until the ban was put in place, which would have effectively placed the two countries neck-and-neck by dollar value to the Canadian pork industry.

When the ban was lifted, the news quickly spread, exciting Canadians, but concerning the Japanese, who are left to wonder if Canadian pork will now flow more slowly into their country, on account of China's demand. Only time will tell, and it will be important for the Canadian industry to navigate these areas carefully to preserve the long-standing, treasured relationships we have, which has resulted in nearly half a century of uninterrupted trade. Neither the Canadians nor the Japanese take that lightly.

"Thanks to our special relationship with the Japanese, we have been able to flourish in the export business," said Brent Moen, Chair, Alberta Pork. "The Japanese have always been exceptional customers, and our industry can't ever lose sight of that. We look forward to increasing sales."

While concerning for our partners in Japan, the lifting of the ban is very welcome by Chinese consumers, who have been hit with prices that have more than doubled since the ban was put in place, thanks to a similar restriction on U.S. meat imports and the loss of nearly half of China's pig herd to African Swine Fever (ASF).



The Verified Canadian Pork logo stands out on a meat cooler placard for Sunterra Meats of Trochu, Alberta, found in a supermarket in Guangzhou.

With the two recent Asian visits under its belt, the Canadian meat industry is feeling confident that critical trade relationships have been effectively fostered. As our industry continues moving in an export-based direction, this can only be a positive outcome during a time when the news has not always been so positive. ■

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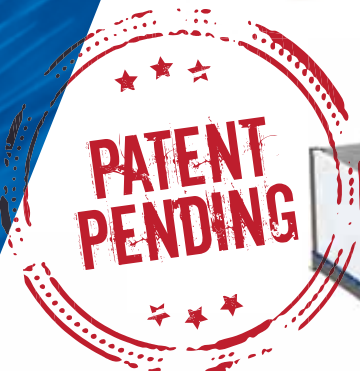
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Unity, resiliency themes dominate Alberta Pork 50th anniversary

By Andrew Heck



Guests arrived early and left late during the 2019 Alberta Pork AGM and banquet in celebration of the organization's 50th anniversary.

Alberta Pork's 50th annual general meeting (AGM) and anniversary banquet took place on November 21, 2019 in Calgary, featuring more than 200 guests for the all-day event.

Coming together for the betterment of the entire pork industry was a major theme that took shape throughout the day, as producers arrived with many relevant discussion points. Processors, likewise, brought considerations of their own and open ears to producers' concerns.

"We need to have a unified front if we're going to continue finding success as an industry," said Darcy Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Alberta Pork. "We've been looking for a more collaborative approach between producers and packers. It's time to take a different direction together to find true success."

The day included a morning business meeting, afternoon presentations and an evening banquet to celebrate Alberta Pork's 50th anniversary.

Butting heads and shaking hands during the business meeting

The morning business meeting was predictably well attended and featured much-anticipated updates from the Alberta Pork staff and board of directors. The organization's 2019 annual report was made available, which included a multi-page historical timeline and archival photos, along with an industry snapshot highlighting the province's growth of 85 new registered producers in the previous year.

"This year has been particularly challenging due to certain conditions within the pork industry and within the geopolitical landscape that has a way of determining our fate," said Brent Moen, Chair, Alberta Pork. "These challenges include producer compensation for CPE, the Canadian pork pricing project, the impact of the ongoing U.S.-China trade war and the ban on Canadian exports to China."

On the side of resolutions, producers voted to maintain last year's request for compensation at \$7 per pig prior to implementing the Canadian Pork Excellence (CPE) program. The Alberta Pork board of directors held its position committed to fighting for compensation until a satisfactory outcome is achieved.



Another resolution was brought forth and eventually withdrawn, related to the role and function of Alberta Pork and the Western Hog Exchange. After some intense debate, with competing viewpoints expressed, producers in the room broke for lunch having felt like an honest, frank conversation was had.

Presentations explore pork's changing character

The first presentation of the afternoon was delivered by Vincent Cloutier, Director, Economic Affairs, Les Éleveurs de porcs du Québec, Montreal. Cloutier's presentation focused on the single-desk selling system currently in place in Quebec, which featured an explanation of the pricing model that now incorporates cutout values to help stabilize hog prices for producers. The new formula is combined with compensation at \$2 per pig to address CPE concerns.

The second presentation was delivered by Steve Dziver, President, Commodity Professional Inc., Winnipeg. Dziver has spent the last 19 years specializing in livestock and grain risk management providing services to independent farm organizations and corporate businesses across Canada and the U.S. Dziver delivered a "year in review" look at how po-



Germany's Dr. Manfred Kern explains how factors such as the changing environment and rising income levels could affect global meat consumption.

litical and disease-related events have affected prices to date.

The third presentation was delivered by Brett Stuart, President, Global AgriTrends, Idaho. Stuart has conducted on-the-ground agriculture industry research for a variety of clients on six continents. Stuart provided an in-depth look at Asian export markets, including China, and the effect of African Swine Fever on pork demand, along with the factors that make certain export nations

better positioned than others to fill the void in the Chinese market.

The fourth presentation was delivered by Dr. Manfred Kern, Managing Director, agriExcellence, Germany. Dr. Kern took a broad look at consumer trends, environmental pressures and global income levels to provide an assessment on projected meat consumption worldwide in the future. Dr. Kern is no stranger to the international perspective: in 2007, the United Nations' Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) recognized Dr. Kern by upholding his title as "Eminent Person."

Alberta Pork celebrates 50 years of service through thick and thin

Following the meeting and presentations, producers, partners and distinguished guests from Alberta Pork's past were invited to attend a special evening


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Darcy Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Alberta Pork addresses the group of more than 200 producers and partners.

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banquet, which included a four-course meal, celebratory video, speeches and a great deal of lively conversation.

The meal included an Asian-style pork belly appetizer, salad, a pork crown roast courtesy of Olymel and dessert. Earlier in the day, meat was supplied by the province's other two federally inspected processors: Maple Leaf and Sunterra Meats.

Many memories good and bad have been made over the past half century. Some of these important points and stories were highlighted not only in Alberta Pork's annual report but also during the playing of a celebratory video produced by The Two Cowboys: a video storytelling duo that operates a web-based documentary service.

Notable events since the 1969 founding of the Alberta Hog Producers Marketing Board (now Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation) include the



Marilyn Griesheimer, Office Manager, Alberta Pork – a 43-year veteran employee – was gifted a bouquet by Andy Vanessen, past director, Alberta Pork and long-time producer from Picture Butte, Alberta.

founding of the Alberta Hog Journal (this publication) and the appointment of 34-year General Manager Ed Schultz in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the story was the

growth of processing and labour disputes that began defining the hog business.

Forward into in the 1990s, the industry experienced the dominance of export markets and increased producer membership. Starting in the 2000s, just after Alberta Pork had dropped its marketing status, producer membership peaked then rapidly declined as prices fluctuated dramatically. By the 2010s, the industry looked very different from its original self, but new challenges and opportunities continue to emerge.

Several current and past directors and chairs took the podium, including Brent Moen, Jim Haggins, Jurgen Preugschas, Martin Waldner and Andy Vanessen to share their thoughts, along with guests from industry and academia.

George Foxcroft, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta, acknowledged Alberta Pork's impressive contributions to swine education and research in the

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John Barlow, MP, Foothills was given the honour of carving his table's crown roast.

province. Many students who have benefitted from various research initiatives have developed careers associated with the pork industry, which is a testament to the commitment made by Alberta producers to support education and research.

Andre Corbould, Deputy Minister, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry brought remarks on behalf of Minister Devin Dreeshen.

"The minister regrets missing this great event, but I can say that everyone with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry is celebrating alongside the many pork producers from today and years gone by," said Corbould. "It's great to see how Alberta Pork supports agriculture in our province and has made a long-time contribution to the economy."

Jason Nixon, Minister, Alberta Environment and Parks submitted a written greeting to Alberta Pork.

"I want to extend my sincere congratulations to your organization and everyone who has gathered to celebrate this special occasion," wrote Nixon. "Alberta Pork has shown tremendous leadership in terms of outreach, education, community involvement, responsible land stewardship and animal welfare. You are truly leaders in your fields and wonderful ambassadors for Alberta on the global stage."

Also in attendance were Glenn van Dijken, MLA, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock, whose constituency is home to more than 70 registered Alberta pork producers, along with John Barlow, MP, Foothills and Earl Dreeshen, MP, Red Deer-Mountain View, who together represent more than 100 producers.

Alberta Pork would like to thank everyone who helped celebrate the special occasion, and the organization is excited for what the next 50 years will bring. ■



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Manitoba pork producers honoured for their spirit of giving

By George Matheson, Manitoba Pork

Manitoba Pork is honoured to be the recipient of Manitoba's 2019 Outstanding Contribution to Philanthropy Award (Organization Under 100), in recognition of the part the provincial hog sector plays in our communities. Our thanks go to Dean Martin Scanlon and the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba for nominating us for this meaningful award.



George Matheson, Chair, Manitoba Pork and Margaret Rempel, Director, Manitoba Pork hold the 2019 Outstanding Contribution to Philanthropy Award (Organization Under 100).

Manitoba Pork's tradition of giving goes back a long way. As producers of high-quality, nutrient-rich pork, a guiding principle for our philanthropic activities has always been to help ensure food security in our communities. Every year, we donate more than two tonnes of pork products to those needing a hand up. To that end, over the years we've partnered with organizations such as Siloam Mission, the Salvation Army and Winnipeg Harvest, Brandon's Samaritan House Ministries, and Steinbach's South East Helping Hands.

Manitoba Pork is committed to advancing agricultural education, welcoming



Manitoba Pork's sausage donation delivery to The Salvation Army Winnipeg Centre of Hope, spring 2019.

any opportunity to help further the public's understanding of how their food is produced. Throughout the year, we distribute educational materials and engage with the public about the hog sector through our many sponsorships and events.

We are particularly proud of our partnership with the University of Manitoba in the development of the Bruce D. Campbell Farm & Food Discovery Centre. Opened in 2011, the FFDC was the first hands-on facility in Canada allowing visitors to explore the ways in which food is made through interactive exhibits and viewing windows into a real working pig barn. We are also long-time supporters of Agriculture in the Classroom-Manitoba, which delivers curriculum-based programs, activities and resources for teachers and their students to learn more about agriculture and the role it plays in our province.

Another passion of ours is to promote active and healthy lifestyles by partnering with grassroots sports organizations and health-related charities that



Scott Peters, Director, Manitoba Pork presents a cheque to the Winnipeg Goldeyes Field of Dreams Foundation during Goldeyes Bacon Night, July 2019.

help advance patient care, services and programming. Our support for the culinary arts in provincial community colleges encourages up-and-coming chefs and foodies to use pork in new and innovative ways. As well, we provide scholarships, bursaries and academic awards to students in the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences.

Manitoba's pork producers enjoy making a meaningful social impact by supporting the communities where we live and work. We know that something as simple as a pork sandwich can make a huge difference in someone's day. We are proud to help make that difference and we are so pleased to be recognized for our efforts. ■



Happy Open Farm Day visitors at the Farm & Food Discovery Centre, University of Manitoba.



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Animal welfare, disease featured at Swine Tech 2019

By Andrew Heck

The 24th Red Deer Swine Technology Workshop took place on October 23, 2019 in Red Deer, Alberta. More than 150 guests—primarily producers and their barn workers—attended eight presentations and networked with more than a dozen exhibitors.

“Every year, Swine Tech includes premier speakers covering a wide variety of topics relevant to pork production,” said Alistair Bratton of Olymel, who serves as Chair of the Swine Tech committee. “Knowledge transfer is the goal, and by involving those on the front-line of production, we are able to connect the people who handle pigs with those who are heavily involved with research, specifically.”



Networking opportunities are a highlight of Swine Tech.

Disease prevention and readiness at the forefront

The day’s first presenter was Alberta Agriculture and Forestry’s Dr. Julia Keenlside, an experienced veterinarian who has been intimately involved with the incident command centre that was established following Alberta’s first outbreak of porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED) in January 2019.

“You can never predict how things will go,” Dr. Keenlside said about the ongoing PED investigations. “We don’t quarantine or depopulate immediately, but we let producers work with their vets to make the decision that’s best for their farm. Often, there is no smoking gun to determine the exact source of disease, which is why it’s important we all work together on this.”

As the investigation continues into Alberta’s four confirmed cases of PED—the last of which was discovered in March 2019—Dr. Keenlside and partners in the provincial government, along with Alberta Pork, are keeping a close eye on adjacent farms, truck washes and assembly yards by performing routine environmental surveillance.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry also sent Perry Abramenko to present on the province’s wild pig situation, which continues to worsen. Perry and his colleagues have been working to track where wild pigs are found, how many specimens there are and where the animals are going next.

“A lot of people say they like to hunt these animals and even eat them,” said Perry. “Hunting does nothing to control the population. Unfortunately, it’s a hard message to sell.”

Wild pigs are very clever and become increasingly evasive when confronted by humans. Rather than shooting to kill, Perry’s team sets food as bait, waits for an entire sounder (group of wild pigs) to start gorging, and then quickly lowers a fence that pens the herd. Once the herd is contained, every individual is culled. Some are brought into the lab for study, but the majority are destroyed.

Among the threats of wild pig population growth is the potential for disease epidemics. In parts of Asia and Europe where African Swine Fever (ASF) is found, wild pigs are a known vector for disease transmission, according to Dr. Egan Brockhoff of Prairie Swine Health Services. Dr. Brockhoff provided an update on the ASF situation for those in attendance.

Regarding the work that is being done to protect Canada from an ASF epidemic: “The ‘big stuff’ has been addressed, like live animal imports, animal by-product imports and international waste,” said Dr. Brockhoff. “But the issue is complex and wide-reaching, which is why other structures have been created to help manage the risk.”

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Other structures include country-wide working groups of veterinarians, production specialists and other technicians, along with a working group for communications. All provincial pork producer organizations are represented in these working groups, which include federal partners like the Canadian Pork Council (CPC), Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

Welfare issues for piglets and sows highlighted

Dr. Brockhoff also presented on the importance of colostrum in early-care management. Selective breeding has raised the total born piglets per litter by four in the last 13 years, but this has also increased pre-weaning mortality, given the longer length of farrowing. On average, farrowing length has increased by two and a half hours.

“We’re now asking sows to run more than a marathon,” said Dr. Brockhoff.

Colostrum is vital to piglet development. It has growth properties that are absent in regular lactation milk and needs to be delivered into piglets as soon as possible from birth, ideally within the first four hours. Progressively over the course of 24 hours from birth, colostrum quality decreases by 90 per cent.

Amount of colostrum and teat order for feeding also matter. If any piglet consumes less than 400 grams of colostrum within those first 24 hours, mortality rapidly increases. But as litters grow in number of piglets, sows struggle to keep up with the colostrum demand.

Dr. Yolande Seddon of the University of Saskatchewan was also on-hand to talk about sows, which included an exploration of what causes sow aggression. According to Dr. Seddon, much of that aggression results from poorly formed dominance hierarchies.

Aggression in sows may be normal or abnormal. A telltale sign of abnormal aggression would be lesions that are observed throughout gestation. While lesions are expected initially, if a dominance hierarchy is poorly formed, aggression can be amplified. On the extreme side, deaths should never result from normal sow aggression.

Allowing sow aggression to take place naturally without trying to prevent it can may, in fact, be better for hierarchy formation. Preventing conflict may result in prolonging the timeframe for conflict, which does more harm than good. The use of mixing pens can be helpful for encouraging the safest sow conflict possible by restricting the area in which these interactions can happen and the ability to add bedding or sand on the floor, to prevent injury.

Kevin Brooks of Olymel provided behavioural analysis from another perspective: moving pigs. Proper animal handling requires coaching, and coaching is dependent on barn conditions—what kind of facility, experience of workers and other unique factors. Having a “game plan” is necessary for efficient loading of trailers.

“Sometimes when we try to do things faster, we actually end up slowing ourselves down,” said Brooks.

A hog’s primary concern is where you are and how to escape the pressure you have created. Confusion among workers moving pigs causes confusion among pigs. Patience is important. If you allow pigs time and space to make decisions, they will go where you want them to; if you cause stress, they are less likely to cooperate.



Dr. Dan Columbus presented on mycotoxins in western Canadian diets. The presence of mycotoxins costs North America \$5 billion annually in reduced performance.

Machine learning and mycotoxins provide a hard science edge

It would not be Swine Tech without the tech! Dr. Dan Columbus of Prairie Swine Centre and Tom Stein of Maximus Systems

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

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drilled down into the topics of mycotoxins in feed and machine learning in pork production.

Mycotoxins are secondary metabolites produced by moulds and fungi in grain. Grains contaminated with mycotoxins are downgraded for animal feed, which has some negative effects on health, including feed refusal and vomiting, impaired reproductive function and organ damage. The CFIA has established regulations to limit mycotoxins in feed. These were previously considered “guidelines,” but will become mandatory in future.

Mycotoxins in grains are increasing and affect 25 to 50 per cent of the world’s crops. In Canada, 42 per cent of wheat and 56 per cent of barley in Canada contain at least one mycotoxin. In Alberta, the number of counties reporting Fusarium—a fungus that produces mycotoxins—has increased from nine in 2001 to 26 in 2016.

The United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) has estimated that mycotoxins in North America represent a \$5 billion reduction in performance annually. For this reason, the recommendation is not to feed grains with mycotoxins or try to reduce use. Treatments using yeast-based products are being developed for the biotransformation of mycotoxin-containing feeds, which is a positive sign.

Shifting gears, Tom Stein explored the world of machine learning, which is a type of artificial intelligence that is appearing in most technical industries, including agriculture. For pork production, it represents unique and precise ways of running barns and managing herd health.

“If I had stood here in 1982, I could have said, ‘There’s this thing called a personal computer, and it’s going to change everything,’” said Stein. “If I had stood here in 1995, I could have said, ‘There’s this thing called the internet, and it’s going to change everything.’ Today I’m saying, ‘Machine learning is going to change everything.’”

Machine learning involves software that relies on inputted data to make decisions, much like a human with the same knowledge. The software recognizes patterns and draws conclusions based on these patterns.

Practical examples of machine learning in pork production include a device developed by Iowa-based Swine Tech Inc. which prevents piglet deaths by crushing within the first few days of farrowing. A device containing a microphone is placed on the farrowing crate to detect the squealing of a piglet being crushed, which triggers a mild, harmless shocking device on the sow to stand up and relieve the crushing. Tests have shown a 50 per cent reduction in deaths by crushing versus barn worker observations alone (no use of technology).

Smart tags for sows are being created to collect health data, sent to the cloud, to notify producers in real time about any issues the animals are experiencing. The tags can track heart rate, temperature and other indicators, which is sent directly to the user’s smart phone.

Further down the road, it is expected that voice assistant technologies could also enter barns. These devices are currently found on smart phones (like Apple’s Siri) or home devices (like Google Home or Amazon Alexa). The idea is that producers or barn workers can verbally instruct smart devices to perform actions in the barn, while the person giving the instruction could be anywhere outside the barn.



This year’s harvest timing meant that many tentative attendees made the decision last-minute.

Organizers consider the event a success

Registrations, particularly walk-ups, were higher this year than last at Swine Tech, while exhibitor numbers were only slightly down. The organizers invite you to stay tuned as details for next year’s Swine Tech are released some time in mid-2020. ■

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The Pork Show welcomes industry to Quebec

By Andrew Heck

With a view of the walls of old Quebec City, and on the doorstep of the province's National Assembly, guests from around the world gathered at the Quebec Convention Centre for The Pork Show on December 10 and 11, 2019.

Canada's oldest major city (now more than four centuries old) might seem an unlikely location for a pork conference,



Given the high-level nature of The Pork Show, it is no coincidence that the conference is held next door to the Quebec National Assembly (provincial parliament).

but the province is our country's top pork producer by volume, and it is here that many in the global industry are looking when it comes to innovative production and models for producer profitability.

The annual conference, now in its sixth year, is the largest pork-specific conference in Canada and routinely welcomes more than 1,000 guests from across the pork value chain to participate.

Big names and big ideas dominate the discussion

The first day of the show featured a panel discussion on African Swine Fever (ASF), with participation by Dr. Aline Dimitri, Executive Director, Animal Health, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA); Martin Pelletier, a contributor to the Quebec Swine Health Team; and Sylvain Fournaise, Vice President, Food Safety and Technical Services, Olymel.

The second day of the show was kicked off with a presentation by Jean Charest, former Quebec Premier and partner with McCarthy Tétrault LLP. He is a veteran politician with much experience on the side of trade negotiations.

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Vincent Cloutier, Director, Economic Affairs, Quebec Pork hosted the African Swine Fever discussion panel on the first evening of the conference.

In 1994, Jean Charest was chosen to lead the federal Progressive Conservative Party, and in 1998, he became the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party. Charest then broke a 50-year provincial record by winning three consecutive election campaigns in 2003, 2007 and 2008. Charest helped negotiate the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), signed in 2016, though only partially in force, and he is currently a director with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

To Charest, there is an emerging agricultural labour crisis that has been spurred by the aging of populations in the western world, along with the rise of political populism, contrasted by a growing middle class in the developing world that is hungry for meat. Tackling these challenges is exacerbated by

political tensions that underly government decision-making.

“The rise of nationalism and economic crises in some countries has changed the game forever. It’s the new reality,” said Charest. “These are warning signals. The country that moves fastest to recruit and integrate immigrants will be the one that comes out victorious. Canada is a country of immigrants, and the agriculture sector needs this.”

Brett Stuart, President, Global Agri-Trends presented a global pork market update, and Robert Saik, President, Saik Management Group presented on the future of food trends.

“Try to find a positive movie on Netflix about agriculture—you can’t,” said Saik. “We and our school-aged children are fed fear on a daily basis, and it’s affecting public perceptions of the industry.”



Jean Charest, former Quebec Premier, suggested that geopolitical tensions and domestic political sentiments have profoundly impacted agriculture.

Guests expand their scope of knowledge

After lunch, breakout sessions were hosted on three topic areas: innovation and technology; health and livestock management; and food marketing. Each session included a half-hour presentation from two different presenters, making for a condensed but efficient format.

Breakout sessions were followed by Awards of Excellence, given to one pro-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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ducer and one industry partner that has demonstrated outstanding work in the past year. The awards were presented by André Lamontagne, Minister, Quebec Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Jean Larose, Executive Director, Quebec Pork.

The winner in the producer category was Ferme Pouvaco Inc., for their efforts to improve animal welfare and environmental practices on-farm. The winner in the industry partner category was the Quebec Pork Development Centre, a centre of expertise that contributes to knowledge transfer activities and research.

To complete the formal portion of the program, Dr. Luc Dupont, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa presented on building an effective business marketing plan, which is part of bridging the gap between public perception and the reality of pork production.

“You’re all doing wonderful things, but this is not enough; you have to tell people,” said Dr. Dupont. “If you don’t take your space, someone else will move in. You have to blow your own horn. Animal activism is a prime example of how the conversation can change shape.”

AQINAC serves Quebec’s feed grain industry

The Quebec Association of Animal and Cereal Feed Industries (AQINAC) works with partners every year to host The Pork Show.

“We believe this event is an important opportunity for the entire industry,” said Sébastien Lacroix, Deputy General Director, AQINAC. “Quebec producers and partners are on the leading edge, and we want to share our expertise with guests, just as much as we want our guests to bring their great ideas to us.”

AQINAC supports more than 200 active and associated livestock and poultry feed grain members in the province, in addition to grain traders and suppliers of goods and services. The organization serves most Quebec producers involved in animal production.

The organization represents an annual production of 4.6 million tonnes of feed equivalents, which are used by more than

half of all the province’s producers of hogs, poultry and eggs. This translates into more than \$2 billion in feed sales. Nearly two-thirds of the total volume of Quebec grain passes through institutions that are members of AQINAC.

While the first commercial feed mills appeared in Quebec in the late 1930s, it was not until 1961 that a first group was created to represent millers. Originally established as the Association for the Expansion and Protection of the Agricultural Industry in Eastern Canada Inc., in 1963, the organization became the Professional Association of Quebec Millers.

In the mid-1990s, the association’s membership became more diverse when it welcomed members of the Quebec Division of the Animal Nutrition Association of Canada (ANAC). To reflect this diversity, and to mark the integration of grain traders, the organization changed its name again in 1996 to become the current AQINAC.



Sébastien Lacroix’s company, AQINAC, is a proud presenter of The Pork Show.

Quebec’s culinary excellence on display

The first evening of the conference featured networking opportunities and the presentation of research posters by Swine Innovation Porc, along with a cocktail reception featuring local beverages, in addition to pork dumplings and pulled pork sliders.

Throughout the event, guests were privileged to enjoy the best of what the province has to offer. The experience was most obvious during the plated lunch on the second day of the conference, which included cuts from the belly of a young, milk-fed pig (porcelet), served with a pepper gravy, bacon-and-cheese mashed potatoes and honey-roasted vegetables. The menu was created by a culinary team that won a competition to have their meal included in The Pork Show’s program.

The second evening of the conference again featured cocktails and networking opportunity, followed by a casual food and beverage tasting event, during which guests were invited to sample the finest of Quebec fare, including charcuterie, hot appetizers and assorted samples of wine, beer and spirits. ■

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News and Views

Olymel gets green light to acquire F. Ménard

Management of La Coop fédérée and its Olymel and Sollio Agriculture divisions are announcing that they have received the green light from Canada's Competition Bureau to acquire all the assets of Ange-Gardien company F. Ménard, in Montérégie, Quebec. The companies had jointly announced in July 2019 an agreement to acquire all the assets of family company F. Ménard in the pork and milling sector. This transaction, whose amount will not be disclosed, is expected to close



Olymel announced its intention to acquire F. Ménard back in July, which has just been approved.

once all the provisions of the agreement between the parties have been fulfilled.

New executive team for the Canadian Pork Council

The Canadian Pork Council's (CPC) newly elected executive team will provide leadership to the Canadian pork industry starting in January 2020.

Rick Bergmann, a pork producer from Manitoba, was re-elected as Chair, René Roy, producer from Québec, was elected as First Vice-Chair, Doug Ahrens, producer from Ontario, was elected as Second Vice-Chair, and Jack DeWit, from British Columbia, was re-elected as Treasurer.

Other board directors include Brent Moen (Alberta), Casey Smit (Saskatchewan), Scott Peters and Claude Vielfaure (Manitoba), Oliver Haan (Ontario), Yvan Fréchette (Quebec) and Hans Kristensen (Maritimes).

Canada Pork International adds new President

Neil Ketilson has retired after 17 years as General Manager of Sask Pork. Neil remains Chair of Canada Pork International (CPI).

Meanwhile, CPI has welcomed Trevor Sears as the organization's new President. Trevor brings a wealth of experience and leadership to the organization. He was employed by Maple Leaf Foods for more than 25 years, most recently as their Director, Global Sales and Marketing.

Maple Leaf becomes world's first carbon-neutral food company

Maple Leaf Foods has announced a massive step forward on its sustainability journey, as it becomes the first major food company in the world to be carbon neutral. The company's announcement acknowledges the impact of the global food system on the environment and the urgent need for transformative change to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to zero.

Maple Leaf has made significant progress towards its goal to reduce its environmental footprint by 50 per cent by 2025, an aggressive environmental target in the industry. Since 2015, the company has reduced over 86 million kilowatt hours of electricity – equal to 12,912 passenger vehicles driven for one year

– and over 4.3 million cubic metres of natural gas, which equals annual energy usage for 1,000 homes.

Sask Pork says goodbye to long-time GM, names replacement



Mark Ferguson, Sask Pork's new General Manager

Neil Ketilson has retired after 17 years as General Manager of Sask Pork. Neil remains Chair of Canada Pork International (CPI).

Sask Pork has announced that Mark Ferguson has accepted the position of General Manager for its organization. Mark brings to the role 15 years of experience in the pork industry as Policy and Industry Development Manager with Sask Pork.

He is a Professional Agrologist and attended the University of Saskatchewan graduating with a Master of Science in 2005 and Bachelor of Science in 2003. Mark grew up on the family farm near Edgeley, Saskatchewan. He and his wife Jill have four children and reside in Saskatoon.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Production Economist joins Alberta Pork



Bijon Brown, Alberta Pork's new Production Economist

Bijon Brown has joined Alberta Pork as the organization's new Production Economist. Bijon will be taking a closer look at cost of production for Alberta producers, by collecting information, aggregating data and comparing it to pricing reports to better understand pork cost margins in Alberta.

Bijon holds a Ph.D in Agriculture and Resource Economics from the University of Alberta, along with a Master's in Agricultural Economics from the University of Saskatchewan and an undergrad degree from

his home country, Jamaica. As a student, he presented his research at the Banff Pork Seminar twice.

Federal ag minister holds position

Marie-Claude Bibeau, Member of Parliament, Compton-Stanstead (Quebec) & Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, has maintained her position in the Liberal government's cabinet, to which she was appointed in early 2019.

John Barlow, Member of Parliament, Foothills (Alberta) has replaced Luc Berthold, Member of Parliament, Mégantic-L'Érable (Quebec) as the Official Opposition's Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food. Barlow was previously the Associate Shadow Minister in 2016.

Fire destroys central Alberta abattoir

A provincially inspected slaughter facility in Ponoka, Alberta (Family Meats) was destroyed by fire in early December that broke out not long after the plant had received a shipment of 100 hogs. All animals were saved.



Family Meats of Ponoka, Alberta was destroyed by fire. Photo © Ponoka News.

The 8,500 square foot plant was opened in 2011 and sold to a company in B.C. last year. The business also owns a meat shop in Airdrie, north of Calgary.

trol mechanism that limits volatility.

Western Hog Exchange meetings well-attended

The Western Hog Exchange (WHE) hosted meetings across Alberta and Saskatchewan in November 2019, urging producers to refrain from signing contracts while fair compensation for the value of their pigs is being sought.

Producers are compelled by the model in Quebec, which includes a premium paid for implementing the Canadian Pork Excellence (CPE) program, along with a price con-

DNA Genetics purchases nucleus farm in Manitoba

Nebraska-based DNA Genetics is excited to announce the purchase of a genetic nucleus farm in Canada. The farm, located in Manitoba, will be populated in early 2020. As their business has grown in Canada, this purchase is a natural progression to supplying the Canadian market with continued genetic improvement.

They currently import boars into Canada through two quarantine locations in western and eastern Canada for the past 15 years. The farm will be populated with all three genetic lines: Landrace, Yorkshire, and Duroc. ■

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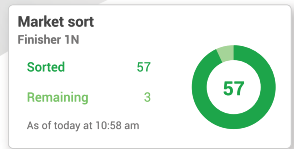
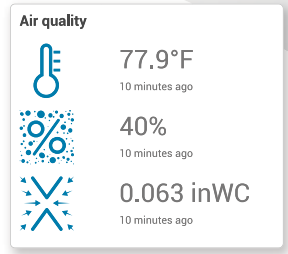
Production management system

**AutoFlex
CONNECT**

**PROSORT
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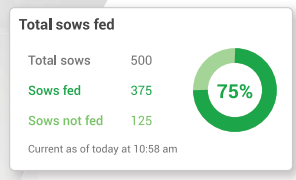


Autosort management system



Overview

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- Notifications
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Electronic feeding for group-housed sows

**Gestal
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**Gestal
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Electronic feeding for farrowing sows

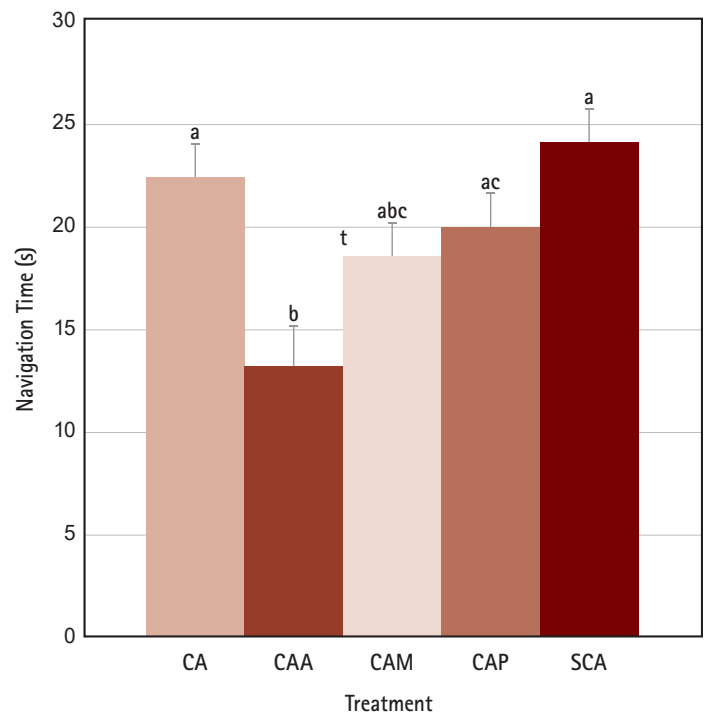
Practical alternatives for managing castration pain in piglets

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Castration is a common procedure performed at an early age to prevent the development of boar taint, an unpleasant smell and odor in pork from intact males. Additional reasons for castration include reduction of aggression and mounting behaviour and improved animal handling. Research has determined that piglets experience significant pain and stress during the procedure, and that pain may last for up to five days thereafter (Taylor and Weary, 2000, Marchant-Forde et al., 2014). To address this problem, the Canadian Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs requires that castration be done with analgesics to help control post-procedural pain (NFACC 2014). Furthermore, if piglets are castrated over 10 days of age, the Code requires that both an analgesic (to control pain following castration, eg meloxicam) and an anesthetic (to reduce local sensation during the procedure, eg lidocaine) must be provided. While considerable research has been done on management of pain in pigs following castration (Hay et al., 2003; Sutherland et al., 2012; O'Connell et al., 2014), few clear recommendations are available.

Figure 1: Study 1. Overall navigation time after treatment. Average of chute runs at 15, 40, 60 and 120 minutes post-treatment (LS means \pm SEM in sec) for pigs given one of five treatments. Treatments: CA: castration control; CAA: castration with ketoprofen; CAM: castration with meloxicam; CAP: castration with paracetamol; and SCA: and sham castration. Bars with different superscripts are significantly different, $P \leq 0.05$.



The Canadian Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (NFACC 2014) has requirements for pain control at castration, but does not provide specifics regarding the appropriate analgesics or protocols for their administration. The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) and Canadian Pork Council (CPC) have provided some guidance on appropriate drugs and dosage, however, several questions remain. The NSAID drug Metacam has received regulatory approval for treating pain at castration, but other options such as ketoprofen and acetaminophen may also be effective. Castration is normally performed in piglets at 3 to 5 days of age. Some studies have suggested that castration may be less stressful in older pigs, but clear evidence is lacking. Also, the timing of drug administration has been questioned: providing pain control 30 min prior to castration may be more effective. However, producers would then need to handle pigs twice and coordinate injection and castration times at processing, and so producers would prefer to provide analgesia at the time of castration. The overall objective

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of this project was to determine optimal procedures for controlling post-procedural pain in piglets at castration. Three specific objectives were: 1. to compare the effectiveness of different analgesics; 2. to study the effect of piglet age at castration on pain responses, and; 3. to study the timing of drug administration.

What did we do?

Castration of male piglets is known to cause pain during the procedure and for hours or days during recovery. As of July 1, 2016, the Canadian Code of Practice has required that swine producers provide analgesics to piglets at castration to alleviate post-procedural pain. However, complete information on the analgesic drugs available, their effectiveness and appropriate methods of delivery is not available. The objective of this research was to evaluate drugs and administration procedures to help identify effective and practical pain control strategies for piglets at castration. Three studies were performed: the first study compared the effectiveness of three non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) on treatment of post-castration pain. The second study examined the effect of age at castration (3 vs 10 days) on piglet's responses to castration when provided pain control or not. Study 3 compared the effectiveness of providing pain control 1 hour before the procedure to providing pain control immediately before castration, which would facilitate implementation of the procedure on-farm.

Behavioural and physiological responses were measured in each study. Of the behaviour measures studied, only tail wagging behaviour in Study 3 showed a tendency for interaction between treatment and time point. At 20 min after castration, piglets that were castrated did more tail wagging than those that were sham handled only. Behaviour measures using a specially designed handling chute were not reliable. Cortisol results in blood were more informative. Study 1 showed higher cortisol concentrations at 45 minutes after treatment in castrated piglets compared with those that were sham castrated, with piglets given pain control being intermediate. Studies 2 and 3 also showed an increase in cortisol concentrations following castration with higher levels in castrates compared to sham castrates. Comparing cortisol responses in pigs castrated at 3 and 10 days of age, older piglets showed lower cortisol levels overall and a greater effect of analgesia on reducing cortisol levels. In Study 3, providing analgesia 1 h before castration resulted in significantly lower cortisol levels compared to pigs that did not receive analgesia. Providing analgesia immediately before castration was also significantly better than providing no analgesia, but was not as effective as provision at 1 hour prior. We conclude that the analgesic, ketoprofen, has a positive effect on reducing pain following castration when given 30 minutes to 1 hour before castration. Drug provision immediately before castration appears to be better than providing no pain control. Older piglets showed a clearer response when given pain control than young piglets, and could be used as a model for evaluating pain control options.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from this project. First of all, we can conclude that, based on this work and previous studies, both meloxicam and ketoprofen can reduce cortisol levels following castration. In addition:

1. Providing ketoprofen 1 h before castration is more effective than administering the drug immediately before castration.
2. Pigs castrated at 10 days of age show lower cortisol levels in response to castration than pigs castrated at 3 days.
3. Providing ketoprofen to pigs castrated at 10 days of age had a greater effect on reducing pain than providing ketoprofen to pigs castrated at 3 days of age.
4. The handling chute used as a behavioural measure in these studies is of limited value.

Acknowledgements

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