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John Van Engelen





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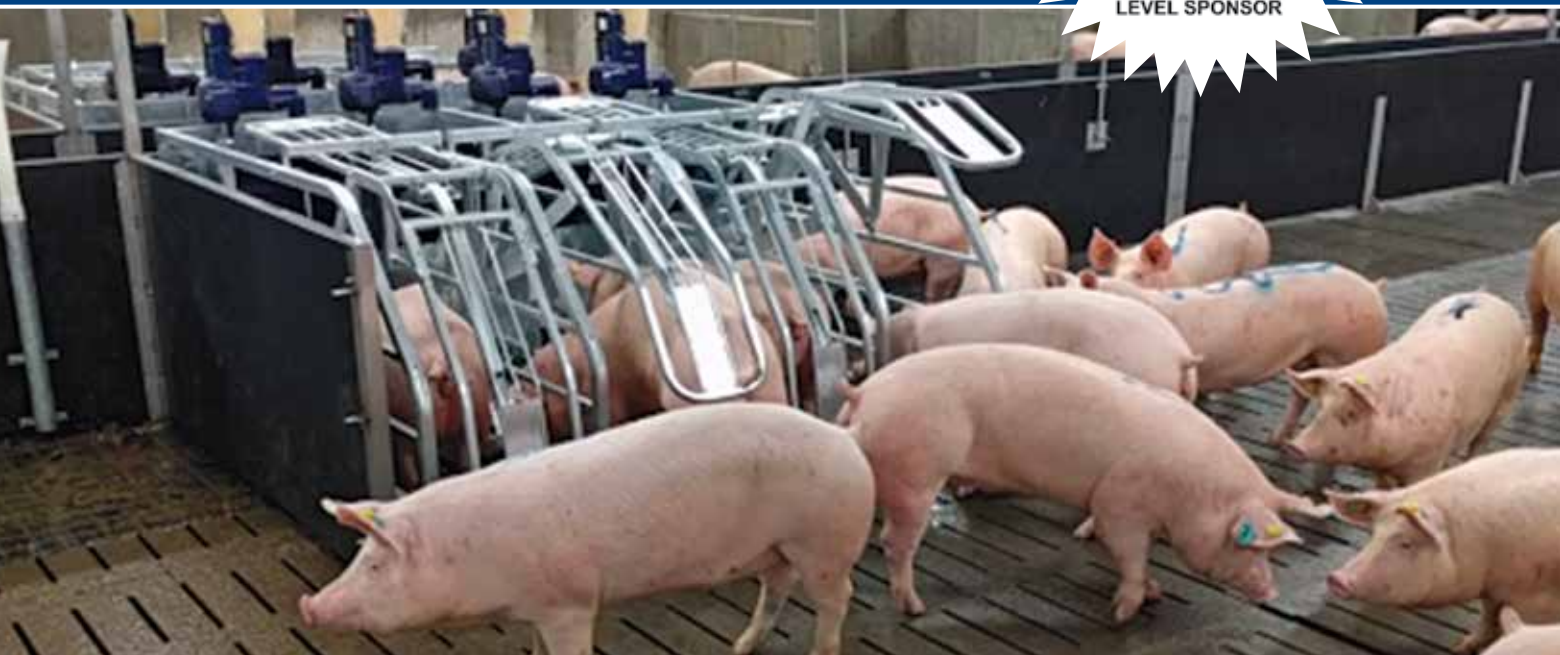


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Living and breathing Ontario agriculture

AgMedia Inc., which publishes this magazine and also *Better Farming*, has built a strong reputation in the Ontario agricultural industry. For more than 16 years, *Better Pork* has been providing insight and analysis to producers across the province.

It is now time for Chapter 2 in this fine tradition. **Farms.com Canada Inc.** announced earlier this year that Farms.com had acquired a majority interest in AgMedia. We congratulate retiring editors, **Robert Irwin** and **Don Stoneman**, on the quality content that their editorial team has filed over the years. We thank them for their assistance through the transition and wish them well.

As with any good book – Chapter 2 builds upon the seeds set in the first chapter. Publisher and editorial director **Paul Nolan** will continue in his earlier role and is based out of the Farms.com offices in Guelph. Field editor **Mary Baxter** will continue working out of her London office.

At Farms.com, we strive to provide valuable information-based products and services to the ag and food industry. Our offerings include *AgCareers.com*, *CareersInFood.com*, **PigCHAMP** software, *Ag Buyer's Guide*, as well as the core website of *Farms.com*.

We are also farmers ourselves. As owners of a 2,000-acre farm in Port Dover, Ontario, we believe we have a solid understanding of the issues facing farmers today.

Our promise to the loyal readers of *Better Pork* is to continue to make this magazine the leading publication for our province's pork producers. Please contact Paul at paul.nolan@betterfarming.com with any ideas or questions. And thank you all for your continued loyalty and support. **BP**

GRAHAM DYER

President, Farms.com

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Spike in barn fires causes rising public concern..... 6

But farmers and builders worry that changes to the Ontario building code will not recognize the unique characteristics of farm buildings and reclassify them as industrial buildings. They want a more pragmatic approach

MARY BAXTER

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Stratford hopes bacon and ale will lure Shakespeare buffs

Tourism officials in Stratford, Ont. are making the most of the Perth County seat's close association with hogs through a **Bacon and Ale Trail** promotion for visitors. Among Perth's 2,400 census farms are 379 hog operations that have annual receipts exceeding \$142 million. The city has been home to the annual **Ontario Pork Congress** for more than 40 years and describes Perth as Ontario's top pork-producing county.

A \$25 pass available at visitstratford.ca or in person entitles pass holders to tastings of unique bacon and beer samples at five of 13 pub, restaurant or food shop locations. It includes discounts on bacon purchases at the **Best Little Pork Shoppe** near the village of Shakespeare, jalapeno poppers with caramelized red onion/bacon marmalade at the **Boar's Head Pub** on Ontario Street in Stratford and house-made charcuterie from whey-fed pigs at **Monforte Dairy** on Wellington Street in Stratford.

Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory offers chocolate-covered toffee with smoky bacon flavour. Among other things porky in area restaurants, there's a pork plate tapas at the **Bijou Restaurant** on Erie Street, and **Madelyn's Diner** on Huron Street offers a half-pound butter tart containing finely chopped bacon. **BP**

PRRS-resistant hog a 'potential game changer'

British-based hog breeder **Genus plc** has quickly licensed **University of Missouri** gene-editing research expected to produce pigs that can resist porcine reproduction and respiratory syndrome (PRRS).

Missouri biologist **Randall Prather** announced the disease-resistance breakthrough in an article late last year in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*. Genus—which has headquarters in Basingstoke, England, and 500 breeding hog herds in 35 countries, including Canada—announced its licensing agreement soon afterward as a “potential game changer for the pork industry.”

PRRS is a costly viral disease among hogs, causes a high mortality rate and has no effective vaccine to date, a University of Missouri statement says. A PRRS-resistant hog is also among the first commercial products of CRISPR, a revolutionary gene-editing technology first demonstrated in 2013. An acronym for the term “clustered, regularly interspaced, short, palindromic repeat,” CRISPR refers to a naturally-occurring gene-editing process that aids the immune responses of bacteria. Gene editing has been adapted for use in genetic engineering.

Missouri's researchers used gene-editing process to disable production of a protein that aids the spread of the PRRS virus within the host animal. Similar research at the University of Edinburgh's **Roslin Institute** has altered domesticated pigs to imitate the natural immunity to African swine fever among warthogs, according to the institute's website.

Genus officials expect it will take five years to bring PRRS-resistant hogs to market. **BP**



Turning manure mountains into gold



European researchers hope to reduce pollution from livestock manure and cut back on the use of synthetic fertilizers by converting mountains of manure into more manageable mineral and soil conditioning products, a statement by the Stuttgart-based research engineering firm **Fraunhofer IGB** says.

Project manager **Jennifer Bilbao** has led a consortium of 15 partners from Holland, Poland, Spain and Germany in a demonstration pilot project at Kupferzell, Germany. Extensive field trial studies funded by the European Union since 2012 have shown that mineral fertilizer and soil conditioners processed from hog manure “can be used directly in agricultural field operations as fertilizer and humus-building substrates,” Bilbao said in the statement.

The process saves on the use of synthetic fertilizers and on the large energy requirements used to produce them. It reduces raw manure to about four per cent of original volume. Processing manure in this way also offers a potential solution to increasing costs for storing and safely distributing about 1,800 million cubic metres of livestock manure produced annually on European farms.

The Kupferzell demonstration project uses the facilities of **AgroEnergy Hohenlohe**.

So far, the project has converted pig manure to useable phosphate and nitrogen minerals and organic biochar. **BP**

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¹ Fairbrother, J., Nadeau, E. and Gyles, C. 2005. *Escherichia coli* in postweaning diarrhea in pigs: an update on bacterial types, pathogenesis, and prevention strategies. *Anim. Health Res. Rev.* 17: 89
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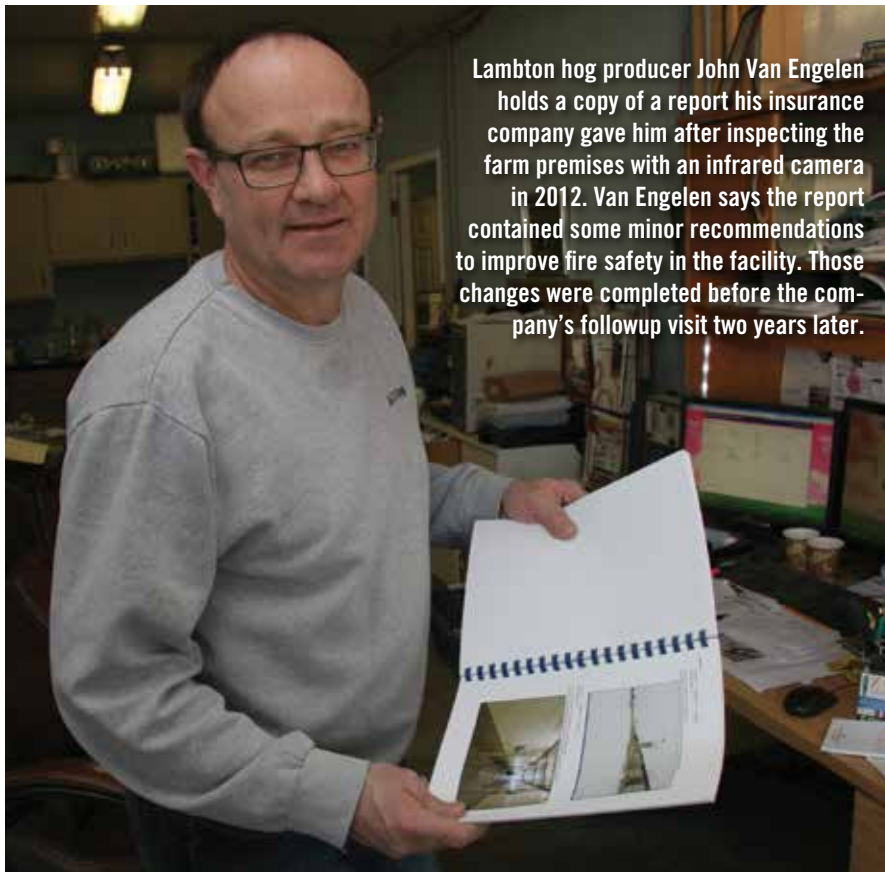
SPIKE in
BARN
FIRES

**causes rising
public concern**



But farmers and builders worry that changes to the Ontario building code will not recognize the unique characteristics of farm buildings and reclassify them as industrial buildings. They want a more pragmatic approach

by MARY BAXTER



Lambton hog producer John Van Engelen holds a copy of a report his insurance company gave him after inspecting the farm premises with an infrared camera in 2012. Van Engelen says the report contained some minor recommendations to improve fire safety in the facility. Those changes were completed before the company's followup visit two years later.

John Van Engelen was 15 when the dairy barn on his parents' farm erupted in flames. "It started from a tractor," he recalls. "The muffler was close to the ceiling, where the hayloft was, and the sparks went up in the hayloft."

Ever since, the Thedford-area farrow-to-finish farmer, now 55, takes his fire prevention routine seriously.

Every farmer fears fire, says Bruce Kelly, environmental program coordinator for Farm and Food Care Ontario. "Nobody wants to lose their business in a fire. You work so hard to build your business and your barns, the plant, and the critters in them," he says. "It's a terrible life-altering event."

Industry and government, too, are aware of the risk. Insurance companies, for example, now routinely visit livestock farms and assess risks using infrared cameras. In 2011, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) published *Reducing the Risk of Fire on Your Farm*, a manual that offers practical fire prevention steps. The manual is on the ministry's website, as are other related fact sheets and information.

Judging by the overall numbers, these initiatives appear to have had a positive effect. Total barn fire numbers are dwindling. In 2014, there were 150 incidents, down 34 from 2008. But the number of fires prompting agriculture ministry staff to issue information about dead-stock management regulations is rising. Four such fires happened in 2013. Last year there were 16 and this year the count by the end of April is 14, including two high-profile horse-barn fires.

Combined, those two fires destroyed 49 horses and their loss sparked public outcry. A Jan. 19 article in the *Toronto Star* noted that Ontario regulations do not require barns to have sprinkler systems or fire alarms. An animal rights group, Canadians for Ethical Treatment of Farmed Animals, wants the National Farm Animal Care Council to establish codes of practice for fire prevention and suppression.

The public reaction makes Van Engelen uneasy. In his barns, built in

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1961, 1983, 2000 and 2003, he and son Mitchell have introduced most of the precautions mentioned in the ministry's fire guide. Lights in the newest barn are sealed, as required by the provincial electrical code. In rooms and hallways, he uses outdoor receptacles with waterproof seals to prevent wash water from seeping in. Periodically, he clears dust from fan heaters, ceilings and other equipment that can't be cleaned with a pressure washer. A trusty leaf blower eliminates debris in areas that the air compressor hose can't reach. The blower "works really well for cobwebs and stuff like that," he says.

Precautions go beyond cleaning routines and special plugs. A heat exchanger system housed in a 40-foot room adjacent to the newest barn not only warms air but also prevents dangerous gas buildup. The hot water boiler system is less of a fire risk than other heating types. In the attic are fire stops (barrier walls). Fire extinguishers are handily located throughout the main floor, as are escape doors.

Van Engelen uses sprinklers in the

newer barns to soak rooms for pre-washing and cooling the pigs and also uses alarms for feed and hydro to generate alerts for power outages and equipment malfunctions. The alarms connect to his phone.

Linking a fire alarm to a sprinkler system, however, is expensive. A sprinkler system alone can cost between \$100,000 and \$150,000. Van Engelen estimates that integrating an alarm system with sprinkler activation would cost thousands of dollars. "Maybe in the future we might be able to use something like that, when the technology makes it simpler," he says.

Farm builders' concerns

Sprinklers pose other problems. Many barns source water from wells and use waterlines that don't have the capacity to provide the pressure such systems need, says Steven Adema, an engineer with Tacoma Engineers in Guelph. Moreover, if a fire knocks out electrical power, how are you going to pump water to the barn?

Adema's firm belongs to the Canadian Farm Builders Association and,

during the association's annual meeting in January, attendees raised concerns that public pressure will foist unrealistic requirements on barn construction to address fire safety.

Beneath that concern, says Will Teron, Adema's Tacoma colleague, lurks the fear that the provincial government will remove the National Farm Building Code as the reference for barn construction in the provincial code. The national code recognizes the unique aspects of farm buildings, such as their low human occupancy, remote locations and special occupants. But its last update was in 1995 and buildings have become much larger since then. What if the province responds to public pressure by reclassifying barns as industrial buildings?

Manitoba went that route in 2010 and, under its provincial building code, barns of more than 600 square metres are classified as either medium or light industrial. The classifications contain provisions for sprinkler systems and firewalls. Facilities that have fewer than 75 employees do not need an alarm system, but both classifications require an emergency plan. A 2009 discussion

Ontario barn fires: what the statistics show*

Number of fires

2013: 4

2014: 12

2015: 16

2016 (to the end of April): 14

Volume of dead stock

2012: 180 MT

2013: 155 MT

2014: 175 MT

2015: 225 MT

2016 (to the end of April): 306 MT
(70 per cent of the figure was from one fire)

**These statistics reflect instances when the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs had provided the farmer with information on regulatory requirements to responsibly manage dead stock. Source: OMAFRA*



Fan heaters used in the newer barns at John Van Engelen's Lambton County farrow-to-finish operation help heat fresh air before it is circulated into pig rooms via the brightly coloured air returns high up on either side of the hallway's walls.

The main causes of barn fires*

According to Ontario's Office of the Fire Marshal, insurance companies and contractors, the primary sources of ignition in barn fires fall within the following categories:

- miscellaneous (chemical reactions, such as combustion and lightning)
- electrical distribution equipment (circuit wiring, distribution equipment, extension cords, etc.)
- heating equipment (central heating, flue pipe, space heaters, etc.)
- open flame (cutting/welding, blowtorch, smoking, etc.)

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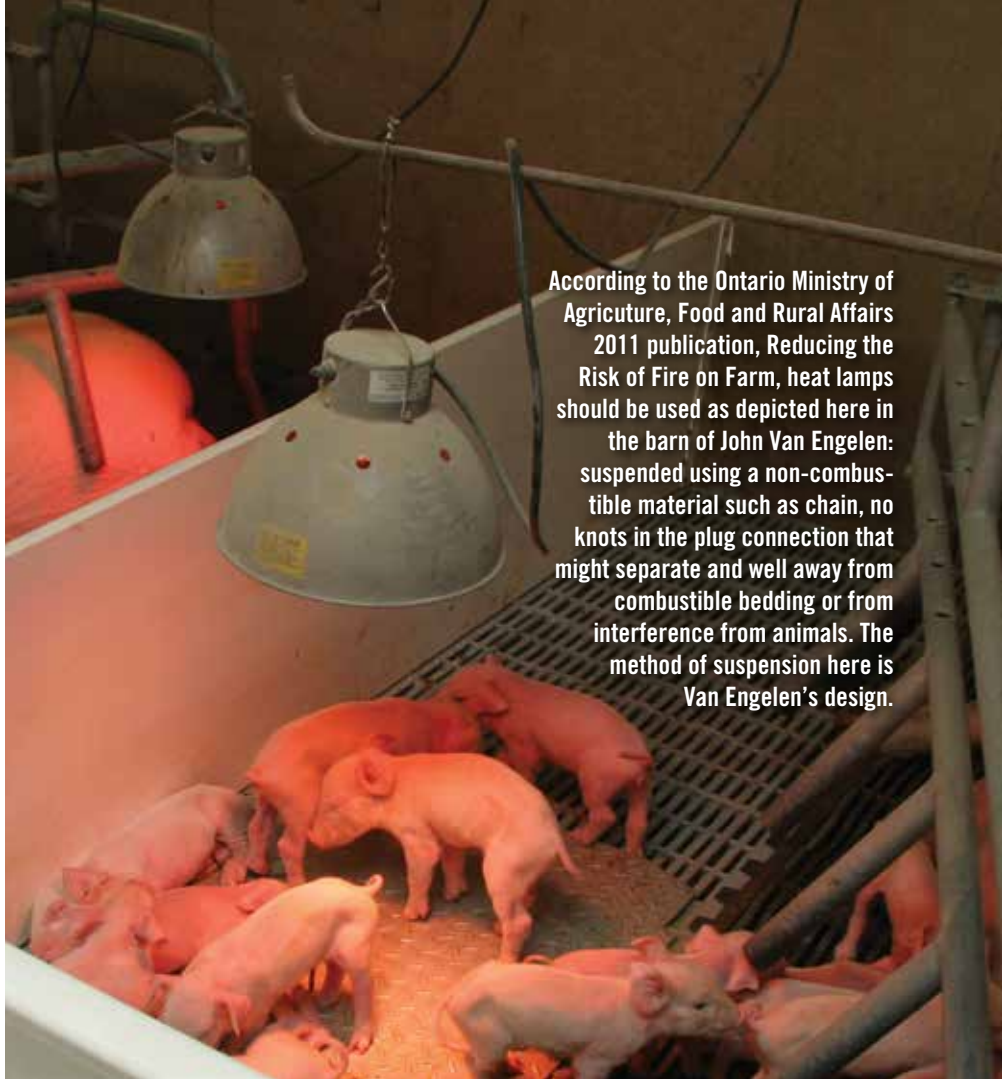
COVERSTORY

paper prepared by the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner estimated the provisions would add \$2.80 to \$4.80 per square foot to construction costs.

Under the Ontario building code, an industrial classification would mean not only adding sprinkler systems but also establishing a fire protection access route and onsite water storage sufficient to fight a fire.

Teron sits on the nine-member Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes' joint task group. It spearheads the national code's update, which finally began this year. The commission is the arm of the National Research Council of Canada, which administers the codes.

He says Ontario was preparing "to go it alone" until the commission announced its plans to update the National Farm Building Code and release it in the 2020 cycle of national building codes. "My understanding now is MMAH and OMAFRA (the municipal affairs and housing and agriculture ministries) backed off a little bit when they heard that there was some real momen-



According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2011 publication, Reducing the Risk of Fire on Farm, heat lamps should be used as depicted here in the barn of John Van Engelen: suspended using a non-combustible material such as chain, no knots in the plug connection that might separate and well away from combustible bedding or from interference from animals. The method of suspension here is Van Engelen's design.



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tum at the federal level,” he says.

In an April email, OMAFRA spokesperson Bianca Jamieson confirmed staff involvement in the national update. They and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff “are engaged in this process and will contribute technical information to inform the review of construction requirements for farm buildings, including advancements in modern farm practices and improved safety performance,” she writes.

Teron says the federal decision to begin the code’s update is unconnected to Ontario’s recent spate of barn fires. “This has been developing. I’ve sat on some of the subcommittees as an observer. Those reports were submitted out nine months ago.”

Most other joint task group members come from the commission’s specialized technical subcommittees, which focus on areas such as structure, fire and hazardous materials. Teron and Gary van Bolderen, a Farm Builders director and owner of Dutch Masters Construction Services in Barrie, are the only members with barn-building experience. The group needs more, Teron says, to foster better understanding of the buildings’ unique characteristics. “One member has already said, ‘well, why don’t we just

call them industrial buildings?’” he says.

Teron anticipates eventual changes to other codes and standards that will affect barn construction. They could include new specifications for the use of explosion-reduction outlets and switches or ensuring the containment of wiring in conduits. Kara Fraser, a spokesperson with Ontario’s Electrical Safety Authority, says there are no new code requirements pertaining to barns in the new Ontario electrical code, which took effect May 5.

Ultimately, however, Teron, Adema and most of those who have monitored the barn fire question say maintenance is the best solution to preventing fire. “The vast majority of these fires start from electrical,” says Teron. “The farm is a harsh environment. There are chemicals, moisture, dust so when an outlet gets damaged, you can’t just go and throw a 69-cent replacement off the shelf from Canadian Tire. There are higher standards that should apply.”

Practical options

Several efforts are now underway in Ontario to help farmers target their maintenance routines.

“OMAFRA is working with several farm organizations to investigate practi-

cal options to monitor barns and reduce the risk of fires,” writes Jamieson. She says the ministry is also evaluating new technologies. She did not offer specifics on the projects and rejected a *Better Pork* request to interview the ministry staff involved.

Kelly says his organization is exploring the feasibility of using other technologies. One possibility is training an infrared heat sensor with an alarm on equipment such as a fan. He notes that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has also begun to work on barn fire problems.

Farm and Food Care Ontario wants funding to buy up to 10 infrared cameras to loan to farmers so they can inspect their barns on their own to find hot spots and risks. The organization already has two. The loans “will allow people in the privacy of their own barns to look at it, and also have a discussion and a dialogue with the people who work on the farm about this,” Kelly says.

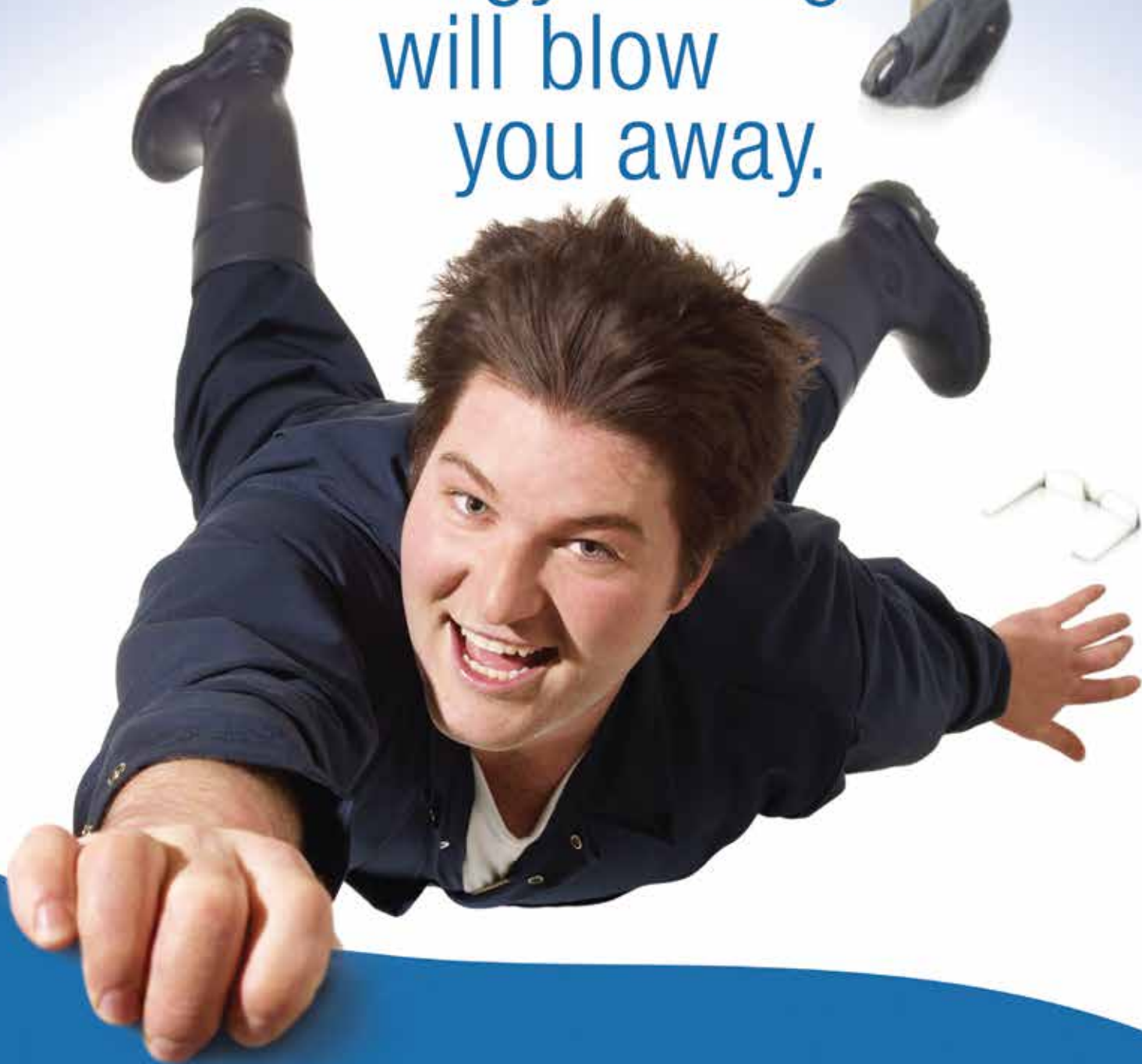
As well, he wants to develop “a pragmatic list” that farmers can “pull out at staff meetings a couple of times a year and just say, ‘what are our risks here?’ Things like using pressure washers in the winter as opposed to leaf blowers to clean down the ceilings of rooms.”

Six electrical safety tips for preventing fires in barns

- Hire only a licensed electrical contractor: it’s the law in Ontario. The contractor must perform all electrical work in compliance with the Ontario Electrical Safety Code and take out the necessary electrical permits so that the work is subject to Electrical Safety Authority inspection. The authority recommends hiring a licensed electrical contractor to perform an annual check of all electrical equipment in a barn to ensure that it is in good working order. Pay particular attention to cord caps, ceiling mounted outlets, light fixtures and electrical panels in areas with animals.
- Repair all damaged or malfunctioning fixtures or equipment as soon as possible. Any damaged or malfunctioning equipment should be replaced with equipment suitable for a corrosive environment.
- Regularly inspect for damaged electrical wires. Rodents are known to cause damage to electrical wires in barns. Damaged wires should be replaced immediately.
- Install arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs). In barn structures where the wiring is not visible, installation of AFCIs can help to prevent fires.
- Only install essential electrical equipment in the confinement area of a barn.
- Ensure the right conditions for electrical equipment. Install in locations separate from the confinement area which are supplied with clean, dry, temperature-controlled air.

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Both Kelly and Jamieson urge farmers to develop a fire plan for emergencies. “That’s of some value in terms of minimizing losses,” Kelly says. Consult your local fire departments, they advise.

But Sebringville producer Doug Ahrens says it’s not only farmers who need to take action. Vendors of electrical equipment and fixtures must do more to make available good quality, inexpensive equipment resistant to corrosion.



Doug Ahrens

“Farmers are concerned about what’s going on and try to do their best. We’re caught in a price squeeze too, but we’re made out as the villain,” he says. “But we’ve got a whole raft of villains over top of us. If they just pull it all together, we could put this thing together at a reasonable price.”

Emergency plan?

John Van Engelen chuckles when he hears the idea of tying heat sensors into an alarm system and training the sensors on fans. There are so many fans. “And there’s where you’re talking about a big cost.” Maybe developments such as nanotechnology will eventually make that strategy affordable, he says.

Asking if he has an emergency plan for the barn elicits chuckles too, but only after a surprised silence. There are only two of them who work in the barn full time. Occasionally his daughter helps out. Everyone can navigate the facility blindfolded.

Van Engelen eyes Mitchell, seated at the barn office desk. “Did you do one when you were at Guelph?”

“No,” Mitchell admits. “I know there’s supposed to be one.”

If there’s an emergency in the barn, says the older Van Engelen, “we’d just call 911.” If it’s a small fire, they’d try to handle it first on their own with fire extinguishers. They’ve used extinguishers before (to tackle combine fires). But if it’s large, they’d call 911.

What else can be done? I put that question to Larry Jacobson, professor and extension engineer in the University of Minnesota’s department of bio-products and biosystems engineering. In 2010, Jacobson headed a National Pork Board committee which explored what the 21st-century sustainable hog-finishing barn should look like.

“Let’s get the manure out of the barn and let’s store it outside,” he says. That way, in the barn, “you still have a corrosive environment, but it’s probably not as corrosive.” You’re going to have to have the same “level of electrical robustness in the wiring.” Ventilation is still needed as well as “a lot of other things.” Nevertheless, the move eliminates many of the risks.

Jacobson’s solution doesn’t sit well with Van Engelen for a multitude of reasons. At the top of the list is the increasing difficulty in obtaining a municipal building permit for a facility that has an exterior manure pit. Instead, try regular maintenance combined with a ventilation system like his own, he suggests.

“If you have a 100 per cent pit-ventilated barn that never lets the gas come up in the first place, that you can actually agitate and you will never smell it inside the barn, only outside the barn where the fan is, maybe that would be a lot better.” **BP**



John Van Engelen, who owns a farrow-to-finish operation near Thedford in Lambton County, demonstrates how he uses a leaf blower to keep the fan heater in his sow loose housing unit dust-free.



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16th London Swine Conference



In setting new attendance records on April 5th and 6th LSC continues to grow, partly by increasing attendance by owners, managers, and staff from the production sector, and impressive industry sponsorship and support. The program balances a mix of research and technical presentations with more practical topics and workshops where the research and technical topics are discussed as they apply at farm level.

This is done by including producers in the planning process. For the past number of years the Conference Chair has been a pork producer, and the planning process includes a number of producers, farm managers, and many others with a background in the production side of the industry. This helps keep in focus the fact that while the research, technical, and 'higher level' topics are important to the industry as a whole it all needs, at some point, to be in support of

Ontario pork production. We also include pork producers and production managers on the speaking program, particularly in the breakout sessions, so that others can learn from their practical experiences in doing the job every day.

The written papers and summaries of the presentations provide a resource for the industry, going back to the first conference in 2001, and are freely available online at the conference website: www.londonswineconference.ca. There is also a link under 'Highlights 2016' to a video of a workshop by Elaine Froese on "Managing Generational Expectations".

Put these dates for 2017 in your calendar: **Wednesday March 29th and Thursday March 30th**. If you want to be part of planning the next conference, the technical planning meeting is coming up:

London Swine Conference 2016 Technical Planning Meeting

June 16th, Woodstock OMAFRA Resource Centre 9am-Noon.

Bring your ideas for our next conference, or send them to me if you can't attend.

Jaydee Smith, Swine Specialist
 519-674-1542 jaydee.smith@ontario.ca

Is 'Social License' Relevant to Pork?

Social License and Sustainability

In my area of work around sustainability, the concept of 'social license' enters many conversations. It will also increasingly be common in pork circles with the recent launch of **Ontario Pork's 2015 Social Responsibility Report**. For a common reference point, I will suggest that 'Sustainability' is a way of doing business where the spheres of People, Planet and Profit overlap to create a sweet spot. Alternatively, these three areas are also called social, environmental and economic sustainability (and yet other names...) and sustainability is the convergence of the three spheres. As a result, the reality of a social dynamic, human, consumer, society, or whatever you prefer to call this area around valuing the public's needs is absolutely relevant. On any given day we can see this play out in the mainstream and social media, and witness the inherent tension of competing views. We see examples that affect our friends in your own and other livestock sectors with issues that relate to production practices, pharmaceutical technologies, animal welfare and other concerns. This complexity of views must nonetheless be treated as real and I will argue forms an important 'mass balance' of sorts.

Is Social License the Real Deal?

Recently Ross McKittrick, an economics professor at the University of Guelph, released a piece on the Canadian energy sector suggesting social license is not a relevant concept (Financial Post online, Wed. April 20, 2016). Therefore he argues it does not need to be honoured in that industry. I will respectfully disagree and offer that society's views change over time, eventually causing changes in behaviour and have real economic consequences. I am suggesting the dimension of time should be applied to an issue when considering social license. To illustrate this, I will use an example that is equally as loaded



as anything we experience in animal agriculture, but one I hope that is 'safe' for pork producers and other animal protein producers. Figure 1 illustrates the North American journey on the acceptance of cannabis relative to tobacco over the last 25 years or so, and that the relative acceptance of these two vices has flipped in the United States. For this article we will assume there are similarities in Canada. My point is that what has been a legal vice for centuries (tobacco), now appears to enjoy less social license than another that (at present) remains illegal.

This social license regarding cannabis has evolved over time; from rebellious idealism a generation (or two) ago, to acceptance as a medicine, to wide recreational use. These three ideas of acceptance themselves have differences among them. Nonetheless, the general momentum of these motivations is in one direction; towards acceptance of cannabis for a variety of reasons. The dichotomy between cannabis and tobacco acceptance has everything to do with how people smoke in public places, how law enforcement deals with marijuana use and current political will. I will argue that the key detail here is that over time social license can as easily convert the illegal to legal, and legal to not. This example is to illustrate the importance of a wave of

opinion, and that this wave is not a tidy, unified message.

Staying 'Ahead of the Curve'

The idea that farming practices could be banned is a pervasive fear for agriculture, and a motivator around maintaining social license. Many who work in the area of sustainability believe that applying the methodology of those three areas of People, Planet, Profit (triple bottom line) will allow business decisions and value chains to pre-empt regulation. In other words, self-policing by sectors or brands to maintain social license and, therefore, long-term profitability to replace legal frameworks. I will offer a nuanced view; by adding the dimension of time and sustainability's dimension of 'continuous improvement', social license is the enabling motivation to move policy and industry practice.

I will use the concept seen across the various livestock species Codes of Practice, as an example. Practices that were once recommended are becoming required. There is a track record that once we in livestock sectors widely accept Best Management Practices (BMPs), we expect our peers to do the same and hold the line in terms of best practices for the sake of the sector as a whole. And at some point, we cannot tolerate our peers that won't 'play nice'.

Pork Consumption and Social License

What is the relevance of these observations to livestock agriculture? It means we need to understand what the 'pulse' of our society is and how to speak to them. As a final example, discussion occurs in some circles to use the euphemism of 'harvest' for slaughter. I will respectfully suggest that term is silly and insults the intelligence of the public. It's disrespectful to the hog that is truly 'committed' in this equation in that we do not 'harvest' the hams and send the pig back to grow another, as we would a bushel of apples from a tree!

Consumers know full well that consuming meat means taking an animal's life, even if many would like a diversity of ethics applied to that animal production. Point is, that despite a diversity of views, society as a group accepts slaughter as part of an ethical social contract to produce protein, if done well. Just use the word slaughter, but with respect. Using that as a jumping-off point, I would argue that we in animal agriculture are expending a lot of communications effort and political capital sanitizing language that doesn't need to be sanitized, because we treat our consumers as unequal partners. Meanwhile, the real issues and business opportunities might be passing us by for lack of dialogue. I'm suggesting the best defence is tearing down a fence between consumers and us, not just 'telling our story'. Rather, collaborating on solutions. Consider finding out their actual concerns, so we don't spend time and money fixing what isn't broke just to be blindsided by a game-changing concern. Leading such change may be profitable.

Social License – On the Bottom Line

Keeping tabs on social license issues is good business! Rather than resenting the public's direction on social license, I would like to encourage Ontario's pork producers to embrace the idea of monitoring these trends for profitability reasons. By applying the sustainability lens, there is a way to tweak a consumer want into a future business opportunity. That's the whole point! OP's '2015 Social Responsibility Report' offers a roadmap as to where this is going. Rather than being negative and saying resistance is futile, I will flip it around to the other side of the proverbial coin; embrace the sustainability and social license challenges as identified in your report and by consumers.

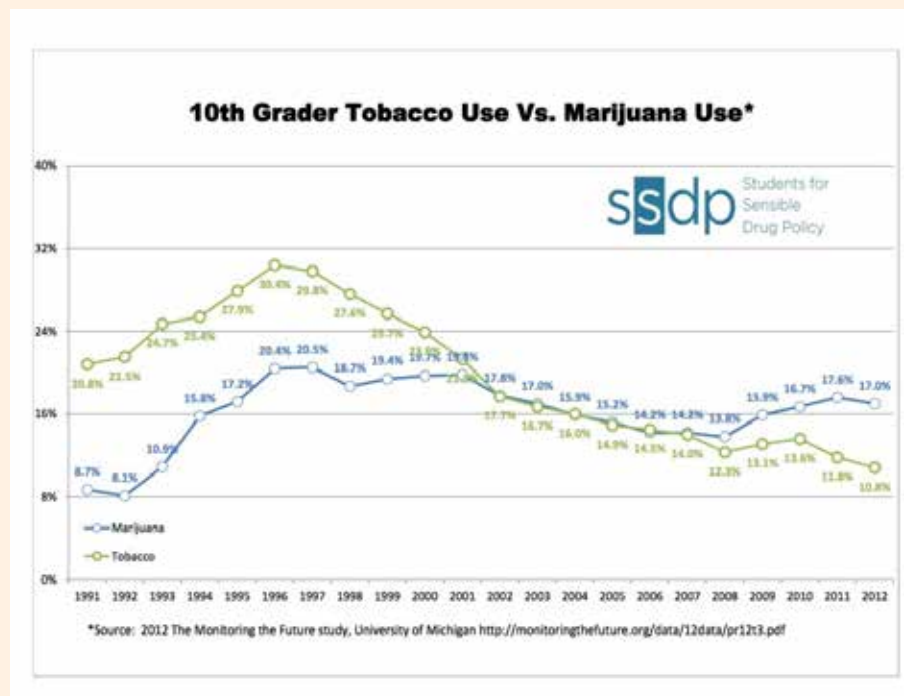


Figure 1. The tobacco and marijuana usage trends for Grade 10 students in the US over 25 years to demonstrate fluctuations in societal acceptance over time

Use this as a way to position your business for future profits!

*Christoph Wand, Livestock Sustainability Specialist @CtopbWand
519 820 3150 christoph.wand@ontario.ca*

Recap - Banff Pork Seminar 2016: Optimizing Feed and Farm Management to Market Conditions

At the 2016 Banff Pork Seminar, Dr. Mike Tokach from Kansas State University addressed a breakout session crowd on how to optimize diets and management practices on farm to match changes in economic conditions.

Swine producers are used to seeing profit volatility. Changes to grain supplies and feed prices, along with changes to pork supply have major impacts on the bottom line. Since feed accounts for 2/3 of the cost of raising pigs, changes to feed prices can have significant overall impacts. Dr. Tokach began his talk discussing the big picture decision of efficiency vs. throughput. Overall, this decision depends on the current state of the market.

When income is reduced due to low hog prices, high input costs, or a combination of both, producers need to focus on managing cash flow, liabilities and assets. Dr. Tokach suggests that cash flow can be controlled through managing costs, reducing capital spending, renegotiating rental or expense agreements, and reducing cash dividend removals from the business. In terms of liabilities, producers may seek to extend or renegotiate loan terms as required. Depending on how tight things become on farm, producers may have to liquidate a portion of their inventory/assets in order to pay down debt and remain solvent. When income is low, producers need to focus more on efficiency, and utilizing assets to their utmost ability.

On the flip side, when times are good and incomes are higher, throughput becomes the main driver, although efficiency is still important. Producers should harvest as much income as possible in order to help prepare for the next downward turn, and this may involve some cost increases or efficiency losses in order to maximize throughput.

Regardless of the market scenario, Dr. Tokach stressed that these types of decisions need to

be based on a cost-benefit analysis rather than on total expenditures.

The second part of the presentation dealt with feed and farm management decisions under good and bad market conditions. Market weights and sow inventory were two areas where Dr. Tokach spent some time before getting into feed management.

Market Weights

Although the magnitude will change depending on your processor and packing grid, producers may want to increase market weights towards the top end of their matrix when returns over feed and facility costs are high. If the marginal increase in value is greater than the extra costs incurred as the pig is reared to heavier weights, it is worth taking advantage of. Keep in mind, additional space may be required to keep pigs on feed for additional days.

On the other hand, when market prices are low and/or feed costs are high, producers may want to shift market weights closer to the lower end of their matrix. Heavier pigs have poorer feed efficiency, which increases marginal feed and facility costs, and it is no longer profitable to keep pigs on feed for extra days. Producers should take precautions to not lower weights too much though, as this may trigger severe weight discounts that exceed the cost of feed and facilities.

Sow Inventory

When times are tight and you are operating below breakeven, Dr. Tokach recommends removing lower producing sows from your herd in order to improve efficiency and to provide some additional cash flow. Eliminating the low producing sows will lower feed costs and allow the farm to focus on maximizing the efficiency of the sows remaining in the herd to their utmost ability. He cautions producers to not lower the herd inventory too much however, or the income generation capability of the farm will become limited. Keep in mind that fixed costs are still present, and must be spread over as much production as possible.

When market conditions are good, producers should maximize their sow herd inventory in order to produce as many pigs as possible and fully capture the economic situation available to your farm.

Although these concepts are relatively easy to grasp, putting them into practice is a little more difficult unless long term market trends are present.

Diet Formulation Changes

Most feed management decisions do not change with changes to market conditions. It is common practice to see dietary ingredients change as the price relationships between those ingredients shift; however, the recommended nutrient levels in the diet will not change significantly.

For many nutrients, including most amino acids (ex. Lysine, methionine, and threonine), vitamins and trace minerals, reducing levels in the diet will significantly impact feed efficiency. From the economic perspective, any savings in feed cost per ton will be lost through poorer feed efficiency, thus increasing the feed cost per pig instead of decreasing it.

Although the levels of most nutrients will remain the same during low and high market conditions, nutrients that influence feed intake and growth rate without greatly impacting caloric efficiency may be subject to change slightly as economic situations evolve. Some such examples are the amino acids tryptophan and valine, dietary energy and copper. For tryptophan, valine and energy, feeding slightly below the requirement level will lower feed intake without impacting feed efficiency (feed intake and growth rate are both lowered together). This may be appropriate when hog prices are low; however, the savings in feed cost may not compensate for the lower growth rate during high priced periods. On the other hand, increasing copper to growth promoting levels will increase feed intake and growth simultaneously, and the extra cost associated with including additional copper may be more beneficial during times where market hog prices are high.

Before making any changes to your nutrient inclusion rates, talk to your feed company about the best option for your farm during different market situations.

In summary, feed and management decisions should be made with changing market conditions in mind. When times are good and you are making money, the driver should be to maximize throughput and weights in order to

claim as much profit as possible. This means that market weights and sow inventory may increase, as well as nutrients that stimulate growth rate. When times are a little tighter, and profits not as good, efficiency becomes the driving force, where less efficient sows are removed from the herd, market weights are reduced to the lower end of your packing grid and diets formulated to reduce cost per unit of gain. Make it standard practice on your farm to continually evaluate opportunities and respond to market conditions!

Reference:

Tokach, Mike. 2016. Optimizing Feed and Farm Management to Market Conditions. Advances in Pork Production. Volume 27, page 63 (Banff Pork Seminar Proceedings).

Laura Eastwood

Swine Specialist, OMAFRA

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New Swine Event Off to a Great Start

The University of Guelph Swine Research Day on May 4th kicked off what is planned to be an annual one-day program that will highlight Ontario swine research, carrying on with the traditions of the Centralia Swine Research update and the Mike Wilson Swine Research Day – high profile guest speakers, short updates on current swine research, written proceedings, and opportunities for networking. A new graduate student oral and poster competition provided insight into the leading edge of swine-related research from the many diverse research groups at the University. To see the winners and for more commentary search #UGSwineResearch.

The feature presentations were streamed live and are available on Youtube. Go to www.centraliaswinereseach.ca for the link. Dr. Jim Squires (U. of Guelph) opened the program with a review of his career unravelling the biochemistry of boar taint in his search for an alternate means of preventing it, and described how new techniques like genomic technologies can contribute. Dr. David Fraser (U. of British Columbia) discussed “Could Animal Production Become a Profession?” with a view to establishing recognized self-regulation ahead of regulation from outside agencies. I think everyone involved in animal agriculture



should watch it, whether they agree or not. More information on the day and the program can be found at the Centralia link above.

Jaydee Smith, Swine Specialist

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New Noise Regulation for Farms July 1

An article from Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (www.wsps.ca) offers “A 4-point compliance strategy for Ontario’s new noise regulation” (direct link: <http://bit.ly/23BxVwT>).

The significant change to the regulation is that it now applies to farming, which was not previously covered by noise prevention requirements. The article states that the new regulation will protect people’s hearing by: requiring employers to reduce noise exposure through control, by ensuring employers select the right devices where other controls are not appropriate, and by specifying the instruction and training employers must provide to workers wearing a device (see the article for more details including links to the regulation). Another regulation may seem burdensome, but noise-induced hearing loss is debilitating, and should be avoidable.

Group Sow Housing Seminar in September

“Thinking Outside the Stall”

A seminar is planned for September in Stratford, organized by OMAFRA, Ontario Pork, Swine Innovation Porc and industry partners. Speakers will include producers, researchers, and others.

There will be exhibitor displays and plenty of opportunity for discussion.

The following times are tentative.

Tuesday September 6th, 4:30-9:00pm.
For producers who are already using group housing for gestating sows:

- Using the potential that ESF offers for improving nutrition
- Making the most of technology
- Panel discussion: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Wednesday September 7th, 9:00am-3:30pm followed by social time.
For producers who are planning the move to group housing:

- Renovation vs new construction
- Managing cash flow and production during renovation and construction
- Overview of the housing, feeding equipment, and management options available
- Sow management and behaviour
- Sow nutrition, feeding options and strategies
- Data collection, technology, precision management

Watch for details in the near future, and visit www.groupsowhousing.com for program details (when available) and other information on group housing and the National Sow Housing Conversion Project.



43RD ANNUAL ONTARIO PORK CONGRESS

CELEBRATE PORK



Ontario Pork Congress

**JUNE 22 & 23, 2016
STRATFORD, ONTARIO**

ADMISSION: \$15

Includes complimentary pork lunch

2016 SHOW EVENTS

Day 1 - Wednesday, June 22

Pork Industry Tradeshow: 10:00am-5:00pm
Complimentary BBQ Lunch: 11:00am-3:00pm
Past President's Luncheon: 11:30am-1:00pm
Taste the Best: 2:00pm-4:00pm
OPIC Hog Jog with Meal After Race: 6:30pm-8:00pm
Bacon Maker Classic-Education Centre: 1:00pm-4:00pm

Day 2 - Thursday, June 23

LIVE HOGS TODAY ONLY
Pork Industry Tradeshow: 10:00am-4:00pm
Bacon Maker Classic-Live Hog Show: 11:00am-4:00pm
Complimentary BBQ Lunch: 11:00am-3:00pm
Rib Eating Competition & Pig Art Auction: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Elective Husbandry Procedures:

(Presented by Ontario Pork)

Upcoming Changes to
Castration and Tail Docking

11:00am-Noon
Wednesday & Thursday
Meeting Area, Arena



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Income (\$/pig)	Farrow to Wean	Nursery	Grow-Finish	Farrow to Finish
Market Pig @ 101% of Base Price \$155.57/ckg, 110 index, 102.19 kg plus \$2 premium				\$178.62

Variable Costs (\$/pig)

Breeding Herd Feed @ 1,100 kg/sow	\$13.74			\$15.07
Nursery Feed @ 33.5 kg/pig		\$15.54		\$16.38
Grower-Finisher Feed @ 277 kg/pig			\$80.47	\$80.47
Net Replacement Cost for Gilts	\$1.79			\$1.96
Health (Vet & Supplies)	\$2.16	\$2.10	\$0.45	\$5.03
Breeding (A.I. & Supplies)	\$1.48			\$1.63
Marketing, Grading, Trucking	\$0.70	\$1.00	\$4.66	\$6.48
Utilities (Hydro, Gas)	\$1.96	\$1.15	\$1.77	\$5.14
Miscellaneous	\$1.00	\$0.10	\$0.20	\$1.40
Repairs & Maintenance	\$1.18	\$0.60	\$2.13	\$4.05
Labour	\$6.27	\$1.85	\$4.00	\$12.83
Operating Loan Interest	\$0.23	\$0.28	\$0.92	\$1.48
Total Variable Costs	\$30.52	\$22.62	\$94.60	\$151.91

Fixed Costs (\$/pig)

Depreciation	\$3.92	\$2.00	\$7.09	\$13.50
Interest	\$2.20	\$1.12	\$3.97	\$7.56
Taxes & Insurance	\$0.78	\$0.40	\$1.42	\$2.70
Total Fixed Costs	\$6.90	\$3.52	\$12.48	\$23.76

Summary of Costs (\$/pig)

Feed	\$13.74	\$15.54	\$80.47	\$111.91
Other Variable	\$16.78	\$7.08	\$14.13	\$40.00
Fixed	\$6.90	\$3.52	\$12.48	\$23.76
Total Variable & Fixed Costs	\$37.42	\$26.14	\$107.08	\$175.67

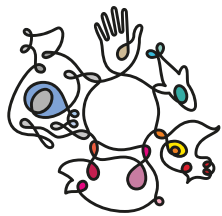
Summary	Farrow to Wean	Feeder Pig	Wean to Finish	Farrow to Finish
Total Cost (\$/pig)	\$37.42	\$65.09	\$134.63	\$175.67
Net Return Farrow to Finish (\$/pig)				\$2.95
Farrow to Finish Breakeven Base Price (\$/ckg, 100 index) includes 101% Base Price & \$2 Premium				\$152.97
Farrow to Finish Breakeven Base Price (\$/ckg, 100 index) excludes 101% Base Price & \$2 Premium				\$156.28

This is the estimated accumulated cost for a market hog sold during the month of April 2016. The farrow to wean phase estimates the weaned pig cost for November 2015 and the nursery phase estimates the feeder pig cost for January 2016. For further details, refer to the "2016 Budget Notes" posted at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/swine/finmark.html>.



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WELCOME TO ONTARIO PORK CONGRESS 2016



I hope the warmer weather is a reminder that the Ontario Pork Congress (OPC) is just around the corner and we're excited for you to join us in Stratford for the 43rd annual event! I'm very proud of our committees and volunteers who have been working hard to prepare all the great aspects of OPC that truly make it a celebration of pork for our Industry.

The 2016 Ontario Pork Congress will be bursting at the seams with a record number of exhibitors filling both the AgriPlex and Rotary Complex exhibit halls to network and showcase innovation. The Hog Highway through the arena will again link the two exhibit halls as well as hosting some of our feature events.

Admission to OPC this year will again include an amazing free BBQ pork lunch prepared by Perth County Pork Producers and served in the courtyard next to the hospitality tent. Don't miss "Taste the Best" held in the arena during the afternoon of the first day – this event features "Local Pork Prepared by Local Chefs" and our feature cut of pork is bacon/pork belly paired with craft beer sampling by Stratford's own Black Swan Brewing... Bacon, Beer... Admit it, for a second there, all your problems went away.

If you're feeling guilty from all the eating and looking to support one of our industry's great charitable causes, make sure you're registered for the Hog Jog taking place during the evening of the first day of OPC. This year's Hog Jog consists of a 3.5 km

walk/jog or 10 km run raising funds for Stratford/Perth Shelter-link which exists to provide youth ages 16-24, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, with shelter, advocacy services and basic needs.

The Bacon Maker Classic (BMC) live hog show is another feature event held on the second day of OPC. The live show is a great way to support and connect with many of the future Ontario pork producers. Make sure to visit the BMC Education Centre setup in the area – this year the Education Centre will showcase carcasses as part of the BMC carcass grading competition.

And just when you think OPC can't get any better... we've added a few new features to this year's show including a "Piglet Pen" kids play area and a charitable Rib Eating Contest with some industry and local celebrity contestants.

Mark your calendars for June 22 & 23, 2016 and make the trip to Stratford for the Ontario Pork Congress – come join us to "Celebrate Pork!"

Blair Cressman
2016 OPC President





presents

Taste the BEST

Local Pork prepared by Local Chefs

Wednesday, June 22nd, 2016

2:00-4:00 pm

RBC Arena, Stratford, ON

Fourth Annual Event



EVERYTHING IS BETTER WITH BACON!

Make sure to join us in Arena from 2-4 pm on Wednesday at the Ontario Pork Congress to sample some amazing BACON creations prepared by local Stratford chefs!



FEATURING Black Swan, Stratford's local craft brewery to compliment your delicious pork samples

This event is being held as part of the Ontario Pork Congress



Ontario Pork Congress

For more information contact: Blair Cressman C: 226-749-4262 cressmanblair@gmail.com



Can't wait to see you!

New This Year...

**Children's Play Area "Piglet Pen"
Rib Eating Competition & Pig Art Auction
Bacon Maker Classic Carcass Competition**

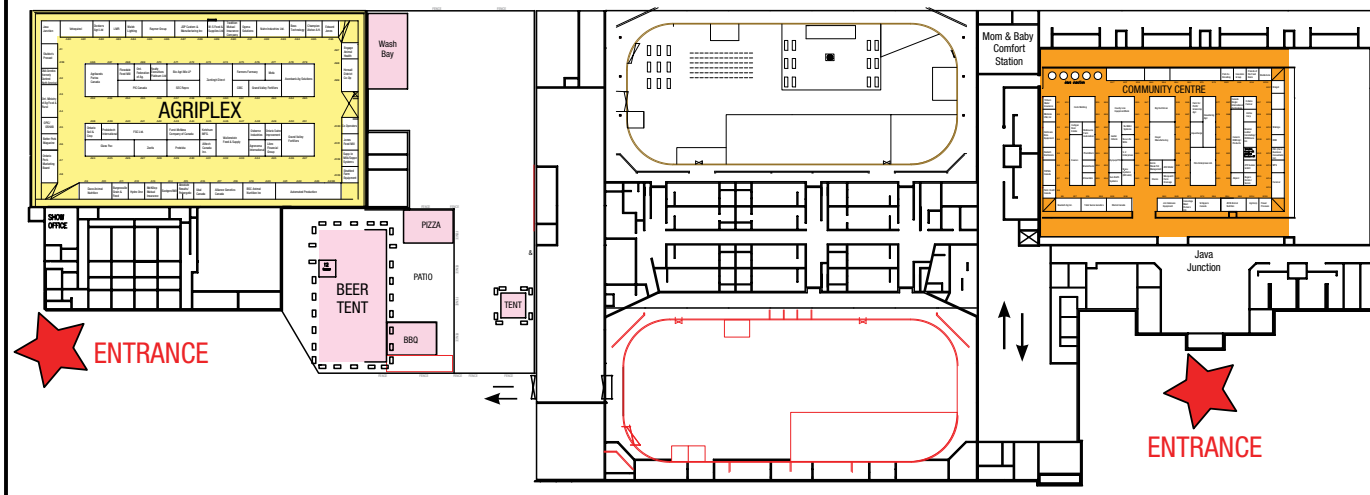


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Listings accurate at time of printing



Java Junction	Vetoquinol	Donkers Agri Ltd	LMR	Walsh Lighting	Raymer Group	JDP Custom & Manufacturing Inc	W-S Feed & Supplies Ltd	Tradition Mutual Insurance Company	Ogena Solutions	Nuhn Industries Ltd.	Boss Technology	Champion Alstoe A.H.	Edward Jones				
A80	A81	A82	A83	A84	A85	A86	A87	A88	A89	A90	A91	A92	A93	A94	A95	A96	
Stubbe's Precast	A1															A97	Engage Animal Health
DNA Genetics (formerly Danbred North America)	A1B															A98	Hensall District Co-Op
Ont. Ministry of Ag Food & Rural	A2	Agribands Purina Canada	Floradale Feed Mill	Ont. Federation of Ag.	Realty Executives Platinum Ltd	Bio Agri Mix LP	Zantingh Direct	Farmers Farmacy	Mofa	Avonbank Ag Solutions						A99	
OPIC/ OSHAB	A3		PIC Canada			SEC Repro		CIBC	Grand Valley Fortifiers								
Better Pork Magazine	A4																
Ontario Pork Marketing Board	A5	Ontario Soil & Crop	Probiotech International	FGC Ltd.		Furst-McNess Company of Canada	Ketchum MFG.	Wallenstein Feed & Supply	Osborne Industries	Ontario Swine Improvement	Grand Valley Fortifiers					A100	Co-Operators
	A6	Glass Pac			Zoetis	Protakta	Alltech Canada Inc.		Agronoma International	Libro Financial Group						A101	Jones Feed Mill
	A7															A102	Supp-le Milk/Soppe Systems
	A8															A103	Stratford Farm Equipment
	A9	Daco Animal Nutrition	Burgessville Grain & Feed	Hydro One	McKillop Mutual Insurance	Eastgen/IMV	Absolute Results/Pehergetic	Ukal Canada	Alliance Genetics Canada	BSC Animal Nutrition Inc	Automated Production						
	A10																
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OPC BOOTH – A75-A76

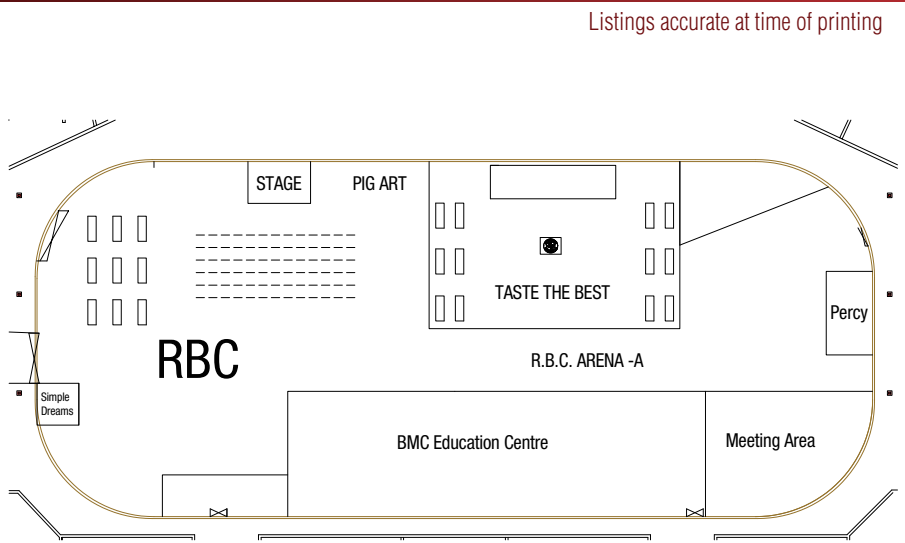
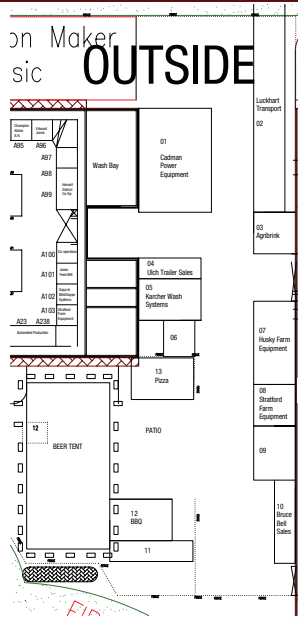


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Java Junction					Kenpal Farm Products			Genex/Hypor Inc		Shur Gain, Nutreco			Pork Ex Breeding	Investors Group	Friends of the Food Bank	ShelterLink									
					B27	B37	B38	B46	B54	B64	B65	B75	B76	B85	B86	B96	B106								
COMMUNITY CENTRE																									
Trillium Mutual Insurance	B1	B10	Caris Welding		B19	B28	County Line Equipment/Bulk		B39	B47	Big Dutchman		B55	B66	Farm for Profit/ Greencrop Agri	Dewetering Agri		B77	B87	Canada Dingki International Technology	Ontario Farmer	B97	B108		
Minitube USA, Inc	B2	B11			B20	B29			B40	B48			B56	B67					B78	B88	Anitox Corp		B98	B109	
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Rostech Electronics	B4	B13			B22	B31	Gestal Ontario	New-Life Mills	B42	B50			B58	B69					B80	B90	Canam BSM Agri Products			B100	B111
TOPIGS Canada	B5	B14	PharmBarn		B23	B32	S-V Enterprises		B43	B51			B59	B70					B81	B91	Vereijken Hoojer BV, Leenders Roosters BV		B101	B112	
Farm Credit Canada	B6	B15	Exacon		B24	B33	Ayrquip/TSI		B44	B52	Aim to Please Pet Management	ARC Water	B60	B71	Pols Enterprises Ltd.				B82	B92	ATX Suisse GmbH		B102	B113	
	B7	B16	Masterfeeds		B25	B34	Sun-North Systems		B45	B53	Marquardt Farm Drainage		B61	B72					B83	B93	Allporc		B103	B114	
	B8	B17	Arbourdale		B26	B35	Njoex Systems (BIOvator)		B46	B54			B62	B73					B84	B94	B95	B104	B105	B115	
	Newtech Ag Inc.		Total Swine Genetics			Merial Canada			Jim Harkness Equipment		Conestoga Meat Packers Ltd.		Schippers Canada		ADM Animal Nutrition		Agricorp		Power Pressure						



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Alltech Canada Inc.	A31
Aquacharge Inc.	B68 - B69
Anitox Corp.	B98
Arbourdale	B25
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Pork Congress

Exhibitor interest in this year's annual Ontario Pork Congress in Stratford is up sharply over the previous year, it's organizers say.

"We've had to expand our exhibition space," says Pork Congress president Blair Cressman. "We'll have over 150 exhibitors," about 25 per cent more than last year.

"We're getting really good response from companies and industry," everything from feeding systems to health-care management systems, he says. "At its core this is a trade show, and these companies will be able to showcase their innovations."

The 43rd annual Pork Congress will take over the Stratford Rotary Complex and Agriplex June 22 and 23, with a "hog highway" linking to two exhibit halls. It's expected that between 2,000 and 3,000 people will attend.

Cressman, who runs a finishing operation at his farm near Kitchener, says the pork industry is coming off three strong years and that there's a strong likelihood the industry will expand in the very near future, providing the incentive to these exhibitors to get their products and services in front of the farmers. Right now, he says,

there are about three million sows in the province and about seven million piglets.

As well, "in recent years the industry has had a heightened awareness of bio-security," says Cressman, anticipating an increasing number of products and services that will address bio-security concerns.

Admission to the Ontario Pork Congress will include a pork barbecue lunch offered by the Perth County Pork Producers and served in the courtyard next to the hospitality tent. Also this year, as part of a Pork Congress tradition, local restaurants will be invited to the show to put some creative touches into the preparation of a pre-selected cut of pork. This year they'll be working with bacon and pork belly. The local Black Swan Brewery will provide the beverage to wash it down.

"We want to make sure people get the chance to eat pork," says Cressman.

And for those wanting even more, there will be a rib-eating competition, which will feature some industry representatives and some local Stratford celebrities.

"If you're feeling guilty from all the eating and looking to support one of our industry's great charitable causes, make sure you're registered for the Hog Jog

taking place during the evening of the first day of OPC," says Cressman. This year's Hog Jog consists of a 3.5-kilometre walk or jog or a 10-kilometre run to raise funds for Stratford/Perth Shelterlink, an organization that provides help to youth aged 16-24, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, with shelter, advocacy services and basic needs.

The Bacon Maker Classic live hog show will be held on the second day. Cressman says the live show is a great way to support and connect with many of the future pork producers. He's encouraging show-goers to visit the BMC Education Centre that will showcase carcasses as part of the BMC carcass grading competition.

In the arena on both days, Ontario Pork will present a discussion about elective husbandry procedures, and the upcoming changes to castration and tail docking.

As well, organizers are planning to make this year's show a little more child-friendly, with a "piglet pen" play area. "We've always seen the kids standing around and wanting to move along while their parents are talking to the exhibitors," says Cressman. He's hoping this may be the solution. **David Pink**

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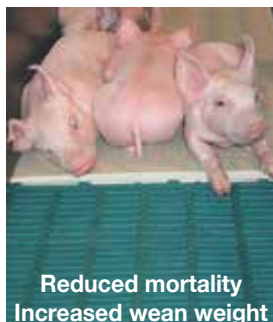
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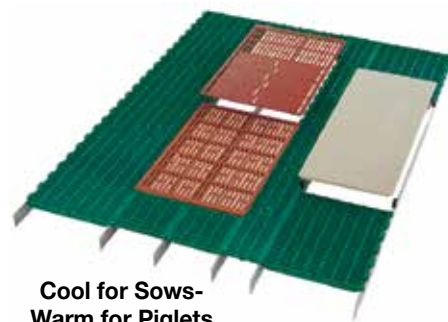
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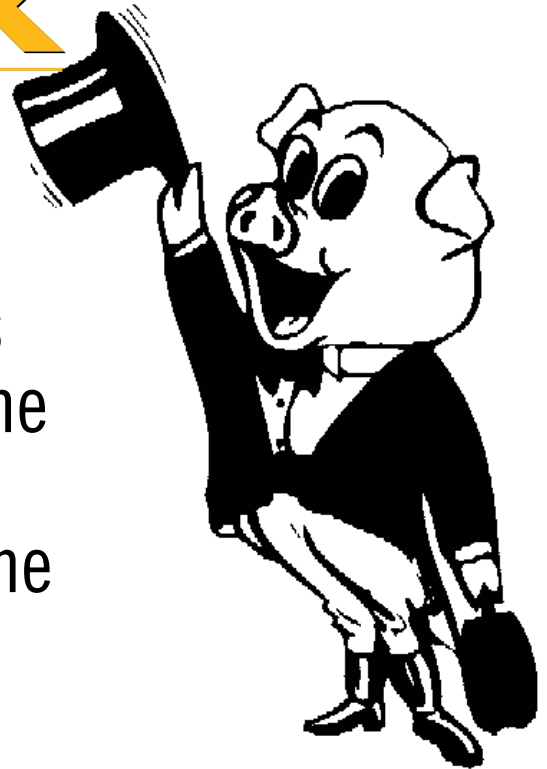
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Reproductive failure caused by bacteria

In the first of two articles, the author reviews the major bacterial causes of reproductive failure in swine. In a subsequent article, he will discuss non-infectious causes of abortions and other forms of reproductive failure

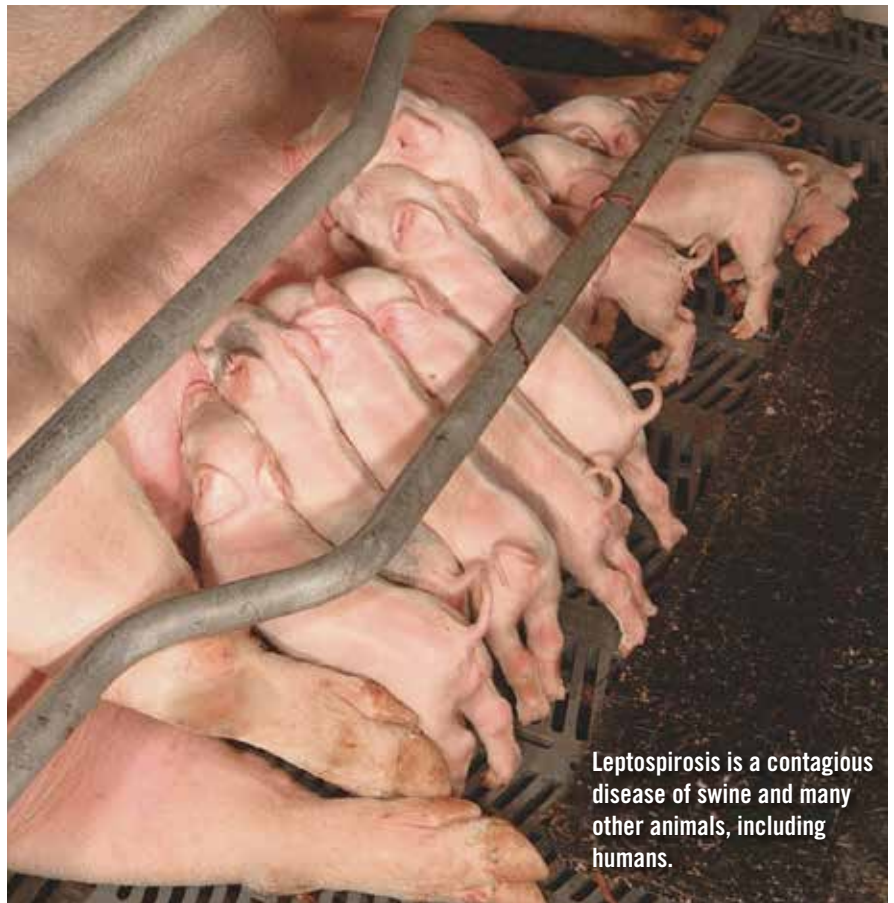
by ERNEST SANFORD

In this article, I will address some of the major bacterial causes of reproductive failure in swine. Many of these bacteria are also zoonotic in nature, and producers always need to be aware that they and their families could contract the disease if their animals are infected.

Leptospirosis (*Leptospira* spp.)

Leptospirosis is a contagious disease of swine and many other animals, including humans. It is caused by infection with any of the large group of *Leptospira* spp. bacteria. Infection may result in fever, jaundice and death in piglets, and stillbirths and abortion in sows. Of the many serotypes of *Leptospira* spp. circulating worldwide, *L. pomona*, *L. canicola*, *L. icterohaemorrhagiae* and members of the *L. australis* serogroup are the ones that contribute to reproductive failure. We have to be constantly vigilant.

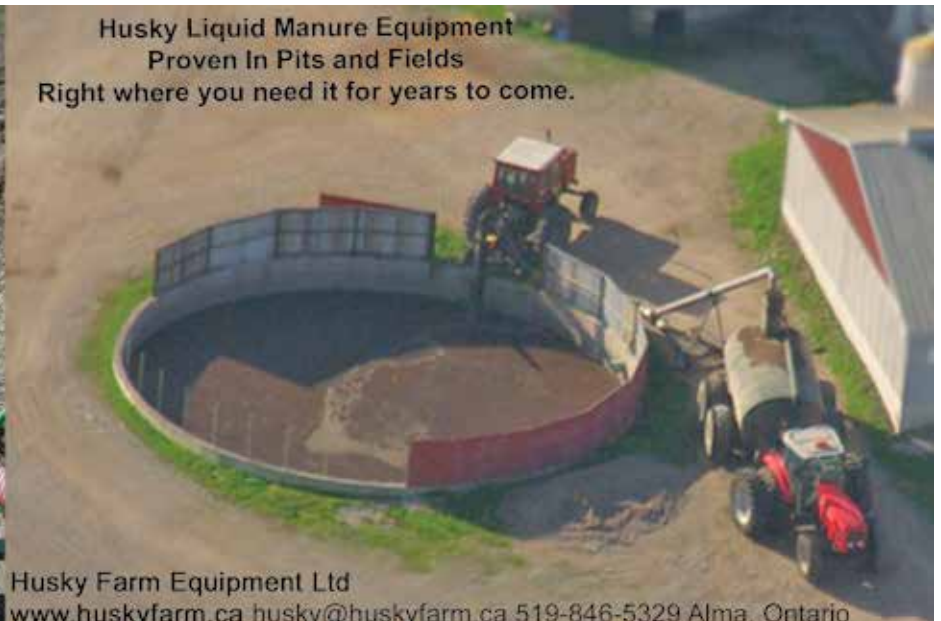
Infection is more common in pigs kept outdoors when they share water access with rodents, beavers and wildlife. The incidence of *Leptospira* spp. abortion has diminished considerably;



Leptospirosis is a contagious disease of swine and many other animals, including humans.



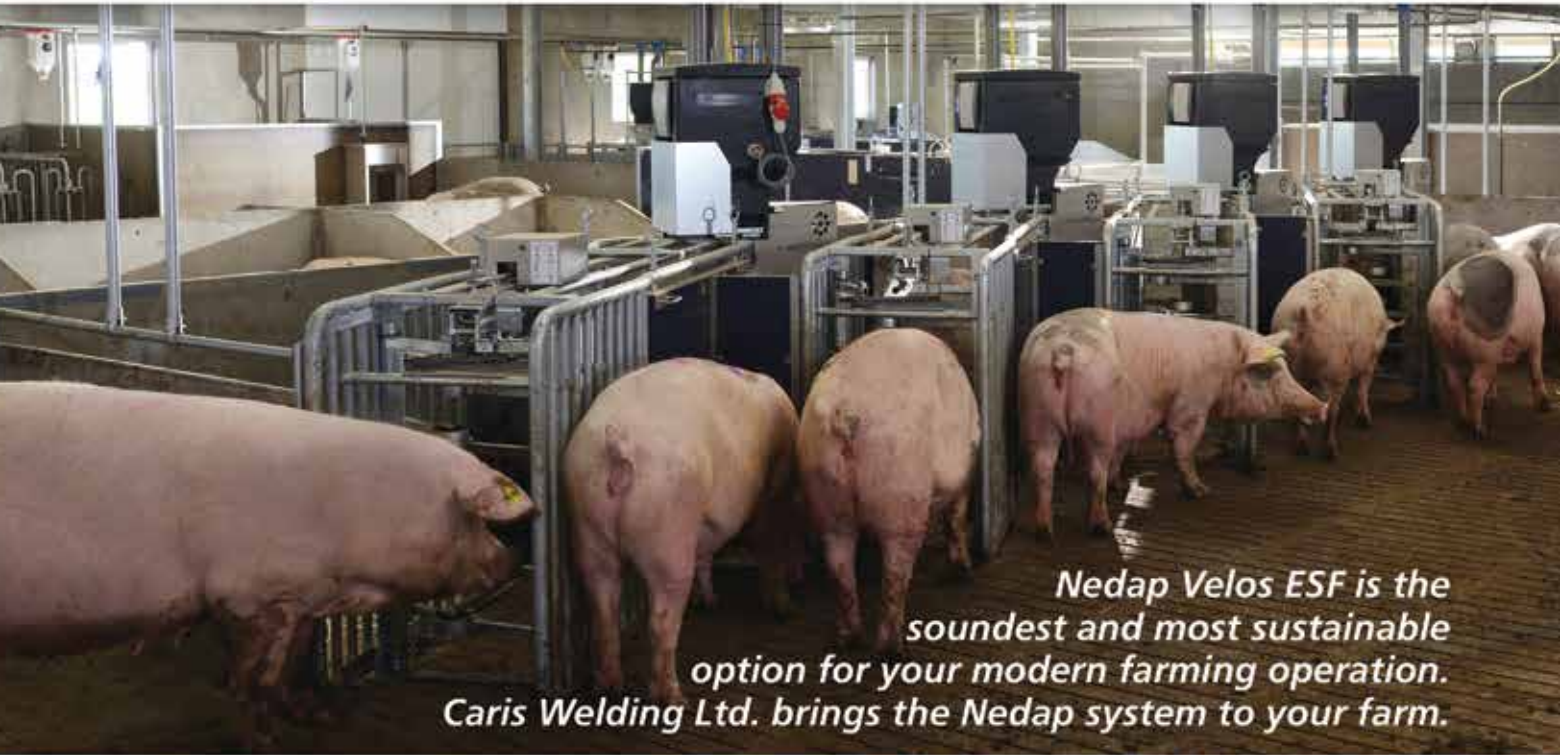
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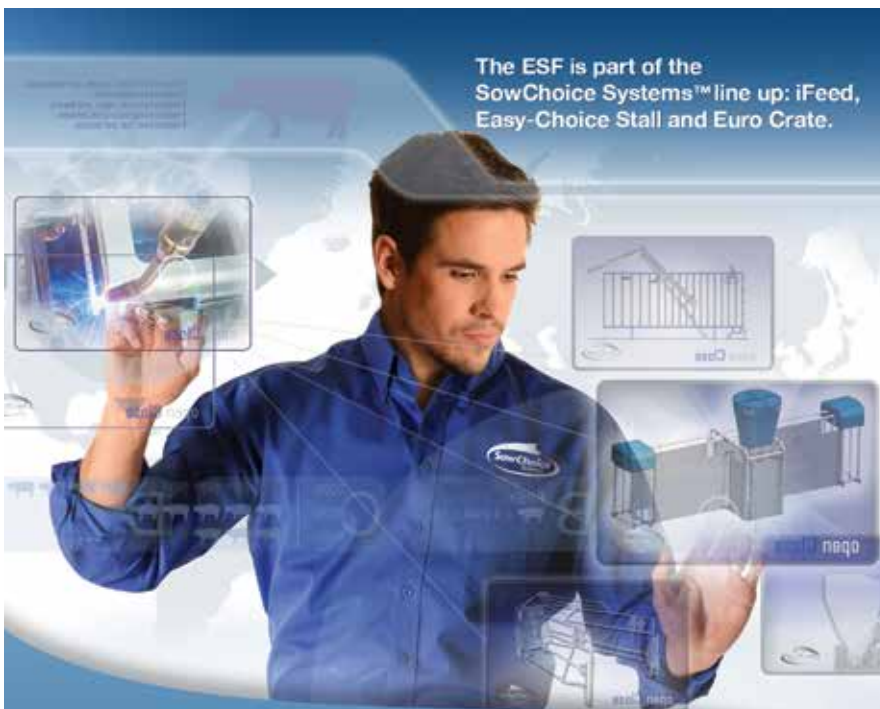


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Acute Leptospirosis infection in young piglets may result in fever, loss of appetite, jaundice, convulsions and failure to grow and gain weight.



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Pathogenesis. Leptospira invade mucous membranes (eyes, mouth, nose, vagina), wounds and cuts and also enter via transplacental transmission or sexual contact. Once they have entered the host, the organisms then multiply to produce a septicemia which may generate clinical signs. The kidney, liver and other internal organs may be damaged. Leptospiral organisms are shed intermittently in the urine for months after clinical signs cease. Organisms localize in the pregnant uterus, causing fetal invasion and abortion 10 days to four weeks after infection.

Clinical signs. Acute infection in young piglets may result in fever, loss of appetite, jaundice, convulsions and failure to grow and gain weight. Chronic infection in sows presents as various forms of reproductive failure, including poor conception rates, late-term abortions, stillborns, dead or weakborn pigs and neonatal mortality accompanied by fever, loss of milk and jaundice. Mummified fetuses also occur commonly among litters of sows with leptospirosis.

Diagnosis. Abortions in the last trimester of pregnancy, weakborn piglets and fever with jaundice and mortality in older piglets and weaners suggest leptospirosis. Confirm the diagnosis by demonstrating rising antibody titres to the incriminating strain of *Leptospira* spp.

Treatment and control. Many antibiotics are effective against leptospire, but control measures consisting of vaccination of breeding sows with killed vaccines containing the appropriate serotype(s) are the preferable methods to prevent reproductive failure from leptospirosis.

Listeriosis (*Listeria monocytogenes*)

Listeriosis is a disease caused by the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. It lives in the tonsils of pigs and other animals and is shed in their feces, where it contaminates soil and crops. Listeriosis is uncommon as a primary disease in pigs, but it may cause fever, septicemia, central nervous system signs and abortion. A major concern with *L. monocy-*



Listeriosis is a disease caused by the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. It lives in the tonsils of pigs and other animals and is shed in their feces, where it contaminates soil and crops.

togenes infection, however, is its role as a food-borne pathogen when present as a contaminant of deli-type foods such as sausages, ham and cheeses. It can cause infection in humans who eat these contaminated foods; recall the listeriosis outbreak linked to deli meats processed at a Maple Leaf plant in Toronto in 2008.

Pathogenesis. After infecting a host, *Listeria monocytogenes* resides as an intracellular parasite, which protects it from most of the immune mechanisms used by a host to ward off invading bacteria. The normal habitat of *L. monocytogenes* is soil and decaying vegetable matter. Infection in pigs occurs via ingestion; then the bacterium penetrates the intestinal wall and sets up a systemic infection by spreading to organs and tissues throughout the body.

Treatment and control. Recovery from infection with *L. monocytogenes* usually occurs spontaneously. Treatment with antibiotics, preferably penicillin, is recommended when fever and illness persist. Preventing the bacterium from contaminating refrigerated deli-type foods effectively controls food-borne infection.

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Brucellosis (*Brucella suis*)

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease caused by species of the bacterium *Brucella spp.* It was first isolated by Sir David Bruce who found it in British soldiers who had died with undulant fever (also called Malta fever, Mediterranean fever and Bang's disease) in Malta in 1885. The organism that was isolated, *Brucella melitensis*, was endemic in sheep and goats in Malta and the source of zoonotic transmission of the disease to humans. Although Sir David Bruce isolated *B. melitensis*, the cause of Malta fever, there are several other species of *Brucella* that cause disease in humans and animals, including *B. abortus* (cattle), *B. suis* (pigs), *B. ovis* (sheep) and *B. canis* (dogs). In cattle, pigs and other animals, the bacterium causes abortion and serves as a source for zoonotic transmission of these bacteria to humans.

Clinical signs. Clinical signs are not seen with *Brucella suis* infection in pigs, but infection results in stillbirths and abortions in sows and infertility in both sexes. In boars, infection in the testicles and accessory sex glands is common. Infection is introduced into a herd by live infected pigs, by contaminated meat products or by semen or ova during artificial insemination (AI). Infected

boars are the usual source of infection within a herd and transmit the disease by natural service or via AI.

Early abortion (returns to estrus five-to-eight weeks after service) results from infection at service, but infection later in pregnancy produces litters with mummified, stillborn or weak piglets. Copious bloody vulval discharges occur. Testicular swelling—inflammation of the testicles (orchitis)—may occur in boars within seven weeks of infection. Bones and joints may be involved in both sexes.

Pathogenesis. *Brucella spp.* invade through mucosal surfaces. Successful invasion usually occurs through the digestive (intestinal) or respiratory tract. After successful invasion, *Brucella spp.* becomes an intracellular organism, surviving within host cells and evading protective mechanisms designed to destroy the bacterium. *Brucella spp.* invade silently and do not elicit a marked host inflammatory response, but cause placentitis, fetal death and abortion.

Diagnosis. Isolation of the organism and serological (blood) tests are used for the diagnosis of brucellosis. Vaccination and treatment are not 100 per cent effective, so slaughter followed by restocking with uninfected stock is the

most successful method of control.

The Canadian swine herd was declared brucellosis-free more than 30 years ago and has remained so since 1985. Brucellosis, however, is common in black bears in Canada and remains a source of infection of hunters and others who come into contact with the bears.

Erysipelas (*Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*)

Erysipelas occurs worldwide wherever pigs are reared. Incidence of the disease has diminished significantly in Canada since we moved to indoor, confinement-rearing systems.

The organism *E. rhusiopathiae* is present in soil contaminated with feces and urine from infected or carrier animals and is present on the tonsils of clinically normal pigs. The organism invades a susceptible pig via the tonsils, gastrointestinal tract or minute skin cuts. Once inside, it multiplies, creating a septicemia within one-to-seven days.

Septicemia usually results in fever and subsequent localization of the bacterium in the skin, joints, muscle or valves of the heart. Localization in joints and heart valves leads to arthritis and valvular endocarditis, respectively. Abortion in sows is believed to be a result of fever.



Erysipelas occurs worldwide wherever pigs are reared. Incidence of the disease has diminished significantly in Canada since we moved to indoor, confinement-rearing systems.

Clinical signs. Hyperacute, acute and chronic forms of erysipelas occur in pigs. Sudden death may occur in the hyperacute form, and grower pigs may be dull, exhibit high temperatures between 41.1 C (106 F) and 42.2 C (109 F) and have a diffuse reddened flush of the skin.

In the acute form, younger pigs such as gilts, grower pigs and young boars go off feed, have a high fever between 41.1 C (106 F) and 42.2 C (109 F) and flushing or blotching of the skin and ears. Diamond skin lesions appear within 24-to-48 hours of the onset of clinical signs. Abortion may occur at this stage in pregnant sows. Affected pigs may recover completely or progress to the chronic form when the diamond skin lesions may become necrotic, turn black and slough. Affected joints become swollen, hot and painful and stiffen in two-to-three weeks.

Diagnosis. A high fever of 41.1 C (106 F) in off-feed, grow-finish or adult pigs which have no respiratory signs is suggestive of erysipelas. The development of characteristic diamond skin lesions is confirmatory for erysipelas. The

culture of *E. rhusiopathiae* from internal organs at post-mortem is needed if the characteristic diamond skin lesions are absent.

Treatment and control. Penicillin remains the drug of choice for the treatment of erysipelas. Response to treatment is rapid. Breeding stock should be vaccinated to protect against erysipelas. In areas where erysipelas is a recurrent problem, growing pigs may also need to be vaccinated.

Summary

The above identifies some of the major bacterial causes of reproductive failure in swine. Many of these bacteria are also zoonotic in nature and producers need always to be aware of the possibility of them and their families contracting the disease if their animals are infected.

BP

S. Ernest Sanford, DVM, Dip Path, Diplomate ACVP, is a swine veterinary consultant in London, Ont.



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Updates coming to Pig Code

New requirements coming under the National Farm Animal Care Council's document that outlines industry standards for the care and handling of pigs

by DIEGO FLAMMINI

As of July 1, 2016, pork producers across Canada will need to adapt their elective husbandry procedures to remain in compliance with updates coming to the National Farm Animal Care Council's (NFAACC) Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs.

The updates are specific to Section 4.5 of the Pig Code, Elective Husbandry Procedures.

The Code observes that elective husbandry practices "such as castration, tail-docking and tusk trimming can be painful for pigs. Minimizing stress,

discomfort, and pain requires attention to protocols and equipment that enable stockpersons to perform such procedures with skill and care for the pigs' welfare."

Castration

With respect to castration, the previous requirements called for castrations performed after 10 days of age to be done with anesthetic (causing physical insensibility) and analgesic (pain reliever) to help control pain.

Under the July 1 updates, "castration performed at any age must be done

with analgesics to help control post-procedure pain," the Code says.

Tail-Docking and Tail-Biting

When it comes to tail docking and tail biting, the previous requirements say tail-docking of pigs more than seven days of age must be done with pain control.

After the scheduled updates come into effect on July 1, tail docking performed at any age must be done with analgesics to help control post-procedure pain.

The recommended practices to control





tail-biting and tail-docking as per the NFACC are:

- “In order to prevent or control instances of tail-biting, investigate all aspects of the environment, feeding, and management practices to identify contributing factors where tail-biting is a problem, so that remedial action can be taken,
- “Provide rooting substrate twice daily to weaned pigs to prevent tail-biting
- “Perform tail-docking, when deemed necessary, on piglets as early as possible, preferably between 24 to 72 hours of age, to a length that as a minimum, covers the anus,
- “Use analgesics to control pain when docking tails on piglets,
- “Do not leave tails intact as a means of identifying pigs.”

Ontario Pork is reminding producers that these new requirements could impact barn management and the time it takes for administering analgesics and that producers may also incur costs for pain relievers.

Other changes to the Pig Code are on their way in the future.

As of July 1, 2024, for example, mated gilts and sows must be housed in groups, individual pens, or in stalls if they are provided with the opportunity to turn around or exercise periodically; boars must be housed individually or in stalls if they are able to exercise periodically.

The Code has earmarked July 1, 2019 as the deadline for stakeholders to clarify suitable options. **BP**

Diego Flammini is assistant editor, North American content at Farms.com.

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Antibiotic-free pork from Denmark well received in USA

Rapid success in export markets has crowned a scheme to get commercial hog farmers involved in pork produced with no antibiotics from birth to slaughter

by NORMAN DUNN



About 18 months ago, Danish Crown, Denmark's leading slaughter co-operative, contacted five of its 8,000 farmer members and asked them to produce some hogs without antibiotics. At the time, this appeared a tall order for the conventional farmers. But the Danish Pig Research Centre (VSP) helped with backup advice, and the slaughterhouse undertook to ensure a bonus for the pioneering producers by seeking out customers

willing to pay extra for the special pork.

By early 2015, the first signs of success were there. The labelled meat went straight into the export market. Soon, 200 antibiotic-free hogs were being slaughtered every week, many of the carcasses and joints heading straight for the U.S. market. The latest news in spring 2016 is that the weekly slaughter total is to be increased tenfold to 2,000 per week.

Right from the start, the planners set

out to avoid any accusations that hogs might suffer from the withholding of any antibiotic treatments. All non-antibiotic hogs are marked by an extra green earmark. If medicine has to be given to these hogs, the green earmark is immediately removed and the animal is treated and then marketed with conventionally raised hogs.

Jesper Friis, Danish Crown's CEO, explains that the co-operative set out to involve both weaner producers and hog

feeding units in integrated antibiotic-free production. Even with the planned 2,000 hogs per week output, this represents only a tiny proportion of Danish Crown's 22 million hogs per year. The co-operative has isolated the antibiotic-free production so far; current producers are situated on the island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea.

Weaners thrive on liquid feed plus straw pellets

Liquid feeding systems are firm favourites on German swine farms. In many units, even suckling sows get all rations via pump and pipeline. The strategy definitely saves labour. But wouldn't the animals perform better with some real fibre in their diets?

Research aimed at improving pork-production efficiency regularly examines the influence of added fibre on performance. Here in Europe, we've seen alfalfa hay, grass pellets and corn silage tried out as supplement to liquid diets for swine. Nowadays, straw is common in hog pens as "play material" to decrease aggression, but it is not seen as part of the diet.

When alfalfa hay and the like have been used, any performance gains have been minimal, admit researchers in Bavaria's State Institute for Agriculture in Schwartzenau. But they decided to take another shot at assessing possible advantages by offering straw pellets to otherwise liquid-fed weaners from 10 to over 28 kilograms liveweight in a commercial feeding regime.

The surprise result was that weaners which were offered straw pellets continually increased their consumption of the very low-energy (1.92 MJ and 37 grams crude protein per kilogram) straw and their intake of liquid feed was more than the intake of control groups without straw supplement. While no significant financial gain from offering supplementary straw pellets could be demonstrated by the Bavarian researchers, the action proved to have very low extra labour input and the pellets created little dust or dirt nuisance, encouraged extra feed intake and possibly diverted weaners from fighting amongst

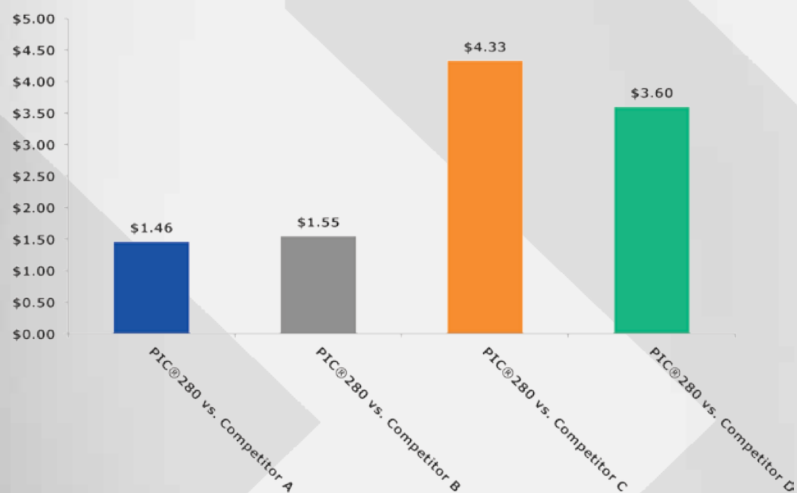


Researchers in Bavaria's State Institute for Agriculture in Schwartzenau are assessing possible advantages of added fibre on performance by offering straw pellets to otherwise liquid-fed weaners from 10 to over 28 kilograms liveweight in a commercial feeding regime.



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themselves.

The actual trial featured 192 weaners in slatted pens; the maximum was 12 head per pen. They were fed with liquid diet in two three-week phases from 10 to just below 15 kilograms and then 15 to over 28 kilograms. About half the animals were offered straw pellets ad lib, available from separate troughs beside the sensor-controlled liquid feed troughs.

In the first week, average straw pellet intake was below 10 grams per head each day. By week six, this intake had increased to 55 grams per day. Also, more liquid feed was consumed by the

straw pellet weaners: an average of 799 grams a day against 772 grams for non-straw groups. Despite consuming more, the straw pellet groups gained marginally less. Average daily liveweight gain

over the six-week trial period worked out at 450 grams against 462 grams for the control weaners. The difference may not have been significant, but in cash terms it meant cost per kilogram of

Straw pellet appetizer for piglets

192 weaners	Liquid feed only	Plus ad lib straw pellets
Av. liveweight start (kg)	8.57	8.74
Six weeks on (kg)	27.5	27.2
Daily liveweight gain (g)	462	450
Daily feed intake (g)	772	799
Feed conversion ratio (1:)	1.68	1.78

Source: Bavarian State Institute for Agriculture, Schwarzenau



Offering straw pellets to liquid-fed piglets from week one post-weaning kept the young animals occupied for longer each day. The pellets did not suppress the amount of high-value liquid feed consumed by the piglets. In fact, the Bavarian researchers found liquid feed consumption was actually higher with weaners fed straw pellets than the consumption found in control groups.



Will the sight of piglets piled around a nursing sow be a thing of the past in Europe? Dutch Minister for Agriculture Martijn van Dam wants suckling litter size to be controlled by law.

Piglet survival: comparing Europe's biggest litters with Irish figures

	Denmark	Netherlands	France	Ireland
Piglets born alive/litter	14.80	13.60	13.20	12.33
Piglets weaned/litter	12.74	11.86	11.40	11.01
Litter mortality %	13.9	12.8	13.6	10.7


Sources: Irish Department of Agriculture and Danish Pig Research Centre (2012 figures)

growth worked out at the equivalent of C\$0.71 against \$0.68.


Dutch welfare group calls for limits on litter size

A national campaign to reduce litter mortality, launched by Dutch swine producers over five years ago, not only completely failed to improve piglet survival, but also rang alarm bells amongst the country's welfare groups. Now the Netherlands' Action Group Swine in Danger (VIN) wants litter size to be limited at birth. Extra piglets should be artificially reared or fostered immediately, it demands.

Twenty years ago, the average Dutch sow had litters that ranged from 10 to 11 piglets. By last year, this average figure had risen to 14.4. Generally, the Danes still beat the Dutch in this field, and French swine producers are also amongst the leaders for litter size. Litter mortality has also remained much the same (around 12 per cent) for years now, although Denmark and France have exceeded 13 per cent in some of the last years (e.g., 13.9 per cent and 13.6 per cent respectively in 2012).



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Back in 2009, the published national swine herd results showed a pre-weaning litter mortality of 12.6 per cent. At this point, the farmers' union (LTO) and the specialist swine farmers' association NVV got together with the veterinary association and breeding organizations to announce a national campaign to reduce litter mortality by as much as 20 per cent within a decade. As often happens with good intentions, the plan went badly wrong. By last year, the mortality figure before weaning stood at over 13 per cent.

Welfare activists have gone to press claiming that this failure is all the fault of the breeding trend toward steadily increasing litter size, although both the Netherlands and Denmark changed direction for several years now to lifetime production per sow. They leave litter-size increase out of the equation.

However, the activists now have the backing of the Dutch government. Minister for Agriculture Martijn van Dam is gunning for a litter limit, too.

Coming to the rescue of the Dutch swine industry are researchers Herman

Vermeer and Marion Kluivers from the country's Wageningen University. Speaking out in the university publication *Resource*, both agree that the breeding toward lifetime production and smaller litters with the emphasis on piglet vitality is the way to go.

But the experts go on to say that breeding for maternal instinct (i.e., breeding better sow mothers) is a major key. Other important points cited by the experts include housing climate. For optimum piglet survival, a temperature immediately post-birth of 35 C, but just



Alfalfa silage and homegrown barley and peas constitute the recipe for low-cost hog rations on a British research farm. See page 51.

18-20 C for the sow, is ideal. A glance at the litter survival figures for Ireland (see table on page 49), where average born-alive numbers are a good way below the European leaders in this context, indicates there's much to be said for smaller litters.

Dairy-style silage ration proves a hit with Gloucestershire Old Spot hogs

Alfalfa silage and homegrown barley and peas constitute the recipe for low-cost hog rations on a British research farm. The organization Food Animal Initiative (FAI) investigates alternative feeding, management and marketing for farm animals and their products in co-operation with farmers and retail outlets.

One aspect of this work is examining how hogs perform on TMR rations, the kind we might see on dairy farms. A typical mix for the hogs there comprises 55 per cent alfalfa/grass silage, 30 per cent barley and the remainder protein meal from peas, plus required minerals.

The 20 per cent crude protein alfalfa silage, which has a chop length of five-to-eight centimetres, is proving a real favourite of the purebred Gloucestershire Old Spots hogs. This traditional breed averaged over 500 grams daily liveweight gain (dlwg) over a recent 13-week feeding period. Energy from the silage averaged 12.6 MJ per kilogram of dry matter.

During the grower phase, dlwg levelled out at 520 grams and a peak of around 850 grams just before slaughter. The FAI researchers agree this performance is certainly not up to acceptable commercial levels with hybrids on conventional rations. However, at a total ration cost equivalent to an estimated C\$145 per tonne coupled to the traditional breed, it leaves a cheaply produced quality pork that has great marketing capacity as speciality meat.

The TMR feed is simply dumped on the concrete floor of the respective pens and the hogs spend hours rooting about, according to FAI researchers.



The traditional English swine breed Gloucestershire Old Spot is performing well on silage and home-grown grains.

An important point: no tail biting or any other serious injuries have occurred so far in these feeding trials.

The scientists also say that up to 50 per cent of total digestion capacity

in hogs can be taken up in the large intestine for breaking down grass or silage. The efficient feed leaves the animals satisfied for relatively long periods. **BP**

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BETTER
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Hog futures should hit their seasonal high in summer

Chinese demand for pork imports has been strong, but the rise in the Canadian dollar is offsetting a higher hog futures price

by MOE AGOSTINO

Hog prices show a somewhat predictable seasonal pattern that repeats itself annually. This predictability is useful in making production, marketing or pricing decisions.

The summer lean hog future contracts established highs in the middle of March 2016 and have been trending downward since. Though this trend has done some damage to the charts, the downward trend is typical of this time of year. The normal yearly seasonal low occurs, depending on the year, between early May and the end of May. In the first two weeks of May, the seasonal tendency for June futures appeared to be negative.

The anticipated seasonal high should occur during the summer months. The date is usually in June or July. In nine out of 10 years, the summer months take care of themselves.

The recent surge in pork cutout values and the run-up in weekly export sales point to rising U.S. pork exports,

which should bode well for cash markets. As hog supplies start to decline during this time of the year, we should start seeing an increase in pork cutout values. However, excellent numbers for pork exports to China have thus far failed to ignite the cash hog market. China's demand could be temporary as the country rebuilds stocks, but it could be a significant price factor for the next few months. Weekly export sales and shipments of pork soared to marketing-year highs in the week that ended April 21, 2016, by 150 per cent over the previous week.

The growth in Chinese pork imports was exceptional in 2015 and showed no signs of slowing down during the first quarter of 2016, according to AHDB, the U.K. levy board. If we compare Chinese pork imports in March 2015 and March 2016, we see that China doubled its pork imports in March 2016 to 114,700 tons.

Unfortunately, the Canadian dollar, after hitting a low in January (almost \$0.68) soared beyond anyone's expectations to a 10-month high of \$0.80 (not seen since June 2015). A new wave of fund money at work in commodities since the end of January is finding value in all commodities, including crude oil, copper, gold and silver. This has lifted all commodity boats, provides the underlying support for a rising Canadian dollar and offsets a higher hog futures price. The Canadian dollar remains overbought, but fund managers look like they want to continue buying regardless of fundamentals. In fact, the funds have added more money in the first quarter than in any other quarter over six years. Look for a steady to lower Canadian dollar in the second quarter of 2016 as \$0.80 cents will act as major resistance. **BP**

Maurizio "Moe" Agostino is chief commodity strategist with Farms.com Risk Management.



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Overview of the room and attic when fans are on



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Farm succession planning should start sooner than later

Succession planning is a process. The aim is to develop a strategy for the successful transfer of knowledge, labour, management and ownership of the farm business from one generation to the next. Time and effort are needed to develop a comprehensive plan that best meets the needs of the farm family. Every family farm business is unique, and no single approach will work for everyone.

by LAURA EASTWOOD

Succession planning and managing generational expectations among farm families was a topic at this year's London Swine Conference. Elaine Froese, a family farm coach from Manitoba, challenged the audience to think about farm transition plans and begin having the often difficult but necessary conversations within families. The audience consisted of producers whose ages ranged from the 20s to over 60.

According to Elaine, different generations have different wants and needs. Despite differences in generations and farms, everyone involved needs clarity, certainty and the commitment to act on the plan for a succession to succeed.

Do you have a succession plan for your farm? Is there a potential successor within your family? If the answer is yes, does he or she have the skills, abilities, knowledge and desire to successfully operate a sophisticated farm business in today's agricultural economy? If you have more than one successor, what do you plan to do? If there is no successor, what are the options? How long does

the current operator(s) want to run the business? Only the individuals involved in the operation can answer these questions.

Communication is key during planning meetings. A family business meeting is an excellent first step to open the lines of communication. Elaine stressed that individuals must ask for what they need, and expectations must be clear for the successful transfer of an operation from one generation to the next. Keep in mind that everyone has different perspectives. Be respectful and listen to everyone's point of view. In many cases, bringing in a third-party facilitator helps ensure that the initial meetings run well and everyone has an equal opportunity to be heard.

You may think that your family doesn't need a succession plan; when the time is right, it will just happen. Elaine wasn't afraid to present some hard-hitting points. She said that procrastination and conflict avoidance are the two biggest threats to Canadian agriculture. When the audience was

polled, the main excuse for not having a succession plan was "avoiding conflict."

A successful transition plan will empower your family, increase your profits and secure the legacy of the founding generation. Don't procrastinate, don't be afraid to ask questions, and don't assume you know what other family members are thinking. Put together a team of professional advisers (lawyer, accountant, financial planner, banker, etc.) to transfer your farm from one generation to the next. Have a clear and concise plan that everyone agrees to, and make sure you act on the commitments in your plan.

For more information on succession planning, visit the OMAFRA business development website at www.ontario.ca/agbusiness. A video recording with written proceedings of Elaine Froese's presentation is available at www.londonswineconference.ca. **BP**

Laura Eastwood, PhD, is a swine specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' office in Stratford.



Elaine Froese speaking at the 2016 London Swine Conference

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