

# Better pork

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DEAR READER: LETTERS FROM A FAMILY FARM

## EMBRACING AG INNOVATION

I love to learn. I'm fortunate that, in our industry, there's constant research and innovation.

I think I acquired my passion for learning from my dad.

Over the years, **Dad** has spearheaded a number of family trips centred on such opportunities. We went to St. Louis, Missouri, for example, to tour **Monsanto's** research facilities. We heard about some of the company's initiatives to improve yields and traits, such as their drought-tolerant corn.

We've also attended the **Farm Progress Show**, which rotates between Iowa and Illinois. As with **Canada's Outdoor Farm Show**, producers can connect with exhibitors at the trade show, watch field demonstrations, and discover new equipment and technology hitting the market.

With my role as managing editor with *Better Pork* and *Better Farming*, I'm able to fuel my love of learning on a regular basis – while situated a bit closer to home. I enjoy connecting with farmers and industry representatives to learn about developments in our field.

This month, our features highlight some opportunities in the swine industry. Staff writer **Jennifer Jackson** explores the topic of enrichment. She explains the current requirements under the **Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs**. Jackson examines the experiences of farmers and researchers when introducing enrichment materials to their herds, and notes the benefits these materials can bring – both in terms of animal welfare and producers' bottom line.

In our other feature, writer **Geoff Geddes** delves into the topic of genomics. He traces research developments and highlights some of the potential, tangible results from this work. Geddes notes the strength of Canada's pig breeding programs on the international stage.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition of *Better Pork*. And I encourage you to get in touch to discuss ag innovation! **BP**

ANDREA M. GAL

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Equipment in these grower pens measures volume and frequency of feed and water consumed for individual pigs. See "Pork industry tickled pink by genomics" on page 18.

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## USING PIGS TO ADVANCE HUMAN HEALTH

One of the largest pork producers in North America is expanding into the business of saving lives.

In April, **Smithfield Foods** launched **Smithfield Bioscience**; the new venture will build off of current health efforts to, one day, provide organs and tissue for humans, according to a company release.

Currently, Smithfield sells animal byproducts to nutraceutical and pharmaceutical companies for the development and testing of a wide variety of drugs, **Courtney Stanton**, vice-president of Smithfield Bioscience and Renewable Bioproducts, said in a statement.

“Smithfield Bioscience will expand its current efforts by exploring new methods and technologies for addressing concerns such as tissue regeneration and the availability of viable human organs for transplantation,” she said. “There are striking similarities between hogs and humans, especially as it relates to our DNA and digestive tracks.”

Smithfield participates in the **Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute**, a consortium with medical and technological participants that study the technology and processes for tissue, cell and organ development. The **U.S. Department of Defense** funds the consortium with the goal of eventually providing tissue repair and replacements for soldiers wounded in combat. **BP**

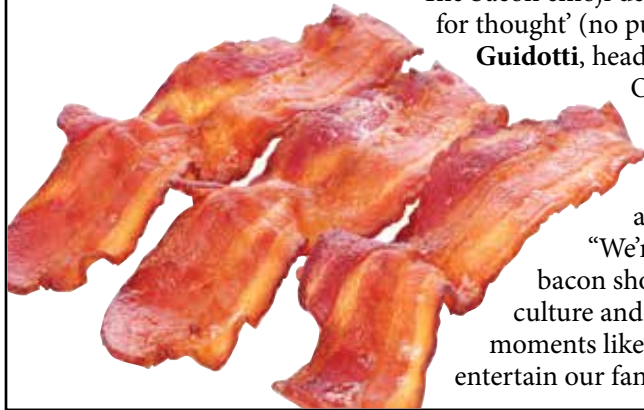
## SEND A TASTY VIDEO MESSAGE

Have you ever struggled, trying to find a way to put your love for bacon into words? Struggle no more – **Oscar Mayer** developed a new font entirely from strips of bacon, according to a promotional video released in April.

Anyone can access the **bacon message generator** on the company’s website to enter a personalized message. The tool will then create a video message, with the text appearing in greasy bacon form.

Users can share the video message on social media, or download it to their computers or mobile devices to send it to friends.

Other companies have also incorporated bacon into electronic forms of communication. As some bacon lovers may have noticed, for example, **Apple Inc.** released its first bacon emoji in December.



“The bacon emoji definitely gave us ‘food for thought’ (no pun intended),” **Greg Guidotti**, head of marketing for Oscar Mayer, said to *US Campaign*, a news website for communication and marketing ideas. “We’re happy to see bacon shows up in pop culture and look to build off moments like that to surprise and entertain our fans.” **BP**

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## LOWERING THE SPREAD OF DISEASE

Swine health officials on both sides of the border are collaborating to reduce pig disease transmission from points of high concentration to the farm.

“The issue is how to contain pathogens that already exist in packing plants, assembly yards and sow buying stations, and keep them from reaching farms,” said **Dr. Paul Sundberg**, executive director of the **Swine Health Information Centre**.

To help accomplish this goal, Dr. Sundberg and other Canadian and American health officials plan to compile key points from existing biocontainment programs.

The group has conducted some planning calls. Its next step is to produce a clear, written objective for the program.



“From there, we will reach out to stakeholders, such as assembly yards and plants, and ask for their participation in developing the material. Once we get consensus on the basic biocontainment procedures, we can take this (initiative) to industry and seek (producers’) support.”

“This (initiative) can serve as a great example of collaboration between countries and among various sectors of the pork industry for the benefit of all concerned,” said Dr. Sundberg. **BP**

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# ENRICHMENT NOVELTY *OR* NECESSITY

by JENNIFER JACKSON

**Some producers and industry experts say that providing enrichment to pigs are becoming**





NT:  
ITY?

the benefits of  
apparent.

“Some like to spend their time on the computer and some like to spend their time in the pig barn,” says David Linton, a pork producer from Blyth, Ont. “I am one of the guys who would rather spend their time in the pig barn – I like working with the pigs.”

For this reason, Linton enjoys providing different types of enrichment to his pigs on his farrow-to-finish farm.

“Pigs are intelligent animals and they need something to keep them occupied,” he says. “They are too smart an animal to only need feed and fresh air.”

Linton has experimented with different types of enrichment in his barns to keep behavioural vices at bay and to keep pigs of all ages content.

Although he has used a range of items, Linton finds straw to be the most successful material for keeping the pigs occupied.

“We built a finishing barn about four years ago that has straw in it and there is nothing that compares,” he says. “Anyone who has been a pig farmer long enough (to remember) when straw was (more commonly used), they will tell you pigs love straw.”

Linton also uses straw in his dry sow barn. He finds that the sows enjoy rooting through the straw as well as eating it.

Linton and his son have experimented with how to best supply the straw, including lining square bales up against the back of the pens. This year, Linton purchased a round baler and has tried giving the pigs increased amounts of straw. Linton says the sows’ enjoyment of the straw has made the extra work worth it.

More recently, Kathy Zurbrigg, industry outreach coordinator at Ontario Pork, dropped off a commercially available pig toy for Linton’s weaner barn, called the Porkyplay.

U.K.-based East Riding Farm Services Ltd. developed the toy, which

is distributed in Canada by Ketchum Manufacturing Inc. Producers can choose between eight toy flavours and colours, including green apple and orange caramel, according to a company statement.

“We were having (some) tail-biting problems in the weaner barn,” says Linton. “When Kathy brought us one of the toys to try, I have never seen pigs go at something like they did – they love those things. I bought some more for the whole barn.”

Linton has found the most success with these hanging toys in the weaner barn, he says.

Linton’s enrichment initiatives align with the current Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs.

“Pigs must be provided with multiple forms of enrichment that aim to improve the welfare of the animals through the enhancement of their physical and social environments,” according to the code.

Although these requirements may seem vague, the Canadian Pork Council (CPC) will release an updated version of the Animal Care Program in 2018 to reflect the code’s enrichment requirements, according to an emailed statement from the CPC.



Based on current requirements and the multiple forms of enrichment, most producers can comply with the code without making any significant changes, according to Jennifer Brown, research scientist at the Prairie Swine Centre.

Brown is confident that, once producers start introducing different forms of enrichment into their operations, they will not look back.

### *Purpose of enrichment*

All types of enrichment for pigs should have the same ultimate goal: to improve the biological functioning of the animal, according to Yolande Seddon, assistant professor at the

## ENRICHMENT

University of Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine and researcher at the Prairie Swine Centre.

"When we say 'enrichment,' we are actually referring to a modification of the environment that will benefit the animal," she says.

The Code of Practice outlines many types of modifications, including audible enrichment, physical changes to the pen, nutritional enrichment, social enrichment and enrichment with objects.

"One of the negative (consumer) perceptions of modern farming is the fact that we raise the pigs in environments that are fairly barren – (we know), obviously, this is for hygiene and cost," she says. "However, for an animal that is growing and developing, a barren environment can sometimes produce behavioural responses that are undesirable, such as greater fear, (aggression) and excitability. When we add enrichment, we help in the development of the pig."

Most commonly, researchers have studied providing enrichment to grow-finish pigs. These animals can often resort to tail biting and other injurious behaviours because of their high levels of activity, according to Brown.

Now that producers are shifting towards managing sows in groups, she also sees increasing producer interest in enrichment for sows.

Although the age of the pig may alter their preference in the type of enrichment, there are benefits for all ages.

"When piglets are weaned, they are mixed with other piglets which can cause some aggression. This period is also a very stressful time for them – they are changing

their diet, leaving the sow and are in a new environment," says Brown. "Certainly providing enrichment can help to reduce the stress of some of



**Laura Eastwood**



*Chains are an easy way to implement enrichment objects for pigs.*

(these changes) by giving (the pigs) something to explore and (interact with) in the environment, and (reducing the time they) manipulate their pen mates.

"Enrichment is known to help reduce social tension. Instead of a dominant animal being aggressive to other subordinate animals, the (enrichment) gives them something else to interact with and manipulate – kind of like it's their resource that they want to protect."

Aggression and resulting injuries can lead to disruptions in production, says Laura Eastwood, swine specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "If you have less aggression and fewer injuries, you are not having to treat the pigs as often," she says. "Less injury treatment will reduce your overall production

costs – injuries can also depress your animal's growth progress. Animals that are injured will perform poorly and will cost more.

"Not only can enrichment increase animal welfare, it can also (protect) your bottom line."

### Selecting approaches

There are numerous approaches producers can take when determining which enrichment objects will best suit their operations.

"Introducing enrichment is simple – you just have to decide what you are going to do," says Brown. "This does not necessarily mean you have to spend a lot of money."

Brown recommends that producers follow the Code of Practice's Six Ss for determining if a material is suitable for pigs. The product must be safe to pigs, sanitary, soft and malleable, simple, suspended, and situated in a place where the pigs have space to interact with it.

Most Ontario producers already supply hanging chain to their pigs, according to Zurbrigg.

"Most pigs do play with the chain and will manipulate it quite a bit," she says. To make the chain more novel, she suggests attaching different materials or objects to it.

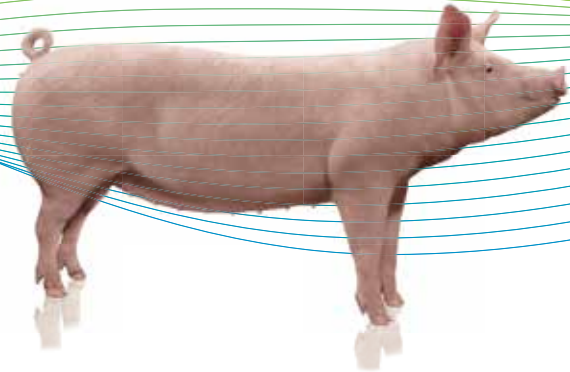
"Some producers will (thread) pipe or a garden hose over the chain – the pigs seem to prefer this and use



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## ENRICHMENT

the object more,” she says. The cost-effective sourcing options for these types of materials make them easy to incorporate into a barn.

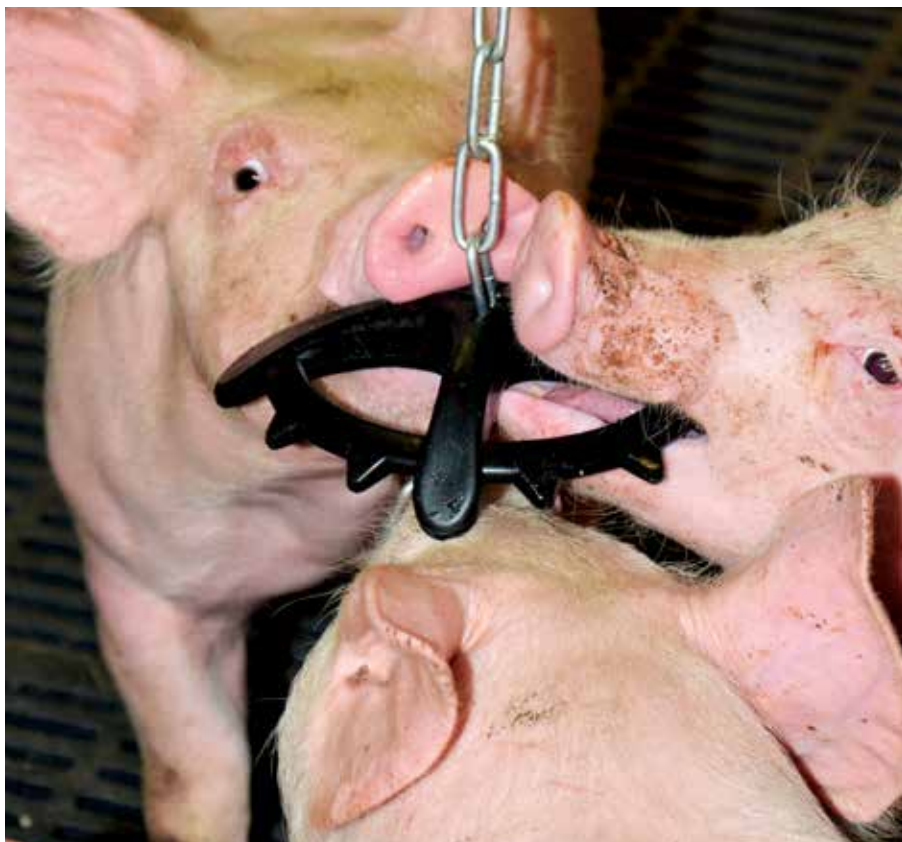
In addition to – and sometimes with – chains, producers can use other malleable items such as cloth strips or wood, Eastwood says.

“Wood is a great tool, especially for some of the older pigs such as sows or finishers,” she says. “Although you have to be careful that the wood is not treated.

“What we have seen is that the best items are malleable. Also, anything that (pigs) can eat without damaging or affecting their health (is a must).”

Not all enrichment, however, needs to be in the form of objects or toys, according to Eastwood.

“Enrichment could be as simple as turning on a radio for the pigs,” she says. “Producers can also increase the amount of positive experiences (the pigs have) with people, such as going into the pens – as long as it’s not scaring the (animals).”



East Riding Farm Services Ltd. photo

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“Pigs are highly sensitive to noises and novel things – anything that can increase the variety they can experience will make them less fearful of novel things,” she says. “We consider enrichment (to be) different flooring types and panels that sows can lie against, or other changes to the environment. (Enrichment isn’t simply) providing what some people call toys. Producers should also consider the pen’s environment and how it’s designed.”

Straw, for example, is stimulating on various levels, Seddon says.

“When we’re putting enrichment (items) into pens ... we know there are certain properties that pigs highly value. The item has to be chewable (ideally, they can ingest it and destroy it) and malleable in their mouth. (It should also) encourage foraging and exploratory behaviour,” she says. “Straw is at the top of the



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## TOYS FOR PIGS?

Pig toys – at first, the idea seemed odd to Tara Terpstra and her husband Dennis, who co-run Silver Corners Inc., a farrow-to-finish operation in Brussels, Ont. Today, Tara’s only regret is not trying out the enrichment products earlier.

Tara and her husband have been farming on their own since 2015 when they left a larger operation. Since then, they have expanded their use of enrichment products for their pigs.

The couple began by placing rubber dog toys or feed tubing in pens where there seemed to be tail-biting problems. Tara found switching the type of objects and materials alleviated fighting between pen mates, regardless of age.

In the fall of 2016 the Terpstas built a new 370 loose sow housing barn, following the updated Code of Practice requirements.

Since the completion of the new barn, Tara began to provide a wider variety of enrichment products for the gilts to prepare them for the transition and to ease any fighting. The Terpstas used blocks of wood, shavings and chain-disk objects for the pigs.

“It really bothered me to see the animals fight,” she says. “I know it is just the nature of the animal but the enrichment products really alleviated the fighting – it kept the boss gilts busy with the toys.”

After seeing that the Code of Practice recommends producers provide enrichment for piglets, Tara became interested in providing enrichment for the nursery. When she saw a pig enrichment toy, the Porkyplay, on sale at Farmers Pharmacy, she was sold.

“I said, ‘you know what, if they are on sale, let’s give it a shot.’ Now, (having tried the toy) I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

At the time of the *Better Pork* interview, the Terpstas had used the toys in their nursery for about six weeks. Tara uses one chew toy for a pen of 50 piglets in their hot nursery – after three weeks in the hot nursery, the couple moves these piglets into a cold nursery room for four weeks.

The Terpstas also provide enrichment objects in the cold nursery, including hanging disks with chains



Tara Terpstra

attached to the bottom.

“There’s a lot less fighting (with the enrichment objects). Pigs are just curious by nature – to me, it makes more sense to have them play with something rather than fight with each other,” she says.

“In the new environment, when they are taken from their moms, we found (the toys) ease their aggravation and stress.”

Although the use of toys in the group housing system is new for Tara, she plans to continue the practice. She also intends to introduce a wider selection of toys for the farm’s older weaners, gilts, sows and finishers.

“It seems odd (to use the toys) but, as we are starting to understand how the animals (act) in the loose housing, it’s great to have the enrichment for them – you have to give them something to do,” Tara says. **BP**

list as one of the most effective forms of enrichment because it has all of these properties.”

Producers with a fully slatted system can put small flakes of straw into racks to help prevent straw from falling into the manure system, according to Seddon. Sows, in particular, will largely consume the straw as opposed to putting it through the slats.

Brown echoes the usefulness of straw, especially for sows.

“Sows are less motivated to explore the environment as they are motivated to get food, being feed restricted. Using a fibre enrichment (such as straw) can increase their sense of satiety,” which in turn can reduce aggression, she says. “Sows do not get a lot of roughage with their concentrated diets. With fibre,

you are not really increasing the calories or energy the pig gets, but you are increasing gut fill and their satisfaction of eating something.”

### **Group housing benefits**

The effectiveness of enrichment may become more apparent to producers as they transition to group housing to comply with the updated Code of Practice, accord-





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*Straw is an excellent enrichment tool for sows, who can both manipulate and eat the roughage.*

ing to Brown.

“We are most concerned with aggression amongst sows,” she says. “With electronic feeders, for example, there can be more competition (in determining) who gets to go to the feeder first.

“Having an enrichment (product) gives the dominant sows something else to control and therefore can take the pressure off of the subordinate animals (at the feeder).”

Although producers may not see the same type of behaviours with sows as they would with younger pigs, recent literature suggests sows obtain immense health benefits if they’re given enrichment products.

“It’s subtle, but you could see better fitness in the sows due to the increase in activity,” says Brown. “The increased muscle tone and (health benefits) carry over for birthing – (we can see) improved sow intervals, fewer stillborns and improved bone strength.”

The increase in activity is not to be confused with negative activity, such as sows aggressively chasing each other, which can cause falling, lameness and injury.

An increasing number of producers are introducing enrichment for sows and gilts in their farrowing crates, says Brown. Hanging burlap, for example, allows the pigs to exude

some of their instinctual nesting behaviours.

“Some studies have shown that providing enrichment at farrowing can increase the sows’ oxytocin levels,” she says. “These (increased levels can equate to) a better birthing and quicker bonding to their piglets. This is especially important for gilts as they are often very stressed at farrowing – without the proper oxytocin surge, they can resort to savaging their piglets.”

Seddon also sees the importance of using enrichment to prepare gilts for group housing systems.

“For producers shifting into group housing, it’s important to improve the

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University of Manitoba photo



*Wood on a chain can be used as enrichment material, provided the wood is untreated.*

social development of gilts and to prepare them for future life in a group system,” says Seddon. “Providing environmental enrichment as (gilts) mature can help reduce their aggression in groups, and improve their cognition which could prove useful for training gilts using electronic sow feeder (ESF) feeding systems.”

**Future changes**

Producers can follow the current Code of Practice’s requirements and recommendations to introduce themselves to enrichment. These recommendations may hint at what producers can expect in future regulations, according to Seddon.

“The code is introducing enrichment to producers, hence why it (allows producers to) choose between social or sensory (types of enrichment),” she says. “What is encouraging is that ... (producers are) trying to go further than the basic requirements and are implementing manipulative material in



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*The Terpstras find enrichment materials in the nursery help with the weaning process.*

their operations.”

The code may become stricter on the forms of enrichment producers are required to provide for their pigs as more research is conducted, says Seddon.

“We know so much already (about different methods) – what’s important is growing sustainable methods,” she says. “(For example), what can we do when we know straw is the best enrichment (material) but some producers simply can’t use straw.”

Brown also believes the Code of Practice may one day reflect stricter enrichment requirements and that producers not already on board with the idea will see benefits.

“I have had some producers believe enrichment is surplus to the pigs’ requirements and that we are spoiling the pigs by giving them toys,” says Brown. “Once producers start to try (different types of enrichment) and see how much the pigs enjoy manipulating (objects), I expect more (producers) to (continue to) try more things.”

The concept of enrichment “is much the same as group housing – those that were originally against the changes now (are supportive) and see the difference in the pigs.”

As for Linton, he will continue to use enrichment in his operation. He is always interested in trying new products and new methods for keeping the pigs interested in their pens.

“Enrichment helps with all kinds of (behavioural vices) – there is no question,” he says. “The extra labour that is required with providing enrichment is nothing outrageous, but (then again) I would rather spend time in the barn anyways.” **BP**



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# PORK INDUSTRY TICKLED PINK BY GENOMICS

**Experts say applications of this science may help address current challenges, like disease and aggression.**

*by GEOFF GEDDES*







*This sow and her antibiotics-free piglets were on show at the Calgary Stampede.*

If you've ever been stalked by a drone or cut off by a driverless car, you know some technology can be downright scary. Some consumers have a similar worry about genomics, a branch of molecular biology concerned with the structure, function, evolution and mapping of genomes (complete sets of DNA within a single cell of an organism). Yet, as we learn more about this science, and its potential for the livestock industry in general and the pork sector in particular, many people who were covering their eyes are now opening their minds to the possibilities.

"One of the earliest advances in pig genomics was a simple diagnostic test called HAL-1843™ that was developed by Canadian scientists and used extensively by the industry to select against porcine stress syndrome," said professor Graham Plastow, chief executive officer of the Livestock Gentec Centre. The centre focuses on the development, implementation and adoption of genomics-based solutions for the livestock industry. Plastow is widely acknowledged as one of the leading authorities in Canada on pig genetics.

Early genetic efforts were concerned with finding specific genes that had a major impact on certain traits, according to Brian Sullivan, CEO of the Canadian Centre for

Swine Improvement (CCSI).

"While that (focus) succeeded with certain traits like coat colour or eye colour that are controlled by a small number of genes, financially relevant traits in livestock production are generally controlled by several genes," said Sullivan.

Thus some progress was needed and, as is often the case, the key to moving forward was a map.

### **Map reading**

"This test (HAL-1843) was quickly followed by large-scale efforts to map the pig genome in both Europe and the United States," said Plastow.

The mapping efforts led to new DNA markers that could be used to map regions of the genome relating to high-value traits. In the process, this mapping allowed researchers to select for, or target, those key traits of interest to pork producers.

### **Cashing in on chips**

In the late 2000s, that targeting became more effective with the development of a tool called a "high-density single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) chip" by groups at the Universities of Alberta and Missouri, as well as USDA scientists.

While the technology was complex, the implications were clear: a new era



*Alberta Pork's Calgary Stampede display shows the marketing value of genomics in reducing the need for antibiotics in pigs.*

of genomic selection was born.

Soon the pig breeding companies began using this chip and other tools to make better selection decisions.

“For example, PIC in 2015 claimed a steep change in rates of improvement due to application of genomic selection from US\$1.41 to \$3.64, in terms of annual gain per pig,” said Plastow.

While the cost of genomic selection was significant in the early stages of this work, that cost has changed over time.

“It’s like hi-def televisions where the price comes down while the technology improves to give you a much better picture of what you’re looking at,” said Bob Kemp, vice-president of genetic programs and R&D for Genesus Genetics.

These advances make it easier to target qualities that are part of traditional selection programs, like those related to growth rate and reproduction. At the same time, genomic selection can also significantly improve the accuracy for more expensive, hard-to-measure carcass traits such as meat quality, Kemp said.

**In sickness and health**

Researchers see great potential benefits of genomics for dealing with disease in the pork industry.

According to Stewart Cressman, chairman of the Advisory Board at the Agriculture Research Institute of Ontario and board chair for Swine Innovation Porc, it comes down to a fundamental question: “Why do some animals thrive in the presence of disease while others fall to pieces?”

That question is the focus of a recently commenced research project by Genome Alberta looking at why certain pigs are better equipped genetically to fend off illness and how we can select for disease resilience in future generations.

“Disease is one of the greatest challenges to pork production and

one of the hardest to manage,” said project manager Irene Wenger. “(Disease) may also contribute to poor public perceptions of animal production, in terms of animal welfare and food safety. Genomics offers new opportunities to reduce these costs and improve the market image of pork.”

While that’s a worthy goal, the project goes a step further by addressing one of the hottest issues in livestock production today: antimicrobial resistance.

“The aim is to boost production efficiency without the use of antimicrobials,” said Wenger. “If we can identify pigs that are the most resilient to disease (a combination of disease resistance and tolerance), we can select for those particular pigs and producers down the line will benefit from these selections.”

**Invention over convention**

The application of genomics in the area of disease management is a good illustration of how far we’ve come with this technology.

“If we wanted to select for robustness or resilience with the conventional approach we would have to expose pigs to a pathogen – (which is) something you just can’t do in a commercial-breeding operation where all the focus is on keeping disease out,” said Brian Sullivan.

“Genomics allows us to study individual pigs exposed (to a pathogen)



*“Why do some animals thrive in the presence of disease while others fall to pieces?” asks Stewart Cressman.*

CPDQ photo



as part of a research trial and figure out which genetic markers are associated with resilience. That (possibility) opens the door to something that just wasn't practical in the past."

Of course, "opening the door" to genetic technology can also open a can of worms these days around controversies like GMOs (genetically modified organisms). In Kemp's view, though, it's apples versus oranges.



"We need to be very clear on our definitions here," said Kemp. "The genomic tools we use do nothing in regard to modifying or creating changes in the genome that are not natural. All we are doing is speeding up a process that has been used for thousands of years since we began selecting animals based on how they looked."

Rather than altering an animal's chromosomes, Kemp likened genomics to taking a picture that reveals which chromosomes influ-

ence which traits.

"We used to consider everything that happened beneath the skin of an animal as essentially a 'black box.' Now we can pull back the curtain on that box and get a better view of the chromosomes and their make-up, which will render our selection decisions more effective."

In essence, Kemp feels it is no different than "taking a swab of the inside of your mouth and sending it to a lab or ancestry.ca to find out you are 16 per cent Northern European."

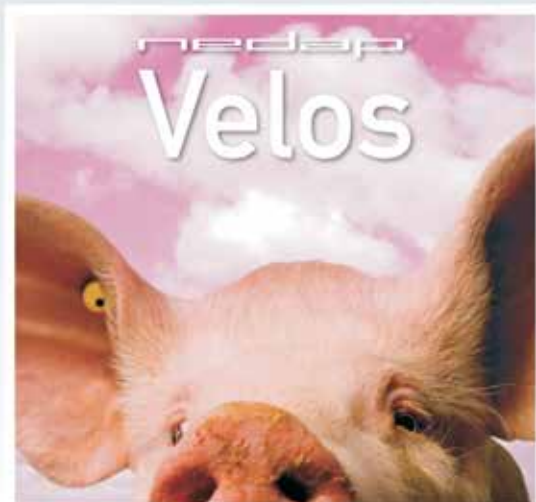
**Benefit package**

Controversy aside, most experts feel the benefits of livestock genomics far outweigh the drawbacks.



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“All of our genetic improvements are focused on profitability in the form of lower input costs or increased value,” said Kemp. “Furthermore, the current application of genomics is making that improvement faster and transferring it more rapidly to the commercial industry for maximum impact.”

And the benefits don't end there, Sullivan said.

“As an industry, we have to do everything we can not only to be economically competitive but to be responsible in our production of food. Genomics is the means to do a better job of the things we have been doing already – and to do more.”

A prime example of “doing better” involves a hot topic these days: animal welfare.

“With the current shift to the group housing of sows, there are behaviour and welfare changes that result,” said Sullivan. “Sows like to establish their pecking order and rumble a bit which is not good for the pigs and counter to the intent of group housing itself.”

Since we know genetics plays a role in aggressiveness and behaviour, Sullivan said that if we can identify areas in the genome relating to more socially acceptable behaviour, sows will get along better in groups and

their overall welfare will be enhanced.

Speaking of hot topics, the environment is another subject garnering a lot of attention and is another beneficiary of genomics.

“When we look at the impact of pigs on the environment, there is genetic variability regarding how much manure is produced and whether a pig is efficient in converting feed to meat,” said Sullivan.

“Genomics gives you the tools to

identify animals with whatever characteristics are deemed desirable from a sustainability, environmental or health standpoint and, to me, that is huge.

“If we want to be both responsible and competitive, we have a moral obligation to make use of this technology. And from an economic standpoint, if we don't do that and others do, we'll be left behind.”

**When less is more**

That doesn't mean, though, that genomics is for everyone.

On his farm near Sebringville, Ont., Fred de Martines runs Perth

Pork Products Ltd. Raising Berkshire, Tamworth and Iron Age pigs, as well as wild boars, he grows and sells specialty pork products from rare and heritage breed pigs to butcher shops, restaurants and consumers across the province.

“For our customers, it's all about the flavour,” said de Martines. “We aren't looking for the same traits as the mainstream industry. Our pork is sold with a story behind it and is produced from purebred animals the way it was 100 years ago. It's what makes us unique and we don't want to change that.”

Consequently, trying to select for traits like growth rate and back fat is counter-productive to the marketing efforts of Perth Pork Products.

“Sure we could make the animals grow faster but, like most things in life, if it doesn't take as long to get there it isn't as good. Our consumers want a darker colour to the meat and faster growth leads to a lighter colour.”

While the rest of the industry is trying to reduce the fat, for de Martines and his customers more fat is better.

“Our approach may be less efficient but in the end it helps us turn a profit.”

One area of genomics that does



Graham Plastow



Brian Sullivan

Irene and Fred de Martines photo



“Our pork is sold with a story behind it and is produced from purebred animals the way it was 100 years ago. It's what makes us unique and we don't want to change that,” said Fred de Martines.





CDPO photo

*“Certainly disease resilience would make it easier to raise pigs without a lot of medication,” said Fred de Martines.*

hold appeal for him is disease resilience.

“For us, a top priority is to raise animals without antibiotics and that is starting to become a bigger thing in mainstream pig farming as well. Certainly disease resilience would make it easier to raise pigs without a lot of medication.”

**Keeping your balance**

One point everyone can agree on is that, if genomics had a colour scheme, it wouldn't be black and white.

“There's no such beast as a perfect animal,” said Stewart Cressman. “You have to do a balancing act where if you go for one thing you give up another.”

The marketplace keeps changing, he says, so what was perfection 20 years ago may be a sub-standard animal today. Still, he sees the genomic contribution as substantial.

“Recently at the London Swine Conference, Steve Meyer (a leading pork market analyst) said the North American market has averaged 1.5 per cent improvement annually for the last 30 years. I think a good portion of that is due to genetics.”

All things considered, genomics is a case of “the more things change, the more they stay the same,” Plastow said.

“As with all genomics work, the most important element will be the rapid generation and use of the information required to drive the discovery process. Once this information is combined with new approaches, we will see applications of genomics in the hog industry on a much greater scale than are used today, helping to address the changing requirements of the different markets around the world.”

Ultimately, Canada's pig breeding programs still drive much of the world's pig improvement, Plastow said.

“Our continuing investments in research and technology, such as those led by Genome Alberta, can ensure we remain at the top of the genetic pyramid.”

And if we stay atop that pyramid, perhaps the only ones who'll find genomics “scary” are those with a fear of heights. **BP**

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by  
**JENNIFER JACKSON**

# DIVERSIFICATION PAYS OFF FOR THIS FAMILY

*Bill Tibben credits much of his family farming operation's success to the contributions of each sector.*

What is the key to jointly operating a large swine, dairy and cash crop operation with five family members? If you ask Bill Tibben, of Tibben Farms Inc. in Dundas County, Ont., he will tell you it is diversification.

Bill farms with his son Glen, brother Ralph, and two nephews Mike and Mark. Andy, a third nephew, helps when needed. Bill manages the 200 sow, farrow-to-finish operation with Glen, while Ralph, Mike and Mark milk 170 Holsteins and run the dairy operation. Together, the five family members manage 2,700 acres of crops.

No single portion of the operation is more important than the next,

according to Bill.

"I prefer working with the pigs but it's all important to the operation," he says. "It's been a good deal having a diversified farm – it's worked well for us. When one market is down, the others seem to carry (us) through."

Bill's parents purchased the farm in 1955, after emigrating from Holland following the Second World War and working for a local farmer for a few years. Ralph took over the farm first as he is older than Bill, who joined a few years later.

Around the time when Bill joined in the 1980s, the family expanded the operation to include the swine facilities. Since this expansion, Bill

has managed the swine portion of the operation.

"The farm has been growing ever since (the initial swine expansion)," says Bill. "I'd like to think we're successful – I think a big part of that (success) is that we each have our own (sector) to manage, without being under each other's feet."

Bill enjoys running the swine operation. Since the late 1980s, he has sold 100 per cent of his hogs to local butchers.

"I like to think (selling locally) is as good for (the butchers) as it has been (for) us," Bill says. "It (also) makes me feel good knowing our product is being sold locally."

Norma Smith photo



**Bill, Wilma, and Glen Tibben**





*Bill enjoys running the swine operation.*

Bill said his family will continue to manage the farm in this diversified manner, allowing each sector and farm partner to thrive.

#### **Describe your role on your farm operation?**

I am the farm manager of the hog (operation). I do a lot of the feed mixing – 100 per cent of the feed for the hogs, (as well as the) supplements for the dairy operation.

I also help out wherever I am needed.

#### **How many people does your farm employ?**

We have five full-time partners (including myself).

Our wives also play an active part and are involved in the farm, one way or another. My wife, Wilma, will spend a couple hours in the barn every morning taking care of the piglets.

Sometimes we get a summer student to work on the farm.

#### **Hours you work per week?**

I'm a farmer, I work all the time. (Laughs.) On average, (I work about) 60 to 65 hours a week – sometimes more during cropping season. We all pitch in on the crop end of the business.

There are some times we try and take a few days off.

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**How many emails do you receive per day?**

Not that many – maybe two or three.

**Hours a day on a cellphone?**

Hours? I would throw the thing away if I spent hours (on the phone).

About five to 15 minutes, including phone calls and texting.

I do a fair bit of texting with (others) on the farm and local business owners.

**What about your smartphone?**

I have an iPhone but I would rather look at my computer if I need to look something up. The iPhone is handy but I don't like using it (a lot).

**Email or text?**

I use both.

**Any favourite apps?**

Being a farmer, I like my weather app – I use it every day.

**Hours a day on the Internet?**

Not hours – I might spend 10 minutes if I need to check emails or look something up. I use (the Internet) when I have to search for farm-related things.

**How often do you travel?**

More now than I used to because I have my son at home (to look after things). We try and travel about two to three times a year.

**Where did you last travel to?**

We were in Minneapolis, Minnesota to visit our daughter, son-in-law and three grandchildren. We tend to go there two or three times a year. We will travel to other places once in a while.

**Hours in the office per day?**

Half an hour on average – sometimes more, sometimes less. I don't have a formal office, it's usually a desk in the barn or the kitchen table.

**What do you like best about farming?**

I guess the variety of things we get to do every day. It's not a monotonous job where you are in one place sitting at a desk or inside all day.

We get to spend more time outside and with the animals. (Sometimes) the animals can be more agreeable than people. (Laughs.)

**What do you like least?**

Probably that (farming) is a seven day a week job. This has changed lately but it used to be that you couldn't go anywhere (away from the farm).

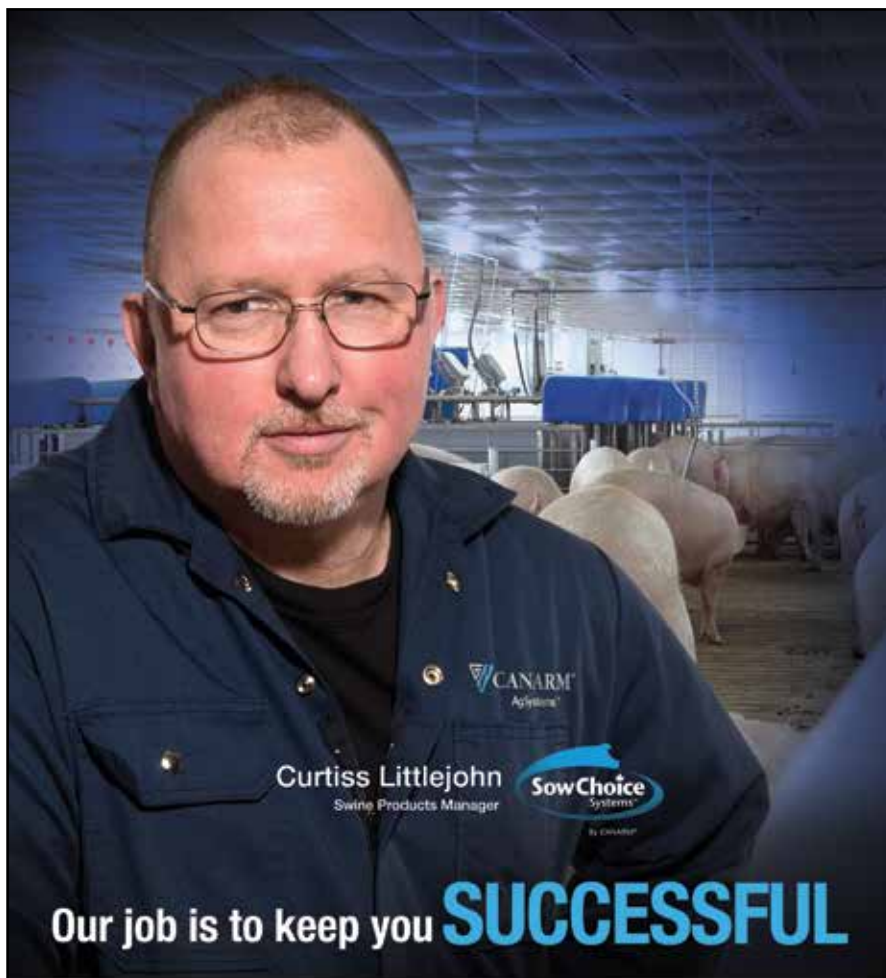
New technology is also helping (with this challenge).

**What is the single most important lesson you've learned?**

Don't be afraid of hard work and do as many things yourself as possible.

**What's your guiding management principle?**

Try to get as much done yourself (as you can) and don't rely on other people unless you have to.



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44TH ANNUAL ONTARIO PORK CONGRESS

# CELEBRATE PORK



Ontario Pork Congress

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**ADMISSION: \$15**

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## 2017 SHOW EVENTS

### Day 1 - Wednesday, June 21

Pork Industry Tradeshow: 10:00am - 5:00pm

Complimentary BBQ Lunch: 11:00am - 3:00pm

Taste the Best: 2:00pm - 4:00pm

OPIC Hog Jog with Meal After Race: 6:30pm - 8:00pm

### Day 2 - Thursday, June 22

LIVE HOGS TODAY ONLY

Pork Industry Tradeshow: 10:00am - 4:00pm

Past Presidents Luncheon: 11:30am - 1:00pm

Bacon Maker Classic-Live Hog Show: 11:00am - 4:00pm

Complimentary BBQ Lunch: 11:00am - 3:00pm

Cooking with Arron Carley: 2:00pm to 3:00pm

### Vet Talks

(Presented by BMC)

Learn about Carcass Quality throughout the pig's lifespan

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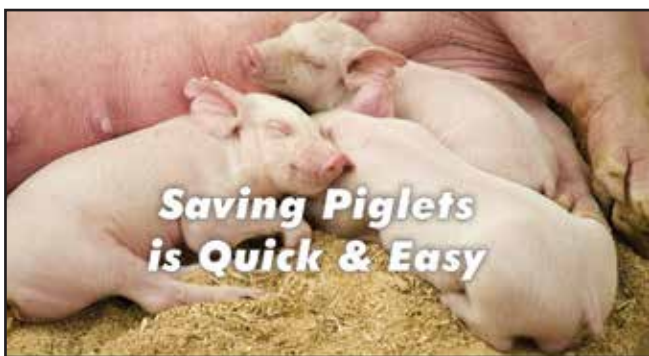
Five members of the Tibben family together operate Tibben Farms Inc. in Dundas County, Ont.

**What’s your top tip about farm succession?**

We’re kind of going through (this) now.  
 Plan ahead and don’t rush into anything unless you have to. (Farm succession) takes years of planning – it has to be good for all sides.  
 Farming has gotten to be a big business. (Succession) has to be done carefully for the good of all generations.

**Are you involved in any committees, associations or volunteer efforts?**

I am on the county pork board and (involved) in a few local community committees. I am also involved in church committees.  
 I think everybody has to do their part (volunteering). But it’s also still important to (save time to) farm.



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**What are your hobbies or recreational activities?**

I enjoy woodworking, smoking meat (with) the smoker I built and entertaining (company).  
 I also enjoy fishing whenever I get the chance to go out.

**What was the last book you read?**

*Dead Wake* by Erik Larson.  
 I do enjoy sitting down and reading. It’s a wintertime thing (for me).

**What does your family think of farming?**

Well, it’s the only life we know. (My kids), even my two daughters who have moved off the farm, appreciate their life growing up on the farm.

**What’s your most important goal?**

Keep moving forward. We’ve never regretted any land purchases or barn renovations that we have done.  
 It’s important to move forward with the operation so there’s a place for the next generation. And to keep up with new technology as much as possible.

**How do you define success?**

To enjoy what you do, and spend as much time as you can with family and friends.

**Is your farm vehicle messy or neat?**

I would consider my vehicle neat. Other people might not consider it (to be so) but there’s room for you if you have to ride in the passenger seat.

**What are three items that are on top of your desk?**

Notepads, pens and a computer.

**What was the last piece of equipment you bought?**

An air compressor.

**What’s the best time of day?**

I’m a morning person. I like getting up in the morning and getting stuff done, then I can hopefully enjoy the evening.

**What was your most memorable crop/production year?**

Definitely 2014. We had an awesome year that will be hard to beat. **BP**



## 44TH ANNUAL ONTARIO PORK CONGRESS, JUNE 21 & 22 AT THE STRATFORD ROTARY COMPLEX



The theme of the OPC is Celebrate Pork. From its birth in 1973, the OPC has weathered many changes in the pork industry, but the goal remains the same: bringing together all segments of the pork industry to highlight the new technologies, services, products and resources to promote the health and quality of pork, and to maintain a safe and clean working environment.

This year's tradeshow is expected to reach over 3,000 attendees with around 150 Canadian and international exhibitors. Exhibitors will showcase a variety of products related to the swine industry, starting at genetics and following the cycle right through to its journey to your dinner table. Truly a pork to fork event.

We have introduced some new events this year in addition to our flagship tradeshow. In honour of Canada's 150th anniversary, historic books and items going back in time will be displayed. Our Pig Art event will also have an online auction to commemorate Canada's anniversary. Taste the Best is back this year on Day 1, and to add another food-related element, Day 2 will feature Arron Carley, a top butcher and celebrity chef, who was the Grand Champion on "Chopped Canada." The Bacon Maker Classic Live Hog Show (second day only) is an opportunity to come out and see the next generation of hog producers showcase their showmanship skills. To further the element of producer education at the show, we will include a veterinary panel discussion. This session will consist of four swine veterinarians, who will discuss questions like carcass quality.

You can't have an OPC without a pork BBQ so, with that in mind, the Perth County Pork Producers will be returning to the main grill for lunch both days of the show (free with the price of admission). Back by popular demand, is the children's play area – conveniently located by our ice cream vendor.

We are proud to be part of the Ontario Pork Industry Council's annual Hog Jog. This event raises around \$40,000 yearly for local causes. This year, proceeds will go to Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services.

Continuing pork week, visit the Stratford Blues & Ribfest Friday to Sunday for great food, local music and the OPC annual "All Pork" Amateur BBQ cook off held on Sunday. Don't forget to stop by local restaurants for their pork specials.

Looking forward to seeing you at the show – let's Celebrate Pork!

For more information please visit our website [www.porkcongress.on.ca](http://www.porkcongress.on.ca) or our Twitter Page @OntPorkCongress



Joe Dwyer

Joe Dwyer  
2017 President OPC

# GEARING UP FOR THE ONTARIO PORK CONGRESS

The event is packed with informative sessions, initiatives to support the community, and delicious food.

by DIEGO FLAMMINI



*Taste the Best is a popular attraction where local chefs prepare delicious bacon creations.*

On June 21 and 22, members of Ontario's pork community will converge at the Stratford Rotary Complex for the 44th annual Ontario Pork Congress (OPC).

The two-day event brings producers, local chefs, exhibitors and educators under one roof to celebrate all things swine.

"The trade show itself is a reason to come," said Joe Dwyer, president of OPC's executive committee. "Being able to see what's new and updated to fit the industry is a great benefit to pork producers."

More than 100 exhibitors are scheduled to be on hand, including some from the United States and Europe.

"This year's trade show is expected to reach 3,000 attendees," Dwyer said. "Exhibitors will be showcasing everything from genetics all the way through to (items for) your dinner table."

### NEW FOR 2017

To coincide with Canada's 150th birthday, organizers scheduled a competition that merges pork with

patriotism. "This year we have a special category in the Pig Art Competition," said Linda Weitzel, OPC project manager, exhibits. "We are looking for the most patriotic pig."

"Canada's 150th birthday will also be the theme of the kids' zone, and throughout the show (there) will be other displays and historical information."

On June 22, chef Arron Carley, winner of Food Network's Chopped Canada and executive chef at The Bruce in Stratford, will perform a cooking demonstration on the main stage. He will use locally produced pork.

Returning for its second year is the International Workers Tour. The guided tour provides international workers with a welcome to Ontario's swine industry. A Spanish translator will be on hand to help international guests with any questions they may have.

"(This tour) was well-received (last year) both by the farms who employ the workers and the workers themselves," Weitzel said.

### MARQUIS EVENTS

OPC attendees can participate in, or watch, some of the more popular

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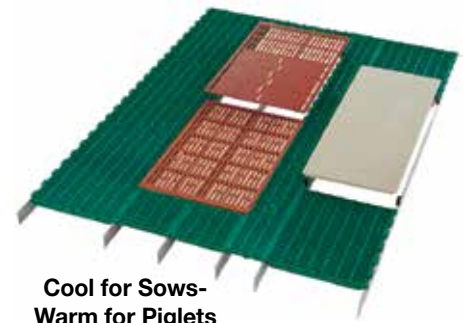
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**The two-day event brings producers, local chefs, exhibitors and educators under one roof to celebrate all things swine.**

events taking place.

One of the marquis events is the Bacon Maker Classic (BMC), scheduled on June 22.

BMC is bringing back the Carcass Evaluation for students in high school and post-secondary programs. Students in this class will have to weigh a total of three hogs. Participants will then have to choose one for carcass evaluation.

New this year, the BMC will present Vet Talks on Day 1, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the arena. Learn from four industry-leading veterinarians about carcass quality throughout a pig's lifespan and get your questions answered surrounding carcass quality.

Another important OPC event that reaches beyond the farm is the Pork for a Cause Hog Jog. The annual 3.5

km run/walk and 10 km run partners with a charity to raise awareness and funds for a community initiative.

This year, the Hog Jog partnered with Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services located in Stratford. The shelter serves as a safe space for women and children suffering from abuse.

The funds raised from this year's race will help Optimism Place purchase a new van – an item the organization desperately needs.

"We have an old van that's absolutely falling apart," said Anne McDonnell, executive director at Optimism Place. "The hood is a different colour than the rest and it's horrible. We're a busy, 13-bed shelter and we can have up to 20 women and children here at one time.

"The van gets used a lot for groceries, picking up donations, taking women to court or to the doctor, and (taking) children to and from school. We're very excited and it's a wonderful opportunity."

The Hog Jog's partnership with Optimism Place can help the shelter strengthen its relationship with rural Ontario.

"Some of the women that come to us are farm women so it's important for us to do our connecting," McDonnell said, adding Optimism Place representatives will be on hand during the Hog Jog to give water to the participants.

Other hot spots during the Ontario Pork Congress include international workers and translators, the hospitality tent, and Taste the Best, where local chefs prepare delicious bacon creations.

**GOOD WEATHER**

Be sure to pack sunglasses as the weather looks to be ideal for OPC, according to early reports. June 21 should be sunny and 21 C. June 22 should be 22 C with a mix of sun and cloud.

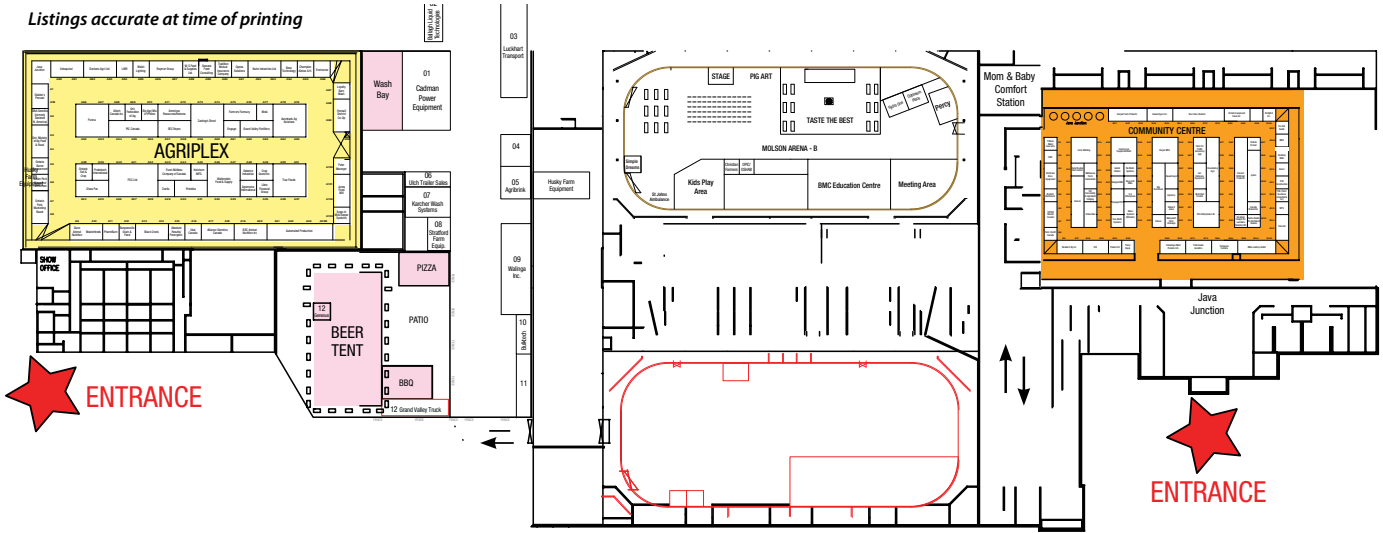
**WHAT:** Ontario Pork Congress  
**WHEN:** June 21 and 22, 2017  
**WHERE:** Stratford Rotary Complex – 353 McCarthy Rd, Stratford, ON, N5A 6W1

**COST:** \$15.00 per adult. Children under 16 are free when accompanied by an adult.

**MORE INFO:** Call 519-272-1532 or email [porkcongress@gmail.com](mailto:porkcongress@gmail.com). **BP**

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Java Junction	Vetoquinol	Donkers Agri Ltd	LMR	Walsh Lighting	Raymer Group	W-S Feed & Supplies Ltd.	Gowans Feed Consulting	Tradition Mutual Insurance Company	Ogena Solutions	Nuhn Industries Ltd.	Boss Technology	Champion Aistoe A.H.	Environize						
	A80	A81	A82	A83	A84	A85	A86	A87	A88	A89	A90	A91	A92	A93	A94	A95	A96		
Stubbe's Precast																	A97	Loyalty Barn Wash	
DNA Genetics (formerly Danbred N. America)																	A98	Hensall District Co-Op	
Ont. Ministry of Ag Food & Rural		A52	A53	A54	A55	A56	A57	A58	A59	A60	A61	A62	A63	A64	A65				
		<b>AGRIPLEX</b>																	
Ontario Swine Improvement																	A100	Peter Maranger	
Better Pork Magazine/Farms.com																	A101	Jones Feed Mill	
Ontario Pork Marketing Board																	A102		
																	A103	Supp-le Milk/Soppe Systems	
		A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20	A21	A22	A23	A23B		
		Daco Animal Nutrition	Masterfeeds	PharmBarn	Burgessville Grain & Feed	Black Creek	Absolute Results/Penergetic	Ukal Canada	Alliance Genetics Canada	BSC Animal Nutrition Inc	Automated Production								

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Abell Pest Control.....	B70	Elanco Animal Health.....	B53	Rural Affairs .....	A3-A4
Absolute Results/Penergetic .....	A15	Engage Animal Health.....	A61	Ontario Pork .....	A7-A8
Agribrink.....	Outdoors 03	Environize.....	A96	Ontario Pork Industry Council .....	Arena
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Agronoma International Inc. ....	A34	Farm Credit Canada .....	B8	Ontario Swine Improvement Inc.....	A5
Alliance Genetics Canada.....	A17-A18	Farmers Farmacy.....	A75-A76	Optimism Place .....	Arena
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American Resources/ROTECNA...	A71-A72	Farm For Profit/Greencrop Agri Products Ltd. ....	B66-B67	Peter Maranger & Assoc. ....	A100
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Arbourdale.....	B24-B25	.....	B111	PharmBarn .....	A11
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Black Creek.....	A13-A14	Hydro One.....	Arena	Shur Gain / Nutreco Canada Inc.....	B64, B65, B75, B76
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Daco Animal Nutrition.....	A9	Newtech Ag Inc.....	B9 & B17	VanRooy Mills & Associates.....	B109
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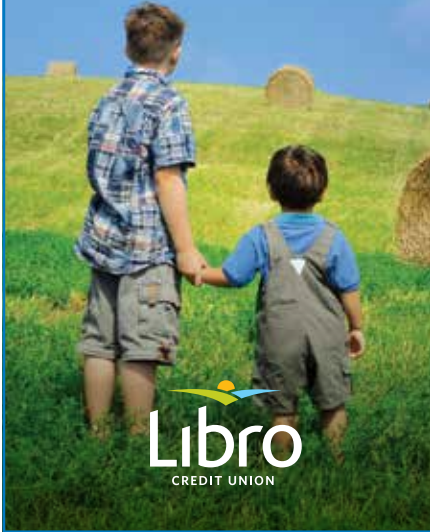
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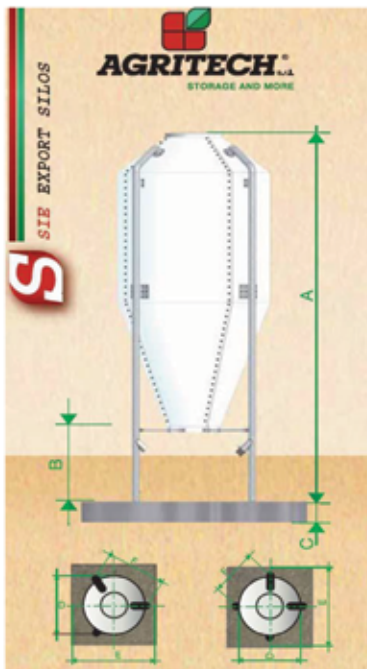
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SIE_08	8	4,8	3	188	41.3	12	79	99	74
SIE_12	12	7,2	3	221	41.3	12	87	110	80.5
SIE_18	18	10,8	4	238	41.3	12	102	120	77.5
SIE_20	20	12	4	272	41.3	12	102	120	77.5
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## WHAT'S NEW AT THE ALBERTA PORK CONGRESS

Organizers are serving up a unique way to showcase and learn about industry products and services.

by GEOFF GEDDES

Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation photo



*Organizers say the Alberta Pork Congress is looking better than ever with a combination of the tried and true alongside some exciting additions.*

Running June 14 and 15 at Westerner Park in Red Deer, the Alberta Pork Congress (APC) offers a forum for the pork industry to showcase its products and services. APC also features social and networking opportunities. As they prepare to celebrate the 43rd edition of the event, organizers say it's looking better than ever with a combination of the tried and true alongside some exciting additions.

"This year looks really good as we've pretty well sold out our booth space," said Nick Korver, president of APC.

In addition to many returning businesses, Korver said organizers are pleased to welcome a number of new vendors, such as Advanced Ag Products from the

United States.

"We're seeing a lot of renewed interest which may be a reflection of the industry these days," said Korver.

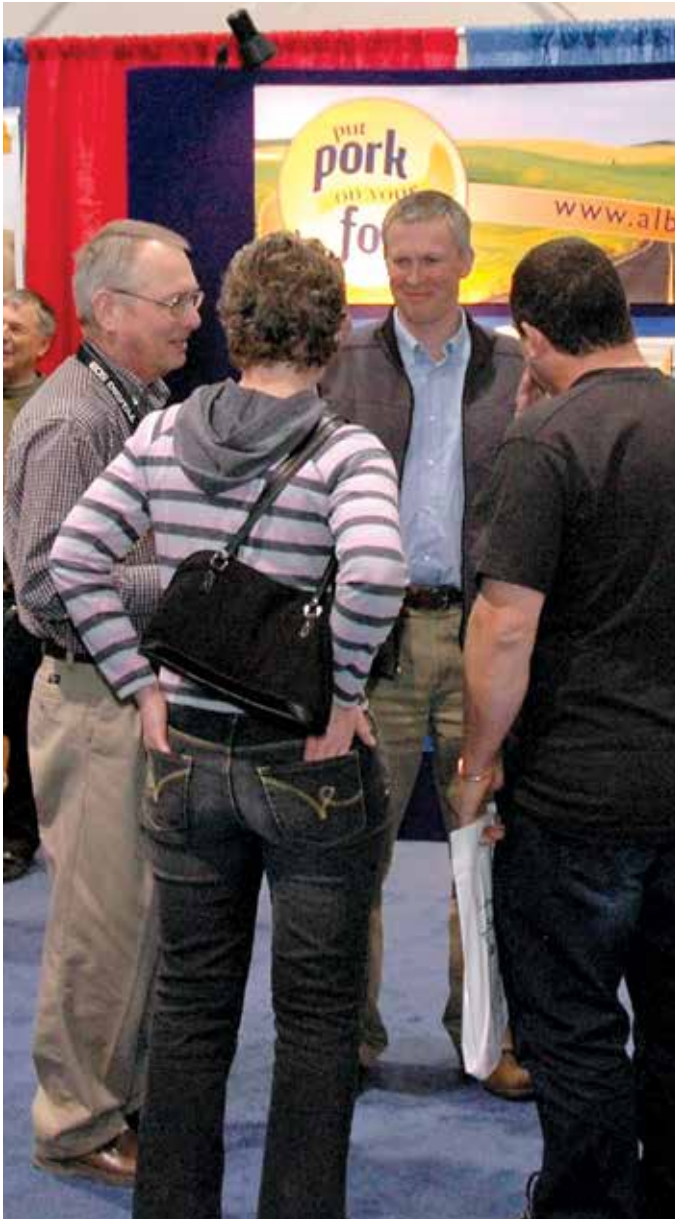
"It's no secret that the hog industry is marked by fluctuations, but it has been pretty stable the last couple of years with guys getting good returns and building new barns. That may be helping to drive our booth sales."

### AN AWARDING EXPERIENCE

One of the most popular elements each year is the Wednesday night banquet featuring awards for industry ambassador, lifetime achievement and best farm



Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation photo



*“It’s a chance for producers and businesses to come together, learn about the latest innovations and celebrate our industry,” Korver said.*

team performance, as well as production awards from Olymel.

“The banquet has really taken off over the last couple of years with the addition of table sponsorship and companies bringing their customers to the dinner. For 2017, we’ve brought back videos to accompany the main awards and tightened up the program so you can enjoy an awesome meal and socialize while still getting out at a decent hour,” said Korver.

Of course, the heart of the event is the trade show and Korver sees a lot of opportunity there.

“It’s a chance for producers and businesses to come together, learn about the latest innovations and

celebrate our industry,” he said.

As fellow board member and past president Dr. Kurt Preugschas noted, a lot of credit for this year’s success goes to Kate Cheney, general manager, for her hard work in driving attendance. Organizers have also made a couple of changes that help keep the event fresh.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

“A really interesting addition this year is the info pod session where companies can make a 15-minute presentation about their products or services right on the trade show floor,” said Preugschas.

The sessions will run every couple of hours and people have already begun snapping up the spots.

In response to feedback from past attendees, organizers have also moved the barbeque back to its Thursday evening time slot.

“We wanted to change the flow of things for the better and felt that topping off the two days with the barbeque was a great note to end on,” said Preugschas.

For his part, Korver is excited about the event’s potential and he is glad he became involved.

“I’ve really enjoyed interacting with people from other parts of the pork industry and learning what is

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Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation photo



*"I think the future is fairly bright for producers, businesses and the Alberta Pork Congress itself," Korver said.*

happening behind the scenes," said Korver.

"I attended Pork Congress for years but was never on the committee, so it has been fun seeing what goes into the planning throughout the year and how it all comes to fruition in June."

As he reflects on the history of the event and on

the industry in general, Korver has high hopes for the future of both.

"We have gone through some rough times as an industry but we've survived by working together and I think the future is fairly bright for producers, businesses and the Alberta Pork Congress itself." **BP**

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## First Annual CFM (Kees) de Lange Lecture – 2017 London Swine Conference

On August 1, 2016 the swine industry lost a teacher, a mentor and a friend. After an eight-year battle with melanoma, Dr. Kees de Lange, Professor of Swine Nutrition at the University of Guelph, passed away at his home. Dr. de Lange was pivotal in developing and organizing the London Swine Conference from its inception in 2001. In honour of the late Dr. Kees de Lange, the London Swine Conference organizing committee has developed the CFM de Lange Lecture series – an annual lecture to be given by a distinguished swine nutritionist at the London Swine Conference.



Dr. Kees de Lange

This year marked the first annual lecture, presented by Dr. Mike Tokach from Kansas State University. Dr. Tokach highlighted many accomplishments in the field of swine nutrition, in many of which Dr. de Lange played a significant role. The full paper which accompanied the presentation can be found by visiting [www.londonswineconference.ca](http://www.londonswineconference.ca).

## How Have New Technologies and Knowledge Changed our Views of Nutrition in the Last 20 Years?

According to Tokach, some of the major areas where new technologies and knowledge have pushed the swine nutrition world forward over the last 20 years are nutrient expression and diet formulation, how we determine nutrient requirements, reducing the reliance on high cost nursery diets, feeding methods and DDGS. For example, transitioning from total to digestible amino acids and phosphorus, and to the NE system, has allowed us to use increasing amounts of by-product ingredients while maximizing performance. Significant improvements to growth and production models, and the use of commercially applicable research facilities, has also had a major impact on the industry. Improved feeder designs have reduced feed wastage and the use of automatic feeders in sow barns has decreased problems with underfeeding.

Dr. de Lange was one of the pioneers in helping us understand why apparent digestible amino acids levels for individual ingredients were not always additive in predicting the level in final diets. He helped us understand how endogenous losses from the pig would impact our estimations. Based on this research, the industry moved to using standardized digestibility values which account for endogenous losses. These values and prediction models are still the basis for how we formulate diets today.

As stated in Dr. Tokach's paper:

"Growth and reproductive models greatly assist nutritionists in estimating the requirements for different levels of productivity. The models also can be quite helpful at answering other 'what if' type scenarios. Kees de Lange was one of the leading pioneers in model development for the North American swine industry. He was the key force behind the model used in the NRC (2012) and in the more sophisticated models used by many feed companies. Nutritionists from around the world have applied the concepts from his work in estimating nutrient requirements of pigs." Anyone in Ontario who has a liquid feeder barn will be familiar with Kees' dedication to this aspect of swine feeding. He pioneered research looking into practical applications for liquid feeding, including feeding systems, ingredient selection and additives. Kees spoke at many meetings on this topic and trained many graduate students to have an extensive knowledge of liquid feeding for pigs.

Although Dr. Tokach's presentation highlighted some of the major achievements in swine nutrition over the last 20 years, it is by no means a comprehensive list. This presentation highlighted many of Kees de Lange's accomplishments throughout his career and reminded us how fortunate the Ontario swine industry was to have known him. The next question, then, is what will another 20 years bring us when it comes to swine nutrition?

Laura Eastwood, Swine Specialist  
519-271-6280  
[laura.eastwood@ontario.ca](mailto:laura.eastwood@ontario.ca)

## What Will Ontario Livestock Farms Look Like in The Low-Carbon Economy of the Future?

Climate change is now widely accepted as being a major threat and human activities that produce greenhouse gases will require attention. In agriculture, the major greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane. Nitrous oxide and methane are much more potent at climate forcing than carbon dioxide. Each tillage, energy use, nitrogen fertilization, livestock feeding and manure usage are agricultural activities that will see changes in the future.

I've said it before and I will keep saying that sustainable livestock need sustainable crops. That is because of the large portion of livestock's footprint that feed production represents. Changes to diesel use and tillage as well as nitrogen use, whether from manure or commercial fertilizer, will have trickle effects through the feeds produced on the sustainable livestock farm. It also

means that livestock feed efficiency, especially from grains, will be a constant push in the future.

The barn envelope will change on the low-carbon livestock farm of the future too. The relationship between heat usage, barn design and animal management will be re-examined. There is already some evidence that swine and poultry barns could be run at lower temperatures. Barns for all species can be more efficient and even generate heat or electricity for use and sale. They can all be more labour efficient! It is time to start a new vision for making long-term decisions, such as building anew or renovating.

I would suggest that livestock farming in a low-carbon economy will look and be managed differently than today, so plan ahead. Follow me on Twitter @CtophWand.

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

## Water Management

Water is an essential element in livestock production. It's important to manage this natural resource carefully for best production and financial results. Here are five ideas on how to do that.

Start by completing a water audit. Wasted water costs money to pump and to dispose of. If you're serious about water management, install a meter and compare consumption with what the animals need as a means of detecting problems. For grower and finisher pigs, water requirements have been found to be 2.3L for every kilogram of feed consumed. For sows on a farrow to finish farm, average daily usage has been found to be about 20L per sow. (See table, from "Water Requirements of Livestock", OMA-FRA Factsheet 716/400.)

Second, check drinker placement. Mounting nipple drinkers correctly reduces wasted water. For drinkers pointed straight out, pigs should

### Water Consumption By Swine\*

Swine Type	Weight Range (kg)	Water Requirement Range <sup>a</sup> (L/day)	Average Typical Water Use <sup>b</sup> (L/day)
Weaner	7-22	1.0-3.2	2.0
Feeder pig	23-36	3.2-4.5	4.5
Feeder pig	36-70	4.5-7.3	4.5
Feeder pig	70-110	7.3-10.0	9
Gestating sow/boar	-	13.6-17.2	15
Lactating sow <sup>c</sup>	-	18.1-22.7	20

<sup>a</sup>A result of the animals' environment and management.

<sup>b</sup>Typical consumption over a year on a daily basis under average agricultural conditions in Ontario.

<sup>c</sup>Includes unweaned piglets.

\*From: Froese, C., and Small, D. "Water consumption and waste production during different production stages in hog operations." St. Andrews, Manitoba: Manitoba Livestock Manure Management Initiative. 2001.



drink from shoulder height. For drinkers mounted downward at 45°, the drinker should be 5cm above the back of the pig. Mounting lower will increase water wastage because the pigs can't access the drinker properly. Generally, drinkers should be set for the height of the smallest pig in the pen. In research trials, however, providing a step for smaller pigs instead of mounting the drinker lower resulted in a 13% reduction of water waste, and reduced manure volume by 10% compared to a conventional setup.

Third, check drinker flow rates. Flow rates determine time spent at the drinker, water intake and water wastage. Too little is just as costly as too much, since it will adversely affect feed intake and animal growth performance. Recommended flow rates are 1,500 ml/min for lactating sows, and 700 ml/min in the grow-finish barn.

Fourth, consider alternatives to nipple drinkers. Cup or bowl drinkers have been shown to waste less water, reducing spillage by 10 to 15%. Wet/dry feeders in the grow finish phase reduce water used by 34%, and slurry volume by 20 to 40%, compared with dry feeders and a bowl. Wet/dry feeders also increase consumption of mash diets compared to dry feeders and a separate drinker, resulting in a 5% improvement in average daily gain. Be sure they are properly adjusted.

Finally, assess the diet. Feeding a diet containing excessive protein or excessive mineral levels results in increased water usage.

Of course, remember that temperature impacts water requirements. For example, every 1° above 20°C results in a sow drinking 0.2L more water each day. For more information, refer to the OMAFRA Factsheet

"Water Requirements of Livestock," Agdex 716/400, <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/07-023.htm>.

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## Tips to reduce heat stress in your pigs

As we move into summer it is important to remember that your pigs are susceptible to heat stress. Although pigs are generally raised in facilities with a controlled environment, it is not always possible to avoid high temperatures within the barns. Temperatures above 23°C can have negative impacts on animal performance, and measures should be taken to help reduce the impact of hot weather on your pigs. A heat stress index for pigs can be found in Figure 1 on page 49.

Heat stress is a concern with pigs because they do not have functional sweat glands like other livestock species to help them reduce body heat. Pigs utilize two primary ways to help minimize heat stress: reduced production of body heat and increased heat dissipation.

When the environment is warm, you will often see pigs increasing body surface contact with a cool surface, such as the floor. Pigs will also increase respiration (panting) as a way to increase air flow and water evaporation from the lungs, which releases additional heat from within their body. These are all strategies pigs use to help dissipate excess body heat. In order to reduce the amount of body heat being produced, pigs will decrease their feed intake and activity levels, and will increase water consumption. Coping with heat stress can lead to poor growth rates, poor feed

conversion, reduced milk production in sows, reduced fertility (lower breeding rates), and even increased susceptibility to disease and mortality. Take steps to reduce heat stress on your farm and help pigs cope with warmer weather.

Management strategies to help reduce heat stress symptoms:

- We cannot control the weather! Plan ahead and have strategies in place to deal with hot weather when it happens.
- Reduce stocking density if possible. Increasing floor space per pig improves the ability of each pig to lay down in a sprawled posture to help dissipate heat. Body contact with other pigs reduces the ability to lose excess heat.
- Check and clean your ventilation systems to ensure they are working properly. This includes thermostats, fans and air inlets.
- Increase air movement when the temperature increases. Rapid air movement over pigs increases the rate of evaporative and convective heat loss. Increasing mechanical ventilation will help remove the humid air from inside the barn. See Table 1 on page 48 for recommended rates.
- Install cooling systems, or check to ensure they are working properly. Drip coolers and sprinklers can have a significant impact on reducing heat stress in pigs through evaporative cooling. Sprinklers should activate for 1 to 2 minutes every 20 to 30 minutes to allow moisture to evaporate off the pigs' skin before starting the process again. Larger water droplets also work better than a fine mist. Drip systems and cooling pads are best suited for individually housed sows.
- Increase the nutrient density of feed in the summer. This means pigs can receive the same

amount of nutrients when consuming less feed. Adding supplemental fat to the diet is a simple way to increase energy density of the diet and reduce the amount of heat produced from the digestive process itself. Work with your nutritionist to come up with a specific program.

- Where feeding is not ad lib, alter the time of day in which the bulk of feed is offered. By providing the majority of feed during cooler hours, it will help to reduce decreases in feed intake.
- Ensure pigs have access to plenty of cool, clean water. When under heat stress conditions, pigs will increase water intake significantly (up to six times the level they would consume under normal circumstances). Waterers need to be adjusted and functioning properly, and enough of them need to be available to meet the needs of each pig in the pen. (See the article on water management in this issue of PNV.)

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## 40 Years Ago in Pork News and Views

The preceding article provides advice in anticipation of warmer weather ahead. At the time of writing, that is eagerly awaited by some. The May-June 1976 issue of PNV emphasized this theme, too:

*“Hot weather increases breeding problems in the sow herd and reduces market hog performance.”*

That issue featured a series of articles addressing coping with hot weather in the various stages of production – housing and ventilation, breeding, transport, etc. There was even a piece on “Keeping the Farm Home Cool in Hot Weather.”

In looking through back issues of PNV and other publications I have archived, it’s clear that the pork industry faces certain perennial challenges. The following article from the May-June 1976 issue of PNV, written by an OMAF Swine Specialist, is an example:

“A higher than usual number of repeat breedings in summertime and the birth of small litters to sows which farrow in November and

December are often the result of heat stress.

“Under controlled experimental conditions, when a group of bred gilts were heat stressed, nearly one-third of them returned to heat. At the same time in another group of bred gilts which were not heat stressed, none returned to heat.

“The most critical periods of heat stress are before and after breeding when air temperatures exceed 27°C (80°F). At high air temperatures, water spray cooling of gilts and sows is the best method to reduce the effects of heat stress in animals reared under confinement conditions.

“The equipment for water spray cooling is simple, inexpensive and readily available. Crop sprayer nozzles are most commonly used. A system of water spray cooling can be automated by using a thermostat, electric timer and a solenoid water valve.”

For more information please contact *Jaydee Smith, Swine Specialist* 519-674-1542 [jaydee.smith@ontario.ca](mailto:jaydee.smith@ontario.ca)

**Table 1:** OMAFRA Recommended Ventilation Rates for Swine

Type of Animal	Ventilation Rate CFM/Animal	
	Cold Weather	Warm Weather <sup>a</sup>
Breeding/Gestating Sow	10	200
Farrowing Sow with Litter	15	400
Nursery Pigs, 4-25 kg	1.0-3.0 <sup>b</sup>	15-35 <sup>c</sup>
Grower Pigs, 25-60 kg	4.0-6.0	50-70
Finishing Pigs, 60-120 kg	6.0-8.0	70-90

<sup>a</sup> Summer ventilation rate for large pigs may need to be increased to one air change per minute during hot summer weather.

<sup>b</sup> For reasonably good air quality, this minimum winter ventilation rate may need to be increased to ensure at least 3 to 4 room air changes per hour.

<sup>c</sup> Limit the maximum summer air changes to one per minute for sensitive livestock.



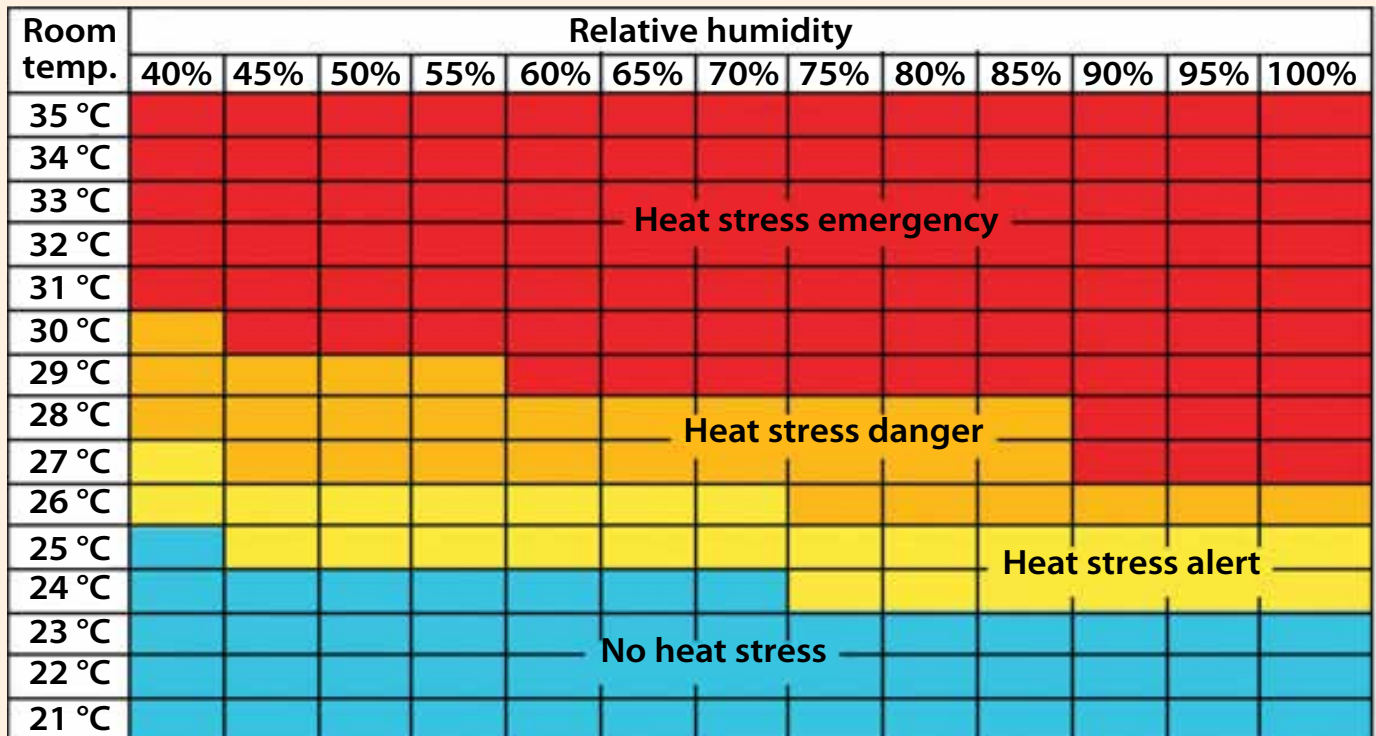


Figure 1. Heat Stress Index for grow-finish swine. Source: Iowa State University

## OAHN Update

### What's New in Swine Research at OVC

From the Oct-Dec 2016 Ontario Animal Health Network (OAHN) Swine Producer and Industry Report. For the full report go to [www.oahn.ca](http://www.oahn.ca). Dr. Bob Friendship shared some upcoming research defenses that we thought would interest producers.

**Peter Park, MSc:** Investigation on the Efficacy of Non-nutritive Adsorbent Binders on Decreasing Skatole and Androstenone Concentrations in Boars. Conclusions: this appeared to be a potential approach to reducing boar taint but products used in the research trials were not effective and therefore this area requires further study.

**Maggie Ainslie, MSc:** An Epidemiological Study of Diet, Farm Management, and Innate Immune Genotype on Salmonella Shedding and Colonization in Pigs. Conclusions: a genetic variant associated with increased Salmonella shedding was identified

and therefore geneticists might be able to apply this research approach in the selection of increased disease-resistant breeding stock.

**Heather Reinhardt, MSc:** The effects of nursery diet complexity on growth performance and carcass quality in various commercial swine settings. Conclusions: pigs fed a cheaper diet without animal proteins during the nursery phase demonstrated compensatory growth and reached market at a similar age to pigs receiving a high complex starter diet. There is a potential for savings by feeding a lower cost nursery ration.

**Emily Arndt, MSc:** An investigation into distribution of serotypes and antimicrobial resistance patterns of *Streptococcus suis* isolates from clinical cases and healthy-carrier pigs. Conclusions: this study found multiple serotypes of *S. suis*, even from an individual pig, and if a farm was to use an autogenous bacterin, care would be needed in selecting the right serotype.

### OAHN Swine Network Nursery Project

Are you a swine producer who currently has a nursery that contains Raised Without Antibiotic (RWA) pigs? Or are you a swine producer in Eastern Ontario? If so, we need your help! Contact us to enroll in the OAHN Swine Network Nursery project. A limited amount of laboratory testing will be complimentary for those enrolled. Please contact Dr. Bob Friendship at [rfriends@uoguelph.ca](mailto:rfriends@uoguelph.ca).

### OPC – Visit us at the OMAFRA booth!

Ontario Pork Congress is fast approaching. Please stop by and visit us at the OMAFRA booth on June 21st and 22nd. This year's interactive booth will have information on barn fire prevention, getting piglets off to a good start, group sow housing, benchmarking and cost of production. We look forward to seeing you all!

## London Swine Conference a Success

The 17th LSC, held in March, grew again this year in both attendance and the quality of the program, building on a momentum developed over the last number of years.

The planning committee works hard to engage the industry, both producers and the various service sectors, in the program planning process in order to build a program that has something to offer everyone. It is very gratifying to see producer participation grow year over year as word gets out about this conference.

The program covered a wide range of topics. The written proceedings are available on the conference website for anyone to browse, including all of them back to the beginning in 2001. [www.londonwineconference.ca](http://www.londonwineconference.ca)

## Ontario Hog Market Information Resources

The OMAFRA Swine Team produces four hog market reports (three weekly and one monthly) that can help keep your knowledge of Ontario hog market facts and trends up to date.

The **Weekly Hog Market Facts** is a summary of current market information, from Ontario, Canada and the U.S., that impacts the Ontario hog market to assist producers in making informed marketing and production decisions.

The weekly **Ontario Market Hog Price Trend Report** is a resource showing a snapshot of the future hog price trends to be used as a guide for marketing decisions. It calculates a "what-if" Ontario 100% Formula price based on CME lean hog futures values and Canadian dollar futures.

The weekly **Hog Margin Trackers** is a quick indicator of price risk management opportunities or challenges based on trends in feed and hog market futures.

The **Monthly Swine Budget** (included bimonthly in Pork News and Views) is a cost of production budget for benchmarks, trends, financial, production and marketing decisions. It encourages

producers to know and evaluate their own cost of production and returns.

For more information or to subscribe to receive any of these reports by email, contact:

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**Weekly Hog Market Facts**  
Monday May 1, 2017  
Compiled by the OMAFRA Swine Team

Week Ending on Friday	31-Mar-17	07-Apr-17	14-Apr-17	21-Apr-17	28-Apr-17
The Ontario Market	\$166.49	\$160.71	\$159.51	\$149.33	\$147.06
100% Base Formula Price (\$/c/kg, 100 index)	\$154.17	\$156.81	\$154.59	\$154.10	\$158.20
Previous Year - 100% Formula Price (\$/c/kg, 100 index)	\$197.91	\$191.96	\$186.53	\$181.42	
Average price (\$/c/kg, DW total value)	\$179.16	\$174.09	\$166.88	\$161.49	
Low price (\$/c/kg, DW total value)	\$155.37	\$219.42	\$224.04	\$218.82	
High price (\$/c/kg, DW total value)					
Weekly Average Dressed Weight (kg)					
Market Hogs Sold					
Market Hogs Sold - % of Previous					
Wenched Pig Value (C\$/pig) - 20%					
Feeder Pig Value (C\$/pig) - 41.25%					
Market Pig Value (C\$/pig) - 101%					
25 kg Feeder Pig Value 14 Weeks					
16 week Avg. Grow-Finish Feed					
Est. Margin after Feeder Pig and					
Est. Farrow to Finish Feed Cost					

**Ontario Market Hog Price Trend**  
Compiled by the OMAFRA Swine Team

Week of	Monday	C\$/c/kg, 100 index	Change from Previous Thursday
22 29-May-17		\$184.24	\$11.02
23 05-Jun-17		\$184.44	\$11.02
24 12-Jun-17		\$185.31	\$10.19
25 19-Jun-17		\$192.69	\$10.27
26 26-Jun-17		\$195.99	\$10.31
27 03-Jul-17		\$194.87	\$10.30
28 10-Jul-17		\$200.21	\$8.25
		\$199.81	\$8.25

**Ontario Market Hog Price Trend**  
Date: May 4, 2017

Used for Weeks #	Month	Value
13-23	Jun '17	\$76.48
24-27	Jul '17	\$77.38
28-32	Aug '17	\$76.63
33-40	Oct '17	\$67.35
41-49	Dec '17	\$62.18
50-52 & 1-6	Feb '18	\$66.45
	Apr '18	\$69.50
		\$77.88

**Hog Margin Tracker**  
Thursday May 4, 2017  
Compiled by the OMAFRA Swine Team

**Farrow to Finish Return over Feed Margin Tracker** - is an indicator of the margin after accounting for the variables with the greatest price risk (market hog, corn, and soybean meal). The margin is the return to cover all other variable and fixed costs (Market Hog, corn, and soybean meal). The margin is the margin provided for producers a quick indicator of risk management opportunities or challenges.

**2017 Farrow to Finish Return over Feed (\$/market pig)**

Return over Feed Margin = Market Hog Income - Feed Cost (Farrow to Finish)

Time Periods on Graph:

- The green bars show the actual margins achieved as the pigs are marketed.
- The graph is broken down into the stages of production for Farrow to Finish as follows: Grow Finish Stage (blue) - 16 weeks; Nursery Stage (orange) - 7 weeks; On The Sow (purple) - 3 weeks; and Gestation (red) - 17 weeks. The black bars are for the Open Sows. These are estimated margins that will change each week depending on the hog and feed market future prices.
- \$60 Margin - Example of a benchmark margin value. It needs to cover all other variable and fixed costs.

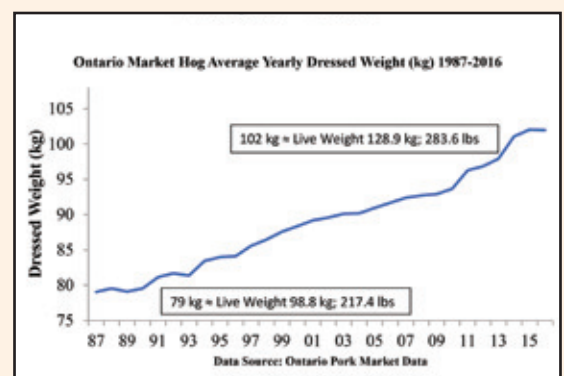
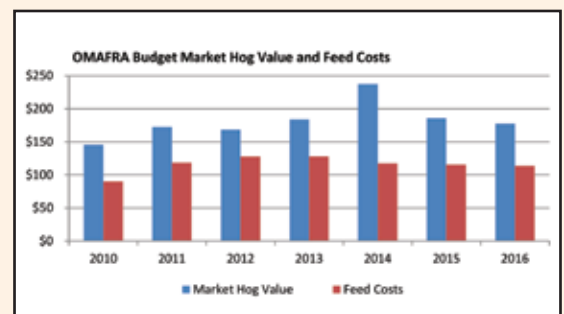
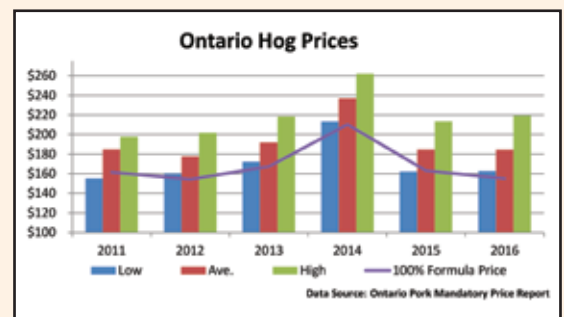
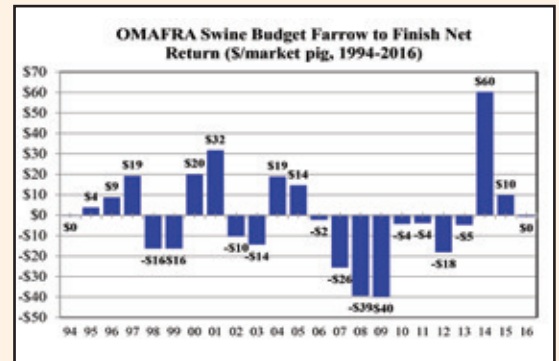
Margin (\$/pig) = Market Hog Value (\$/pig) - Feed Cost (\$/pig):

- Market Hog Value = 101% of weekly base price X 110 index X weekly avg. dressed weight + \$2 premium (Feed Corn) - Hamilton Soybean Meal plus \$20/tonne, commercial premium, and \$20 per tonne (handling and mixing)
- Feed Budget - based on 1,100 kg. of sow feed, 33.5 kg. of nursery feed, and approximately 270 kg. of grow-finish feed (based on 2.75 feed conversion and growing a 27 kg feeder pig to market weight).
- Projected values used for feed (corn and soybean meal) and market hogs are calculated using basis adjusted futures values at the market close on Thursdays.



## 2017 Ontario Hog Market Summary

	Jan '17	Feb '17	Mar '17	Apr '17
100% Formula Price (\$/c/kg, 100 index)	\$150.70	\$174.67	\$173.64	\$152.66
<b>* Same Month - Previous year</b>	<b>\$141.99</b>	<b>\$163.11</b>	<b>\$159.33</b>	<b>\$155.57</b>
Average price (\$/c/kg, DW total value)	\$180.00	\$203.63	\$204.29	\$184.76
Low price (\$/c/kg, DW total value)	\$155.12	\$180.75	\$184.49	\$164.87
High price (\$/c/kg, DW total value)	\$221.54	\$231.69	\$228.50	\$220.57
Ontario Market Hog Sales	418,185	400,000	492,050	380,084
<b>* % Change Same Month - Previous Year</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>-2.68%</b>
Average Carcass Weight (kg)	103.60	103.00	102.34	102.13
Weaned Pigs (\$/pig, 5 kg)**Formula	\$39.20	\$45.42	\$45.15	\$39.69
Feeder Pigs (\$/pig, 25 kg)**Formula	\$62.60	\$72.05	71.63	\$62.97
Value of Canadian Dollar (US\$)	\$0.7567	\$0.7640	\$0.7479	\$0.7443
<b>* Same Month - Previous year</b>	<b>\$0.7068</b>	<b>\$0.7228</b>	<b>\$0.7533</b>	<b>\$0.7777</b>
Prime Interest Rate at End of Month	2.70%	2.70%	2.70%	2.70%
Corn (farm price) - \$/tonne	\$180.86	\$184.29	\$183.78	\$184.83
<b>* Same Month - Previous year</b>	<b>\$189.25</b>	<b>\$187.00</b>	<b>\$180.28</b>	<b>\$179.68</b>
Soybean Meal (Hamilton + \$20/tonne)	\$526.12	\$523.55	\$510.84	\$481.69
<b>* Same Month - Previous year</b>	<b>\$483.64</b>	<b>\$466.99</b>	<b>\$457.97</b>	<b>\$475.07</b>
Corn - Western Ontario Feed - \$/tonne	\$201.47	\$200.84	\$197.93	\$197.38
<b>* Same Month - Previous year</b>	<b>\$202.37</b>	<b>\$200.32</b>	<b>\$192.15</b>	<b>\$193.75</b>
DDGS FOB Chatham/Sarnia/Alymer (\$/tonne)	\$139.75	\$150.00	\$165.20	\$175.00
<b>* Same Month - Previous year</b>	<b>\$230.00</b>	<b>\$229.21</b>	<b>\$214.00</b>	<b>\$192.10</b>
<b>Summary of OMAFRA Swine Budget (\$/pig, Farrow to Finish)</b>				
Value of Market Hog	\$175.46	\$201.88	\$199.43	\$175.22
Feed Cost	\$114.46	\$114.81	\$114.81	\$114.31
Other Variable Costs	\$41.45	\$41.25	\$41.24	\$43.69
Fixed Costs	\$23.76	\$23.76	\$23.76	\$23.76
Total Costs	\$179.67	\$179.82	\$179.81	\$181.77
Net Return	-\$4.21	\$22.06	\$19.62	-\$6.55



For more information or to subscribe to our weekly reports or monthly Swine Budgets, email [jaydee.smith@ontario.ca](mailto:jaydee.smith@ontario.ca)

Income (\$/pig)	Farrow to Wean	Nursery	Grow-Finish	Farrow to Finish
Market Pig @ 101% of Base Price \$152.66/ckg, 110 index, 102.13 kg plus \$2 premium				\$175.22
<b>Variable Costs (\$/pig)</b>				
Breeding Herd Feed @ 1,100 kg/sow	\$13.29			\$14.57
Nursery Feed @ 33.5 kg/pig		\$16.27		\$17.14
Grower-Finisher Feed @ 277 kg/pig			\$82.60	\$82.60
Net Replacement Cost for Gilts	\$2.18			\$2.39
Health (Vet & Supplies)	\$2.16	\$2.10	\$0.45	\$5.03
Breeding (A.I. & Supplies)	\$1.80			\$1.98
Marketing, Grading, Trucking	\$0.90	\$1.50	\$5.76	\$8.33
Utilities (Hydro, Gas)	\$2.35	\$1.38	\$2.13	\$6.17
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	\$0.24	\$0.29	\$0.96	\$1.52
<b>Total Variable Costs</b>	<b>\$31.37</b>	<b>\$24.09</b>	<b>\$98.22</b>	<b>\$158.01</b>
<b>Fixed Costs (\$/pig)</b>				
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
<b>Total Fixed Costs</b>	<b>\$6.90</b>	<b>\$3.52</b>	<b>\$12.48</b>	<b>\$23.76</b>
<b>Summary of Costs (\$/pig)</b>				
Feed	\$13.29	\$16.27	\$82.60	\$114.31
Other Variable	\$18.08	\$7.82	\$15.62	\$43.69
Fixed	\$6.90	\$3.52	\$12.48	\$23.76
<b>Total Variable &amp; Fixed Costs</b>	<b>\$38.27</b>	<b>\$27.61</b>	<b>\$110.71</b>	<b>\$181.77</b>
<b>Summary</b>				
Total Cost (\$/pig)	<b>\$38.27</b>	<b>\$67.44</b>	<b>\$139.80</b>	<b>\$181.77</b>
Net Return Farrow to Finish (\$/pig)				<b>-\$6.55</b>
Farrow to Finish Breakeven Base Price (\$/ckg, 100 index) includes 101% Base Price & \$2 Premium				<b>\$158.43</b>
Farrow to Finish Breakeven Base Price (\$/ckg, 100 index) excludes 101% Base Price & \$2 Premium				<b>\$161.80</b>

This is the estimated accumulated cost for a market hog sold during the month of April 2017. The farrow to wean phase estimates the weaned pig cost for November 2016 and the nursery phase estimates the feeder pig cost for January 2017. For further details, refer to the "2017 Budget Notes" posted at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/swine/finmark.html>.





# TRICHINOSIS – THE PIG IS NOT GUILTY

*In the past, people became infected with this disease by consuming undercooked pork.*



inzyx/Stock/Getty Images Plus photo

As I defined in my previous article in *Better Pork* (pg. 30-32 in the April 2017 edition), a zoonotic disease is an infectious disease that is transmitted from animals to humans. The infectious agent could be a virus, a bacterium, a fungus or a parasite.

In this article, I shall discuss trichinosis, a zoonotic disease caused by a parasite, namely the roundworm, *Trichinella spiralis*. This disease dates back to biblical times. It is partially responsible for the banishment of pork from the diets of two of the world's major religions – Judaism and Islam. Since biblical times, the disease has been detected in individuals after they ate uncooked pork. At that time, people did not know that the pork was contaminated with encysted larvae of the *Trichinella spiralis* parasite.

Overall, this is a good news story – a very good news story where pigs and pork are concerned. Historically, pork had been the source of trichinosis in humans for centuries but this disease is no longer a concern in pigs raised in modern pork operations. Modern pig-rearing methods have eliminated the threat of trichinosis to the human population. Now, the risk of acquiring trichinosis comes from the consumption of uncooked or undercooked wild boar, horse meat and wildlife species (especially bears).

How did the pork industry address this infectious disease?

The industry overcame the threat of *Trichinella spiralis* through a combination of:

- Testing pigs at slaughter for the parasite, removing positive animals and intensifying tests in the other pigs from the same farm.
- Improving hygiene on pig farms.
- Enforcing and maintaining rigorous on-farm biosecurity measures.

## **Life cycle of the *Trichinella spiralis* parasite**

Trichinosis occurs worldwide. Although *Trichinella spiralis* in pork was the major source for trichinosis in humans, the disease can also be caused by *T. pseudospiralis*, *T. nativa*, *T. nelsoni* and *T. britovi*. These parasites are present in other meats, depending on the geographical location of the infection.

The life cycle of *Trichinella* spp. is perpetuated by animals that are fed (e.g. pigs, horses) or eat (e.g. bears, foxes, wild boars) other animals infected with encysted infective larvae of the *Trichinella* spp. parasite. Humans become infected after eating raw or undercooked meat from infected animals. Historically, this role was reserved for pigs, but is now exclusively owned by bears or wild boars. (Pigs no longer consume the feed that made them susceptible to the parasite.)

Encysted larvae of *Trichinella* spp. break out of their cysts during normal digestive processes, penetrate the intestinal wall and become adults in six to eight days. Mature female larvae release living larvae for four to six weeks, then die or are expelled. Newborn larvae migrate via the bloodstream to striated muscles (skeletal muscles

and heart). Larvae encyst in muscle in one to two months and remain viable for years as an intracellular parasite. The cycle continues when encysted larvae are ingested by a carnivore.

At first, infections are usually asymptomatic or mild. Nausea, abdominal cramps and diarrhea may occur.

Systemic signs may begin one to two weeks after infection, consisting

of swellings of the face and around the eyes, muscle pains, persistent fever, intermittent headaches and hemorrhages in the whites of the eyes. Eye pain and sensitivity to light (photophobia) often precede muscle pain. Inflammation from heavy infections may cause myocarditis and heart failure, encephalitis, meningitis, visual disorders, seizures and pneumonia.

Myocarditis or encephalitis can be

fatal and lead to death.

Clinical signs gradually subside and most disappear when the larvae become fully encysted in muscle cells in about three months.

**Treatment**

Anthelmintics (mebendazole or albendazole) eliminate adult worms but have little effect on encysted larvae. Analgesics (e.g. nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs [NSAIDs]) are used to relieve muscle pains. Prednisone is also used to reduce severe allergic, myocardial or nervous system signs.

**Prevention**

Cooking meat thoroughly is the best way to minimize the risk of contracting trichinosis. Cooking pork and other suspect meats to a temperature of at least 71 C (160 F) kills and eliminates the threat from the parasite. Avoiding the consumption of meat from bears and other wildlife also reduces the risk of contracting the disease.

The swine industry, enforcing strict biosecurity measures, has done a tremendous job of isolating domestic swine from raw meat products that might harbour the encysted *Trichinella spiralis* larvae. Regulatory statutes banning feeding of uncooked restaurant leftovers and other such recycled food products have, in a large measure, eliminated this risk to the domestic pig population.

**Conclusion**

Trichinosis, caused by the encysted larvae of the roundworm parasite, *Trichinella spiralis*, was once a major zoonotic disease passed from pigs to humans worldwide. Historically, the infection was caused by eating raw or undercooked pork containing encysted larvae of *Trichinella spiralis*.

Now, this disease has been eliminated from pigs, leaving bears and wild boars as the new sources of trichinosis. **BP**

*S. Ernest Sanford, DVM, Dip Path, Diplomate ACVP, is a Swine Veterinary Consultant based in London, Ont.*

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# SENECAVIRUS A – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

*With the arrival of warmer weather, we need to be more vigilant in identifying potential on-farm outbreaks.*

Dr. Marty Misener, South West Ontario Veterinary Services, photo



**Ulcers or blisters may be seen on the noses of pigs infected with Senecavirus A.**

Senecavirus A has been present in Ontario, resident in some assemblies, since fall 2016 when it was first confirmed in the province. Although we have not had a farm case confirmed to date (May 5, 2017) in Ontario, the prevalence of this disease can increase as the weather gets warmer. This fact means we have to be even more vigilant as we move into the summer.

Clinical signs of Senecavirus A include:

- Blisters or ulcers on the snout, mouth or just above the hoof, where the hoof joins the leg
- Lameness, fever, lethargy and/or lack of appetite in pigs of all ages
- In farrowing barns, a one week spike in pre-wean mortality is common after an outbreak, affecting piglets within one week of birth

The virus has a typical incubation period range from two to eight days after an animal has been infected with the virus. Infected animals can spread the virus for one to two days before showing any visible clinical signs and for an unknown period after displaying clinical signs.

### *It's not a foreign animal disease but ...*

Senecavirus A is not a foreign animal disease but some of its clinical signs closely resemble those of other swine vesicular foreign animal diseases. In fact, lesions caused by Senecavirus A are indistinguishable from those caused by foot-and-mouth disease, for example.

That visual similarity is why the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will test all pigs at processing plants that show signs of Senecavirus A. While testing is being carried out, the affected processing plant can be shut down for up to 72 hours, which will immediately halt all hog movements and pork shipments from that facility.

### *I think some of my pigs have clinical signs ... now what?*

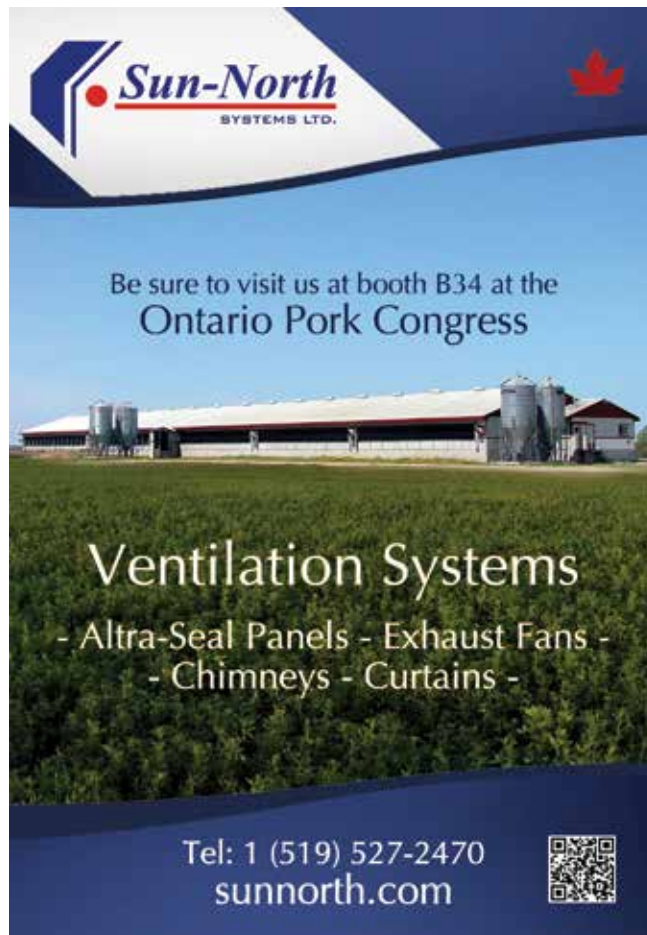
If you notice any of the clinical signs of Senecavirus A in your herd, immediately stop all movement on and off the farm. Contact your herd veterinarian and the CFIA. Don't leave your premises until the vet and CFIA have arrived. If you had any pigs leave your farm in the previous 12 to 24 hours, notify your transporter, processing plant and/or assembly yard right away.

### *What can I do to protect my herd?*

It's important to be vigilant and strengthen the biosecurity procedures on your farm. This approach includes biosecurity for people, animals, and vehicles and supplies moving on and off the farm.

Thoroughly clean and disinfect livestock trucks, clothing, equipment, boots and other tools before allowing them onto your premises.

Unfortunately, it's not clearly known how effective most disinfectants are against Senecavirus A. Since the virus's clinical signs are similar to those of foot-and-mouth disease,




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it's recommended that producers follow disinfection protocols for that disease.

These protocols include using sodium hydroxide, sodium carbonate, 0.2 per cent citric acid, aldehydes, and oxidizing disinfectants including sodium hypochlorite.

In Canada, disinfectants that should be effective against Senecavirus A, based on their spectrum of activity,

**Important phone numbers**

CFIA regional office phone numbers are listed below and full contact information can be found at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/offices/eng/1300462382369/1300462438912>

- **Barrie** 705-739-0008
  - **Belleville** 613-969-3320
  - **Brockville** 613-342-3682
  - **Guelph** 226-217-1200
  - **Hamilton** 905-572-2201
  - **London** 519-691-1300
  - **Markham** 905-513-2850
  - **Mississauga** 289-247-4098
  - **Mitchell** 519-348-0433
  - **Niagara Falls** 905-937-7434
  - **North Bay** 705-495-5995
  - **Ottawa** 613-773-8616
  - **Peterborough** 705-742-6917
  - **Port Perry** 905-985-1870
  - **Sarnia** 519-332-3031
  - **Thunder Bay** 807-683-4370
  - **Walkerton** 519-881-2431
  - **Windsor** 519-969-2522
  - **Woodstock** 519-539-8505
- CFIA after-hours emergency phone number: 1-877-814-2342 (answered 24 hours/day, seven days/week)
  - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300
  - Swine Health Ontario: 1-519-577-6742

include Virocid, Prevail, Synergize and Virkon.

There are no human health implications for Senecavirus A. The disease does not present a risk to our international trade markets.

More information about Senecavirus A or biosecurity procedures is

available from Swine Health Ontario at [www.swinehealthontario.ca](http://www.swinehealthontario.ca). **BP**

*Swine Health Ontario is a leadership team focused on improving and coordinating the industry's ability to prevent, prepare for and respond to serious swine health threats in Ontario.*

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by  
**DIEGO  
FLAMMINI**

# DECIDING WHETHER TO LEASE OR BUY AN ESF

*Weigh short- and long-term financial considerations when acquiring an electronic sow feeder.*

When deciding to bring electronic sow feeders (ESFs) – or any other major piece of equipment – into their swine operations, producers can be left debating whether to buy the equipment outright or lease it over an extended period.

Before producers consult their financial advisers, they should first consider a checklist of items, according to Peter Brickman, partner with Famme & Co. LLP Chartered Professional Accountants.

“Farmers should have a list of all their leased assets,” said Brickman. “They should know the monthly payments for each leased item, if there was a down payment on the lease, the length of the term and if there’s an option to buy the equipment at the end of the lease.

“Having these things in order can give farmers a solid understanding of how much they’re already spending on leases.

“Farmers should always compare the options of purchasing versus leasing depending on their individual set of circumstances. It may be more advantageous to actually purchase and finance instead of leasing.”

To determine whether leasing or buying is best for them, producers should consider how quickly they need the equipment installed, according to Blair Gordon, Ontario sales agent for Gestal Ontario.

“A lease allows for very quick approval,” Gordon said. “By going to a lease, the lease only requires the asset itself.”

Some producers will choose a lease over purchasing the equipment to avoid trips to the bank, Gordon said.

“Some (producers) don’t like going to the bank because they may be at the top end of what the bank will give them,” he said, adding that some producers could need up to \$200,000 to have all the necessary equipment installed.

“A lease does not impact a farmer’s current cash flow at the bank. All the banking arrangements are left intact and (the farmer) doesn’t have to give up any security to the leasing company,” he explained.

Leasing equipment is also a good option for swine producers who have a limited budget, said Gordon.

“For producers who are tight with money but have to move forward, leasing gives them the opportunity to keep their relationship at the bank in good standing and get into a leasing situation within a few days,” he said.

“If cash flow is a concern, usually the monthly payment is lower under a lease agreement (than) compared to purchasing,” added Brickman.

## **Considering tax implications**

Whether leasing or buying, bringing new ESFs into the operation can help pay dividends for swine producers in the long run. But does one method have an advantage over the other? Not entirely, says Jim Snyder, national director, agriculture practice development, BDO Canada LLP.

“There are exceptions to every rule but, generally speaking, there isn’t a great deal of benefit to leasing versus buying,” he said.

“If farmers lease a piece of equipment with their first lease payment and a 30 per cent buyout at the end of it (meaning that, when the lease expires, the farmer will owe 30 per cent of the price of the equipment to purchase it outright), what they’ll usually find is the amortization doesn’t look any different than putting the 30 per cent down and financing the rest at the same interest rate,” said Snyder.

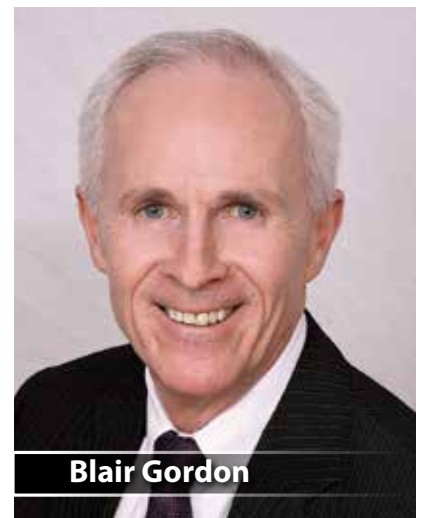
However, leasing does provide some advantages that can be harnessed at tax time.

“When leasing, the payment is an expense (and therefore) is 100 per cent deductible for income tax purposes.

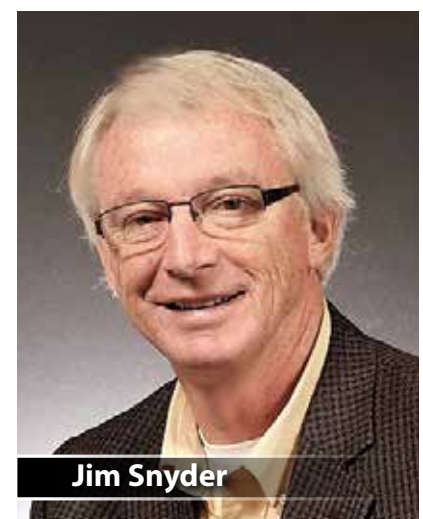
“Usually there is some tax relief



**Peter Brickman**



**Blair Gordon**



**Jim Snyder**

when it comes to a lease because of (Canada Revenue Agency's [CRA's] capital cost allowance [CCA]) rules," said Snyder. "(The rules) mean (a certain percentage) of the normal depreciation rate can be claimed in the first year. But that's quickly offset by the fact you have a greater advantage in other years. So that becomes a wash."

"If a farmer purchases (equipment), they can only deduct a certain per-

centage of the purchased asset based on CCA rates as well as the interest expense," said Brickman.

Gordon and Brickman echoed Snyder's sentiments that leasing gives small tax benefits for producers.

"The CRA would allow you to write (equipment) off in about five years," said Gordon.

"And, on a lease, (you) would generally be committed for the same amount of time. So you're not able to



Aumama/Stock/Getty Images Plus photo

*"If a farmer plans to buyout at the end of the lease, he or she could consider a reduced buyout price to get faster and larger lease payments for a higher tax deduction," Brickman said.*

write (the equipment) off any quicker."

"Over the life of the equipment, producers usually end up with the same overall tax deduction but each particular lease versus buy scenario is different," added Brickman.

"Many times there is a purchase option to buy the unit at the end of the lease," said Brickman. "If a farmer plans to buyout at the end of the lease, he or she could consider a reduced buyout price to get faster and larger lease payments for a higher tax deduction."

**Conclusions**

When deciding whether to lease or buy, farmers are encouraged to use all available tools to help them make the best decision.

"A producer's accountant is probably the best person to talk to," said Gordon.

Farmers "could plug the quoted lease price into a TValue calculator," which is capable of determining payment amounts over a length of time based on interest rates and other information, Snyder said. "It's an easy way to tell if the rate being quoted is accurate or not."

Don't be afraid to ask questions, said Brickman. **BP**



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by  
**MOE AGOSTINO  
 & ABHINESH GOPAL**

# IT'S RAINING PIGS

*With the U.S. expansion of hog production, increases in exports and domestic pork consumption are critical.*



*U.S. hog producers have ratcheted up production.*

This year started with a blast for American hog prices, which then stalled and fell back to almost the late-2016 lows.

The expected expansion in U.S. hog slaughter capacity, in the form of two to four new packing plants coming online this year in the American Midwest, has enticed U.S. hog producers to ratchet up production.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) March Quarterly Hogs and Pigs report showed across-the-board, year-over-year larger U.S. inventories of market hogs and breeding animals, both of which suggest larger second-half 2017 pork production. A record number of piglets that survived during the first quarter of 2017 also fuelled American hog herd expansion.

It's raining pigs. These large inventories will keep weighing on prices (even through 2018) unless demand, domestically and globally, is able to consume a lot of that in-

creased production.

According to the USDA, the second quarter of 2017 should see a 6 per cent increase in U.S. pork production as a result of increased supplies of slaughter-ready hogs and slightly heavier carcass weights. "In anticipation of additional slaughter capacity (with the new plants), hog producers appear to be extending an expansionary effort that began in 2011. Since then, the American pork industry has added roughly 275,000 animals to its breeding inventory. Over that same period, average litter rates increased from 9.78 to 10.5 pigs in 2016," the USDA reported.

"With expanded breeding inventories and continued productivity increases, it is expected that third-quarter 2017 pork production will be a record 6.4 billion pounds, more than 5 per cent higher than a year earlier. Fourth-quarter production is expected to be record-high at 7 billion pounds, even with an assumption of only moderate

increases in dressed weights."

The market is nervous and anxious about the U.S. pork supply in the second quarter of the year. Due to continued strong margins, American packers are easily finding hogs. For producers, finding shackle space could become a problem if your hogs are not booked in a timely basis.

It will be important to see stronger U.S. pork exports to avoid a further sustained slide in hog prices. (Hog futures dropped by 15 per cent from early February to late April.) USDA data shows that around 7.6 million hogs were exported throughout the world in 2016. This movement includes Canada's export of 5.7 million hogs. The overwhelming majority of our exports went to the United States.

Global pork exports are expected to increase by over 5 per cent in 2017 (which equals 8.75 million metric ton [MMT] of pork exports in 2017), from 2016's record pork trade and

**LAST 5 YEARS U.S. PORK CUTOUT VALUE CHANGE FROM 1ST APRIL TO 1ST JULY**



Year	Change, 1st April - 1st July (\$/cwt)
2016	12.96
2015	17.49
2014	-1.99
2013	30.3
2012	13.9
<b>5-yr Average</b>	<b>14.532</b>

SOURCE: USDA, FARMS.COM RISK MANAGEMENT

twice that in 2003. Total U.S. pork exports in the first quarter of 2017 represented 26 to 28 per cent of total production. This figure is higher than the 24 to 25 per cent of the last quarter of 2016.

Lower feed costs across the world have boosted pork supplies among major producing nations and that pork will be imported into high-

demand markets, like China. For China and Hong Kong combined, 2017 pork imports are expected to be 2.750 MMT. Mainland China's imports are forecast at 2.3 MMT, which is similar to its imports last year – but over twice the country's

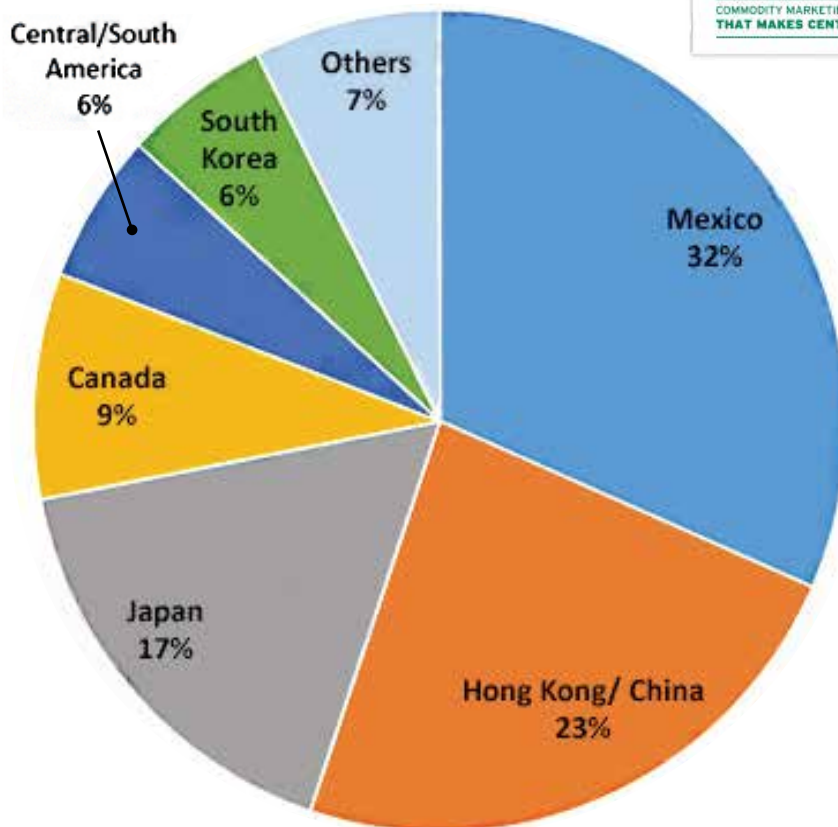
import level from two years ago.

It seems European pork producers have gained the most from this revival in Chinese pork demand. However, China is expected to continue to be a strong buyer of U.S. pork in 2017, as their local hog prices are higher than the price of pork imported from the United States.

America exported \$1.6 billion of pork and pork variety meats in 2016, which equated to \$50.26 in exports for each hog slaughtered and 21 per cent of national pork production.

Earlier this year, American retail pork prices were sharply higher, mostly due to the rise in the price of bellies/bacon in the face of falling beef prices. In March, the U.S. retail value of pork was \$3.78 per pound, which was 3.8 per cent higher than the previous month and 0.5 per cent higher than the previous year. Since mid-February though, pork belly cut

**MAJOR U.S. PORK VOLUME EXPORT DESTINATIONS IN 2016**



SOURCE: USDA, U.S. MEAT EXPORT FEDERATION

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North American meat grilling season impacts pork cut-out values.

values have dropped and, in the process, contributed to the dragging down of the composite pork cut-out values as a whole.

U.S. pork cut-out values, however, have a seasonal tendency to bounce by an average \$14.53 per hundred-weight from April 1 to July 1 (during North American meat grilling season) in any given year.

As is the case in most economies, higher consumer meat demand is associated with rising disposable incomes and a better national economic outlook. For the U.S., improved economic fundamentals will need to continue to boost domestic demand with all of the available protein. U.S. pork cut-out values will have to reflect the growing American demand to support higher hog prices.

The U.S. Federal Reserve is likely to continue a series of interest rate increases which could boost U.S. dollar values and make American exports more expensive. We really need to maintain American export growth at rates higher than the previous year to support hog prices

and to spark a rally. Indications of changing American trade policy are probably the greatest source of uncertainty in the market right now.

In the meantime, the speculative funds have decided to sell and ask questions later. They are taking a wait-and-see approach before jumping back in at the long side. Positive news on demand could do the trick as, in the short term, dark clouds remain in the foreseeable future. We

have a wet spring/summer forecast of raining pigs! **BP**

*Maurizio "Moe" Agostino is chief commodity strategist with Farms.com Risk Management. Abhinesh Gopal is a commodity research analyst with Farms.com Risk Management. Risk Management is a member of the Farms.com group of companies. Visit RiskManagement.Farms.com for more information.*

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by  
**RICHARD  
SMELSKI**

# HOW PIG AND BEAR WENT INTO BUSINESS

*The adventures of these business partners remind us of the importance of looking at the big picture.*

Long ago, I read an article in a business magazine that has fascinated me ever since. Let me share a version of the story with you.

Two entrepreneurs, Pig and Bear, decided to go into business. “We’ll make lots of money,” they thought.

Pig picked and baked a bushel of apples and Bear fried a heap of doughnuts. They went to the market early in the morning to get the best location. Nobody was around and the morning was wet and chilly.

Bear had a nickel in his coat. After a while, he went over to Pig’s stand to warm up and share some stories. “How much for a baked apple?” he growled.

“A nickel for you,” Pig replied.

Bear fished for the nickel in his fur coat, took the biggest, steaming apple off the pile and returned to his stand.

My business is moving, rejoiced Pig. But since there were no more customers for a while and he hadn’t eaten since they left for the market at dawn, he crossed over to Bear’s stand and bought himself a blueberry doughnut for a nickel.

Bear was happy to have his first customer. He felt he should eat something before they started to flock. He went over to buy another baked apple.

The move brought him luck. He had hardly finished eating when Pig came over for another doughnut.

Then business slacked off again until Bear bought another apple. Soon Pig was over again and Bear went right back to Pig’s stand, who then returned to Bear’s location.

Business was getting brisk. The pair continued this back and forth. At the end of a busy and tiring day, there were no more apples or doughnuts left.

“How did you do?” asked Bear.

“Actually I was quite busy and sold all my baked apples,” said Pig.



Oleksandr Lipko/Stock/Getty Images Plus photo

*Most successful businesses have a well-documented strategic plan.*

“Yeah, me too,” Bear added. Silently, he thought to himself that he was going home with more money than Pig.

Meanwhile, Pig was planning how he could expand his business since he sold everything he brought to the market.

This story has a number of inferences regarding your competitive ability in the pig business.

We see many people working very hard but making little progress because they do not see the big picture. And the pig business certainly requires a big picture perspective.

Where do you want to position your business – locally, provincially, nationally or globally? That positioning goal is why most successful businesses have a well-documented strategic plan.

A strategic plan has a very specific process to it – it cannot be created in one simple sitting. The goal should not be to move as many pigs out the door as possible (or

apples or doughnuts) because one has to have a bigger-picture purpose.

The real benefit of strategic planning is the process in itself, not necessarily the plan or document. There is no “perfect” plan. By doing your best while completing the process and learning from it, you will enhance what you’re doing the next time around.

The strategic planning process is usually not an “aha!” experience. It’s like the management process itself – it’s a series of small moves that together keep the organization doing the right things as you continue to head in the right direction. In planning, you will find that things usually aren’t as bad as you might fear nor as good as you’d like. Start simple but start!

Contact me via *Better Pork* and I will provide you with a basic outline to start your strategic plan. **BP**

*Richard Smelski has over 35 years of agribusiness experience and farms in the Shakespeare, Ont. area.*





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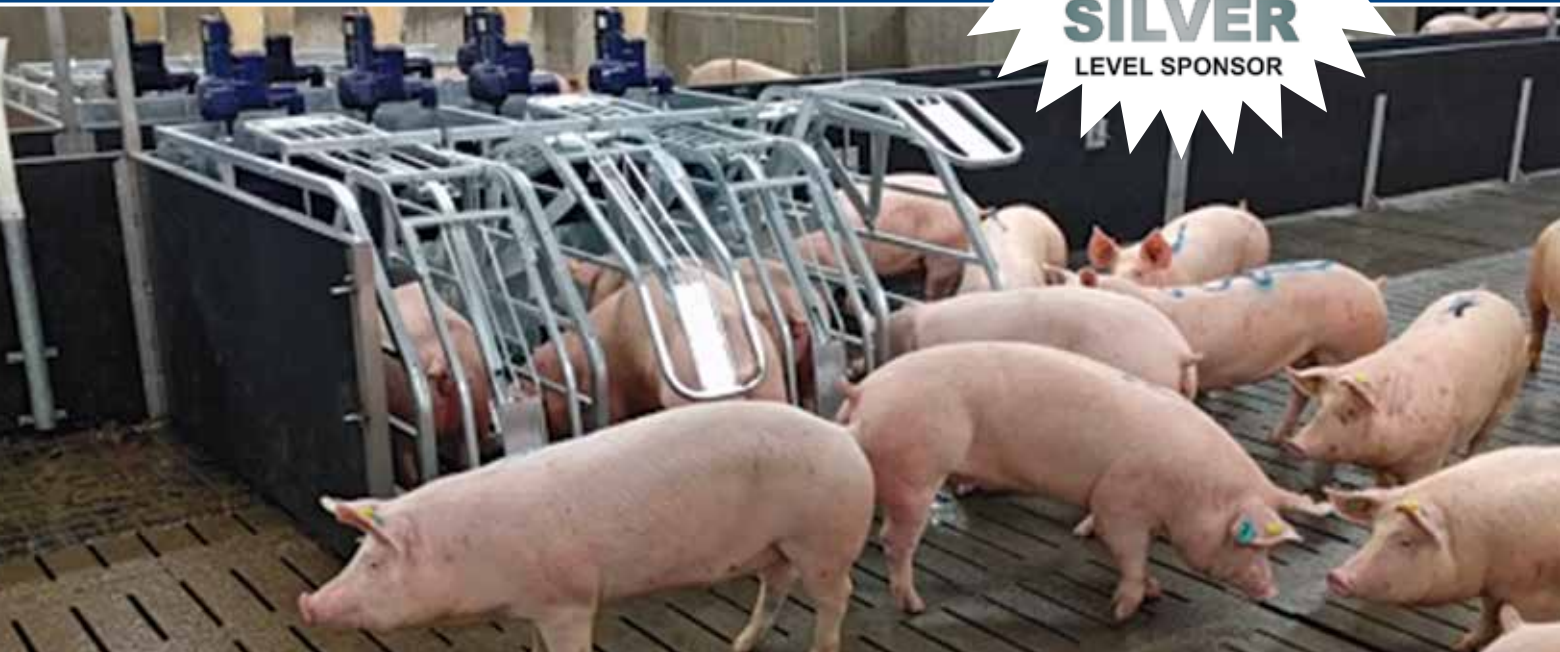


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