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**Cover Photo**

One of the many recent barn fires in Ontario.  
See our story on page 22.

*Photo courtesy of Fire Chief Bill Hunter, Perth East  
Township, West Perth Municipality*



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## Message from the editor

Welcome to the fall edition of the Western Hog Journal!

You might notice a tiny change to our logo – the “western” part is shrinking and fading. That’s because we are transitioning and for our next edition, Winter 2017, we will be called the Canadian Hog Journal.

As editor, I’m really excited for this change. It was part of my mandate when I was hired to evolve our audience into a national one, and to grow the scope of our coverage nationally as well. It’s taken almost four years but we’re there now, with a readership that stretches from coast to coast. It’s a great success story that started with the name “Alberta Hog Journal” and has grown over the years.

Of course, part of the increase in our breadth of coverage comes directly from the consolidation of the industry over the years. There are fewer producers, sometimes with much larger operations, and the challenges and issues facing the industry are largely common across every province. Advertising too has changed over the years. Most of our advertisers are national – there are very few regional companies remaining who only wish to market to a specific province. As a result, our decision was made to ensure we remain the most relevant source of industry information for all of our readers and stakeholders.

With that said, we will continue to ensure we cover events and issues at the regional and provincial level. Our roots are western, and that will always reflect in our editorial offering. This issue we have some great coverage coming out of Ontario, as well as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Quebec. Our next issue is still being planned, but we’re looking forward to some new industry research, celebrating successes, and taking a look at what 2016 may bring the industry.

Our bank of agriculture journalists has greatly increased in recent years, which means a more professional product that meets Canadian Press Style guidelines. While this publication has always been an excellent resource for the industry and has always been a respected trade magazine, it’s rewarding to see it blossom and expand its horizons.

Having a team of talented journalists also frees me to work even harder on growing our presence at various events, as well as online. In the coming months, we will be working to launch our website, as well as social media outreach. If you have a

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 6*

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# News and Views from Far and Near

## Ralph Tuck joins PIC

PIC is pleased to announce that Ralph Tuck recently joined the company as an account manager in Canada. Ralph will be responsible for identifying and



managing the prospecting process to grow market share within Alberta and Saskatchewan as well as managing customer portfolios.

This will include helping customers and prospects maximize the profitability of their operations by utilizing the genetic value and technical services of PIC.

Ralph has been in the livestock business for the past 40 years with a focus on profitability in swine units.

## Ralco appoints Kyle Schulte

Kyle Schulte has joined Ralco in the role of swine technical service and research nutritionist for animal nutrition.



Schulte received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Studies and a Master of Science in Animal Science, both from Iowa State University.

Schulte has been working with pigs since he was a young boy. He grew up on a farm near Norway, Iowa, and showed livestock through 4-H and FFA.

Schulte believes in Ralco's approach to swine nutrition. "My previous roles have prepared me for my job at Ralco," Schulte said. "The Ralco swine nutrition approach is all about understanding customers' operations and their goals. First you understand, next you develop customized nutrition programs to help them accomplish their objectives, and then you assist them in implementation of Ralco swine nutrition technology into their operations."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Message from the editor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

moment, please let me know which social media sites you use the most frequently.

I'm excited to be attending The Pork Show (Le Porc Show) in Quebec City December 5 and 6. Having been at so many wonderful industry events in Alberta and Saskatchewan, I'm, looking very forward to my first event in the East. The Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium is being held November 15 and 16, and if you've never had the chance to go, I certainly encourage you to. I've been several years in a row, and it's a top notch venue with wonderful opportunities for networking. Manitoba's Prairie Livestock Expo is on December 14, and while I can't make it this year, I sure hope to be in my home province for it in 2017!

Kevin Grier's column this edition may be a tad controversial with some folks as he tackles the issue of traceability. Kevin is an opinionated economist, and while he and I tend to disagree on hot topics (like traceability), he's honest about he feels and he makes no bones about it. Nonetheless, traceability is here to stay. It's simply a new reality when it comes to livestock production in highly developed countries, and everyone has a stake in its success.

From all of us, here's wishing you a wonderful harvest and a very happy Thanksgiving! ■

sherimonk@gmail.com

PIC is excited to welcome

# Ralph Tuck

as Account Manager for western Canada

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## Topigs Norsvin Canada Inc. announces new genetic nucleus production manager



Topigs Norsvin Canada announced in June that Andrew Hirst has joined its staff as genetic nucleus production manager. Andrew will be based out of the Topigs Norsvin Winnipeg office. In his new role, Andrew will be responsible for overseeing the production and management of our genetic nucleus operations within Canada.

“Andrew has more than 20 years of experience in swine production and technical support having worked in many international hog production systems around the world, namely in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. He is a motivated and dynamic person looking for results. We welcome Andrew to our team,” said Mike Shaw, director of genetic services, Topigs Norsvin Canada.

“I am excited about the opportunity that exists in this industry, and in particular at Topigs Norsvin,” Andrew said. “I am extremely focused on supporting the production at our nucleus facilities and furthering our genetic program as we continue to grow and expand. I am proud and excited to become part of the Topigs Norsvin team.”

Topigs Norsvin Canada is a leading swine genetics supplier in North America. Topigs Norsvin produces and develops sound, profitable pig genetic programs and breeding systems for commercial hog production and is one of the largest genetics companies in

the world with business activities in over 55 countries.

## Hypor Magnus finishers consistently rank in top 10

Five of the top 10 indexing producers supplying hogs to Maple Leaf Foods, in Brandon Manitoba, Canada, use Hypor Magnus Duroc semen, according to Hams Marketing Services' Top 10 List for the month of June 2016.

Each month Hams Marketing Services, Western Canada's largest hog marketing organization, ranks the quality of pigs from Manitoba and Saskatchewan-based hog producers marketing to Maple Leaf Foods. Maple Leaf Foods is Canada's leading consumer packaged meat company.

“Producers using the Hypor Magnus Duroc and the Hypor Libra sow, consistently rank in the top 10,” says Hypor Canada sales manager Chris Tokaruk. “Five of the farms listed in the top ten for index in April and six of the farms listed in May,

use the Hypor Magnus Duroc semen in their operations.”

Carcass quality takes into account the health, lean percentage, loin depth, meat percentage and the proportion of pigs sold that meet the target carcass weight.

“Hitting the grid results in higher indexes and often higher margins for the producer,” Tokaruk says. The definition of carcass quality is based on current consumer demand for traits like the leanness of pork.

“The carcass grading system helps meat packers market uniform products by offering incentives to producers that supply pigs fitting their criteria,” Tokaruk explains. “The Hypor Magnus Duroc does a very good job of meeting this criteria due to its ability to produce a lean carcass at a heavy market weight—the average weight for Canadian market pigs is around 129 kg and is increasing.”

Tokaruk explains that the Hypor Magnus Duroc benefits all areas of the pork chain – on the farm, at the packing plant, and on the consumer's plate.

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## Genesis appoints Art Goelema as sales manager, western region



Art joins Genesis from Peak Genetics where he was sales manager from 2007 to present.

Art is a graduate of Almelo University, Netherlands. In 1988, Art moved to Canada where he has managed several sow farms, including a Uni-Pork multiplier and has been part owner of a sow unit.

"Genesis looks forward to Art providing knowledge, strong relationships and leadership to Genesis as we continue to grow in the western region," said Mike Van Schepdael, vice president of Genesis.

"I am honored to work with the world leader in swine genet-

ics with the largest registered purebred herd in the world. Genesis allows me to provide my clients with a genetic program that is truly industry leading," said Goelema.

## Osborne Industries receives new patent

Osborne Industries, Inc., is pleased to announce that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has recently awarded Patent No. 9,361,770, for one of the company's newest products – the Osborne Heat Pad Indicator Light.

For more than 40 years, Osborne Industries, Inc., has been developing innovative products for the pig production industry, designed to facilitate informed management decisions, increase operational efficiency, and improve producer profit. The company's commitment to the industry is evident in the newly released electric indicator for its signature Stanfield® pig heating pads. The device provides visual confirmation that individual heat pads are

operating properly and offers producers an added level of assurance that heat pads are providing the heat necessary for optimum piglet growth and development.

Unlike other devices available for competitive heating pads, Osborne's product features two bright LED lights. The unique and newly patented device shows that electrical circuits are functioning properly, and that individual heat pads are drawing electricity and providing the necessary heat for young pigs. The addition of the heat pad indicator to Stanfield heat pads eliminates the need for infrared temperature wands or physically inspecting individual pads to ensure they are operating properly.

Both LED lights of the Heat Pad Indicator remain consistently bright, regardless of variable watt power, which is a patented feature of the device. If the temperature of a heat pad is controlled by a ramping controller to compensate for the reduction in heating required for piglet development, the LED lights remain consistently bright and visible, even as power is reduced to the pad.

## Alberta Agriculture Labour Summit

The Agriculture Industry Labour Council of Alberta (ALICA) is again offering a one-day labour conference. This is the third year for this event. Alberta Pork strongly supports this event both directly and as a member of the ALICA industry organization.

This year the Agriculture Labour Summit will be held on October 26 at the Pomeroy Inn, Olds College Campus.

The 2016 program features labour topics of current interest to all producer-employers and includes information on OHS, on-the-job training, and the future of agriculture education. This year the afternoon program offers concurrent workshops with a focus on recruitment and retention. The day's presentations and workshops are applicable to farms who have both family and non-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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family people/staff working in facilities or on the general farm site. It also offers a tremendous opportunity to network and interact with those individuals responsible for many of the programs today's farms need to deal with.

More details and registration can found at [www.aglabour-summit.ca](http://www.aglabour-summit.ca).

### Dr. Tom Stein joins the I-Novarum/Maximus team



Dr. Stein is a doctor of veterinary medicine and also has a

PhD in Clinical Epidemiology from the University of Minnesota. He designed the Pig-CHAMP software in the 1980s and was the cofounder of MetaFarms in 2000. He is a leader in the design of management support software for swine production.

Dr. Stein was named by the National Hog Farmer magazine as one of the "Top 50" most influential persons in the U.S. swine industry of the 20th century. In 2011, he received the Howard Dunne Award for his outstanding contributions to swine production and health, from the American Association of Swine Veterinarians.

"I am very proud to join the i-Novarum/Maximus team who shares a vision that I have promoting for my entire career - improving the welfare of animals and the performance of farm businesses through technological innovations," said Dr. Stein.

Part of his new role within the I-Novarum/Maximus team will be to promote product internationally. The company

will also benefit from his technical expertise and strategic advice.

"This new association demonstrates the technological leadership of our company and reaffirms our determination to remain a leader in the agricultural sector," said Mr. André Spilmann, engineer and executive chairman of i-Novarum/Maximus.

### PEAK Swine Genetics Inc. and Topigs Norsvin Canada Inc. announce strategic alliance

PEAK Swine Genetics Inc. and Topigs Norsvin Canada Inc. after several months of negotiation have reached a strategic alliance agreement. This agreement will allow PEAK Swine Genetics to participate in the world-class genetics program of Topigs Norsvin. Topigs Norsvin will also bring sales and support staff to the customer base of PEAK Swine Genetics.

"Participating with a world leader in swine genetics is exciting for us as a company, as it will be for our existing customer base and future customers. We have great confidence in Topigs Norsvin being able to accelerate our Alberta-based business. Having strong technical and sales support has always been the driver of our business and I am confident our customer base will benefit greatly from this alliance," said president of PEAK, Walter Preugschas.

"As a major player in the Canadian swine genetics business we are excited to form this alliance with PEAK. The shareholders of PEAK have shown a long-term commitment to the swine industry and their standard of ethics is second-to-none. Several of their board members have been honored by the swine industry over the years and this gives us great confidence in working with this group. By having access to Topigs Norsvin's worldclass research and development, this allows PEAK and its customers to move to the next level," said Cam McGavin, general manager of Topigs Norsvin Canada.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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## Spring Creek colony sends first shipment 'RWA' hogs

Farmers at Spring Creek Hutterite Colony near the Alberta and Saskatchewan border have achieved a milestone in the evolution of Canadian hog production by becoming among the first major farms in the Canadian Prairies to ship 'RWA' (raised without antibiotics) hogs to market.

The shipment of 200 hogs at market weight of 265 pounds was loaded last Thursday and a second similar shipment is planned today. The customer for both is Britco Pork Inc., based in Langley, B.C., a specialty pork processing division of Donald's Fine Foods which plans to sell the RWA pork in greater Vancouver and the lower mainland.

"We're very excited about this – to be among the first producers of RWA pork in Canada," says Paul Hofer, swine manager for Spring Creek Colony. "Any time you change a production approach you have to be very careful. We were a bit nervous at first, but we took it slow, got the right advice and implemented the right practices."

"Everything has gone very well for us," says Mike Hofer, assistant swine manager. "The barn is clicking on all cylinders and the full flow of our swine production is now going out RWA. Average days to market, feed conversion, gain, even mortality – it's either similar or often significantly better under the new program."

The progress by Spring Creek may prove a key tipping point for swine production in western Canada and beyond, as more operations consider shifting to reduced use of antimicrobials and/or RWA approaches. Rising interest in this evolution has been driven by changing marketplace demands and new restrictions coming such as the Veterinary Feed Directive in the U.S., taking effect January 1, 2017, and similar new rules planned for Canada.

The antimicrobial use issue is not black and white, says Paul Hofer. But the bottom line, as Spring Creek Colony sees it, is that farming operations are best positioned for the future if they can reduce reliance on antimicrobials as much as possible without compromising animal health and welfare.

"I think the future is coming this way – it's what the marketplace wants and what consumers want," says Paul Hofer. "We figured if we're going to be in this business long-term then this is the best approach and we should get ahead of the curve. For us, animal health and welfare is still first and foremost. Part of our approach is doing all we can to create an environment where disease risk is as low as possible and where the animals are well supported, for example with nutritious high quality feed and clean water. We try to keep the disease challenges down in the barn and keep a healthy gut in the pig."

If any animals need to be treated with antimicrobials for health reasons that's what is done, says Paul Hofer. "But we separate the treated animals out so they go to a different market not with the RWA animals. So far we haven't had to treat many."

Spring Creek colony passed regular third-party audits to ensure RWA status. "It has taken more work to run the program, but it has been worth it," says Paul Hofer. "We have less health issues and the results are better than ever. We feel great about the product we are producing."



## SEC REPRO introduces respiratory monitoring system

SEC REPRO Inc. in Quebec is now offering in Canada a system to detect early respiratory health problems. It includes SOMO hardware with a Soundtalks microphone, two temperature sensors, one relative humidity sensor and pig respiratory distress monitoring software. The actual device is used in the finishing barn. Very helpful for farmers, veterinarians.

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# OPINION The View from Grier

## Mid-Year Inventory Report

The StatsCan July 1 hog inventory report was released in August and it showed that the Canadian sow herd increased



By Kevin Grier

by less than one per cent this year compared to last. The increase in the east was 0.9 per cent while the west was a paltry 0.4 per cent. The western sow herd had a net increase of just 2,000 sows this year compared to last. The western increase was led by a 1.2 per cent increase in Saskatchewan while Manitoba and Alberta saw increases of 0.2 per cent. B.C. lost 1.1 per cent of its 9,000 head sow herd.

If there was any good news from the report for the West it was that market hog numbers were up by 1.5 per cent or 77,000 head. For reference, however, Ontario's market hog numbers were up

92,000 head. Ontario's sow herd is up by one per cent or 3,000 head while Quebec's sow herd was also up by one per cent and 3,000 sows. Manitoba's sow here is listed as the biggest in Canada at 321,300 while Quebec's is second at 320,200.

There might be an argument that the increased sow tally in the west is on the low side but even if it is, it is not out by much. The main message of the mid-year count is that the Canadian industry, and particularly the west is not in growth mode. The lack of growth comes despite nearly three years of good returns and constant messages of strong demand from western packers. It also stands in contrast to the U.S. where significant growth is in the cards for packing and production. The reasons for the lack of growth in Canada can be summarized in the inability to generate a return on the exceptionally higher cost of investment on the prairies.

## Over-Selling Traceability

Traceability has taken the next logical step in the hog industry regulatory progression – threats and fines. In August the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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CFIA issued a "Notice to Industry" stating:

*New amendments to the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Regulations allow persons designated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to issue notices of violation to those who do not comply with mandatory federal pig identification and movement tracking requirements. These amendments mean that violations may not only be handled with a letter of non-compliance or prosecution, but also with notices of violation with or without monetary penalties.*

In the cattle industry, the CFIA enforces the Canadian Cattle Identification Program with penalties for non-compliance beginning at \$1,300 and going as high as \$10,000 depending on the seriousness of the violation. Those penalties began back in 2002.

There is a long history of the development of traceability in the hog industry. In July, 2002, the Canadian Pork Council received a mandate from its members to coordinate the development of a national traceability system for pigs, from birth to slaughter. In 2003, the CPC's National Hog ID and Traceability Working Committee began the design and development of a Canadian Swine Traceability System that would assist in quickly containing foreign animal disease outbreaks. The

system is in place now and administered by PigTrace Canada, a division of the Canadian Pork Council.

A national regulated traceability system was sold to hog producers as a way to lessen the damage in the event of a foreign animal disease (FAD). Producers were also told it would help in global export market access. In theory, and it must be emphasized only in theory, should there be a reportable foreign animal disease, having a national regulatory traceability system in place could result in faster location and isolation of the problem. Given today's hog and pork production systems the reality is that the problem might also have been isolated rapidly without a national regulated traceability system. There is no assurance that any trading partner is going to allow faster re-opening to Canada or a region of Canada just because there is a system in place. In any event, if there was a FAD, the market disorder would likely be so disruptive that the entire issue of traceability would be a remote afterthought.

Within that context, respect has to be given to the goals of traceability in the event of a FAD. Those goals and effort should stop there at FAD mitigation and control, but they don't. There is the claim among traceability advocates and traceability careerists that with a regulated traceability system in place, Canadian pork products will have a competi-

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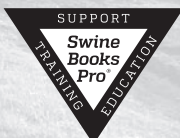
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tive advantage. Canada will gain better market access because of the trace system it is said. It is even said that without a regulated system Canada could lose access to lucrative markets. Government and some producers like to link this to the “Brand Canada” concept. Under that thinking, Canadian pork is supposed to gain access to global markets because hard-nosed Japanese, Australian and Korean meat buyers melt at the thought of the Mounties and Rockies.

The fact is that in international trading, traceability is a non-issue. Buyers are not concerned about a national regulatory traceability system. There might be a credible argument that if two bids are equal, the fact that there is traceability system in place could help the sale. I don’t accept that argument. No Japanese buyer is going to accept a Maple Leaf bid over a Tyson bid simply because we have a national regulated system in place. With that said, some buyers in Japan want a story to go with the pork. Traceability could be part of the story, but it would not have to be a national regulated system. A company could have its own traceability system to fill that bill. Any company that thinks that traceability matters to its customers from a marketing perspective can accomplish that on its own. For example, Loblaw has a system for its Ontario Corn Fed program. The market access argument for a national regulated system is not correct.

The disease control and market access points are the most common arguments for a traceability system, but the PigTrace website takes it to a whole new level. The website says traceability is good for Emergency Preparedness; Financial Stability; Market Access; Business Management; and Security. On closer inspection though, all of these points ultimately relate back to the FAD and market access.

In any event, now there are threats of fines for not complying with a system that delivers a little in theory. Likely next steps would include on-farm inspections and on-farm enforcement. That is a very real step in the process and again there is the issue of who pays for it.

Producers need to get back to the drawing board. This system is not going to be thrown out of course, it is too late for that.

Furthermore, it is prudent to have some system in place to help identify and isolate in the event of a FAD, which is the only real reason for traceability. The requirements however, could be wound into the CQA program. Good record keeping including movement records and verification are part of CQA and it could be expanded modestly to include traceability aspects.

Further to that, the CQA program has included traceability for years, but was not reported to a national data base. Each farm completed own sheets. Animal movements have been reported since the beginning of the CQA program. There might be a distinction between animal movements within a farm business and animal movements that leave the farm business, as regarding reporting to an external data base. Internal farm pig movements should not be reported to PigTrace. Farms should be able to show where and when pigs moved in the event the information is needed. Streamlining and simplifying this program would provide substantial benefits to the industry and most likely better deliver the information needed to address a potential FAD outbreak.

Of course producers are often not pleased about the new CQA program as well as the traceability program with all the new CQA rules, restrictions, and paperwork. There are good reasons for this concern given CQA’s ever expanding mandate. Nevertheless, CQA’s basic principles are generally respected by commercial producers. The winding in of a simplified Traceability would be seen favorably.

It is also legitimate to question where the CPC, funded by producers, becomes the producers’ regulator and in essence delivers a program on behalf of the CFIA. I think the government must be pleased to see that these rules are coming in with government authority or regulations in the background so the ministers do not have to listen to all the complaints. This is one of many examples where “self-regulation” is not the dream opportunity it appeared to be when first presented. In this case it is a clear win it is for governments to get out of the regulatory business wherever and whenever possible.

In summary, the goals of traceability with regard to FAD need to be respected and the effort concentrated in that area alone.

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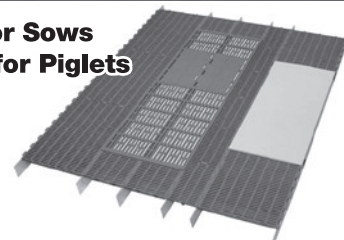


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It takes discipline to simplify, but this needs to happen so it focuses back on its core mission. Whether it is CQA or Traceability, more and more focus of the language and rules are going toward perceived market development. Producers need to consider where will it stop and what's coming next. The traceability cheerleaders need to leave the marketing aspects to people that know what they are talking about.

To paraphrase Churchill, when it comes to traceability and marketing, never in the field of bureaucratic endeavors has so much been regulated to achieve so little.

## A Bright Spot in Alberta

The Royal Bank of Canada's provincial outlook from June was forecasting Alberta's GDP to decline by -2.5 per cent in 2016. The bank's national growth forecast is +1.4 per cent. Alberta's employment will decline by nearly two per cent as the unemployment forecast rate runs around eight per cent compared to the national forecast of seven per cent. Housing starts will be 24,000 this year in Alberta compared to over 40,000 in 2014.

The state of Alberta's economy is well known but the numbers relative to the rest of the country and its recent history provide some context. The economic malaise is a recent phenomenon and tied to specific, identifiable problems which of course will be significantly exacerbated by the current government.

In the hog sector, the Alberta industry's relative decline has been longer standing and due to a greater variety of problems. For example, the Canadian sow herd peaked in 2005 at nearly 1.6 million sows. The Alberta sow herd at that time was nearly 200,000 sows. Since that time the Canadian sow base has declined by nearly 370,000 sows or 23 per cent. The Alberta herd has declined by 60,000 sows or 30 per cent.

Despite the 30 per cent decline in the Alberta sow herd and the 20 per cent decline in the western sow herd from 2005 to now, Alberta's slaughter only declined by 15.6 per cent. In 2005, Alberta's five packers slaughtered 3.1 million head. Last year the province's three packers killed 2.6 million. From 2013 to 2015, Alberta's slaughter has increased from 2.4 million to 2.63 an increase of 12 per cent. This year Alberta slaughter is down slightly from last, but will still be around the 2.63 mark by the end of the year.

The three packers in the province, Olymel, Maple Leaf and Trochu, were each slaughtering hogs in 2005 along with Sturgeon Valley and J&M. Based on the Canadian Pork Council's capacity listings, Maple Leaf at Lethbridge has expanded from 6,500 per week to 7,500 this year. The Sunterra Meats plant in Trochu is listed at 3,500 head per week and has been constant from 2005 to 2016.

Maple Leaf's slaughter in Lethbridge is usually at the listed 7,500 head capacity or even higher. It exports most of its production to Japan and procures a fatter type of hog due to its

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



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hot skinning process. Most of the hogs are procured from the local colonies.

For its part, Olymel Red Deer lists its capacity at 90,000 head, which is what it could do if it was double shifted. It did that briefly and partially in 2006 but it could not be sustained due to labor shortages. Actual capacity is up to 45,000 head on one shift.


The plant is supplied by hog farmers across the prairies but about two thirds come from Alberta. A few loads a week come from western Manitoba from its own production base. About 15-16,000 head per week come from Saskatchewan from its own base and other suppliers. In addition to the Western Hog Exchange marketings, some of the larger Alberta production units market directly to the plant. Beyond that of course the majority of the plant is supplied by its own integrated production, OlySky and OlyNorth. Olymel acquired Peace pork and its 5,000 or so sows in 2015 and named it OlyNorth.

Olymel is owned by Coop Federee. According to the Coop Federee's 2015 annual report, Olymel's annual production in the West totalled over 1.1 million hogs in 2015, meeting nearly 50 per cent of the supply needs of the Red Deer plant. With the full OlyNorth production included, the integration level at Red Deer is probably at least 55 per cent. Recent kills at Red Deer have been in the 40,000 head range which is similar to last year at the same time.


Clearly the Coop sees Olymel Red Deer in a positive light. Its 2015 annual report stated "the Western fresh pork sector generated profits in fiscal 2015. This return to profitability was driven by higher slaughtering volumes, a more favourable exchange rate as well as an improved meat margin, which contrasts with conditions in the East. The meat margin is higher in the West compared with the East owing to lower supply costs, higher value-added products, and more lucrative markets such as China."

One point to be draw is that while the Alberta economy is exceptionally weak and while the hog sector has been in long term decline, in the last few years, Olymel has been a source of growth and investment. While the rest of the industry in Canada and Alberta were retrenching and consolidating, Olymel was investing and building. The fact that Olymel slaughters over 55 per cent of its own production would have been seen by some in the recent past to be an alarming negative. Now however, it can only be seen as a sign of confidence in the prairie industry. ■

*Kevin Grier Market Analysis and Consulting provides industry market reports and analysis, as well as consulting services and public event speaking. You can reach him at [kevin@kevingrier.com](mailto:kevin@kevingrier.com) to comment or to request a free two-month trial of the Canadian Pork Market Review.*



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**See page 4**



Western Hog JOURNAL

# HOT ISSUES

## Traceability a hot topic - even in November

By Geoff Geddes

When you ask the average consumer what they think of traceability, they say, "That depends, what is it?"

But ask them if they care where their food comes from, and they're liable to give you an earful. That's why traceability is a hot topic these days, and why plans are heating up for the Traceability Symposium to be held November 2-3 in Calgary.

Hosted by the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA), the two-day event will bring together government, industry and the private sector to identify gaps and share successes and lessons learned.

"Traceability may be the packaging, but it's really about the public wanting insight on the source of their food,"

said Anne Brunet-Burgess, general manager of the CCIA. "To give them that, we need to record the beginning and end point of the animal and the chain of custody from start to finish."

With all the public interest, it seemed like the perfect time for a conference, and who better to take the bull by the horns than the agency charged with administering traceability for cattle, sheep and bison?

"We are the meat in the sandwich between government and producers or other participants in the chain of production like auction marts, abattoirs, assembly yards and fairs," said Brunet-Burgess.

First proposed by Paul Laronde, their tag and technology manager, this event is a chance for CCIA to demonstrate leadership in advancing traceability in food production, not just livestock.

"It's an opportunity to learn from other sectors and countries and spark ideas of how we can do our job better."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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Organizers see this event as a forum to hold a global conversation, identifying gaps and what others have done to bridge them.

Though all are welcome, the target audience is people who work in traceability, or what Brunet-Burgess calls the “brain trust of the industry”.

### Keys to success

While you don’t need added incentive to visit Calgary in November, organizers feel those who attend the conference should get their money’s worth and more.

“We are humbled by the support we’ve received from our peers in the traceability world. From a speaker standpoint, no one has turned us down, and the sponsor interest has been superb – they see the need for this and want to be a part of it.”

Headlining the program is keynote speaker Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Dean of the Faculty of Management at Dalhousie University and co-founder of the Food Institute.

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**In agriculture, nothing is black and white. We have a chance to make sure the system encompasses those grey areas as well, and events like this can help bridge the gap between that system and what is actually happening on the ground.**

~ Christina Carley, Alberta Pork

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“It’s a real coup to have Dr. Charlesbois on the agenda. He’s world-renowned and highly sought after, and we’re the envy of others who wanted to book him, so we feel very fortunate.”

Also of note is Leann Saunders, the co-founder, president and COO of Where Food Comes From Inc., the leading agricultural and food verification/certification company in North Amer-

ica. When McDonald’s ran its pilot project of the branded foods program in Canada, Saunders did the auditing of it. Brunet-Burgess heard her talk then and is “thrilled to have her as a plenary speaker”.

That’s not to take away from the other speakers though.

“We have a wide variety of presenters from across Canada and abroad, as well as representatives from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency who have agreed to speak or chair some of our panel sessions.”

### Prepare for pre-tours

To enhance their experience, attendees can also take part in one of three pre-tours.

“The purpose is to offer something for people travelling a long distance and arriving early to the event. It’s a chance to get out of the city and see something they might not see at home.”

For example, Brunet-Burgess said a lot of people from Europe are fascinated by feedlots, and very few people have been to a bison farm, so both destinations are included in the offerings.

### Taking attendance

Registration thus far has been brisk, and of significance is that most of the CCIA’s board of directors will be in attendance.

“We are thrilled about that as the directors represent a number of organizations, so after the symposium, they can offer feedback to a broad spectrum of cattle, sheep and bison producers.

Among those taking part is Christina Carley, traceability coordinator for Alberta Pork, who is pleased to see this subject in the spotlight.

“Traceability is another tool that producers and industry can use to safeguard, protect and hold accountable everyone in the food value chain,” said Carley. “It gives you the capability to view the bigger picture and gives you marketability on a global scale.”

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As Alberta Pork works to get everyone on board with traceability and provide education around it, Carley said the symposium has a big role to play.

“In agriculture, nothing is black and white. We have a chance to make sure the system encompasses those grey areas as well, and events like this can help bridge the gap between that system and what is actually happening on the ground.”

Given the diversity of registrants, Carley sees the conference as a vehicle to go beyond what’s happening in your own backyard and find out what others are doing.

“It’s a place to share ideas and build relationships. Given that not all industries are on the same playing field with traceability, this is a chance to have that conversation and learn from others who are trying to achieve the same thing but with other commodities. You can then take that information home and mould it to fit the needs of your members.”

**One stop learning**

Like any event of this scale, the Traceability Symposium took a lot of time and effort to organize. For her part, Brunet-Burgess feels it was a worthy investment.

“We always wanted to go to an event like this and couldn’t find one, so we planned it ourselves. The idea of assem-

bling this much talent and experience under one roof for two days is something I find very exciting.”

For those wanting to be part of the excitement, they’re advised to visit the website (www.traceabilitysymposium.ca) where they can easily register and pay online or find contact information if they have questions.

So is this the first of what will become an annual event? At this point, organizers want to see how it goes before committing. But they’re confident that for those in the industry, it will leave them better equipped to do their job. And for those who are less informed, it will answer the burning question that keeps them up at night – “What the heck is traceability?” ■



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# Stamping out the stats on barn fires

## Fire prevention begins

By Treena Hein

Of all types of barn fires, those in pig barns are the most difficult to handle. According to a fact sheet produced by non-profit group Farm and Food Care, this is because of the design of pig barns means they are almost impossible to evacuate due to the volume of animals and the difficulty in moving them. As anyone who's been near a barn fire can attest, it takes only minutes for the building to be completely engulfed in flames. That's partly because (as stated in the fact sheet), "the vast majority of barn fires occur late at night or early morning hours, often going undetected until flames are showing. They rarely have smoke detectors or sprinkler systems installed."

This year has been a bad one for barn fires in Canada. In June, a farm near Leroy, Saskatchewan lost approximately 5,000 pigs when two barns burned. In early July, about 4,200 pigs perished in one barn on a Hutterite colony near Bentley, Alberta.

In Ontario, a rash of barn fires in January shocked those across the province and beyond. On January 4, 43 horses died in Puslich. On January 12, a fire destroyed a barn full of chickens near Listowel. Two days later, more horses died in a

barn fire northwest of Guelph in Mount Forest. The next day, a barn fire near Appin near London killed hundreds of pigs. On January 17, another barn fire in nearby Delaware killed 500 milking goats and 30 cattle. Two days later, in nearby Parkhill, 2,100 pigs were lost. Four more fires happened between May and August.

The Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management in Ontario puts the number of barn fires in the province in 2008, 2009 and 2011 all around 185, but in 2012, 2013 and 2014, there were 136, 157 and 150. No numbers are yet available for 2015. The leading causes for preventable, determined barn fires (about 60 per cent) were mechanical/electrical failures, misuse of ignition source/equipment, and deficiencies in design/construction/maintenance. Primary sources of ignition include miscellaneous (chemical reactions, such as spontaneous combustion and lightning), electrical distribution equipment (circuit wiring, distribution equipment, extension cords), heating equipment (central heating, flue pipe, space heaters), and open flame (cutting/welding, blow torches etc.).

The insurance industry and the Electrical Safety Authority of Ontario have investigated why electrical issues are such a common cause of ignition. "The corrosive environment found inside livestock barns has been determined to be the leading cause of degradation or failure of electrical equipment," states the OFMEM. "The degradation is typically corrosion of the exposed metal components (e.g. wires, connections)." The corrosion increases the resistance at these points, which results in more of the electrical energy being

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**Prevention of fires**

We asked OFMEM what preventative measures farmers should be taking to prevent fires in their barns. Spokesperson Jude Kelly stresses that prevention is definitely the responsibility of farmers and also of local fire services. He explains that the OFMEM sent a customizable news release in April to Ontario fire services to use through local media, to remind the public of this. "Most farm buildings are

not regulated under the Ontario Fire Code and as such, local fire services have limited responsibilities with respect to inspections and code enforcement on these properties," Kelly notes. He adds "the news release advises owners and operators of farms and agricultural business properties with further concerns about fire safety to contact their local fire department to discuss options to identify and reduce fire risks...It is ultimately up to the local fire service to manage local risks as identified through their community risk assessment," and "there are numerous readily available resources to assist."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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However, John Maaskant, chair of Farm and Food Care Ontario, warned in an open letter early in the year in the Ontario Farmer newspaper that “many first responders are not familiar with barn design or animal handling.” He advises farmers to review their fire prevention plans, hold annual meetings with family members and staff and get to know your local fire department team.

“Many rural fire departments organize barn fire education programs for their team so that they better understand how barns in their coverage area are built and the types of livestock found within,” Maaskant stated. “These programs also offer the opportunity for farmers in their region to highlight potential risks. If you’re comfortable doing so, invite your local department for a tour so that they can get to know you and your operation. If not, plan a visit at their fire hall and provide maps of your facilities. Talk to your insurance company about having them do inspections using thermal cameras or buy or

borrow a camera to do checks on your own. These cameras can help identify faults before they cause a fire. Talk to your electrician about the state of your electrical system to ensure it meets current standards.”

Bruce Kelly, environmental program manager Farm and Food Care Ontario, says his organization has been working with Ontario Pork, fire departments and insurance companies on barn fire safety for several years from several angles.

“We are working on a producer education program that we are presenting this fall, including a display at the Outdoor Farm Show in September,” he explains. “The display will focus on the use of FLIR (infra-red) cameras that help producers see heat as a result of corrosion in electrical receptacles. A fact sheet goes with the farmer when they borrow a camera for a week.”

Farm and Food Care Ontario has also purchased a number of FLIR modules for farmers to borrow. These modules plug into a smart phone, making it into a “pretty good” infra-red camera, Kelly says.

“Evaluations of their facilities will hopefully lead farmers to work with their electricians on upgrades where required,” Kelly notes. “They don’t replace a professional inspection, or rule out all

the possible causes in the fire, but it’s a way to engage farmers in a discussion about fire safety and prevention.”


Farm and Food Care Ontario is also working on two research projects with Harvest Robotics of Hamilton related to early barn fire detection. One is the development of an inexpensive infra-red heat sensor, with an alarm that can be sent by email or text and could automatically turn off equipment or activate fire suppression. The other is the development of a methane alarm system.

Last year, Ontario’s Perth East Fire Department created free, customizable farm fire resources which have been accessed by numerous departments across the province and in the US. When asked his thoughts on barn fire prevention, Perth East Fire Chief Bill Hunter says he would like to see the National Farm Building Code of Canada, which regulates new farm building construction in Ontario, updated to reflect current construction trends.

“We are seeing massive farm buildings that house hundreds of thousands of dollars of livestock and equipment being constructed to a code that is over 20 years old,” he explains.

The office of the Ontario Minister of Agriculture says the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) is working on

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updates to national code requirements for large farm buildings. Staff members from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing are engaged in this process and will contribute technical information to inform the review, says André Laroche, manager of regulatory code solutions at NRC. The updates will be finished by fall 2018, and are focused on fire and structural safety and the storage of dangerous goods.

However, Laroche adds that the regulation of building construction and fire safety is the domain of the provinces and territories, which often delegate this responsibility to municipalities. "As such, the National Farm Building Code is not adopted by all provinces and territories," he explains.

Hunter makes the point that farmers can choose to go over and above the minimum requirements of the

## What other provinces are doing

### Alberta

From 2006 to 2015, there were about 16 barn fires per year. "Barn fire safety relies heavily on the behaviours of barn owners," notes Heather Kaszuba with the communications branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs. She adds that the best way to reduce barn fires is to keep barns clean and well-maintained, to avoid overloading electrical circuits. "Many farmers grind, cut and weld inside their barns and this can result in fire," Kaszuba notes, adding "Know the limits of your extinguisher and keep it well maintained." There are no planned building code changes in the works.

### Saskatchewan

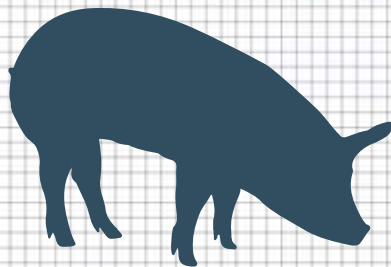
Sask Pork's Harvey Wagner says his organization encourages good housekeeping. He adds, "Regular inspection and maintenance of all mechanical or electrical systems is routine. These inspections go a

long way to prevent system failures, which is a major cause of fires due to overheating. Alarm systems which monitor heat buildup and electrical service anomalies are common."

### Manitoba

The number of barn fires has not increased in the last couple of decades in Manitoba. Manitoba Pork has been assisting the provincial government in the introduction of a new barn building code, says spokesperson Sandy Ellis. "Prior to 2011, barns were not subject to the building code, and while the code is not perfect and still needs work, it is at least a step in the right direction. The electrical code was also recently worked on with a Manitoba Pork-initiated change in enforcement and administrative policy just adopted this August. Manitoba Pork has also been actively investigating potential new forms of fire insurance for hog barns."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



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**Booklet (56 pages) 'Reducing the risk of fire on your farm'**  
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/barnfire/toc.pdf>

**OMAFRA resources:**

<https://news.ontario.ca/omafra/en/2016/01/ontario-encouraging-fire-safety-for-barn-owners.html>

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/reduceriskfire.htm>

**Perth East County, southern ON – farm fire prevention resources**

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuCuLeB7nhI5MD2en5XUMRQ>

<http://www.livestockwelfare.com/wp-content/uploads/Barn-fires-involving-farm-animals.pdf>

Code. “Monitoring and alarm systems can be installed, fire separations in addition to the minimum requirements can be installed, sprinklers or other extinguishing systems are available, the list goes on and on. Farmers have the choice.”



Hunter notes, however, that as a quick fire suppression tool, barn sprinklers are hobbled by serious issues such as freezing pipes, inadequate water pressure/volume and false alarms. He says there are many different systems out there, including ‘dry’ systems designed for unheated buildings, mechanical rooms and offices, including one made by Haven (<http://www.havenfiresafety.com>) which Hunter doesn’t endorse, but thinks is “a neat idea, and not huge dollars.”

Overall, the biggest stumbling block to preventing barn fires in Hunter’s view may be the belief of some farmers that a fire simply won’t happen to them. He’s heard them say things like ‘we have never had a problem’ and ‘we are just trying to make a living and cannot afford any fancy upgrades.’

“We have heard it all,” he concludes. “The point of our entire program is that you can spend as little or as much as you want. In my opinion, farmers should be protecting their investments, however, many think that their insurance is there for the protection. If we are going to see any substantial improvements in codes and regulations, we will have to have some open and frank discussions with the farming community, and quite honestly the insurance industry probably needs to step up and say enough is enough.”


Hunter believes there is a lot that can be done on a typical farm to prevent fires.

“Simple housekeeping is the easiest and cheapest starting point,” he says. “Request an electrical inspection, make rules about smoking, install some extinguishers and learn how to use them, control rodents... the list goes on.” ■


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# Upcoming Events

## Le Porc Show a swine industry show-stopper

By Sheri Monk

The third Annual Le Porc Show (The Pork Show) will be held December 5 and 6 in beautiful downtown Quebec City and nearly 1,000 people are expected to attend. While most attendees are from Quebec and Ontario, the event is already beginning to draw from more exotic locales.

“We have people from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the U.S., and last year we had four people from France and one person from Spain. It’s a good start for us,” says Sébastien Lacroix, member of the steering committee.

Le Porc Show starts off with an evening reception on December 5. On December 6, participants can look forward to a full day of information sessions, high profile speakers and workshops.

“What makes The Pork Show special is we gather all parts of the pork production chain for one event,” Lacroix said.

All presentations and information will be available in both



English and French to ensure everyone is included equally.

Speakers and topics include Jean-Philippe Gervais, Farm Credit Canada’s chief agricultural economist, who is address-

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 28*

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## Upcoming Events



ing profitability trends, Wyno Zwanenburg on the future of the global swine industry, and the ever-popular Temple Grandin who will address animal welfare issues.

After lunch, three workshops will be offered – business management, livestock management and marketing. “The people

will go to different workshops depending what their interests are,” said Lacroix.

Following the workshops, stand-up comedian Jérémy Demay will entertain and enlighten the crowd as he tells his story of managing depression. Immediately following, attendees will



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have the opportunity to network with one another while visiting one of the 60 exhibitor booths and enjoying Le Porc Show's famous signature cocktail hour.

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**We think Quebec has a lot of knowledge in pork production and we are important players in pork production in Canada. We believe we have to all work together to be stronger.**  
 ~ Sébastien Lacroix

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"Each year we have a special cocktail. The first year it was a cosmopolitan with bacon, then last year it was more a bloody caesar with pork. It was very special. This year it's going to be bacon beer," Lacroix described.

In the evening, celebrations begin and include wine tastings and samples from a local brewery. Attendees will also receive 15 tickets to try different pork-themed dishes (and additional tickets are available for purchase). Perhaps most excitingly, students from a Quebec City culinary school will be in a cooking competition in hopes of winning a scholarship. Attendees will have to vote for one of three dishes, selecting the winner that night during the festivities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



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## Upcoming Events



“Our goal is to gather all the people and to promote the good quality of pork. You can walk and taste all the different dishes. It’s very cool,” said Lacroix.

Quebec has 2,000 pork producers and roughly 250 will attend the event. In the past, there were three annual pork events in Quebec, but the various producer groups joined forces to hold one large event. Le Porc Show does not receive any subsidies, but relies solely on revenue from exhibitors and from attendee registration.

“We think Quebec has a lot of knowledge in pork production and we are important players in pork production in Canada. We believe we have to all work together to be stronger,” Lacroix said.

Information on the event, including how to register, can be found at [leporcshow.com](http://leporcshow.com). ■

# Rocky times not a threat to Banff Pork Seminar

By Geoff Geddes

Photos by Western Hog Journal

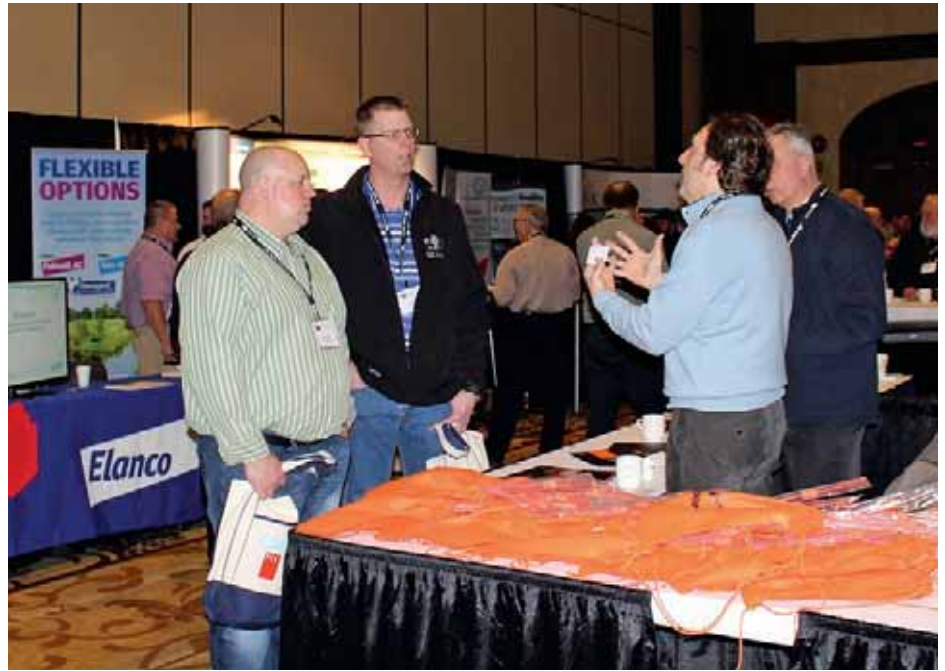
If you're not a skier, a trip to the frozen Rockies in January can go downhill in a hurry. For organizers of the 2017 Banff Pork Seminar (BPS), however, there are many reasons to be upbeat.

Considered one of the leading industry events in Canada if not North America, BPS celebrated its 45th anniversary in 2016 and is still going strong.

The Banff Pork Seminar is touted as a technology transfer meeting for the pork industry that has been held in Banff, Alberta since 1972. The conference program is coordinated by the Department of Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science and the University of Alberta in cooperation with Alberta Pork, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and other pork industry representatives.

As she prepares for the 46th edition of BPS, which runs January 10-12, 2017 at the Banff Springs Hotel, Conference Coordinator Ashley Steeple is excited about this year's version.

"With our unique blend of networking, knowledge and nightlife, we regularly attract more than 600 delegates from across Canada, the United States, Europe and Asia," said Steeple.



"Our attendees represent all aspects of pork production and every large pork organization and business you can think of."

## Upbeat in a downturn

While tough economic times may be plaguing the industry right now, they're not slowing BPS preparations.

"Everything is looking good," said Steeple. "We've got an exciting program planned and registration is now open."

The theme for this year's event is "innovative and sustainable solutions for an evolving industry". While it may not roll off the tongue, it was inspired by some notable speakers and topics, beginning with the plenary talks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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## Upcoming Events



“On Wednesday we have Sandra Vijn from the World Wildlife Fund to talk about feeding the planet. She’s followed by Dr. Frank Mitloehner of UC Davis with a presentation on sustainable identification: ‘How to Satisfy the Rising Demand for Animal Protein without Depleting Natural Resources.’”

Not to be outdone, Thursday features two speeches that Steeple called “thought provoking”. It’s kicked off by the popular

Terry O’Reilly, host of the award-winning CBC Radio One/Sirius Satellite/WBEZ Chicago radio show, “Under the Influence”. Perhaps fittingly for a radio host, he will address the need to change the conversation around agriculture and how to do that.

“That should flow nicely into our last plenary session by Dr. Joe Schwarcz from McGill University about countering public misperceptions of agriculture.”



The breakout sessions will continue the theme of innovation and sustainability with such topics as swine health, sow housing conversions and reducing antibiotic use.

Along the way, there will be plenty of time for visiting sponsor booths, networking and perhaps a pub visit to quench your thirst for things other than knowledge.

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“The reaction to our move to the Banff Springs Hotel last year was very positive. Everyone felt it was a great facility and loved having all events under one roof, so the sooner people get their room reserved for 2017 the less chance of disappointment.”

To obtain the delegate rate at the hotel, you must book by December 1. You can also secure an early bird rate on your conference registration by acting before November 15.

The other deadline to keep in mind is October 31. Applications for the RO Ball Young Scientist Award Competition and the 2017 Dr. F.X. Aherne Prize for Innovative Pork Production must be submitted by that date.

Information on all of this, as well as the online registration form, is available at [www.banffpork.ca](http://www.banffpork.ca).

Of course, nobody is minimizing the current pork woes as they finalize the plans. They just hope that for one weekend in January, heads and spirits will be up, and the only ones looking down in dread will be first time skiers at the top of the mogul run. ■



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## Upcoming Events

# 2016 Prairie Livestock Expo coming soon

By Jennifer McFee

Excitement is mounting for the 2016 Prairie Livestock Expo, which will bring together producers of all kinds for a one-day trade show based in Winnipeg.

Set for Wednesday, Dec. 14, the expo will feature more than 30,000 square feet of display space, with nearly 50 exhibitors already signed up. The overall goal is to promote the sustainability of Manitoba's livestock producers of all kinds.

Formerly known as Hog and Poultry Days, the event runs every second year. It's being coined as Canada's newest multi-species show with information on issues such as animal handling, feed additives and feeding equipment. Other topics touch on odour control, composting and manure application.

For Andrew Dickson, committee chair as well as general manager of Manito-

ba Pork, he's hoping to see about 1,200 people turn up for the jam-packed event.

"We invite in all the commodity groups, so we get poultry, beef and pork representatives. We don't get a big number of displays from the other commodities, so mostly it's pig-related and most of the people attending are pig producers," he says. "But we're trying to open it up a bit because some of the companies sell the same products to all livestock groups."

With a focus on new and evolving technologies, experts will provide presentations to inform producers and other attendees.

The University of Manitoba is organizing a panel of speakers who will provide short talks on timely topics. Although the speakers' list is not yet finalized, biosystems engineering professor Qiang Zhang is confirmed as a presenter. Zhang, along with Laurie Connor, is currently conducting a study that looks at concrete flooring slat and gap widths in relation to sow comfort and manure handling.

Livestock producers will also have the chance to network with each other and with government and industry representatives.

For Dickson, another highlight of the expo is that it features Canada's largest pork quality competition.

"We have a carcass competition that's very popular with the Hutterites in particular. They raise a finished pig, which is slaughtered and then the carcass is evaluated by a judge," Dickson said.

"There are prizes for the best quality animal. Usually it's money packages, and usually the winners donate it to a charity of their choice."

The carcasses then go to the Winnipeg Harvest food bank for distribution. Adding to the charitable efforts, different companies bring in display meats that are later donated to the humanitarian organization Siloam Mission.

Similar to the 2014 event, this year's expo is expected to include a chicken wing eating competition as well as winning entries displayed from children's poster contest.

The vision also remains the same for 2016: "For Manitoba's livestock producers to be world leaders in producing quality food while safeguarding the environment, embracing proven welfare practices and contributing to the social and economic well-being of Manitoba's farming communities."

For more information about the 2016 Prairie Livestock Expo, visit [www.prairielivestockexpo.ca](http://www.prairielivestockexpo.ca), email [info@prairielivestockexpo.ca](mailto:info@prairielivestockexpo.ca) or follow the event on Twitter. ■



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# Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium showcases exciting line-up

By Sheri Monk

The 39th annual Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium will be held November 15-16 in Saskatoon. In previous years, the event has drawn upwards of 200 attendees, primarily from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Conference co-ordinator Kim Browne says the event is organized efficiently to benefit both the stockperson and the manager.

“Our day-one focus is the stockperson. When they have limited time to attend a conference, we need to ensure that those who are in the barns working with the animals get as much practical information as they can get. Day two is more management focused,” she said, adding that everyone involved in the industry will get something out of each speaker.

**I would say that we have a tremendous lineup of experts in their field – all of them.**  
~ Kim Browne







A variety of sponsors from all over Canada and North America are attracted to the event, for the networking and for the top-notch presentations.

“I would say that we have a tremendous lineup of experts in their field – all of them,” said Browne. Speakers are gearing up for their chance to present new technologies and opportunities to advance industry and Brown anticipates all presenters

will be well-received. “I don’t highlight keynotes because as far as I’m concerned they’re all keynotes. There are U.S. and international speakers, and they all bring something here.”

Mike Brumm will address the topic of hog barn ventilation systems and is among many others to look forward to, in-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

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## Upcoming Events



*The speakers at the symposium are always entertaining and engaging, and the 2016 event will be no exception.*



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cluding Jennifer Brown from the Prairie Swine Centre, who will host a discussion on various sow-housing systems. Greg Giokas will look at the Canadian pork industry's efforts to expand global markets, and Abe Huisman will explore biological limitations in pig production... and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Browne expressed advanced gratitude for everyone who continues to support the time-honoured event.

"We're just ever so thankful for the ongoing contribution of our long-term sponsors of the event, because really it's tough to build this kind of a program without their assistance. They're very important to the success of these events."

The host hotel offers very reasonably priced accommodations and ample space. The Saskatoon Inn and Conference Center has recently been significantly upgraded and updated, offering a perfect setting for the symposium.

Those who wish to attend are strongly encouraged to register in advance, the form for which can be found at [saskpork.com](http://saskpork.com).

"The annual banquet is a really fun event for those who haven't seen each other in a while to network because we really don't pack it too full of program. Expect cocktails, dinner, maybe an hour of awards and programming, but mostly we just let people visit and have fun and drink lots of wine and eat good food," Browne said. ■

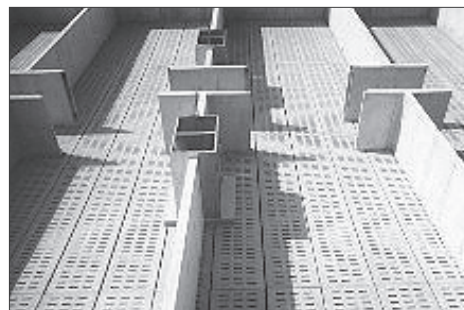


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# Positive PED sample from Alberta transport trailer

By Geoff Geddes

One oddity of scientific testing is that a positive finding makes people negative, while a negative result is cause for celebration. Maybe that's why no one was planning a PED party when Alberta recently received its first positive result for the disease on a swine transport trailer.

Since the first Canadian case of the virus causing 100 per cent mortality in nursery pigs was reported on a farm in Ontario in January of 2013, the pork industry has been on high alert, especially after the disease spread to Quebec and Manitoba. As PED was slowly eradicated in Canada, so too was a lot of the fear, at least until recently.

## Routine test, abnormal result

As part of the PED (Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea) surveillance program, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (ARD) takes samples every week from high traffic areas such as plants, assembly yards and truck washes on a voluntary basis. Those samples are then lab tested for the presence of PED, Swine Delta Coronavirus (SDCV) and Transmissible Gastro Enteritis (TGE). For the longest time, none of the samples were positive... not until, of course, they were.

"On August 2, one of six samples taken at random from a trailer in Alberta tested positive for PED," said Dr. Julia Keenlside, a veterinary epidemiologist with ARD.

While the finding led to news headlines about the first positive PED test in Alberta, Dr. Keenlside is quick to correct that.

"Last year, we also had a positive. That one was from an office of one of the participating facilities. The recent test was the first identification of PED on a truck in Alberta, but not the first positive in the province."

That's not to say this latest result is no cause for concern, it just means you need to do something that media struggles with – keep it in perspective.

"We performed a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test. While it's not quantitative, the strength of the reaction tells us how much virus was present, and in this case it wasn't a really strong positive test."

Furthermore, Dr. Keenlside pointed out that a PCR test can't tell you if the virus is alive or dead at that moment – it just indicates that the disease was once there, something that must be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

**This was one out of six samples being positive from a random trailer. There was no PED detected on a farm and no pigs were sick. If a farm is truly infected you'll see positive tests everywhere. In Manitoba PED was found on buildings, vehicles, tractors and most places around the farm. ~ Dr. Julia Keenlside**

Perhaps most importantly, there is a key distinction between recording a positive test and actually having the disease.

"This was one out of six samples being positive from a random trailer. There was no PED detected on a farm and no pigs were sick. If a farm is truly infected you'll see positive tests everywhere. In Manitoba PED was found on buildings, vehicles, tractors and most places around the farm."

## Tracing the path

Although it could have been worse, one positive PED test is one

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too many, so officials traced the truck back to look for clues.

“This trailer was used to deliver culled sows from Manitoba to a slaughter plant in Wisconsin on July 25,” said Dr. Keenlside.

The truck was then washed in Wisconsin before returning to Canada, where it picked up non-livestock equipment and arrived in Alberta on July 28. Five days later, the positive test was conducted.

Keenlside says the result was handled very professionally by all involved parties.

“Both the transporter and the truck wash took this very seriously. After the positive test, the truck was thoroughly washed and disinfected. It was kept in a segregated area away from traffic so as not to endanger other trucks or farms, and had plenty of downtime before going back into circulation.”

### Border disorder

These days, it's hard to talk about truck washing in the pork industry without thinking of the border trucking controversy, as livestock trailers are one of the prime carriers of the PED virus.

When PED was at its height in early 2014, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) implemented an emergency protocol suspending a requirement that trucks be washed south of the border before returning to Canada. This meant that transporters could wait and wash their trucks in Canada where the wash bays are thought to be superior; for example, not using recycled water as many American facilities do.

In May, however, the CFIA resumed enforcement of the regulation making truckers wash in the U.S. prior to crossing the border. As a result, transporters must now choose between relying solely on a less effective procedure at an American facility or washing again when they get to Canada, expending more time and money in the process.

For some, this issue begs the question: Did the resumption of enforcement at the border lead to inferior washing of pig trailers and bring PED to Alberta?

“With this being the first PED positive trailer in Alberta, we don't have enough numbers to say yes or no about a causal link,” said Dr. Keenlside. “There are so many ways the trailer could have been contaminated.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 40*

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We know assembly yards in Manitoba have been positive so it may have happened there or at the U.S. slaughter plant.”

In any case, Dr. Keenlside pointed out that the CFIA exemption only applied to trucks visiting American farms, whereas this truck went strictly to the plant and thus was unaffected by the exemption.

“I agree that the regulations need updating, but we don’t have enough proof that they impacted this truck. Still, it’s a good reminder that trucks washed in the U.S. could carry the virus.”

According to Alberta Pork’s executive director, it’s a reminder of other things as well.

### **Bearing the burden**

“Biosecurity is just one more issue that costs producers money and forces them to carry the financial burden themselves,” said Darcy Fitzgerald. “When you’re selling a product at prices that are lower than they were 25 years ago, that’s asking a lot.”

At the same time, Fitzgerald noted the positive reminders that were sparked by the positive test.

“We’ve now had two environmental samples show traces of PED, but no farms or pigs have been infected in Alberta. That’s a tribute to the fabulous job producers are doing in devising new systems and defenses, and to the work of veterinarians in stepping up and helping producers with biosecurity and bio-containment.”

Ultimately, it’s a reminder of what could have been and what might lie ahead in the absence of vigilance.

“People tend to get complacent because we sounded the alarm years ago that PED was coming to Alberta and it never came,” said Keenlside. “We need to be mindful that there is still a risk. The only reason we kept PED out was our commitment to biosecurity, and it’s the only way we’ll continue to do so.”

Given the current state of Alberta’s pork industry, maintaining that commitment could be a challenge, but on the other hand, what other choice is there?

“I understand that things are tight and producers have to look at cutting input costs,” said Keenlside. “Reducing biosecurity might save you a bit today, but in the long term it will cost a lot more if PED gets in.”

In that worst case scenario, it’s not just producers that would suffer, it’s also transporters, slaughter plants and assembly yards, because as Keenlside stressed, “we are all in this together”.

And perhaps that last statement is the best reminder to come from this incident.

“This case reinforces the amazing relationship we have with the provincial agriculture staff,” said Fitzgerald. “ARD and Growing Forward programs have helped our industry through education, surveillance programs and on-farm initiatives to support producers.”

“At the end of the day, PED spurred collaboration along the whole value chain – producers, truckers, vets, processors, assembly yards and the government. It got everyone working together, and that is a real positive.” ■



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# Quarantine in milliseconds

**Two revolutionary biosecurity systems develop in Ontario combine smart phone apps, powerful software and GPS technology to provide lightning fast outbreak management and protection of herd health**

By Treena Hein

How does what's happening right now on Ontario poultry farms relate to the pork industry, in Canada and beyond? In a word – biosecurity.

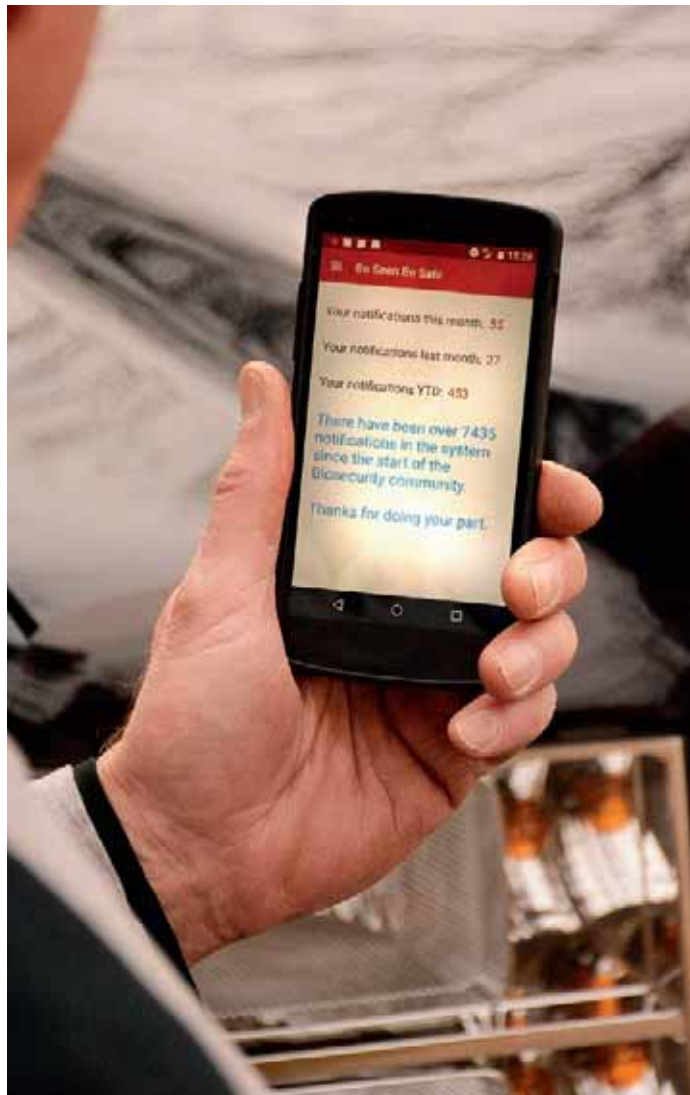
Two new patented biosecurity systems, one for halting disease outbreaks ('Be Seen, Be Safe') and one for better protecting herd/flock health ('Farm Health Monitor'), were rolled out over the winter across Ontario. More than 800 geo-fenced poultry farms and 1,200 people and vehicles were involved, including every producer belonging to Egg Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission, and the Turkey Farmers of Ontario. These associations paid the first two years' nominal cost for each farm (installation and ongoing monitoring), with 75 per cent of that cost being reimbursed by a federal government grant.

**It's one more line of defense, and helps to take the cumbersomeness out of a biosecurity system. ~ Lee Whittington, Prairie Swine Centre**

'Be Seen, Be Safe' (BSBS) and 'Farm Health Monitor' (FHM) were invented by Tim Nelson and Joel Sotomayor in order to make better disease management available to industry.

In the pork industry for example, risk of various diseases such as swine flu remains strong. More than eight million pigs have died globally from PEDv (porcine epidemic diarrhea virus) since early 2013, and several Canadian swine farms have recently been identified as PEDv-positive with recurrent

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 44*



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infections. Other infectious disease concerns include swine dysentery, foot and mouth disease, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, classical swine fever, African swine fever, coccidiosis, and respiratory diseases such as pleuropneumonia and porcine parvovirus.

Nelson recently presented BSBS and FHM to the UK Pig Health and Welfare Council and other UK livestock and poultry groups, with further meetings planned. Nelson also presented the systems at the Prairie Swine Centre (PSC) in

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in January. PSC President and CEO Lee Whittington says Nelson was invited to their 'Innovator's Club,' an exclusive half-day workshop on current and emerging technologies held every year in conjunction with the Advanced Pork Seminar for people involved in all aspects for the pork value chain. Whittington believes BSBS fits well with the psychology of pork industry. "It's one more line of defense," he says, "and helps to take the cumbersomeness out of a biosecurity system."

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For his part, Egg Farmers of Ontario Director of Public Affairs Bill Mitchell believes “timeliness and accuracy of information are the essence of responding effectively in any disease situation, and that’s where ‘Be Seen, Be Safe’ really raises the bar. We’re putting it in place for our farmers because automating outbreak response information systems makes it a lot easier for everyone who participates in our industry at the farm level, including people who are on the road towards the next farm at the time of an alert.”

### How ‘Be Seen, Be Safe’ works

To effectively contain an outbreak, farms must be quickly quarantined and the traffic to and from infected or potentially-infected farms must quickly be tracked. However, using the telephone or emails to do this has its limitations, especially in quickly identifying individuals or vehicles that may have spread the disease. Using farm visitor log books to track farm visitor movement is slow to the point of being almost pointless in an emergency. In contrast, ‘Be Seen Be Safe’ provides a way to instantly analyze farm visit data so that farms can be quarantined, to immediately communicate with everyone who visits farms, prompt farmers to step up livestock monitoring and biosecurity protocols – thereby rapidly preventing an outbreak from becoming a potential disaster.

Before the system is turned on in any particular jurisdiction, the geographical boundary of each farm is mapped with GPS technology called ‘geo-fencing.’ During the same period of time, anyone who regularly visits swine farms – veterinarians, feed and pullet delivery persons, vaccination crews, salespersons and so on – downloads the encrypted BSBS smart phone app. It is available on all major platforms, causes no battery drain and involves very minimal internet usage as it only runs for a split-second when a device with the app crosses a geo-fenced property.

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**Timeliness and accuracy of information are the essence of responding effectively in any disease situation, and that’s where ‘Be Seen, Be Safe’ really raises the bar. ~ Bill Mitchell, Egg Farmers of Ontario**

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The system then goes live. Anytime a system-ready smartphone or tablet (or the GPS beacon on vehicles that regularly travel to farms) enters a geo-fenced farm property, BSBS is automatically triggered and the visitor is electronically

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46



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greeted with a welcome message. At the same moment, the farmer is instantly notified of a visitor's arrival. Information on all visits to that farm is stored in an online visitor record book which farmers can access at any time using a secure personal login.

The encrypted BSBS database stores farm visit information for one year, which includes farm ID, visitor ID, number of farms visited in the recent past (a risk assessment level), and the time in and time out. In addition, the identity of individual visitors and farms are only accessed by authorized system administrators in an emergency outbreak situation. Nelson says support for the system has been overwhelming in Ontario, with a firm understanding that BSBS is no more intrusive than what came before – physically signing a farm visitor log book. “The geo-fencing aspect to the system means that only on-farm visits are logged, not every movement of an individual or vehicle, which protects personal privacy,” he adds.

Whittington believes “the tedious manual log book system is often inaccurate and there is an immediate benefit for the producer in that BSBS provides a long-term, accurate record of who visited the farm. He notes that “Everyone has smart phones now and this system uses them, but protects overall

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privacy. The mentality today is 'I want the data immediately and at little or no cost,' and 'Be Seen, Be Safe' fits with that."

When an outbreak hits, the BSBS software analyzes the entire database of visitor and vehicle movements at lightning speed, starting with a specific flagged farm or farms. Disease spread can be mapped and extrapolated in real time, with the simultaneous overlay of factors like wind speed and direction, humidity and temperature. Farmers and visitors receive ongoing updates and guidance.

Dr. Susanna Williamson sees value in this type of rapid regional surveillance of swine disease. "The timely collection, analysis and sharing of accurate clinical and diagnostic data from pig farms within and across geographical regions is an aim of many veterinary surveillance systems around the world," says the veterinary lead of the Pig Expert Group Surveillance Intelligence Unit of the Animal and Plant Health Agency of the UK, based in Suffolk, England. "Achieving it is something of a 'Holy Grail', but providing pig keepers and their vets with information and intelligence on patterns and trends of disease occurrence and what to look for allows them to undertake targeted precautionary actions. These may include upgrading biosecurity, increased vigilance for specific clinical signs, or other preventative measures. Whatever means are used to provide surveillance of this nature, they need to be sustainable, cost-effective and achieve good coverage, with confidentiality."

Williamson also sees value in systems such as 'Be Seen, Be Safe, in that as time passes since an outbreak incident, some biosecurity measures may be applied less strictly than is desirable. She believes "having standard operating procedures and herd health management systems that also include prompts and alerts to remind staff what specific actions need to be taken and when, with a means of auditing these, would help maintain biosecurity awareness and standards and protect herd health."

## Farm Health Monitor

'Farm Health Monitor' (FHM) permits all farmers and veterinarians in a given area to better contain and manage production-limiting diseases. Like BSBS, FHM also involves a secure smart phone app where farmers and veterinarians can input information on disease symptoms (including a short video) and/or bird deaths. If similar information is reported on two or more farms within a given area, FHM sends out a blanket warning across the region, prompting producers and vets to check flocks carefully and to report as necessary. Nelson calls it "a true early warning system."

The poultry FHM app is being trialed right now, with the swine version ready for trial and a dairy version under development. FHM is currently being integrated by PigChampPro Europe into its software, which will allow the pork industry there to record pig disease events, do batch to batch comparisons of diseased pigs and more.

PigChampPro Europe is also planning to do a small 'Be Seen, Be Safe' trial in the region of Sugovia, Spain around the end of July. In early June, BSBS and FHM were presented to a swine biosecurity company called Unitec in Milan Italy, and also to the BC Pork Council and to BC's chief veterinarian, Dr. Jane Pritchard. "In B.C., we presented the offline mode of the systems, which applies to situations where cell coverage is little or nonexistent in the province," Nelson explains. "When there is no coverage, the GPS function still works, and the geo-fencing information is stored until the phone is back in cell range, when it is then instantly uploaded."

In addition, the Prairie Swine Centre just recently announced that it will be the sole distributor of BSBS and FHM in Canada for swine, and that profits will go back to swine research. More announcements are sure to come in Canada and around the world about these systems. ■

### For more information:

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# Industry News

## End of an era - Alberta's ALMA cashing out

By Geoff Geddes

In *The Gambler*, Kenny Rogers sings about knowing when to “hold'em” and when to “fold'em”, equating life to a poker game. These days, the same analogy could apply to agriculture in Alberta, with some holding on and others folding up shop. For many then, the demise of the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) couldn't have come at a worse time.

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**We have been a catalyst for the industry. Since inception, we have invested almost \$29 million in the pork sector alone, supporting industry development, research and education, and I'm pretty proud of that. ~ Gordon Cove, CEO of ALMA**

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As part of the provincial budget released in April, a number of agricultural groups were either disbanded or had their responsibilities internalized and managed by the government. They include the Alberta Grains Council, Alberta Farm Safety Advisory Council, Next Generation Advisory Council, Agriculture Operations Practice Act Policy Advisory Group, and Agriculture Development Committee.

Most observers agree however, that the most significant cut on the agriculture side was to ALMA. In taking over their operation, the government also reduced funding from \$25 million to \$17 million this year.

### Rolling out and diving in

Since its incorporation in 2009, ALMA has been tasked with driving change in the province's livestock and meat sectors. Their focus was on advancing the Alberta Livestock and Meat Strategy by offering ideas, information and investment opportunities to the industry and the provincial government. President and CEO Gordon Cove was with them from the outset and takes pride in how far they came.

“At the beginning we faced a lot of skepticism as a new agency positioned between industry and government,” said Cove. “We had to prove our worth, slowly weaving ourselves into the fabric of the industry.”

If he was writing that sentence, Cove might have bolded “slowly”. “Our biggest challenge was figuring out how to engage and

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bring value to our stakeholders. Building credibility and partnerships takes time – nothing happens quickly.”

It took a while, but Cove said that once they were firmly established, they accomplished a great deal.

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**We need a vehicle like ALMA to encourage, promote and stimulate new ideas and innovation. We have to stop re-inventing the wheel for political reasons. Let's find a formula and make it work. Let's use what we have and make it better.**  
~ Darcy Fitzgerald, Alberta Pork

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“We have been a catalyst for the industry. Since inception, we have invested almost \$29 million in the pork sector alone, supporting industry development, research and education, and I'm pretty proud of that.”

In total, ALMA invested \$219 million in the livestock and meat industry while leveraging that number through other sources to \$873 million. Cove points to the latter number as a reflection of their ability to partner and broaden their scope, noting that “nobody else touches every part of the industry, the international market and all the players in between.”

### Unhappy ending

Nothing lasts forever of course. In agriculture, seven years is an eternity, but the end was still tough for Cove and his staff to swallow.

“There was disappointment all around. The government wanted to save money and transition ALMA back to the ministry with a different delivery model and a more direct relationship with stakeholders.”

At the same time, Cove was heartened that the minister recognized their contribution to the industry and the importance of continuing their work in one way or another.

Whatever form that work takes, one thing is certain – there will be less of it.

“The \$8 million reduction in our budget will force us to cut back on some areas like research and industry development.

We're determined to maintain the quality of our efforts, we just have to prioritize and focus on areas that impact the long term profitability of the industry such as combating PED and supporting genomics research.”

### Spare us the change

If the people doling out the funds are disheartened by all of this, those on the receiving end aren't popping the champagne either.

“ALMA supports a lot of research that helps producers and the industry as a whole,” said Darcy Fitzgerald, executive director of Alberta Pork.

They've also funded some key programs for Alberta Pork such as Passion for Pork, Porkapalooza, changes to the Alberta Hog Feeders Association, Taste Alberta, the cost of production study and a program to reduce energy usage and environmental footprints.

Personally, Fitzgerald is frustrated by what he sees as a “baby out with the bathwater” mentality on the part of the government.

“We need a vehicle like ALMA to encourage, promote and stimulate new ideas and innovation. We have to stop re-inventing the wheel for political reasons. Let's find a formula and make it work. Let's use what we have and make it better.”

While he acknowledged that ALMA wasn't perfect, he noted that it's only been around for seven years and has made great progress in a short time frame.

Looking ahead, “cautiously optimistic” may best describe Fitzgerald's stance.

“Right now it's hard to say what the new version will be, so I'm giving the government the benefit of the doubt. I'm sure they will enlist good people who will do their best with the mandate they're given.”

In spite of some misgivings about the future, Fitzgerald is quick to praise ALMA for the past.

“From a personal perspective and as a company, we have had a great working relationship with them and appreciated the professionalism of their staff. Hopefully some of the same people will be employed in the new system as they really do know their stuff.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

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## Industry News

### ALMA matters

Apart from its impact on the pork industry, the loss of ALMA affects a broad range of industries and institutions.

"We have enjoyed such a productive relationship with ALMA over the years because their board really grasped the benefits of research for the broader industry," said Dr. Stanford Blade, dean of the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Alberta.

"Not only did they fund traditional research around animal production, but they branched out to include value added processing, food safety and environmental sustainability. I was very vocal about complimenting them for providing such a wide portfolio of support, not just for our faculty but across the research community; they really set the bar."

Like Fitzgerald, Dr. Blade is concerned about the implications of losing ALMA or dealing with a less-funded version.

"The issue I have is that there are other Alberta agencies like the Alberta Crop Development Fund that won't be getting a new allocation of resources to fund research and innovation, so our faculty and research partners can no longer approach these other groups to leverage our investment."

In essence, it's not just ALMA money disappearing from the system or being reduced, but there's also a loss of leverage from

private industry sources, NGOs and other commodity groups in an industry "that has potential to grow and add to Alberta's economic diversification".

That concern for the big picture is shared by Fitzgerald, who takes it one step further.

"It's well established that agriculture creates a lot of jobs and boosts the economy, but it goes beyond that. We must be mindful that Canada is one of the few places on the planet that still produces food to share with the world – just because we have abundance now doesn't mean we always will."

### Onward and...?

Perhaps fittingly, ALMA's last day of existence in its present form is October 31, as that's also Halloween. After all, the agency known for dispensing "treats" to worthy programs and research got caught in a tricky situation.

"We're in the process of transitioning agreements over to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry," said Gordon Cove. "If ALMA committed to a project over multiple years, the government has pledged to honor those agreements and make the move as seamless as possible." Still, he admits that industry is nervous and uncertain of the road ahead. "All I know for sure is that I have been very fortunate to work for such a great organization. As far as what the future holds, only time will tell." ■



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# Manitoba Pork AGM offers upbeat updates

By Jennifer McFee

From the local to the global, Manitoba Pork's 2016 annual general meeting offered insights into the wide-reaching realm of the pork industry.

General manager Andrew Dickson said the April 13 event attracted a good turnout for the morning and afternoon sessions, and about 450 people gathered for the banquet.

"There was a fair amount of participation from those that were there, with questions of the speakers. It was a bit of an upbeat note with 2014 and 2015 being reasonably profitable years for the hog industry in Western Canada, and our members are part of that," he said.

"Going into 2016, margins are tighter but it's still in a positive nature – and there are lots of good things happening that make the outlook seem more positive than we've seen for a long time."

For example, the low Canadian dollar has brought benefits to the industry, he noted.

"If you look at the factors that affect pork production, the Canadian dollar has been hovering around the 75-cent range, which is good for prices because everything's priced in U.S. dollars," Dickson said.

"The offside, of course, is that when we start importing things like grain and corn and soymeal and so on, those get more expensive. The equipment also gets more expensive, so if some of the sow crates are manufactured in the United States, they're going to be more expensive."

Nonetheless, the industry outlook remains bright in Manitoba, which was evident in the optimistic mood at the AGM.

"In Manitoba, we would produce about 4.5 million finished pigs that are slaughtered here and about 2.5 million weanlings. In terms of numbers of baby pigs, we've generally been No. 1 in Canada. We just don't finish all our pigs, since some get sent elsewhere," Dickson said.

"Our processing plants in Brandon and Neepawa can handle more pigs, which is good. That means if you were to build a finisher barn, you know there is a processor that would buy them. Contrast that with Ontario, which is having difficulties finding processors and has to export pigs into Quebec and into the United States."

The AGM addressed some of these issues with presentations focused on global and national marketing initiatives as well as talks by Iowa and Minnesota pork producers. Another key focus hinged on structural change and competition on the Prairies.

Manitoba Pork chair George Matheson presented the 2016 Pork Industry Awards at the AGM, with Scott Dick earning accolades as the co-founder of Agra-Gold Consulting Ltd. based in Landmark, Man. Dick stands out for his "exceptional leadership skills and his commitment to protecting Manitoba's environment through continuous innovation and raising the bar for excellence in nutrient management."

Also, Steve's Livestock Transport Ltd., based in Blumenort, Man., earned recognition for their "continuous pursuit and exceptional implementation of cutting-edge technologies to ensure the highest standard of animal care and biosecurity in Manitoba's livestock transport industry."

Looking to the future, Dickson outlined a few areas on the radar for the pig producers' membership association.

"Manitoba Pork Council is going to continue with its efforts to ensure the public is fully informed of how the industry works and our impact on the environment. We're going to continue with our trade advocacy works into the United States," Dickson said.

"We have to start looking forward – and we talked about this at the meeting – at how are we going to do disease management. Western Canada has huge business links with the U.S. Midwest and we've got to start thinking in terms of a continental approach to disease management in the swine herd." ■

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# The next step: Sequencing the PIC genome

Submitted by PIC

In November 2015, PIC embarked upon a collaboration with The Roslin Institute to fully sequence the genome of more than 14,000 pigs. With this new project, PIC will be able to further increase the accuracy of selection and deliver faster and faster genetic improvement to pig producers. This is the next step in a long tradition of innovation to advance pig production.

Traditionally, breeders focused on selecting animals based on phenotypic traits that are economically important, such as individual piglet birth weight, growth, robustness, primal yield, and meat quality traits. Since the early 2000s, PIC has explored opportunities to use DNA markets to better understand which genotypes would correlate best with the phenotypic traits.

In 2013, PIC was the first swine genetics company to utilize tens of thousands of genotypes per animal to increase annual genetic improvement across all traits. This new way of selection, relationship-based genomic selection, uses a repository of millions of pedigrees and phenotypic traits along with the new genotypic data to more accurately select the best animals. Three years into this process PIC is realizing historically unprecedented genetic trends at the commercial pig level.

The new sequencing project with The Roslin Institute can help to further accelerate the rate of genetic improvement. The genome of the domestic pig has around 3 billion nucleotides,

similar in size to humans. With its current genomics program, PIC captures only a small portion of the sequence, around 80,000 locations. If full sequence information is available, PIC will be able to improve the understanding of the genotypes that impact phenotypic traits. This allows to increase selection accuracy and increase the rate of genetic improvement.

This focus on sequencing has already led to many breakthroughs in humans. It has allowed medical experts to better understand the root cause of diseases, make new and improved vaccines, and identify new cancer treatments to name a few. The vast amount of work in humans has improved the quality of sequencing technology and has driven down the cost.

PIC sees numerous possibilities with these types of projects for pig production. Swine genetics companies will be able to further improve the accuracy of relationship-based genomic selection by having all genome sequence information possible from any one animal. Other possibilities include identifying genes that can impact resistance to diseases that challenge the pork industry – such as PRRSv. By investing in future genetic improvement through this multi-million dollar project, PIC believes the industry can continue to thrive and it will benefit animals, consumers, and farmers. ■



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## No pain a big gain for pork industry

**As of July 1 of this year, castration or tail docking performed at any age must now be done with analgesics to help control post-procedure pain**

By Geoff Geddes

It's easy to embrace the notion of "no pain, no gain" unless, of course, you're the one in pain. And as painful experiences go, castration is right up there with childbirth and tone-deaf karaoke. So when the new requirements for pain management in the revised *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs* recently took effect, many people – and a few million pigs – breathed a sigh of relief.

Under *Section 4.5 – Elective Husbandry Procedures* in the code, the requirements for two areas of pain management have changed – castration and tail docking. Prior to July 1, 2016, pain control was only mandated after 10 days of age for castration and after seven days for tail docking.

As of July 1 of this year, castration or tail docking performed at any age must now be done with analgesics to help control post-procedure pain.

### Less stress

As a standing observer of the Code Development Committee that worked out the changes, Mark Fynn, manager of quality assurance and animal care programs for Manitoba Pork, has firsthand knowledge of what was changed and, perhaps more importantly, why.

"This was recognition by producers and industry that pigs actually deal with pain during and after these procedures," said Fynn.

That's confirmed by Dr. Egan Brockhoff, a swine veterinarian in Alberta and owner of Prairie Swine Health Services.

"Research from around the world supports the premise that castration is a painful procedure, and that the proper management protocols can reduce that pain."

Furthermore, pain puts a lot of stress on piglets, affecting their behavior and even their well-being, so doing something to manage pain was critical.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

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## ■ Social Licence

It also stresses consumers to think of pigs in pain, and Fynn said it was a combination of these two factors that drove the changes forward.

### Go with the flow

Yet with all of that focus on the “what” and “why” of pain management, Dr. Brockhoff said one key factor was overlooked – the “how”.

“Everybody said ‘let’s do it’ but nobody had ideas on how to do it.”

That’s where Brockhoff got involved, finding a way to implement the changes on the farm and presenting a number of options to producers and vets.

According to Mark Fynn, implementation was the main challenge for producers.

“When it comes to piglet processing, it’s all about flow. You must decide when to administer analgesics so that you’re being efficient from a time standpoint while ensuring proper pain control for the animal.”

The choice of process is important because the wrong choice may actually add to a pig’s stress.

“Most producers have decided not to go through, apply the analgesic and then come back 30 minutes later to perform the castration.”

Handling the piglets twice like that might be more stressful to them than the procedure itself, not to mention unnecessary.

“If you’re dealing with an anesthetic, you may have to wait five or 10 minutes for it to have the desired effect,” said Fynn. “But an analgesic is basically to reduce inflammation and deal with post procedural pain, so that waiting time is not as critical.”

Since an analgesic doesn’t address pain during the procedure, Fynn said there’s no need to stress the pig twice when applying it.

In his practice, Dr. Brockhoff has encountered some producer concerns over the change in requirements, but nothing that time won’t fix.

“We are asking them to add one more step to a well-established protocol,” said Brockhoff. “Like any change, people need some time to play with it and understand how it will fit with their routine. It’s not difficult, but there is an adjustment period.”

### Handle with care

One producer who has dealt successfully with the challenge of change regarding pain management is Martin Bowman, director of production with Verus Swine Health Management Services and a director of Alberta Pork.

“People resist change no matter what it is,” said Bowman. “For us, it was a matter of figuring out how to get pain mitigation into the pigs while handling them as little as possible.”

By having his staff become part of the implementation process, Bowman found they really got on board and helped make the transition as smooth as possible.

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**Research from around the world supports the premise that castration is a painful procedure, and that the proper management protocols can reduce that pain. ~ Dr. Egan Brockhoff**

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### Drug dealings

Once producers are familiar with the new requirements and find a place for them in their day-to-day operations, the next question is what product to use in dealing with pain.

“In Canada, the only option we have available for on-farm pain management are NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs),” said Brockhoff.

Within that category of drugs there are a few choices. For Brockhoff, the drug of choice is meloxicam, which can be administered orally or by injection.

“There’s a lot of research to support meloxicam as a good option for managing the pain associated with castration and other minor surgeries.”

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Two alternatives for both castration and tail docking are ketoprofen and flunixin meglumine, which is thankfully easier to apply than it is to pronounce. Since they are prescription products, producers need to speak with their herd veterinarian to determine which one will best suit their needs.

Also, since some meloxicam formulations are not labeled for pain, they must be prescribed by a vet if being used for that purpose.

### Short term pain, long term gain

While the code changes may alleviate a piglet's discomfort, some fear they could be a drain on producers' time and a pain in their pocketbook. From Bowman's experience, those fears are largely unfounded.

"Incorporating the new requirements does add a bit of time, but it soon becomes part of the process. "You may add some pennies per pig in operating expenses, however, the alternative would cost us far more in terms of consumer support."

Those assertions are supported by Brockhoff, whose on-farm trials with the new protocols found no added time when two people did the processing, and about 20 seconds more per pig if only one worker was involved.

### Who's in charge here?

Less clear than the processes and drugs involved in pain management is how the new rules will be enforced. Though there is currently no mechanism in place to ensure compliance, Fynn said that it's only a matter of time.

"The revised pain management requirements will be part of the animal care component in the new Canadian Pork Excellence program. Ultimately we'll have validators on farm and audits of the validators, all to confirm that these changes are being applied in the barn."

Yet like any change to the status quo, long-term success will hinge on whether those affected buy into the benefits.

"We put a lot of effort into education, training and awareness," said Brockhoff, "and it seems to be paying off as most of our clients are adopting the changes."

For Bowman, seeing was believing when it came to getting onside with the revisions.

"We did a few trials early on with Dr. Madonna Benjamin at the University of Calgary to test the notion that pigs feel pain and they were quite compelling. The difference between the litters that received pain mitigation and those that didn't was like night and day, and it was expressed in their vocalization and posture."

It doesn't mean that he agrees with everything in the new code regarding pain mitigation, just that he supports the rationale and is ready to move forward.

"At the end of the day, it's about doing the right thing for the animals in our care." ■

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# RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

## Feeding wheat dried distillers grains with solubles (DDGS) to weaned pigs

Lifang Wang<sup>1</sup>, Eduardo Beltranena<sup>1,2</sup>, and Ruurd T. Zijlstra<sup>1\*</sup>

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### Take Home Message

Wheat distillers dried grains and solubles (DDGS) is the coproduct (what's leftover) of fermenting cereal grain (wheat, sorghum, triticale) to produce ethanol to blend with car fuel. Locally produced wheat DDGS contains more than 30 per cent protein and may replace imported soybean meal in pig diets to reduce feed cost. In this experiment, weaned pigs were fed zero, five, 10, 15 or 20 per cent wheat DDGS replacing up to 20 per cent soybean meal for 3 three weeks starting three weeks after weaning at 19 days of age. Pigs had increased feed conversion (feed:gain) mostly due to reduced weight gain in the first week on test, but maintained feed intake for the entire trial. We therefore recommend introduction of wheat DDGS into weaned pig diets by stepping up inclusions progressively by growth phase.

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### Wheat DDGS

Wheat distillers dried grains and solubles (DDGS) contains 3 times more protein and fibre because yeast ferments most of the cereal grain starch to ethanol and carbon dioxide. Wheat DDGS is therefore a good source of protein and phosphorus for pigs and may reduce feed cost by sparing inclusion of soybean meal and phosphate. In a previous study that we conducted with weaned pigs starting one week after weaning at day 19, we saw that feeding DDGS reduced weight gain by one-half as a result of reducing feeding intake by one-third. That raised a research question whether older weaned pigs would have a similar response starting feeding wheat DDGS at three weeks after weaning at ~20 days of age. In this experiment, we evaluated inclusion of up to 20 per cent wheat DDGS in diets fed to older weaned pigs.

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### Nutrient profile of wheat DDGS

Wheat DDGS was sourced from the Husky Energy plant in Lloydminster, SK. The wheat DDGS contained 33 per cent protein, 31 per cent total dietary fibre and 0.7 per cent phosphorus. Wheat DDGS was fluffy, having lower bulk density (41 kg/hL) than soybean meal (61 kg/hL) and wheat grain (56 kg/hL).

### Weaned pig trial

We conducted this trial at the Swine Research and Technology Centre, University of Alberta (Edmonton, AB). In total, 160 pigs (Duroc × Large White/Landrace F1; Hypor, Regina, SK) with an initial weight of 12.5 kg were involved in this 3-week trial that started 3 weeks after weaning. After weaning at 19 days of age, pigs were fed sequentially a commercial pre-starter diet for five days and a starter diet for 16 days (Hi-Pro Feeds, Sherwood Park, AB). Pigs were housed in nursery rooms in pens containing two barrows and two gilts each.

A wheat-based control diet with no DDGS added and four diets including five, 10, 15 or 20 per cent wheat DDGS were formulated by replacing soybean meal with wheat DDGS. Fish meal and soy protein concentrate were included in test diets at 5 and one per cent, respectively. Diets were formulated without antimicrobials or growth promoters to provide 2.3 Mcal net energy/kg and five g standardised ileal digestible lysine/Mcal of net energy. Other amino acids were formulated as ideal ratio to lysine. Diets were mixed and steam-pelleted at 70°C. Pigs had free access to feed and water throughout the trial. Individual pigs, feed added and remaining were weighed weekly.

### Trial results

For the entire three-week trial, increasing wheat DDGS inclusions up to 20 per cent did not affect feed intake, but each five per cent inclusion of wheat DDGS linearly reduced weight gain by 8.5 g per day and linearly increased feed consumed per kg gain by 16.2 g (Figure 1). Most importantly, each five per cent inclusion of wheat DDGS nearly reduced weight gain by 10 g per day for the first week. Each 5 per cent dietary inclusion of wheat DDGS linearly increased feed consumed per kg gain by 31.6 g for the first week on test. Final body weights were 27.8, 27.3, 27.2, 27.3 and 26.9 kg for pigs fed zero, five, 10, 15 or 20 per cent wheat DDGS, respectively and were not affected by increasing wheat DDGS inclusion.

### Cost vs. benefit

Prices per MT were as follows: wheat \$199, soybean meal \$562, wheat DDGS \$220, canola oil \$1,100, L-lysine-HCl \$2,150, L-threonine \$3,050, DL-methionine \$5,850. Dietary inclusion of 5, 10, 15 or 20 per cent wheat DDGS to replace soybean meal reduced feed cost by \$9.70, \$18.03, \$26.64 or \$35.52 per MT, respectively and decreased feed cost per kg of body weight gain by up to 0.03 cents.

### Recommendation

Increasing wheat DDGS inclusion up to 20 per cent replacing soybean meal in diets fed to weaned pigs may reduce feed cost when the price of soybean meal is relatively high. Increasing wheat DDGS inclusion reduced weight gain and increased feed conversion mostly during the first week on test that affected growth performance for the entire trial despite maintaining feed intake. The reduction in growth performance in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

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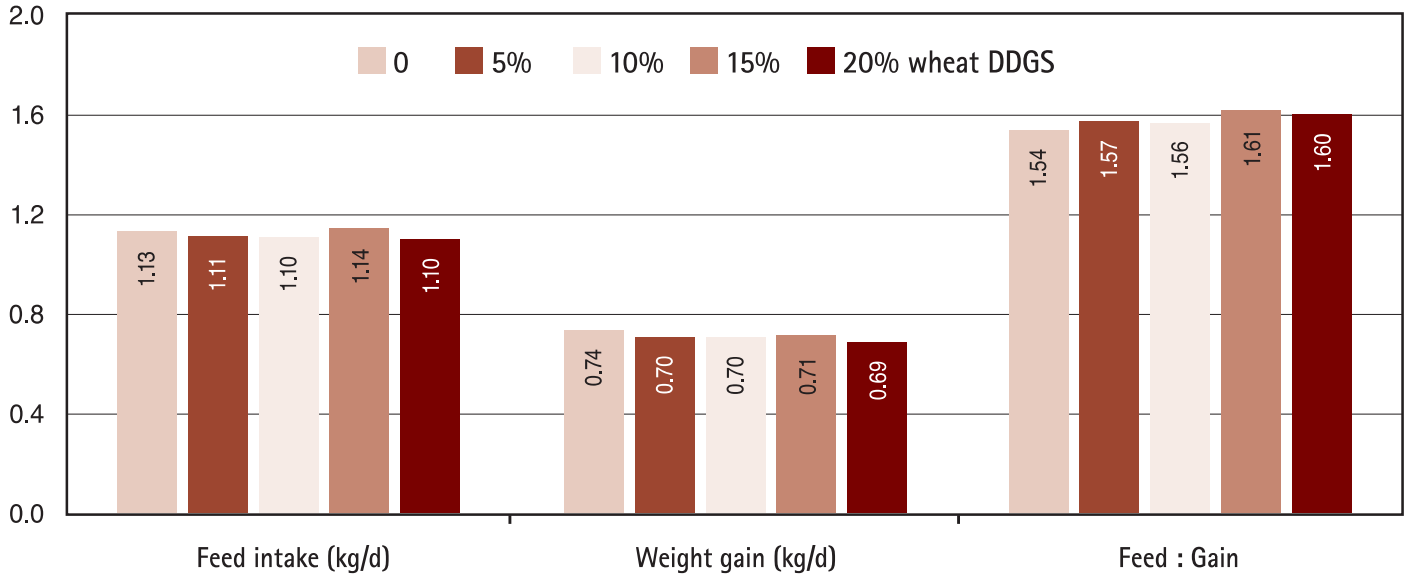
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Figure 1. Growth performance of piglets fed diets with increasing wheat DDGS inclusion for 3 weeks starting 3 weeks after weaning at ~19 d of age.



weaned pigs delaying feeding of wheat DDGS until 3 weeks post-weaning was smaller than we reported previously for younger pigs. We therefore recommend introduction of wheat DDGS into weaned pig diets by stepping up inclusions progressively by growth phase.

**Acknowledgements**

We appreciate the research funding from the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund, Alberta Pork, Danisco Animal Nutrition, and the Canola Council of Canada that sponsored a multi-trial project. ■

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# Manitoba celebrates Bacon Month

The popularity of bacon is good news for the Manitoba hog industry, which provides more than 13,000 jobs and contributes more than \$1.7 billion per year to the economy

By Jennifer McFee

Everything's better with bacon – especially in Manitoba where the mouthwatering morsel is creating jobs and bolstering the economy.

To celebrate life in Canada's bacon capital, Manitobans spent a sizzling hot August honouring the meaty treat for the third annual Bacon Month.

Susan Riese of Manitoba Pork said the much-anticipated annual event got its start in 2014.

"At that time, Maple Leaf Foods was re-organizing their processing facilities and creating centres of excellence around the country for different types of processing. Our facility here became the bacon and ham processing facility, so we produce the bacon and ham for the country at the plant here in Winnipeg," explains Riese, manager of public relations and consumer marketing programs.

"As a result of the expansion and restructuring, we were looking for something fun to do as the bacon-producing capital for the country."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60



Photo by Manitoba Pork

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- Adam Schlegel, Schlegelthorne Farms Inc.

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## Pork Culture and Trends



Photo by Manitoba Pork

*Bacon Party – Olympic gold medalists Team Jennifer Jones let MB Pork staff and other Bacon Party guests try on their gold medals.*

The Winnipeg-based Maple Leaf Foods plant is the largest bacon-processing facility in Canada at a sprawling 270,000 square feet. Currently, this location produces more than 25 million kilograms of bacon each year. Recently, the provincial and federal governments announced plans to invest in the facility, resulting in an increase in bacon production by another eight million kilograms per year.

Close to home, the appreciation for bacon has been heating up across the province, so it's easy for Manitobans to sink their teeth into a whole month of celebrations for the savoury success story.

“The first year, it was kind of a novelty,” Riese says, “and we tend to expand on things as we go along.”



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Last year, they partnered with the Winnipeg Goldeyes to add Bacon Night to the campaign. Participants eagerly ate up the event, so they ran it again in 2016. The baseball players wore special bacon-print jerseys with matching hats. Fans could also purchase their own bacon-wear at the game, and bacon-themed prizes and promotions enhanced the experience. Bacon-inspired edibles were definitely a home run with tasty creations including bacon poutine, bacon Caesars, bacon dogs and maple bacon cupcakes.

Adding to the excitement, Bacon Month has worked its way into the Winnipeg BBQ and Blues Festival, which features a southern-style barbecue competition with live blues, bluegrass and rock music.

“We’ve always been involved in that, but since it happens in August, which is also Bacon Month, we decided to try to incorporate some bacon-themed items,” Riese says.

“We actually had a booth on site and two tents this year, sampling Ooey-Goey Bacon Tarts and also Sweet and Savoury Bacon Marmalade.”

At the same event, festival-goers learned how to grill pork through several food demonstrations at the Manitoba Pork BBQ Village Stage. Pork was a major presence throughout the festival site, since pork butt and pork ribs were featured as part of the barbecue competition.



Photo by Manitoba Pork

As a new addition to Bacon Month in 2016, bacon lovers had the chance to buy a collectable T-shirt for \$20 that depicts the iconic Golden Boy from atop the Manitoba legislative building – except that he is holding strips of bacon instead of a torch. Although Bacon Month has now come and gone, the T-shirt is still available for purchase by emailing [info@manitobapork.com](mailto:info@manitobapork.com).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 63

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2016 marks 39 years of presenting Symposium! Speakers from around the globe will offer information on consumer trends and social license, advances in sustainable pork production and swine health and ways to optimize profits!

## Day 1 – November 15, 2016

**Cherilyn Nagel, Agriculture Advocate** and local farmer from Mossbank, SK shares her passion for agriculture and farming and why connecting with the consumer is so important.

**Jennifer Brown, PhD, Prairie Swine Centre** hosts a discussion on various sow housing systems.

**Murray Duggan, MSc., & Daniela Grossi, PhD** will demystify the world of swine genomics.

**Yolande Seddon, PhD, Western College of Veterinary Medicine (U of S)** presents practical information to help farms adapt to the new Pig Code requirements including enrichment and pain relief/management.

**Henry Gauvreau, DVM, Warman Veterinary Services** will address whether antibiotic benchmarking can improve farm management.

**Greg Douglas, DVM, Maple Leaf Foods** will focus on MLF's commitment to sustainable production and consumer demand for high welfare foods.

**Peter Provis, DVM, Elanco Animal Health** examines whether antibiotics are part of sustainable production with a focus on growth promotants and ionophores.

## Concurrent Sessions - Afternoon

1. **Rodrigo Teuber, DVM, PIC North America**  
*Early Pig Care Strategies*
2. **Mike Brumm, Ph.D, Brumm Swine Consultancy Inc.**  
*Troubleshooting Ventilation Systems in Hog Barns*

## Day 2 – November 16, 2016

**Greg Giokas, MA, BA, Canada Pork International** looks at the Canadian pork industry's efforts to expand global markets.

**Abe Huisman, PhD, Hypor Inc.**, explores biological limitations in pig production.

**Brett Stuart, BS (Acc), Global AgriTrends** will provide insight into the economics of North American pork production with his global protein/pork outlook.

**Andrew Van Kessel, PhD, Dept. of Animal and Poultry Science (U of S)** offers the latest information on the importance of gut health on weaned pigs.

**John Harding, DVM, Western College of Veterinary Medicine (U of S)** will address the use of vaccines and our social license to produce pork.

**Donald Down, BSA, MSc, Elanco Animal Health** focusses on the full value pigs and profit optimization.

**Eric Olson, BSAg, PAg, MNP**, will report on a recent study on agricultural investment in Saskatchewan.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Sask Pork's Annual General Meeting** will be held at the conclusion of Symposium November 16, 2016.

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For additional information on Saskatchewan Pork Symposium or sponsorship inquiries, contact Kim Browne, Conference Coordinator, Sask Pork at [info@saskpork.com](mailto:info@saskpork.com) or call (306) 244-7752.



Photo by Manitoba Pork

## Sweet & Savoury Bacon Marmalade

Courtesy of the Manitoba Pork website  
 Servings: 1 cup

### Ingredients:

- 375-gram package thick-cut bacon, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) finely chopped yellow onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) freshly brewed coffee
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) maple syrup
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) packed light brown sugar
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 ml) ground ginger
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) whiskey or apple juice
- 1 tsp (5 ml) lemon or orange zest

### Directions:

- In large skillet, fry bacon over medium-high heat, turning often until fat is rendered and bacon is lightly browned. With slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Pour off all but 1 Tbsp fat from skillet.
- Add onion; cook until translucent, about 5 minutes.
- Add garlic; cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- Stir in coffee, maple syrup, vinegar, brown sugar, ginger and cayenne pepper. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring and scraping up brown bits from bottom of skillet. Return bacon to skillet. Add whiskey or apple juice; stir to combine. Reduce heat and let mixture simmer, stirring occasionally until liquid has thickened, 30-45 minutes.
- Transfer mixture to small food processor. Add lemon or orange zest. Pulse mixture about 5 times; do not over-blend.
- Transfer marmalade to a sterilized glass jar with screw top lid. Store in refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Why bacon makes it better: Use this sweet and savoury treat as a condiment on everything from sandwiches and wraps to grilled meats and seafood. Or simply spread it on toasted bread or crackers and enjoy.

“That’s gone over really, really well,” Riese says. “People think it’s really fun. Basically, that’s part of us being the Bacon Capital of Canada.”



Manitoba Pork also gave away 20 cases of bacon, each containing 32 packages, in its Bacon for a Year contest.

The Bacon Month festivities wrapped up with the Bacon Makes It Better Party held on Aug. 31 at Winnipeg’s Pony Corral Pier 7. Attendees indulged in bacon entrees, appetizers, cocktails and more.

With an eye on the horizon, Riese expects the popularity of bacon to continue to grow.

“The cool thing about bacon right now is that there are so many varieties out there. It seems like every time I go to the store that there’s something different, whether it’s the smoke that they use or the seasoning that they use,” she says.

“There are so many different cuts too – thick cuts, thin cuts, everything in between. A lot of the independent butcher shops are making their own bacon too. It’s really interesting to see what people are doing, so it’s constantly reinventing itself.”

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The popularity of bacon is good news for the Manitoba hog industry, which provides more than 13,000 jobs and contributes more than \$1.7 billion per year to the economy. And Manitoba's bacon can boast a wide reach, with people enjoying it in more than 30 countries worldwide.

"I think it's great that people have embraced bacon and are doing cool things with it. Even now, you're able to buy things at retail that you were never able to buy before, like pork belly is becoming more readily available. And people are buying smokers so they're even smoking their own bacon," she says.

"While it's been a breakfast menu item forever, it's morphing into all of these other areas and people are trying different things with it. It's awesome."



Photo by Manitoba Pork

Bacon can even be used as a wrap to keep the moisture in other foods such as scallops or chicken. With a focus on health, it contains vitamins B1 and B12, as well as zinc and selenium.

"It partners well with a lot of different kinds of foods from spicy to sweet. So it's super versatile," Riese says.

"Generally, people just generally can't get enough of it. It's got that yummy flavour that you can't really pinpoint – you just know that you want more." ■



Photo by Manitoba Pork

## Ooey-Gooney Bacon Tarts

Courtesy of the Manitoba Pork website

Servings: 18

### Ingredients:

- 18 tart shells, frozen
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) butter, melted
- 1 cup (250 mL) lightly packed dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) maple syrup
- 2 (5 mL) eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp (180 mL) vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) chopped pecans
- 6 slices bacon, diced, cooked and drained
- Vanilla ice cream (optional)

### Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
- Place frozen tart shells on baking sheet.
- In large bowl, combine butter and brown sugar.
- Add maple syrup, eggs, vanilla, pecans and bacon. Mix well.
- Divide mixture evenly between 18 tart shells.
- Bake 20-25 minutes or until pastry is golden brown and filling is set.
- Remove to wire rack. Cool slightly.
- Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream if desired.

Why bacon makes it better: The addition of crunchy bacon makes baked goods blush and satisfies the palate's craving for something a little salty AND sweet.

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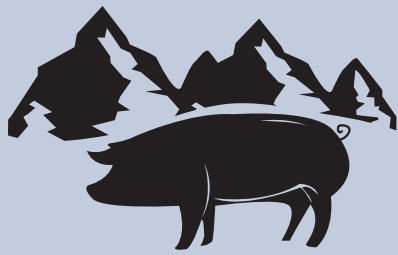
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# YOUR DAILY BACON

BY BUDDY SIMMONS

Pigs have a place in many facets of pop-culture. Sometimes there are pig-jokes. There are tons of bacon and other pork recipes, some on the unusual side of the frying pan, metaphorically speaking. A wide array of products exist, from brilliant, to fashionable, to just plain odd... and we've brought all of these to your attention in past instalments of Your Daily Bacon and this one will be no different!

This time, we also took a look around for accounts of pigs that were a bit...unusual, and chose our very favourites. During research, I learned that there are quite a number of pig legends that while interesting, weren't always the kind of story you'd want to read while eating your morning bacon feast. So, what we have brought to you is a collection of tales – an odd one, a heroic one, and an amusing one, plus a touching one that might make your eyes mist just a little.

We'll start with pigs being on trial. No, we are not speaking of political hearings, but actual porcine defendants. It seems that back in the days of yore, it was not unheard of to bring animals before a court of law. (We'll skip the obvious "jury of their peers" gag though.)

In 1266, a pig in France was tried and convicted of eating somebody. The details on who was eaten and what the circumstances were are sketchy, but the accused was sentenced to death by public burning by the monks of Sainte Genevieve in front of a public audience. The sentence was served in Fontenay-aux Roses, just south of Paris. I cannot determine whether or not whether the homi-



cidal hog was basted and served with coleslaw or beans, but justice was apparently served.

A couple hundred years later, again in France, a pig stood accused of attacking a child, injuring his face and ultimately resulting in his death. (Keep in mind that in those days a paper cut could kill someone.) That perpetrator was arrested, sent to prison and subsequently sentenced to death as well. Defense lawyers for animals in those days were somewhat lacking. A court artist sketch of one of the trials is available and of course, it behooved us to include it. Pun definitely intended.

Now, for a less grim outlook, we bring you the story of the pig that saved its owner from a heart attack. Lulu, a pot-bellied pig, was given to a woman as a birthday gift. Apparently she had

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## Our next issue is January 2017

For advertising contact James Shaw at 416-231-1812 or jamesshaw@rogers.com

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## Pork Culture and Trends

asked for a pony, because she didn't even take the gift home, and so Lulu was taken home by the woman's mother, Jo-Ann. That



turned out to be a wise choice. Lulu grew into a 150-pound porker, so apparently she was living the life. And then one day, her step-mom had a heart attack. Fortunately, having been from a more compassionate stock than medieval French pigs, Lulu took action. She somehow managed to get out of her fenced yard and made her way to the highway. When a car approached, she laid down on the road. Most vehicles went around her. It was reported that when there was no traffic, Lulu returned to check on her owner. Finally, somebody did stop, and was led back to the stricken woman by Lulu and so the compassionate owner was saved once paramedics were called. Way to go, Lulu!

In the silly category, there is the story of a tragic accident happened on US-235 near Dayton, Ohio in 2015. A trailer hauling 2,200 piglets crashed. Around 1,000 were killed in the crash, and more than 1,000 survived and were collected, a few remained loose. Authorities were concerned about a population of feral pigs becoming established and began to try to track down the wayward individuals. Meanwhile, somebody somewhat amused by the event took it upon themselves to construct homes along the highway for the lost pigs. Three homes, to be exact – one of straw, one of sticks, and one of

bricks. The brick one even had a satellite dish, in accordance to it being the home of the high-class pig. Eventually they were taken down by the department of highways, probably by huffing, puffing and finally, a wrecking ball.


And finally, a heartwarming tale. In White Cloud, Kansas in 1913, there lived a farmer's son, Wilbur Chapman. A missionary named Mr. Danner was visiting homes, telling of the scourge of leprosy in other countries and his efforts to help the people afflicted by the disease. Upon his departure, he gave Wilbur three silver dollars for being attentive and concerned about the less fortunate overseas. Well, Wilbur decided to ask his father to purchase a pig with the coins, in hopes of




raising it and then selling it and then donating the money to help those lepers. His dad thought it was a splendid idea. The pig was purchased and was named Pete. Pete did very well under Wilbur's care. Wilbur's mother had also been touched by the plight of the lepers, and canvassed her friends and neighbours in an effort to also raise money. Her goal was

\$2,500, which was the amount needed to help 10 individuals. She did a good job, falling a mere \$250 shy of her goal to provide for 10 afflicted people. That's when Wilbur stepped up to the plate. He put his pig on the market and got a good price, enough to meet the goal and aid that tenth victim of leprosy.

Danner and the others from the missionary were thrilled by this development and decided to challenge other kids across the U.S. to do something similar by collecting coins for the charity. They donated banks for the kids to save their coins which were distributed to kids from coast to coast. And those banks were in the shape of – you guessed it – pigs. This contributed to the



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popularity of saving loose change in piggy banks. Oh, and Wilbur? Supposedly, children's author E.B. White was so moved by the story of charity that he named the plucky pig in his book *Charlotte's Web* after the generous lad. Is the story true? Hard to say. But if you go to a small church located in White Cloud, Kansas, you'll see a plaque that was placed there to commemorate the story you just read. (Or you can save travel expenses and look at the photo we've provided.)

Until next time, may your sausage be succulent and your bacon crisped to your liking! ■



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