

Early Detection Key to Addressing Lameness in the Sow Herd

A researcher with the University of Manitoba says, whether choosing to treat or cull, early detection is key to addressing lameness within the sow herd. As part of a multi institutional multi disciplinary initiative being coordinated on behalf of swine innovation pork scientists across Canada have been looking at addressing lameness as a means of increasing the longevity of the sow herd. Dr. Laurie Connor, the head of the University of Manitoba's Department of Animal Science, told those on hand yesterday in Winnipeg for a sow lameness, longevity and temperament workshop, in many cases sows are leaving the herd due to lameness well before they have paid for themselves which is typically between the third and fourth litter costing anywhere from 100 to 400 dollars per animal culled.

Clip-Dr. Laurie Connor-University of Manitoba: I think it's something that perhaps we've become more aware of and I think we're seeing that producers are becoming more aware of lameness as an issue in itself. It predisposes the animal to other conditions, it's going to affect it's reproductive performance et cetera et cetera and so the path that we're trying to follow now is let's identify these early. Some will say identify early. Depending on the issue, whether it's a hoof issue or a limb issue you may be able to treat and maintain that animal in the herd. Others will say that you need to detect it, get that animal out of there and replace her as soon as possible because she's not going to perform. She's just going to cost you more and more either by treating, or loss in salvage value. Either way, and individual herds have to do their economics as to what's going to work the best, that increased awareness, early detection in fact can have significant financial return.

Dr. Connor says we recognize the costs associated with lameness are substantial but lame animals are also in pain so there are also animal welfare implications.

For Farmscape.Ca, I'm Bruce Cochrane.

*Farmscape is a presentation of Sask Pork and Manitoba Pork Council

To access the article online and listen to the interview, click on the link below:

<http://www.farmscape.ca/f2ShowScript.aspx?i=24423&q=Early+Detection+Key+to+Addressing+Lameness+in+the+Sow+Herd>