

National Chair in Swine Welfare Update

February 1, 2013, Mississauga, Ontario – Dr. Sandra Edwards was the keynote speaker at a one-day pork industry event organized by Farm and Food Care Ontario and hosted at the Think Food! Centre of Maple Leaf Foods. Dr Edwards a professor and Chair of Agriculture at the Newcastle University, UK, will soon be a familiar resource to Canada's pork value chain as the first **National Chair in Swine Welfare**. Her message for the audience which included pork producers, packers, processors, retailers and food service professionals was filled with optimism for the Canadian industry “*In Canada you have the opportunity to avoid the mistakes we made in Europe over the past 20 years, where regulation and legislation reflect a lack of public trust in farmers and are often focused on systems rather than animal care*”. The presentation took the audience through the challenges of understanding pig behavior, asking “what is good welfare” she demonstrated how you can identify it and how good welfare can be found in almost all production systems. The Canadian industry should be talking about the measurement of “**real welfare**” to avoid the proliferation of multiple marketing schemes filling the pork shelves with competing welfare labels as has happened in Britain and Europe. “The many schemes cause confusion for the consumer and do not necessarily add value for the farmer or improve welfare for the pig.”



- *Sandra Edwards, Ph.D.*
- *Candidate for the National Chair in Swine Welfare to serve all segments of the Canadian pork value chain*
- *Currently Chair of Agriculture Newcastle University, UK*
- *Accomplished researcher with over 50 major projects completed.*
- *Contributing to qualified personnel in industry, graduating 28 doctoral students*
- *Experienced communicator with over 400 scientific presentations*



“Canada has an opportunity to avoid competing welfare schemes as has developed in the United Kingdom” – Dr. Edwards



“Are these pigs comfortable?” Welfare should focus on the pigs not the system’ –Dr. Edwards

Notice the left side of the photo shows pigs sleeping on straw, alongside a photo of pigs sleeping on a slatted floor; what does the behavior of these pigs tell us?

Looking for more information on the National Chair in Swine Welfare?

Contact Lee Whittington
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Pork Producers leading the way in Support of National Welfare Chair

Manitoba Pork, Sask Pork and B.C. Pork confirm participation with 5-year commitment.

The Chair, a joint effort of Prairie Swine Centre and the University of Saskatchewan, is a national effort to establish a group of professionals to interact with industry and academia across Canada and indeed around the globe. “By using an NSERC-IRC (Industrial Research Chair) as a mechanism for securing salaries and start-up research funding the industry can have their contributions matched 1:1 by the federal research program. The program has four critical components: University commitment to support the position; candidate with a stellar track record in applied research; thirdly industry financial commitment for 5 years; lastly a research program that addresses industry needs, trains young scientists and creates new knowledge that will move the science forward.

“The program’s strength is a new model that has funding support from all segments of the pork value chain” notes Lee Whittington, President of Prairie Swine Centre.

Farm and Food Care forms links in pork value chain

At a recent conference in Toronto organized by Food and Farm Care Ontario, there was great interest in how the food retail and food service industries could participate in the program as they see the advantage of aligning corporate vision on sustainability with supply chain realities and consumer desires. *“It was anticipated that retailers are working with their suppliers in aligning purchase requirements with the important sustainability messages being developed within their company”* noted Crystal MacKay, Executive Director of Food and Farm Care. *“The level of interest and real enthusiasm for cooperation and sharing knowledge of real science on animal welfare is genuine, the conference exceeded our expectations for meeting the processors and retailer’s needs”.*

Funding Program Advances the Science of Welfare

All segments of the pork value chain are invited to participate

A new model of cooperation is key to advancing the science of welfare:

- Pork producers across Canada have taken a leadership position in supporting research, committing millions of dollars annually to constantly improve food safety, farm productivity and sustainability.
- The National Chair in Swine Welfare makes it possible for pork processors, and their grocery and food service customers to contribute directly to improving our understanding of “real welfare”
- The final budget should reflect an equal and balanced partnership with pork producers, processors and retailers all contributing equally
- If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please e-mail lee.whittington@usask.ca with National Swine Welfare Chair in subject line.



Dr. Harold Gonyou is recognized world-wide for his contribution to understanding pig behaviour and welfare. This successful applied research program made it possible to develop a National Chair in Swine Welfare.



The Ethology group at Prairie Swine Centre uses the study of animal behaviour to address questions in housing, transportation, handling, meat quality and health

Looking for a way to talk about modern pork production with your customers? Try this virtual tour of a pig farm.

<http://www.farmissues.com/virtualTour/en/index.html>

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