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Message from the editor

The new China

As I write this, it’s not yet mid-December and it’s already been a long, cold winter. I went to China in November on assignment to document the newly emerging market for premium beef, but what I learned had take-away lessons for the pork industry too.

In China, it’s very much like two worlds sharing one country. Most of the population is still lower income. But a growing segment of the Chinese people have money – and some have a lot of it. During the ride from the airport to my hotel, I was stunned by the wealth on display. I never saw an old vehicle – they were all new. I saw more Porsches in four days there than I’ve seen in all my life. Mercedes, BMW, Land Rover, Jaguar – I’d heard about China’s emerging middle class, but if their vehicles were any indication, their upper class isn’t doing too poorly either. The billboards along the freeway – all of them – advertised high-priced luxury items. High-priced fashion, luxury vehicles, jewelry, mile after mile – it was striking. In Canada, we see billboards for the closest McDonald’s.

Does that mean that the Chinese population is wealthier than Canada’s? Of course not – but it demonstrates that the small portion of their population able to afford those luxuries is significant enough to chase with high-priced advertising.

I saw fish being chopped in half, still alive, still gaping in hope of breathing water again, even while its tail flopped on the counter beside it.

In order to understand the true scope of the market there, you have to scale the numbers. There are 1.35 billion people in China. That means for every one Canadian, there are 38 Chinese. There are 1.3 million millionaires in China right now, and just a hair fewer than 300,000 in Canada.

China’s economy has grown as fast as it has for several reasons – and some would say one of the big ones is because business is poorly regulated. Some describe the economic climate of China as a free-for-all. Developed nations have been regulating industry for decades and decades on several fronts – trade, environment, labour, safety... the list goes on and on. China has become more regulated than it has been in the past, but there’s little doubt that the lack of regulation is part of the reason why setting up shop in China is so lucrative.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
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There’s another side to China, and it’s very, very poor. The trickle-down effect of economics will bring many out of that poverty, but it will take time. For many years, most of the Chinese population has lived very leanly. Disposable income as we know it is a very new development for much of the population. I’ve had lean times in my life – not Chinese-lean, but lean – and you learn to do more with less and when you can’t do that, you make do. As a general rule, nothing is off the table when it comes to eating in China. Most of their consumers don’t have the luxury of being picky, and in a very unregulated economy, business has been taking advantage of this weakness. There have been food scares, tainted food, and horror stories that would turn your stomach.

The result is that China’s food market is two-tiered. The top tier desires meat that they know is safe – and that means they want imported meat from countries like Canada. Our cost of production is higher, our meat is better and our system is safer. With China (and Asia in general) emerging into the global economy, we have an opportunity to strategically position ourselves not to sell on price, but to create pull for our quality. In the past, with our dollar valued so low against the greenback, we could sometimes afford to sell on price, but those days are gone.

When I was in Shanghai, I visited what is known as a “wet market”. It was rank, disgusting and disturbing – and it was one of the better ones. This is where many Chinese go to buy their produce and their protein. I saw pig’s feet, legs, brains and tripe. I saw meat being chopped on dirty wooden countertops that looked like they haven’t seen a rag in five years. I saw fish being chopped in half, still alive, still gaping in hope of breathing water again, even while its tail flopped on the counter beside it. In short, I saw what China’s middle and upper class are willing to pay extra for to avoid.

And believe me, when I saw that poor fish, I thought, ‘Where is Mercy for Animals now?’ and I reflected a lot on the issue of animal rights. We have a world-class production system in Canada. We are very good at what we do, and we’re only going to get better at it. I received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from both readers and advertisers about our last issue, which featured an interview with the leader of an animal rights group. And I also received a couple of complaints. It doesn’t matter how long I’ve been in this business, I have to admit it still hurts a little bit when I’ve made someone upset, but it’s part of the job.

I believe very strongly that good journalism makes people think, and it gets them talking. The reality is
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that animal welfare is becoming an increasingly important topic, and my personal belief is that knowledge is power. This magazine is known to be the best in its class at providing production and technical information to producers, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that legacy continues. But I also think I have a duty to deliver more. Because the truth is that this industry is affected by much more than production techniques and technologies. There are few industries more political and emotional than meat production.

China has changed dramatically, especially over the past 10 years. The result are modern economic epicenters in the midst of ancient cities.

The filthy conditions of traditional wet markets are what many Chinese with higher incomes pay to avoid. For them, imported meat is often viewed as being cleaner and safer.

The FDA is phasing out antibiotic use in growth promotants, which means Canada can ultimately expect to follow suit. A new animal rights investigation video was released south of the border, which will probably accelerate America’s transition to group housing. PEDv continues to stump researchers and producers here are anxiously awaiting the release of the finalized new code, but despite all this, there are some positive indicators for the industry. I think Western Hog Journal has a responsibility to report on all of these factors.

I really enjoy hearing from readers and advertisers, and I really value your feedback – even if it might sting a little. I’d like to have a flourishing “letters to the editor” section, so please consider writing one to me. I certainly appreciate the emails and phone calls, but it would be really beneficial if we could create a dialogue where readers could write in about what they would like to see covered in these pages, or with their thoughts about the issues this industry faces.

At the end of the day, this is your magazine, and I like to think we all have a role in ensuring it’s an asset to our industry.

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Smart Pig Handling videos released

A series of videos entitled Smart Pig Handling was released recently by the Manitoba Pork Council (MPC). Designed to aid in employee training, the techniques focus on reducing stress on both workers and livestock, preventing workplace injuries, improving workplace satisfaction, reducing losses, improving meat quality and ensuring animal well-being.

The videos are available on MPC’s YouTube channel (MBPorkfan) and on its website. Producers may also contact MPC or their pork organization to request an extended version of the training videos, which are customizable to any farm type.

The development of these videos was supported by Alberta Pork, Sask Pork, Ontario Pork and FPPQ. It was also supported by Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative, and the Government of Alberta. The project’s main support came from the FCC Ag Safety Fund, administered by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association with funding from Farm Credit Canada.

Trade deal with Europe announced

On October 18, Prime Minister Harper announced that Canada and the European Union had reached an agreement in principal on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). The negotiations were challenging, and supply management was one of the key stumbling blocks.

Speculation was intense in September and in early October, leaked information indicated the announcement was imminent. The agreement – which could take 18-24 months to finalize – could add $12 billion to Canada’s economy annually, and increase bilateral trade by 20 per cent. Canada’s red meat sector analysts are encouraged, but warn that other trade barriers may exist to accessing Europe, such as ractopamine and other animal growth interventions.

ALERT Line answered 500 calls last year

In 1995 producers requested it, and today the Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) ALERT Line (1-800-506-2273) is an integral part of the province’s livestock industry.

"Producers were asking for an alternative service where the public could report any suspected animal care concerns in a confidential way, and enable producers themselves to get some help. We know animal welfare is a growing public concern - agriculture is definitely under scrutiny. The ALERT service also helps to educate the public,” said Pam Miller, ALERT Line coordinator.

AFAC has established resource leaders and team members across the province to respond to situations arising from ALERT Line calls. “The ALERT Resource Team members have successfully nipped problems in the bud, providing practical hands-on advice to improve animal care and support responsible producers when the public calls were unfounded,” added Miller.

Last year, 500 calls in total were received, covering all livestock sectors. Of those, 88 cases were investigated and required some form of intervention.

Miller explained that when a call comes in the ALERT coordinator determines the nature of the call. “If the caller is unfamiliar with agricultural practices the coordinator will provide information that will enable them to better understand the situation they were calling about. We receive a lot of calls that are unfounded. More and more, ALERT has become a source of information.”
Danbred North America is now DNA Genetics

Danbred North America, a genetics company, is now known as DNA Genetics.

“DNA Genetics will use our Danish genetics as its foundation, but we are now independent of Denmark’s genetic program,” said Brett Bonwell, CEO of DNA Genetics. “Operating independently of Denmark gives us the ability to focus on the traits and economic value that are most important to the profitability of our North American customers. The result will be providing customers with the best genetic value for greater gains and improved performance.”

The separation from the Danish genetic system is described as amicable. “It came down to the fact that our business approach and how we deliver economic value for our customers no longer matched theirs,” he states.

The company is ready to operate independently. “We have always been set up to run separately in the case of a trade barrier or disease outbreak, so while the circumstances are different, we are ready to provide a seamless transition for our customers,” he said.

The company says the biggest change will be that trait selection will now be based solely on a North American economic model instead of a European model of production. The company is investing $5 million to move the current genetics to a new level for the North American market. For more information on DNA Genetics, visit www.DNASwineGenetics.com.

Osborne introduces new hog feeder

In November, Osborne Industries introduced a new hog feeder to the market. Double-sided wean-to-finish rectangular feeder models are available for dry and wet/dry feeding. The feeders are constructed with heavy-duty, 304 welded stainless steel that provides reliable, durable, and long-lasting performance for years of operation in hog finishing facilities. The rolled edges provide structural strength as well as safety from sharp edges. The simple adjustment system promotes optimum feed efficiency and deep head entry into the feed trough helps achieve Osborne’s signature “no waste” pig feeding. Solid divider panels with pre-drilled holes allow for splitting the feeder among sort and grower pens, while the pre-drilled holes and knockouts allow for mounting the feeders in multiple applications. For more information about the new rectangular feeders or Osborne’s complete line of swine management CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

New faces at Genesus

Genesus recently announced the appointment of Greg Gilsdorf as general manager of U.S. operations. Greg joins Genesus from Genetiporc where he was a sales director in their U.S. operations.

Greg will be responsible for sales and business activities with Genesus.

He brings a business, and production background to augment Genesus’ sales and customer relations.

Joel Newman has joined Genesus as a sales and technical representative. Joel joins Genesus from Genetiporc where he was an account manager for the previous 12 years.

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PEDv still spreading

By mid-December, the National Health Laboratory Network said that the PED virus was confirmed on 1,373 farms in 20 states. Porknetwork.com reports that two-thirds of the cases are in three states – Iowa, Oklahoma and North Carolina. Nebraska is the most recent state to join the unfortunate club.

TOPIGS starts to banish boar taint from dam lines

TOPIGS has started to breed sows that produce offspring with less boar taint. Boar taint will be part of the breeding objective within the dam lines of TOPIGS. As a result of this, it is expected that the number of finishers with boar taint will have been halved in five years time. At present 4.5 per cent of finishers have boar taint.

Thanks in part to the use of genomic selection; TOPIGS has found a new technique that makes it possible to reduce the heritability of boar taint in dam lines without affecting the fertility. The substances that cause boar taint also play a role in fertility. Research has revealed, however, that the degree to which this connection occurs in TOPIGS dam lines will not hinder the use of the newly developed technique. Starting in 2010, TOPIGS was the first company to breed Nador finisher boars with a low heritability for boar taint. The greatest reduction in boar taint can be achieved via the finisher boars. Including boar taint in the breeding objective of the sows ensures an extra reduction in the occurrence of undesired taint in non-castrated pork.

FDA phasing out some antibiotics used as growth promotants

In early December, the FDA announced it would begin phasing out some growth promotant antibiotic use in animal agriculture.

The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday it would begin phasing out the use of antibiotics in animal feed that make animals grow faster on less food, while phasing in requirements for veterinary oversight of the remaining uses of such drugs. Pharmaceutical companies are being given 90 days to overhaul their labels to reflect the changes, which will instruct antibiotic use only to treat or prevent illness, with a veterinary prescription and ongoing supervision.

The changes come as a result of increasing concern over antibiotic resistance. Agriculture uses more antibiotics than are used in the medical treatment of humans and while many of the antibiotics used in agriculture are not used for people, some are. It is the drugs that are used for people which are being phased out. Antibiotics only used on animals will still be permitted to be used as growth promotants. Some common antibiotics which will no longer be permitted include tetracyclines, penicillin and macrolides such as azithromycin.

Please send your news and press releases to sherimonk@gmail.com.
Survey shows…
By Kevin Grier

Grier tackles “pig meat” and country of origin labelling in France

I have been presenting the North American outlook for beef, hogs and poultry at the Gira Meat Club in France since 2008. The Gira Meat Club is produced by GIRA, a France-based strategic consultancy and market research firm founded over 30 years ago. The company operates in the drink and food sectors and the food-based retail chain throughout the whole of Europe and worldwide in some product sectors such as meat, fish and dairy. The Meat Club meets in the first week of December and this was my sixth time giving that North American outlook. The Gira Meat Club provides a situation report and outlook for the major exporting and producing nations around the world including Russia, China, EU and South America. Attendees to the club come from all around the world including Canada, South America, the U.S., Japan, and of course, Europe.

Given the fact that Canada and the European Union have recently signed the CETA trade agreement, I thought it might be of interest to provide an overview of the information that was presented on the EU pork industry. The presentation is called EU Pigmeat. I have been trying for several years to get them to say “pork” instead of “pigmeat” without success – somehow pork seems more appetizing than pigmeat, but I digress.

The Euro pork situation and outlook was presented by Jan-Peter Van Fermeij, an excellent analyst with the IFIP – Institut du porc, or the French Institute for pig and pork industry. The following are some of the points raised by Jan-Peter:

• With regard to the welfare rules, the UK and Ireland appear to be the most compliant with the rules, along with the Netherlands, Denmark and Spain to a lesser extent. France and Germany may be running at about 70 per cent compliance, but approximately 10 per cent of their producers left the business as a result of the rules. Other countries such as Italy, Poland and Belgium appear nowhere close to meeting the rules.

• With regard to consumption, the EU consumed 1.5 per cent less pork this year compared to last. There is ongoing pressure on household incomes resulting
in tight budgetary obligations and pressure on food expenditures. In general, there has been a drop of meat consumption (quantities) while retail prices increased.

- Exports remain near record highs, but have declined modestly in the last couple of years. (The EU is the second largest exporter in the world just behind the U.S.)
- Pork imports into the EU are negligible.

Interestingly, Jan-Peter asked whether or not the EU still exists when it comes to pork production. He noted that there are more and more national programs that he referred to as “more national protection”. The major pork-producing countries all seem to have some form of country of origin labelling or promotional schemes to identify and emphasize the host country. Jan-Peter says that EU intra-trade has been negatively impacted.

My presentations at the Gira Meat Club tend to be laced with vitriol regarding country of origin labeling. Over the last several presentations, I have shown the negative impact the U.S. mCOOL has had on Canada, and its ludicrous impacts on trade patterns. Despite my efforts, an informal poll of Club members showed that the overwhelming number of them felt that country of origin labelling was going to increase around the world.

However, I decided to conduct my own poll of Meat Club members. I asserted that value is defined as the relationship between price and quality, and that quality is defined as taste, safety, nutrition and overall eating pleasure. I said, “If that is the definition of value, does anyone think that country of origin labelling adds value to consumers?” Not a single person raised their hand. Case closed.

Kevin Grier is the senior market analyst at the George Morris Centre. He provides industry market reports and analysis, as well as consulting services. You can reach him at kevin@georgemorris.org to comment or to request a free two-month trial of the Canadian Pork Market Review.

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2014 – The Year of the Pig Farmer

Jim Long, President – CEO Genesus Inc.

The Chinese have the year of the horse, dragon, dog, etc. The last few years in North America and much of the world it’s been the years of the Grain Farmer. High Grain prices pushed mostly triggered by US Government Corn Ethanol Mandates and by regional drought not only lead to record grain production profits but unprecedented farmland appreciation. (If there is 315 million arable acres in USA, each $1,000 an acre appreciation of land was $315 billion dollars). This created wealth or at least paper wealth.

These producers that hung in and survived are now going to be rewarded in 2014.

The huge jump in Global Grain Prices has triggered grain development in much of the world. For the last few years we have written as we travelled the world especially Russia, Ukraine, China and Brazil our observations of millions of acres of land coming into Grain production. In 2013 the world produced 55% more corn than in 2006. An unprecedented increase. The old saying “The surest cure for high prices is high prices” comes to mind.

The world for Grain Farmers is now going upside down. On the Chicago Board of Trade last January-March was $6.50 a bushel, last week March closed at $4.23. The USDA estimates that it cost around $4.10 a bushel to produce corn. The bloom has gone off the proverbial rose for grain farmers.

In 2014 it will be the Year of the Pig Farmer. Feed Costs have dropped about $35 per head while lean hog futures (i.e. June) at 1.01 are $20 per head higher than they were last summer for June 2014. Hog Farmers who are in business are survivors. The last five years have not been good. Most Producers have less equity in their swine business that they did five years ago. A few days ago the USDA released the December 1 Hogs and Pigs Report. It indicates fewer breeding animals and fewer market hogs year over year. This seemed to surprise the “Chicken Little Economists” who were predicting expansion.

We note that these predictors of expansion do not own hogs, never have, and never will. They don’t understand how hard owning pigs are, they never lost money raising hogs, never borrowed money, gave personal guarantees, struggled to make payroll, never had a pig disease (i.e. Prrs, PED, etc.). Bottom line, there is no expansion because there isn’t the capital and courage to get it done. The equity hole is huge. It needs to be backfilled. These producers that hung in and survived are now going to be rewarded in 2014.

2014 will be the Year of the Pig Farmer. Lower Feed prices, fewer pigs, a stronger domestic economy, record high beef prices, good pork exports, PED all are a recipe for a 2014 that will be the most profitable in a decade. We all need our turn. We expect summer Lean Hogs will reach $1.10. Happy New Year – 2014 the Year of the Pig Farmer.
Alberta Pork Producers Dig Deep for Donation to Typhoon Victims

Dec. 23, 2013, Alberta Pork News Release

They may be small in number, but Alberta pork producers are responding in a big way to the victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

On behalf of the province’s 350 producers, Alberta Pork donated $10,000 to the Canadian Red Cross to aid in relief efforts for those affected by the disaster.

The typhoon, one of the strongest ever to hit land, descended on the central Philippines on November 8, triggering massive tsunami-like waves and wiping out entire communities.

“Many of our producers employ workers from the Philippines,” said Alberta Pork Executive Director Darcy Fitzgerald. “They are an integral part of our industry and we wanted to do what we could to support their friends and family back home that have been impacted by the devastation.”

At last count, the typhoon had left 6,102 people dead and 1,779 missing, not to mention the estimated 4.4 million people who are now homeless.

The Government of Canada is matching donations made by Canadians between November 8 and December 23, 2013. After that date, people are still strongly encouraged to make a financial donation online at www.redcross.ca, at their local Red Cross office or by calling 1-800-418-1111.

For more on the Alberta Pork donation, contact Darcy Fitzgerald at 1-877-247-7675, or by email at darcy.fitzgerald@albertapork.com.

In the wake of widespread destruction, life-saving services in the form of food, clean water, health and emergency shelter are still desperately needed.

“Our producers are a close-knit group,” said Fitzgerald. “They are hard-working, compassionate and believe in reaching out to those in need. The scale of the damage is overwhelming, but as an industry this was our chance to play a small part in the rebuilding process.”

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To be quite honest, I am pretty sick and tired of hearing stories about farming that quite simply are not the truth! After reading last edition’s article (Interview with an activist), from the director of operations for Mercy for Animals, I was more determined to get this article completed that I have wanted to write for some time.

When it comes to these “activist” groups, we need to realize one thing; their objective is NOT to improve welfare conditions for animals; it is to cease the consumption of meat and other animal proteins completely. I truly believe that many of the videos that “animal activist” groups display of animal “abuse” is intentionally filmed by members of their association to make people think that this is “routine” practice in farms and to scaremonger people from eating meat. If they truly believed that what they filmed was cruel, or wanted to change production techniques used, they would use the billions of dollars that are donated by the public to make sure that the changes were made. In fact, where exactly does that money go?

While the practice of keeping sows in stalls and the use of blunt force trauma to euthanize baby pigs currently is standard practice, no other part of what was filmed is recommended standard operating procedure. Both of the above are accepted practices, approved by the American Association of Swine Veterinarians. We can be reminded that the practice of keeping sows in stalls in the first place was designed to keep sows in a more welfare-friendly condition by minimizing the effects of dominant sows. Today we realize that there are limitations with stalls, and the North American industry is looking at alternatives. It won’t be as simple as other countries with fewer extremes in weather patterns like the UK to find a housing system that works well. Forcing an industry into a certain type of production system before they are ready may cause worse welfare conditions in the short term.

When it comes to on-farm practices and animal care, I don’t know a single sector of people who do more, who take more pride, who do more than minimum requirements and take more care of their livestock than the people that raise hogs in Alberta! That is a fact!

Swine producers are a very forward-thinking group of people. They are always investing in their swine operations financially, mentally and wholeheartedly. You will find most farms are making housing improvements every year, from ventilation and energy upgrades to renovations, new penning, and new flooring. In all cases, the intention is to improve animal health and welfare.

Swine veterinarians and large animal veterinarians are on farm and checking animal welfare conditions and husbandry practices on a more regular basis than most people have their dog or cat examined by their vet.

“…..just because we can’t communicate with them in a language, it doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t treat them with utmost respect,” Perrais was quoted in the article.

I see producers every day that treat animals in their care with respect. They are gentle and calm around the animals, they are compassionate and they do everything they can to make sure these animals have a good quality of life.

I am proud to say that I am a swine veterinarian! I am proud of the producers in this industry who produce safe, humanely-raised meat.
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DNASwineGenetics.com
The unseen audience
By Sheri Monk

Another video secretly filmed at a pig farm was released in October – this one was from the UK. The owner of the farm ended his life shortly after it aired. He left behind a wife and two young daughters.

I watched the video, and like most I have seen, the majority of the footage is common practice taken out of context, and some of it is genuinely unsettling. Before I wrote this column, I watched many of these types of videos, just to be sure of what bothered me about them, and what didn’t. But I know that as someone who has covered the livestock trade for several years, I’m probably a little desensitized compared to the average consumer. So just to be sure of my observations, I viewed some footage of the dog and cat slaughter trade in China to see what would affect me both emotionally, and intellectually. You see, I live with a dog and even though his feed is probably better nutritionally than a lot of my own, I definitely don’t see him as a delicious Sunday supper.

The most disturbing parts of the videos I saw dealt with handling, sanitation, and euthanasia – and all three of these elements are unavoidable parts of livestock rearing. So, how do we as an industry fight back? The answer, I believe, is preemptively.

Handling is a tricky one. The public isn’t familiar with animal behaviour. They don’t know how livestock exhibit signs of stress, fear or aggression the same way that producers do. And pigs are noisy critters – even their normal noises can unfortunately sound a lot like cries of distress to the uninitiated. There isn’t a lot we can do about that, but we can control what we sound like, and how we appear. We should never use foul language toward stubborn animals, no matter how frustrated we become. The chances that anyone is actually listening are incredibly small, but we need to be mindful of setting an example for other workers, and even our children who may be watching, and learning. It wouldn’t be a bad idea for some of our industry groups to record natural pig behaviour during normal levels of stress and to make those videos available online so that if necessary or needed, there are examples of benchmarks for the public and media to evaluate.

Sanitation is a tricky one. Pigs poop, and it isn’t pleasant. Many pigs produce a lot of poop, and because we raise our animals indoors, it’s difficult to paint a pretty picture. Some say straw bedding can go a long way towards creating a more pleasing environment and others say the straw just adds to the mess. The best we can do is to do our best, and to have protocols in place that are easy to demonstrate. Keeping walls and rust in check with regular maintenance and repair can go a long way to improving the overall appearance of a facility. Adding an element of natural light is another option to making the environment more pleasant for both pigs and people.

What’s most important is that we continue to treat our animals in a way we’re proud of – no matter who might be watching.

Let’s face it – death is a scary and unpleasant event. Watching a video about the death of anything isn’t going to be a positive experience. And yet, death is an unavoidable part of life – especially on a farm. Meat consumers implicitly know this and accept it with every bite. After all, bacon can come in many forms – reduced salt, maple flavour, extra thick – but it can’t come alive. For our industry, death isn’t the issue... but how we deal with it is.

Obviously, the death of an animal on a farm is different than the death of a beloved family pet in a home. Farmers and employees simply cannot invest the same emotion into livestock, and though it may seem cold on the surface, this is absolutely no different than the buffer zone that doctors, nurses, and professional caregivers have to create. This isn’t because they are cruel, but because they are human – it’s an essential coping mechanism necessary to do the job.

But that necessary professional detachment left unchecked can over time turn into the callousness we’ve seen on some of these videos. It’s the kind of animal treatment that makes us all collectively cringe, and want to look away from. And if that’s how it affects us, how does it affect the public?

It is of critical importance that we deal with euthanasia in an unflinchingly professional manner that affords the animal the dignity and respect we wouldn’t be ashamed to have broadcasted to the world. That doesn’t mean we have
to portray some false grief, but it does mean we have to be efficient, clinical and clean – whether there’s an audience or not. And that applies to disposal too. Animals lying in bloody heaps just aren’t good for business or consumer confidence. Consider using a tarp to cover temporary deadstock containers, such as a wheelbarrow, or plastic crate. Think of it this way: when we shop at a grocery store, we don’t see the unwanted scrap, or blood drippings. When we take our animals to the veterinarian, we don’t see any carcasses awaiting cremation or rendering. Does that mean there isn’t unappealing scrap at the grocery store, or dead pets at the vet? No – but they know it’s bad for business to have it on display. Likewise, we can take measures on our own operations to reduce the potential impact from these images. And psychologically, it creates a culture of greater respect for the animals that every farm worker could benefit from over time.

If you read Dawn Magrath’s special column this issue, you’ll see the issue from the unique perspective of a veterinarian. As an individual with an interest in anything science-based, I can only imagine the kind of frustration Dawn experiences when she sees our industry attacked from a purely emotional standpoint.

There is no issue more paramount to our future as livestock producers than animal welfare, and the public’s perception of it. And there’s no way that industry will ever be able to eliminate activists from taking secret video, and that’s okay. What’s most important is that we continue to treat our animals in a way we’re proud of – no matter who might be watching.

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Western Hog Journal | Winter 2014 | 21
Olymel CEO bullish on Asia and the West

East meets West... and loves it

By Sheri Monk

While the Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium in November was packed with top-notch speakers, one of the heavyweights was none other than Réjean Nadeau, president and CEO of Olymel.

“We are a young company, less than 25 years, yet in this short time, Olymel has become a leader in the slaughtering, processing and distribution of pork and poultry made in Canada,” he said in his opening address to the large audience.

At the time of the symposium, it hadn’t yet been a year since Olymel purchased Big Sky Farms, rescuing it from receivership and breathing new life into the industry. Olymel cited the acquisition as part of its strategy to ensure adequate supply for its Red Deer plant. Olymel may be a relatively new kid on the block, but they aren’t one to be overlooked. The company now employs over 10,000 people, and 50 per cent of its trade is done outside of Canada, with as many as 60 different countries.

After his presentation introducing Olymel and its history to the Saskatchewan industry, the Western Hog Journal sat down with Nadeau for a tête-à-tête.

Q. You don’t seem very bullish about CETA and increasing trade with the EU. As China’s economy started to develop, has it surprised you how fast it has risen?

A. China has been growing for the last 10 years and it grows very fast. We see it as a big opportunity in terms of market, especially on the hog side.

Réjean Nadeau, the CEO of Olymel, speaks to the crowd at the Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium.

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Q. Sometimes people question how China can make food safety demands of their trading partners when their own industries don’t meet the same standards. How do you reconcile that?
A. You cannot compare what they are doing and what we are doing. They are the customer and we are the seller, and so we have to comply with their requests. It is not a question of judging what they are doing in their country – the opportunity of selling is there, and the growth is there.

Q. Has going racto-free at Olymel in Red Deer paid off yet?
A. We’re not on the list. We’re supposed to be on the list, and it’s a question of days because the plant is ractopamine free now, so it’s a question of time. We hope we can start to ship before Christmas.

Q. Recently, China said for inexplicable reasons that we have to ship only frozen meat, and not chilled meat anymore. Is that affecting you at all?
A. No, because in China we only ship frozen meat. We do ship some chilled pork in Japan, in Korea and even in Australia.

Q. There’s been an issue in China with meat being sold as something it’s not, for example, pork being modified to be sold as beef. Have you seen incidents like that?
A. That kind of thing often happens in China. We have seen over years people packing pork from the U.S. or from somewhere else in an Olymel box. We even saw once a warehouse, a frozen warehouse with a big Olymel sign on it.

Q. I was in Quebec City over the summer and I found it very interesting to see how much more visible pork is in the market. I saw bus signs promoting it, restaurants promoting it and there’s more of a selection of cuts in the stores.
A. Recently I have not been in the stores, but we have a good support of customers even here in the West. We do sell to the main players in western Canada, and in the western U.S. also.

Q. As sow stalls are phased out, some producers are concerned that we will invest in infrastructure, but that retailers will still continue to import pork from the South where there might not be the same cost of production. Is that a concern?
A. It is a concern, but I think even the Americans are going to have to adjust if they want to continue to do business with some customers. And even in Canada, the Canadian customers – even some in the food services – are talking about it now. It’s going to come.

Q. I didn’t realize that Quebec controls the use of antibiotics in livestock production as much as they do. Quebec is a big pork producer, and if they are able to do it successfully without using routine antibiotics, then it can be done.
A. It can be done, yes. The big difference is the grain, the feed.

Q. One last question: What do you think is the big challenge for the Canadian pork industry in the next few years?
A. I think animal welfare – environmental issues. I think that’s the big one. But out of that, there is opportunity, mainly in the West where the cost of feed – the cost of grain is an advantage, and there’s space and water. There are very good things here.
Rapid change for China’s pork industry

China’s appetite for pork drives modern production and policy

By Bernie Peet

China is famous for its “backyard” pigs and, until relatively recently, almost every rural family kept a few pigs close to their house. The traditional Chinese breeds are prolific, hardy and not too fussy about what they eat, so the pigs lived on vegetables and kitchen scraps. When they were big enough to eat, the family enjoyed a feast of pork, supplementing their normal diet of rice and vegetables. But now, backyard pig production is a shadow of its former self, the result of massive social, industrial and agricultural change within the country. Most pigs are now produced on specialist farms, either by smaller independent producers or in large scale “industrialized” production systems which are increasingly fully integrated.

The economic reforms that were introduced in the late 1970s led to the development of many private-sector businesses, although the economy is still dominated by state-owned enterprises. Over the last 30 years, the manufacturing sector has grown dramatically, producing everything from cars and trucks to furniture and electronics. China is now the world’s manufacturer, exporting about $45 billion of goods each year to Canada alone. As this large scale manufacturing grew, people from rural areas moved to the cities to work, in some cases leaving behind only the old and those incapable of working. This so-called urbanization of China is still going on and is reflected in the large number of apartment blocks being built in the cities. It is also the reason for the rapid drop in backyard pig production. In the early 1980s, more than 95 per cent of pork was produced by people owning just a handful of pigs. Now they represent only one-third of total production.

Independent “professional” producers – typically those with between 10 and 100 sows – now comprise the majority sector in the industry. Herd size is increasing as the industry consolidates, but there are still a lot of farms with 20-30 sows. Breeding herd productivity at these farms averages approximately 13-14 pigs weaned per sow.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26
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Large scale, or “commercial” farms are defined as those producing more than 3,000 pigs per year, and this sector is expanding the most. A number of major meat processors have established their own farms to create vertically integrated systems, often sending pigs from their own breeding units to contract finisher farms, which they also supply with feed. These companies are developing rapidly, and are building new farms which utilize North American or European technology and genetics. However, while the newer farms provide excellent facilities, productivity is constrained by a shortage of skilled and experienced staff. Typically, these farms are weaning about 20 pigs per sow, and therefore have a lot of potential for improvement.

All the vegetables used in the canteen kitchen are grown on the farm, as well as mangos, papayas and bananas.

While the pace of change in the pork industry is breathtaking, there is still a long way to go because of the huge scale of the task. With 50 million sows and 455 million total pigs – about half the world’s pigs – structural change will probably continue for another 30 years.

Pork is of great economic, cultural and political significance in China, and maintaining an affordable supply of pork (and rice) is a political priority for the national government. In fact, it intervenes directly to control the supply of pork – and consequently the price – through a variety of means such as increasing or decreasing imports, and purchasing pork for storage as a price support mechanism. It has also encouraged the modernization of the pork industry because it wants it to become more professional and efficient while improving food safety. A per-sow subsidy was initiated in 2007, withdrawn in 2010-11, and then reintroduced again at a rate of 100 Yuan ($15) per sow. In addition, there are a variety of incentives, grants and tax breaks that encourage structural change.

Food security is a major focus for China, whose population of 1.4 billion represents about 20 per cent of the world’s people. Although agricultural productivity is increasing, Chinese companies are increasingly looking outside the country for future food supplies, either buying or renting and farming land themselves, or entering into joint ventures. The recent purchase of Smithfield Foods, the world’s largest pig producer and processor, by the Chinese Shanghui International Holdings Ltd., is seen as part of this strategy. It is likely only a matter of time before a Chinese company enters the Canadian pork production and processing sector.

Changes in the pork industry and other livestock sectors have been essential to ensure an adequate supply of meat as people’s incomes grew, and their meat consumption increased. Meat consumption in China has risen more than fourfold since economic reform started in the late 1970s and now stands at 37 kg of pork, 13 kg of poultry and 9 kg of beef and sheep meat per capita. Although pork is still the most popular meat, its share of total meat consumption has fallen from 80 per cent in 1985 to 64 per cent in 2012. Growth in pork demand
has now slowed to a rate of 1-2 per cent per annum, while chicken consumption is expanding more rapidly.

Disease is a major challenge for Chinese producers, partly because of the density of pigs and people in the south and east parts of the country. Consequently, the new development of large scale production is increasingly taking place in remote areas such as Mongolia. Diseases such as PRRS, Circovirus and PEDv have led to large production losses and tight pork supplies in the past, most notably in 2008 and 2011.

In addition to limiting the economic impact of disease, one of the key challenges for the large commercial production companies is getting high levels of performance out of their huge investments in facilities in order to maximize their profits. While many of the staff in these operations are well-educated, they lack knowledge about pigs and the processes involved in production, and so are not equipped to achieve the performance levels we expect in the West. However, the production companies are very aware that this is an issue and are now starting to address it, opening up the opportunity to improve performance significantly in the future. Over the past 18 months, I have been working with two integrated companies to train staff in modern pig production techniques, and also teaching them to deliver training in production skills to workers on their farms. This has been a very rewarding experience as there is a huge thirst for knowledge, and a strong determination to improve.

The farm where I was carrying out the training last November is a 3,000 sow farrow-to-finish operation owned by a company which has 25,000 sows and is in the process of adding another 7,000. The company also manufactures feed, as well as supplies both feed and breeding stock or feeder pigs to its customers. All the staff in the hog production complex live in a large apartment block and eat all of their meals from the company canteen. I was told that the quality of food is an important factor for workers when choosing a company to work for, and this farm has a good reputation in that respect.

Southern China is in the sub-tropics and temperatures can reach up to 40°C in the summer. To keep pigs as cool as possible, the building structures are narrow and well spaced-out to permit effective natural ventilation. Vegetation is grown between them to help with cooling – in fact all the vegetables used in the canteen kitchen are grown on the farm, as well as mangos, papayas and bananas. The buildings are whitewashed to reflect the sun, and have open sides with hand-adjusted curtain ventilation. There are about 100 staff in total, many more than at similar farms in the West, but labour is relatively cheap and there is very little automation. With so many people around, the farm is kept in spotless condition, making it a pleasure to work in.

In my four visits to China, I have had the opportunity to find out firsthand about the changes taking place in the pork industry and understand what is driving its restructuring. It will be fascinating to observe this process as it continues to evolve.
Concrete progress on Pig Code brings finish line into focus

Dec. 2, 2013 News Release

Canada is closing in on a major milestone to complete a new Code of Practice for the care and handling of pigs.

Farm animal care stakeholders made strong progress this week at meetings in Ottawa to forge agreement on the tough issues toward finalizing a renewed Code. This included a major focus on the public comments around the high-profile issue of sow housing, as well as finding consensus on broader issues like feed and water, animal health, husbandry practices and euthanasia.

“We have made great strides towards final agreement and are on track to have a new Code for the New Year,” says Florian Possberg, chair of the Pig Code Development Committee who runs a family hog operation in Saskatchewan. “Final agreement on a substantial portion of the Code content has now been reached, with plans to complete the remainder at a final meeting in January. After that, some time will be needed to have the final Code translated, copy edited, and published.”

Specific details on Code content cannot be publicly released until the Code is fully finalized and published, which is expected to be spring 2014.

The process of developing Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals is coordinated through the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC). Pig Code development has been led by a Pig Code Development Committee representing diverse interest groups, including farmers and others in the agriculture and food industry value chain, animal welfare groups, enforcement and government.

“There has been a tremendous effort from the Code Development Committee to work together and build consensus on often complex and challenging issues,” says Jackie Wepruk, NFACC General Manager. “It has been a long road to get to this point and the progress we are now seeing is a testament to everyone’s commitment to the common goal of achieving a Code that is good for the animals and implementable by producers.”

Codes of Practice sets out national guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. They promote sound management and welfare through recommendations and requirements for housing, management, transportation, processing and other animal husbandry practices.

The Pig Code development process has involved several key stages. It was initiated in October 2010 at the request of Canadian Pork Council (CPC). In addition to being led by the multi-stakeholder Code Development Committee, it has included the contribution of a Scientific Committee that conducted a review of scientific research on priority issues. A draft Code was initially completed in early 2013 and released for a public comment period that took place from June 1 to August 3.

The public comment period resulted in over 4,700 comments submitted. The Code Development Committee has since been reviewing and considering these comments toward finalizing the Code, with the Ottawa meetings this past week being a major opportunity for face-to-face discussion to determine areas of final consensus.

Funding for the Codes of Practice is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Agricultural Flexibility Fund, under the Addressing Domestic and International Market Expectations Relative to Farm Animal Welfare initiative, as part of Canada’s Economic Action Plan.

About NFACC

The National Farm Animal Care Council is the lead organization for farm animal care in Canada. More information on NFACC and the Pig Code Development Process is available at www.nfacc.ca.
Industry invests in future with commitment to swine welfare

Contributed by Prairie Swine Centre Inc.

A major milestone was reached in October when industry fundraising achieved 50 per cent of its target to establish a National Chair in Swine Welfare. The proposed Chair in Swine Welfare, an industry-wide initiative, has been gaining momentum with six provincial pork associations and four pork processors committing to the five-year program to develop a dedicated team of researchers focusing on swine welfare. The Chair application will go forward soon to NSERC (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council) as an IRC (Industrial Research Chair), a program that benefits industry development of applied and early discovery research. The program provides 50–50 matching funds to the industry financial pledges for approved research programs.

“The process for achieving such a program is significant,” notes Lee Whittington, President of Prairie Swine Centre and the lead organizer behind the Chair. “We first identified the Chair concept as a viable option over four years ago, the ensuing years have included the necessary steps of working with industry qualifying the priority of and gauging the need of greater effort in welfare, endorsement and partnering with the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan, selecting the right candidate for the Chair position and presenting the concept to industry to achieve the financial requirements of the program.”

After a world-wide search, Dr. Sandra Edwards, Professor and Chair of Agriculture, Newcastle University, UK, was the successful candidate. Dr. Edward’s career includes successful research in a variety of interdisciplinary projects over the past three decades, numerous awards and senior advisor on industry and government advisory groups. Dr. Sandra Edwards brings a wealth of research and practical on-farm experience in the areas of nutrition, applied behavior, and health management. A sampling of Dr. Edwards’ research can be found at www.prairieswine.com, by searching Sandra Edwards in the PorkInsight database of applied research.

Dr. Edwards is becoming increasingly well-recognized and active in Canada at key pork industry events, including as the keynote speaker at the Tim Hortons Sustainable Food Management Summit in Guelph, Ontario in October, and at the Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in November.

Additional information on the National Chair in Swine Welfare initiative can be obtained by contacting Lee Whittington at the Prairie Swine Centre.

Prairie Swine Centre Inc., located near Saskatoon, is a non-profit research corporation affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan, and is recognized globally for its contributions to practical, applied science in pork production in the disciplines of nutrition, engineering, behavior and management.

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Edmonton-based Select Ready Foods Inc. (Select Ready) produces quality, frozen Alberta meat products for Canadian food service and retail customers. With funds from two Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) grants, Select Ready will soon have the capacity to develop a total of 10 new food items using Alberta pork.

Select Ready customers demonstrated significant interest in prepackaged meals that offer convenience and easy, one-step cooking in the oven or microwave. The ALMA grants helped Select Ready purchase new equipment and technology. The new equipment, together with product specialists’ expertise from the Leduc Food Processing Development Centre, will improve Select Ready’s competitive advantage. As well, the new integrated technology improves information flow and security.

“Our objective is to build on our core competencies by adopting new technologies, processes and skills that will grow our business as we process more Alberta meats,” shares Danya Clarke of Select Ready. “ALMA’s ongoing support has been instrumental in the development and expansion of our business.”

The latest Select Ready meat products are new to the Alberta and Canadian marketplace. Select Ready estimates they will process more than 50,000 kg of Alberta meat per year, with the majority of sales occurring outside of Alberta and Canada. Development and introduction of these new products will lead to increased sales of Alberta-based, value-added products that could lead to additional economic activity in Alberta.

“When local supply-chain companies improve their capacity, industry stands to gain as more value-added products are produced. The increase in the amount of processed Alberta meats contributes to profitability and sustainability here at home. These are the types of projects that ALMA looks to partner on,” shares Gordon Cove, ALMA president and CEO.

For more information on Select Ready Foods Ltd., contact Danya Clarke at danya@selectready.ca.
Full House for Alberta Pork AGM

By Geoff Geddes, Alberta Pork

Darcy Fitzgerald, executive director of Alberta Pork, addresses the crowd at the November 14 AGM

It was standing room only at the 2013 Alberta Pork AGM in Calgary November 14 as producers and industry members packed the house.

In near record numbers, they received an update on Alberta Pork’s progress under their four strategic objectives to support producers, from Growing Forward to pricing to biosecurity. Fitzgerald also played the latest commercials for the Passion for Pork campaign and a new video on producer commitment to animal welfare. “Our producers have made it clear that telling their story is a priority, and these are just some of the ways we’re doing that.”

Along with Chairman Frank Novak, he provided updates on Alberta Pork’s progress under their four strategic objectives to support producers, from Growing Forward to pricing to biosecurity. Fitzgerald also played the latest commercials for the Passion for Pork campaign and a new video on producer commitment to animal welfare. “Our producers have made it clear that telling their story is a priority, and these are just some of the ways we’re doing that.”

In the afternoon, guests were treated to presentations from Rick Bergmann, Bruce Ginn and Ted Bilyea on key issues including a comprehensive look at where the industry is at and where it’s going. In addition, Dr. Lucie Verdon (CSHB) and Dr. Julia Keenliside (ARD) provided important information on the need for heightened biosecurity to fend off PED.

Producers register for the AGM, which attracted near-record attendees.

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Speaker advises holistic approach to risk management

By Myron Love

All farmers are entrepreneurs, says Eric Olson, who was the keynote speaker at the Manitoba Pork Council’s recent fall pork producer meetings.

“Farming is just about the last business where you can have a real windfall and make lots of money,” said the farm management consultant for the accounting firm MNP.

But to be successful, he noted, producers need a goal of how much they want to make in the coming year. He also said it helps to become more disciplined and to keep abreast of what the markets are doing.

The well-attended meetings took place on October 29 in Niverville and on October 30 in Portage La Prairie. The afternoon included reports from the MPC’s chairman Karl Kynoch and general manager Andrew Dickson, updates about PEDv, animal care, and PigTrace Canada, as well as news concerning MPC public relations and social media initiatives.

Olson was introduced by Andrew Dickson, who noted that the speaker has been working with hog producers for 22 years.

“We have learned a lot of our strategies from successful clients,” Olson said.

He first reviewed the conditions that have resulted in tough times for producers over the past few years – issues such as high feed costs due to drought in the U.S., the diversion of much corn for ethanol, the American country of origin labeling, the H1N1 scare, and the change in the relationship between the U.S. and Canadian dollars.

While the outlook is going to remain volatile, he said there are some positive indicators.

“Change is in the air. This year was a record year for yield and grain prices are coming down. And hog prices are strong. In order to be successful, you have to be on top of your production costs,” he said.

He recommended producers sit down and go through all their expenses, including fixed costs and their own labour. If producers operate a mixed farm, it gives them an edge because feed prices account for up to 65 per cent of costs.

Once producers know how much each pig costs to raise, they have a better idea how much hogs must be sold for to achieve a profit. Knowing market conditions may prompt producers to lock in a margin. Sometimes that means making less of a profit, but it eliminates the risk of selling at a loss should market conditions change.

Olson pointed out that information is key. “There’s a ton of information out there to help you make your decisions,” he said. “There is also a ton of white noise. It is best to rely on a few good sources in regard to hog prices, grain markets and political trends that influence the currency outlook.”

He also noted that financial institutions and advisers are hog producers’ partners in business. “We can help you become better managers,” he said.
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Frightful weather, delightful symposium!
The 36th annual Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium delightful!

Photos by Sheri Monk

It was a cold couple of days in Saskatoon November 19 and 20 at the 36th annual Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium, but the discussions were on fire. Both days of the event were well-attended, and speaker line-up was impressive.

Dr. Sandra Edwards is interviewed by CTV. Edwards spoke at the symposium, and will be the National Chair in Swine Welfare once the funding for the project has been completely raised.

Kevin Grier, senior policy analyst at the George Morris Centre, speaks to the audience about market trends and economics.

A couple of very enthusiastic and naturally gifted attendees perform a traditional Indian dance during Varughese's cultural presentation.

Tina Varughese, president of tWorks, gave the final presentation. She specializes in cross-cultural communication, and gave a very entertaining and even interactive talk about how to recruit and retain foreign workers.

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Red Deer Swine Technology Workshop attracts record attendance

A record 256 people attended the 15th annual Red Deer Swine Technology Workshop on October 30. The action-packed day included sessions from Dr. Blaine Tully on improving farrowing rates, from workshop organizer Bernie Peet on converting to group housing, and from Dr. Steve Dritz of Kansas State University on feed efficiency. Several other top-notch speakers presented to the full house, and attendees reported increased optimism for the industry’s future.
Saskatchewan Pork Industry Awards of Distinction ceremonies

On November 19, two outstanding individuals were presented with awards of distinction from the Saskatchewan Pork Industry during the 36th annual Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium. Submitted by Sask Pork

Mr. Brian Andries, BSA,
Manager Operations, Prairie Swine Centre received the Award of Distinction for Production Research.

Lee Whittington, President and CEO of the Prairie Swine Centre presented the Production Research Award to Brian Andries who joined the Prairie Swine Centre (PSC) 35 years ago when the facility was a new pig barn, located on Floral Road and operated by the U of S College of Agriculture. The operation is now known across Canada and beyond as the Prairie Swine Centre and Brian continues to manage the site and research projects carried out in the barns.

Since the beginning, PSC has begun a new project every nine to 11 days, an important statistic affecting the operations of the barn when we consider the logistics of pig age, weight, location in the barn are all determined by the Manager Operations. Brian has been at the “centre” of what happens at the “Centre”.

Swine research within a commercial swine barn is, at times, a mixing of oil and water -- balancing the competing needs to manage a commercial-like operation while meeting the research mandate of the Centre. Brian’s commitment can be summed in one statement – “We want to be as close to commercial as possible, while having world class research going on”.

The Saskatchewan pork industry congratulates Brian Andries, a deserving recipient of the Production Research Award for his dedication to the management of the Prairie Swine Centre barns but also his dedication to the Canadian pig industry.

Sylvia Meszaros
Barn Manager,
Cudworth Pork Investors Group

Sylvia has managed a 1200 sow farrow to finish multiplier unit for Cudworth Pork Investors Group for 19 years. She leads a production team that consistently exceeds expectations in the pigs’ reproductive performance (94% farrowing rate); growing herd performance, exceptional consistency in marketing of quality breeding gilts to commercial farms, and on-farm feed mill coordination.

Sylvia practices life-long learning and understands the value of staff training, teamwork and excellent human resources practices. Her dedication to the industry and sincere commitment to her employer, staff, the animals and industry stakeholders is what sets Sylvia apart from others in this role.

The Saskatchewan pork industry congratulates Sylvia Meszaros, a deserving recipient of the Award of Distinction for Production Excellence, and for the value and vision she brings to her organization and the pork industry.
Smart Pig Handling reduces stress for both workers and pigs

New video series available for staff training
By Mark Fynn, Manitoba Pork Council

Back in May 2012, Manitoba Pork Council’s Industry Performance and Services Committee brought forward the idea of creating a series of training videos to standardize the way new farm staff were being trained to handle pigs. New workers already receive training on handling pigs when they enter the barn. However, it was suggested that the production of some high-quality videos might help improve the consistency of training and by providing a good conceptual foundation to start from, make the hands-on training component easier for farm managers. The other provincial pork boards agreed, and over the last year and a half, Manitoba Pork has been working on the development of these videos with much industry support.

A working group with plenty of hands-on experience was formed to develop the content, including Dr. Laurie Connor with the University of Manitoba, Don Down with Elanco Animal Health, Bryan Hay with Maple Leaf Consumer Foods, and Lorraine Langlois with HyLife Ltd. Filming took place at four different locations, including three barns and a processing plant, with animal handlers from those facilities being the stars of the show. The footage was then reviewed and analyzed by the working group, and a number of key industry players – including Nancy Lidster of DNL Farms Ltd., the developer of the Low-Stress Pig Handling training course – were brought in to review the content. The result was the video training series, Smart Pig Handling.

Smart Pig Handling focuses on keeping pigs calm while handlers are moving them and using their natural response patterns to guide them the way handlers want them to go. Understanding what the pigs are telling you through their behaviours and responding to them appropriately are the keys to Smart Pig Handling. This understanding, combined with the appropriate use of handling tools and PPE, will keep handlers safe during the process of handling pigs. The training videos revolve around five core principles:

1. Pigs’ Flight Zones
Pigs like to keep potential threats a certain distance away from them, effectively maintaining a “personal space” around them; we call that space their “flight zone.” The size of a pig’s flight zone is related to preventing a perceived threat, e.g. a handler,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38
from getting too close. You can tell when you have entered a pig’s flight zone because the pig will begin to react to your approach. A pig’s flight zone will vary in size depending on its previous experience with handlers, its current level of excitement, and the body language and movement of the handler. Previous positive experiences, a calm temperament, and relaxed, methodical movements will all respectively decrease a pig’s flight zone making them easier to handle.

2. Pigs’ Responses to Handlers

How pigs respond to handlers varies depending on the situation they are in. Generally, if a handler approaches slowly and the pig has space to move away in the opposite direction, it will do so. If its escape is blocked in the opposite direction because of a wall, gate or other pigs, but there is space for it to move to either side, it will often attempt to circle around past the handler. If neither of these options is present and there are other pigs in the area, it will often wedge into the group. Understanding and using these natural response patterns to guide pigs’ movements can empower handlers to get the job done easily and in one movement. This is critical because every time you cause a pig to wedge, circle around you, or start and stop, it becomes more excited and more likely to become fatigued and/or refuse to move.

3. Pigs’ Herd Behaviour

A pig’s main source of protection is the herd. As herd animals, they are strongly motivated to follow and avoid being separated from each other. As pigs become more excited, they become less likely to leave the protection of the herd, choosing instead to stick closer together. Wedging or bunching is an example of defensive herd behaviour. However, herd-following behaviour is also a form of herd behaviour, one that does not indicate defensiveness. Handlers can use this to move groups of animals; simply get the first few pigs moving, stop applying pressure, and let the remaining pigs follow the leaders. The front pigs will “pull” the other pigs forward while the back pigs “push” from behind.

4. Pigs’ Need for Release of Pressure

Pigs need time and space to respond to handlers after they have been pressured. Remember that every movement, touch or noise is a form of pressure to the pigs. After applying pressure, handlers should release it by pausing to give the pigs time to respond. When they respond, pressure should not be reapplied unless they begin to stop or slow down. The most common handling mistake is not giving pigs a sufficient release of pressure after applying it. This mistake often causes lead pigs to bunch, which prevents them from “pulling” the group forwards, and might also cause the back pigs (or pigs that you are moving individually) to try to circle past you. In effect, the movement stops. If pigs are flowing in the desired direction, do nothing to distract their attention.

5. Pigs’ Desire to Keep Threats in their Sight

Pigs want to keep handlers within their sight. When moving an individual animal, a handler should stay out of its blind spot (the space directly behind it). Instead, the handler should approach from behind at an angle slightly to the side of the pig, in its peripheral vision, at the pace it sets. In moving a group (out of a pen, for example) a handler’s position should allow the pigs to keep him or her, the open gate and the flow of their herd mates in their sight all at the same time. The best position to accomplish this is right beside the opening, on the side of the pen. By staying on the side close to the opening and reaching towards the back, pigs will circle around a handler through the open gate with the desired direction of flow down the alley. Working from behind can draw the pigs’ attention back, away from following other herd mates out of the pen. It also often leads to more pigs arriving at the gate than are able to exit, resulting in wedging, elevated stress, and defensive responses that hinder flow.

These core principles form the foundation of Smart Pig Handling. The training is expected to lessen stress on both workers and pigs, prevent workplace injuries, improve workplace satisfaction, reduce in-transit losses, improve meat quality, and ensure animal well-being. Versions of the training videos are available at: http://manitobapork.com/manitoba-pork-industry/animal-care/pig-handling/

The extended versions of the training videos, which are customizable to any type of pig farm, are available through the provincial pork organizations.

The development of these videos was supported by Alberta Pork, Sask Pork, Manitoba Pork, Ontario Pork and EPQ. It was also supported by Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative, and the Government of Alberta. The project’s main support came from the FCC Ag Safety Fund, administered by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association with funding from Farm Credit Canada.
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Disaster Recovery: It’s More Than a Plan – It’s a Process

Are You Prepared?
Advertorial submitted by Angela Greter, AGNOSIS Continuity Ltd.

It is a well-accepted fact today that the number of natural and man-made disaster incidents appear to be increasing.

The world is experiencing more serious and frequent climate variations as well as an increase in the complexity of production methods and transportation logistics. These things, in combination with an increased dependence on more complex, diverse, and in many cases, aging or outdated infrastructure, suggest an increase in the urgency and need for contingency planning.

Another indisputable fact is that the reported number of disaster occurrences is rather staggering and disquieting across Canada, as well as globally. Media coverage and social networking have reached the point where society and the business world are constantly bombarded by news of these events. This is resulting in an air of apprehension regarding the inevitability of such an event occurring locally and is a constant source of concern in all fields of business.

It is essential for the agriculture and agri-food industry to recognize that it is not exempt from these concerns. Indeed, the industry is becoming acutely aware of the ever-growing need to address contingency planning due to concerns being voiced by producers and their associated boards and organizations. In light of recent events (Alberta flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.), this need is increasingly urgent.

Recognition of the magnitude of the effort involved to do this planning properly at both the producer and organization levels within the sector is, of itself, somewhat of a deterrent to consistent and effective progress in this regard. It is not enough for the commodity organization to create an emergency preparedness plan, as this does not specifically protect the individual producer and his/her unique operation. Thus, it is essential that a reasonable approach be adopted for this contingency planning effort in order to ensure successful achievement of a satisfactory state of preparedness. This will help to provide protection for the individual producer as well as the industry as a whole. And, perhaps most importantly, taking action protecting the producer and the agricultural industry to will ensure continued safe and plentiful food supply for Canadian consumers.

What Can You Do?

There are a number of helpful documents on disaster planning that have been created by the Canadian federal and provincial governments. These documents can help producers to start the process of creating a plan for their operation. Some examples include:

- Planning for and Responding to Disasters in Canada An Approach for Farmers and Farm Organizations (http://agmarketing.extension.psu.edu/Business/PDFs/disaster_planning.pdf)

However, most producers would benefit from a guided process designed to help them set up emergency preparedness protocols and disaster recovery/business continuity plans for their unique farming operation. There are specific steps to a common-sense approach to contingency planning that a service provider may bring to the table.

1) Determining a producer’s unique risk factors will help keep the planning and preparedness measures reasonable and specific to his/her farm. A risk assessment will help identify the number of factors that may affect a business but should be used primarily to make decisions on prioritizing the disaster scenarios that are possible or probable.

   Example: If a producer’s farm is located next to a river, stream, or within a flood plain, it is more likely that a disaster resulting from floods will occur.

2) A Business Impact Analysis (BIA) process will identify the specific and cost-effective recovery objectives that a producer will need to factor into the development of the continuity plan for their business. What business functions or processes are critical to a producer’s business? What is the cost of the loss of each of these business functions over time after an incident has affected the business?

   Example: If the producer is without electricity for any extended period of time, how will that affect their operation and what are the costs?

3) Recovery time objectives, based on the impact over time, will allow for the development of very specific recovery schedule strategies. How soon after a
disaster strikes does a producer or farmer need to have each business function up and running?

Example: Water contamination – if a producer’s main water supply has been contaminated due to flood waters or hazardous material spills, how long can the producer go without having access to safe clean drinking water for their livestock?

4) The recovery strategies specific to an individual producer’s business needs will be identified and selected. There are many options with regard to how a producer can tackle the response and recovery effort. It is important to recognize that time-of-disaster is not the right time to start thinking about these. Identifying the strategies and analyzing those most appropriate for a producer’s operation are key to maintaining a reasonable recovery plan that will work when an incident occurs.

Example: If the power goes out, does the producer have a power generator as a backup power system? How long can the producer’s facilities operate from the backup generator? Can the facility operate at its peak power operational capacity? Does the producer have significant fuel supplies to run the generator for an extended period of time?

5) Established infrastructure recovery capabilities need to be put in place that meet the needs of the individual producer. Replacement of lost or destroyed critical and specialized equipment or resources will need to be arranged through agreements and / or contracts.

Example: If the backup generator fails, who does the producer call to acquire a new generator? In wide scale disasters, generators may be next to impossible to obtain.

6) The steps that will be taken to deal with the emergency or disaster situation need to be outlined ahead of time and supported by effective and documented processes and procedures.

7) It is essential for producers to understand that a business continuity plan needs to be maintained. This will include periodic reviews, changes, and updates. If the plan is maintained by your service provider, they will help to ensure that this is done regularly. Additionally, the plan must be available in its truest form to all who need it at the time of disaster occurrence. This means a repository is needed that will allow all response groups, organizations, service providers, and producers to have a copy in their hands when they need it. A service provider will often provide this service as well.

Example: Have you added a barn to your farm? Perhaps you have added just a few more animals? Have the road systems in your area changed?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42
8) All contingency planning measures need to be tested. An untested plan is proven to be less than 50 per cent effective in a real disaster scenario. This can mean the difference between minor or very extensive business and financial losses for the producer.

Test exercises need to be developed and conducted based on the specific disaster scenarios they are meant to address. Testing of the plans according to a periodic schedule is the most effective means of identifying weaknesses and the fault tolerance of the plans.

9) An interface for co-ordination of efforts with local, provincial, and federal emergency response organizations must be identified, clearly outlined, and documented. Lines of communication for dealing with all supporting groups and teams must be known by the producers and their boards ahead of time and facilitated through predetermined channels of communication.

Example: Communication between the pork producer and Alberta Pork during a disease-related event.

10) Contingency planning awareness and training for all workers involved in a producer’s operation is key to timely recovery, the safety of the people involved, and humane consideration and treatment of the animals affected. Recovery activities and tasks are not usual activities related to a producer’s normal day-to-day work; therefore it is important that all involved are made aware of the recovery strategies and plans that will be executed.

There are very few organizations working on emergency preparedness and disaster recovery planning in the agricultural industry. Most of these consultants are focused on IT business needs. AGNOSIS Continuity Ltd. combines the skills of individuals with disaster recovery training, agriculture, and environmental impact assessment to offer a comprehensive program designed to meet the specific needs of agricultural producers.

The Bottom Line
A daunting task, yes, but an impossible task, no. Contingency planning is, however, an undertaking for which producers may wish to seek assistance from a service provider.

Producers already have an overwhelming multitude of tasks on their “To Do” lists and a prodigious amount of skills under their belts and tools up their sleeves. With new production methods and technologies popping up at an alarming rate, the pressure to maintain operations can become overwhelming.

When it comes to emergency response, disaster recovery, and business continuity planning, there are service providers, such as AGNOSIS Continuity, that can be an invaluable partner. Producers can develop a strong, trusting relationship with these providers that will serve them well in developing and maintaining a state of preparedness that will ensure the survival and continuity of their business following a disaster occurrence.

About the Authors
AGNOSIS Continuity Ltd. is a family-run disaster recovery/business continuity consulting company based out of Calgary, Alberta. Dr. Angela Greter, Trevor Rouillard, Jamie-Lynn Greter, and John Rouillard make up this team and bring a wide variety of skill in agriculture, disaster recovery, and environmental assessment. The organization aims to help producers to develop and maintain emergency preparedness protocols and business continuity plans, regardless of what situation they are experiencing. Please visit www.agnosis.biz for more information.

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Energy and amino acid digestibility of high residual oil canola co-products fed to finisher pigs

Fernando Grageola¹, Jose L. Landero¹, Eduardo Beltranena¹,², and Ruurd T. Zijlstra¹,*
¹University of Alberta; ²Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development *Email: ruurd.zijlstra@ualberta.ca

Take Home Message

Residual oil content that increases the dietary energy value of canola co-products makes expeller-pressed canola meal (EPCM) and cold-pressed canola cake (CPCC) attractive feedstuffs for swine. However, the nutrient composition of EPCM and CPCC might be more variable because they are produced in local plants where equipment and conditions vary. Profitability of plants that produce EPCM and CPCC as co-products hinges on sourcing and pressing mostly off-grade canola seed and therefore, greater variability in quality should be expected in EPCM and CPCC than solvent-extracted canola meal. Results from the present experiment indicate that EPCM and CPCC are good sources of energy and AA for pigs. The DE and NE values of EPCM and CPCC were determined largely by their residual oil content and consequent differences in fibre and CP content. The higher fibre content in EPCM was likely associated with its lower digestibility for a number of indispensable amino acids, including lysine.

High residual oil canola co-products

Several co-products can be obtained after extracting the oil from canola seed. Commonly, canola seed is crushed in large-scale, solvent-extraction plants to produce food grade oil for human consumption and canola meal for animal feeding. However, canola oil is also extracted using less efficient pressing technologies that do not involve solvent extraction. Expeller-pressed canola meal (EPCM; 10 – 15% residual oil) and cold-pressed canola cake (CPCC; more than 20% residual oil) are attractive canola co-products, because, the cost per Mcal net energy (NE) of their residual oil is less than supplementing such energy from feed-grade liquid canola oil, tallow or vegetable-animal fat blends. However, the nutrient composition of EPCM and CPCC might be more variable among plants, because they are produced in plants with less standardization of equipment and procedures and may include heated and (or) green seed that would be otherwise rejected by canola crushers producing oil for human consumption.

Nutrient profile of EPCM and CPCC

The EPCM and CPCC used in this trial were sourced from Hartland Colony, (Bashaw, AB) and Cansource Biofuels, (Mayerthorpe, AB), respectively. The EPCM contained half the crude fat of CPCC (Table 1). Consequently, EPCM contained 20% more crude protein and indispensable amino acids (AA) than CPCC. Following a similar pattern, crude fibre, acid detergent fibre, neutral detergent fibre and phosphorus content were 42%, 31%, 23% greater and 16%, respectively, in EPCM.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44
than CPCC. Total glucosinolate content of EPCM was approximately double that of CPCC.

**Digestibility trial**

The trial was conducted at the Swine Research and Technology Centre of the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The test ingredients were included at 50% in test diets fed to 6 finisher pigs surgically fitted with a cannula at the end of the small intestine. In addition, pigs were fed a nitrogen-free corn starch-based diet to estimate basal endogenous AA losses and calculate the standardized ileal digestibility (SID) of AA. Pigs were fed the 3 diets in 3 experimental periods. Each period consisted of 5 days of adaptation to the experimental diets, followed sequentially by 2 days of fecal collection and 2 days of digesta collection from the cannula. Digesta was collected to calculate AA digestibility and feces collected to calculate apparent total tract digestibility (ATTD) of energy, and digestible energy (DE) value of EPCM and CPCC. The NE value of test ingredients was predicted by using the calculated DE value and the analyzed content of acid detergent fibre, starch, crude protein and crude fat.

The EPCM had a lower (P<0.01) ATTD of gross energy than CPCC (Table 2). The DE and NE value of CPCC was 0.74 and 0.78 Mcal/kg greater (P<0.001), respectively, than of EPCM. The SID of alanine, cysteine, glycine, histidine, isoleucine, lysine and valine in EPCM was lower (P<0.05) than that of CPCC.

**Conclusion**

The EPCM and CPCC are good sources of energy and AA. The greater DE value of CPCC was associated with its greater residual oil content.

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**Table 1. Analyzed nutrient content (%, dry matter) of test ingredients.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Expeller-pressed canola meal</th>
<th>Cold-pressed canola cake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crude protein</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crude fat</td>
<td>11.66</td>
<td>23.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crude fibre</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acid detergent fibre</td>
<td>16.57</td>
<td>13.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral detergent fibre</td>
<td>20.79</td>
<td>17.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starch</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphorus</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross energy (Mcal/kg)</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>6.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indispensable amino acid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arginine</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histidine</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isoleucine</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leucine</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lysine</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methionine</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenylalanine</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threonine</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tryptophan</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valine</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total glucosinolates, µmol/g</td>
<td>11.88</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Apparent total tract digestibility (ATTD) of energy, digestible and net energy content, and standardized ileal digestibility (SID) of amino acids of the test ingredients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Expeller-pressed canola meal</th>
<th>Cold-pressed canola cake</th>
<th>SEM$^a$</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTD of energy, %</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestible energy (Mcal/kg DM)$^b$</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net energy (Mcal/kg DM)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SID of amino acids, %</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arginine</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histidine</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isoleucine</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leucine</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lysine</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methionine</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenylalanine</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threonine</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tryptophan</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valine</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Standard error of the mean. $^b$ Dry matter.

and greater digestibility of energy compared with EPCM. Thus for quality control, the content of crude fat must be measured. The markedly greater calculated NE value of CPCC reflected its greater DE value, lower CP content and lower fibre content compared with EPCM. The higher fibre content in EPCM was likely associated with its lower SID for a number of indispensable AA. The high glucosinolate content of EPCM may limit its inclusion in swine diets.

**Acknowledgments**

Funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the Canola Council of Canada through the Growing Forward program is acknowledged.
Stress during transportation is an important issue for pork producers and processors. When hogs experience stress during loading, transport and unloading, it affects the health of the animal, the quality of the meat and, in extreme cases, can result in death. With funding from a wide range of industry partners, Drs. Jennifer Brown and Harold Gonyou from the Prairie Swine Centre in Saskatoon, Sask., led a research project to evaluate current transport methods along with new technologies and approaches in order to identify best practices that will benefit the entire pork industry.

The importance of this project and the commitment of the pork industry to improving animal welfare was apparent from the number of organizations collaborating to fund the project. Partners included Alberta Pork, Saskatchewan Pork, Manitoba Pork, Ontario Pork, Maple Leaf Fresh Foods and the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA).

To deliver the ambitious outcomes targeted by this project, Drs. Brown and Gonyou assembled a national team of collaborators, including Dr. Trever Crowe (University of Saskatchewan), Drs. Tina Widowski and Renée Bergeron (University of Guelph), Drs. Luigi Faucitano and Stephanie Torrey (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Sherbrooke, Quebec), Dr. Laurie Connor (University of Manitoba), and doctoral student, Sebastien Goumon (Université Laval).

Drs. Brown and Gonyou approached the transportation process with fresh eyes, considering everything from the width of chutes, the slope of loading ramps, the design of the truck, the group size being handled, trailer ventilation and insulation, the behaviours exhibited by the pigs given different handing
methods and much more. Dr. Brown explains, “This project was made up of a series of studies that took place across Canada looking at key factors affecting stress during transport. Until this initiative, there were no studies that looked at swine transport under Canadian conditions. The study was a real collaborative effort that brought scientific rigor to this problem. We compared transport in eastern and western provinces, and looked at all stages of the transport process to identify methods to ensure that animals are being handled as safely, humanely and efficiently as possible.”

Darcy Fitzgerald, the executive director for Alberta Pork, said, “We are hopeful that the practices coming out of this research project will benefit the pork industry across Canada. If we can reduce stress for the animals and their handlers, we can shorten handling times and losses during transport. Reducing the stress on the pigs is better for the animal’s overall welfare and, in turn improves the meat quality of our pork.”

First, the team evaluated the design of handling facilities for loading and unloading pigs, as well as the trailers used to transport the animals. Second, the researchers looked at the animals, including their behaviour during loading, transport and unloading as well as measures of stress physiology and meat quality. Altogether, these studies show there are many ways to reduce the stress of handling during marketing of pigs. These include improving the design of ramps and approaches, providing animals with sufficient time to recover between handling events, modifying trailer ventilation and insulation (depending on the season), and providing pigs with prior exposure to handling. The research team has published two papers focusing on variation in trailer temperatures and the effects of ramp configuration and slope; further results are awaiting publication.

Gordon Cove, ALMA’s president and CEO, said, “We have teams of researchers on this project who are measuring, evaluating and optimising everything around loading, transporting and unloading hogs. It has a huge scope and represents a lot of work, but that’s not what makes it exceptional. What makes this project stand out is the long list of industry partners who not only recognise that this is important research, but who put money on the table. This level of cooperation and commitment is a great sign for Canada’s pork industry.”

For more information, contact Dr. Brown directly: jennifer.brown@usask.ca
Gowans Feed Consulting Student in Nutrition Award GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIP

The Prairie Swine Centre, a non-profit corporation affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan and located near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, in collaboration with Gowans Feed Consulting, a leading Canadian swine nutrition consulting firm are offering a unique opportunity to combine graduate studies with practical training and industry experience in swine nutrition.

The Gowans Feed Consulting Graduate Student in Nutrition Award is available at the PhD or Masters level and will include a minimum of 2 practical training modules aimed at boosting experience and expertise in commercial swine production, nutrition and feed manufacturing. Selected research topics will consider a balance between meeting academic rigor, practical training and industry application. The award will be among the highest available to a graduate student providing up to $20,000 per year of study (PhD award) in addition to the normal Graduate Research Assistantship stipend. Full time employment with Gowans Feed Consulting may be offered to successful graduates upon completion of the program.

Successful applicants for the M.Sc. program will have a B.Sc. in animal science or related discipline. For the Ph.D. program, applicants will have a M.Sc. in animal nutrition or equivalent. Students at the Prairie Swine Centre are enrolled in the College of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Saskatchewan. The successful applicant will possess strong organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills with a demonstrated willingness to function as a member of a research team. Preference will be given to those students with swine or feed industry experience.

The Prairie Swine Centre represents a unique approach to research and technology transfer, maintaining strong linkages with the pork industry while continuing an emphasis on quality academic endeavour. Active in research, education and technology transfer, the Centre operates a 300-sow farrow-to-finish commercial research herd with extensive surgery, metabolism and intensive research facilities. It recently completed a major expansion of its office facilities and provides students with modern office space, including excellent access to computer facilities. The nutrition research program is part of a broader research program at the Centre that also includes engineering and applied ethology (behaviour).

Gowans Feed Consulting (GFC) is a leading Canadian swine nutrition consulting firm serving swine producers across Canada and in select international markets. GFC nutritionists provide hands on consulting services which include regular barn visits with a focus on reducing feed costs and maximizing net returns. Also active in research and technology transfer, GFC in partnership with Drumloche Farm operate a 2000 head commercial grow-finish research facility near Irma, Alberta.

Interested applicants should contact Dr. Denise Beaulieu, Prairie Swine Centre Inc., P.O. Box 21057, 2105 - 8th Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA S7H 5N9 Phone (306) 667-7441; e-mail denise.beaulieu@usask.ca and/or Dr. Malachy Young, Gowans Feed Consulting, 1837 11th Ave., Wainwright AB T9W 1N3 Phone (780) 842-9221; email malachyy@gowansfeedconsulting.ca
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The presence of DON contamination in grain is directly related to the presence of head or ear blight produced by Fusarium fungi, which in turn is directly related to the moisture content at flowering and/ or harvest. Possibly due to recent high stress growing seasons, we have seen an increase in the presence of DON contaminated grains in the Prairie Provinces, and it is expected that DON contamination will continue to spread. Grains contaminated with DON are often downgraded, and either fed to livestock or destroyed. The best strategy for dealing with contaminated grains is to reduce the final concentration of the mycotoxin by dilution; however, this may not be possible if large quantities of contaminated grain are available.

Feeding DON contaminated diets to pigs has negative effects on performance, and can also affect intestinal integrity. Contrary to this, including SDAP into swine rations leads to improved performance and has positive benefits on gut health and integrity. This led to the hypothesis that feeding SDAP to pigs consuming DON contaminated diets would mitigate the negative effects on performance. The use of activated clay binders is another strategy designed to help reduce the negative effects of certain mycotoxins in livestock, and thus we also hypothesized that adding an activated clay to the diet would improve animal performance in DON fed pigs.

Two blocks of 100 nursery pigs each were used for this trial. Pigs were housed in groups of 5/pen with a total of 8 pens per dietary treatment. Pigs began consumption of experimental diets 3 days post weaning and remained on trial for 20 days. Body weights and feed intakes of the pigs were measured on days 0, 3, 11 and 20. Intestinal samples were collected from the jejunum and ileum for 8 pigs per

### Table 1: Diet Formulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>PC+clay</th>
<th>PC+plasma</th>
<th>PC+both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON Wheat (9.3 ppm)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean Meal</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whey Powder</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Meal</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola Oil</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS 20</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activated Clay</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDAP</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzed DON, ppm</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. All diets contained equal amounts of vitamin and mineral premixes, choline chloride, salt and CuSO₄·5H₂O
2. Amino acids, limestone, and mono/di-calcium phosphate were added to balance diets
diet at the end of the trial for histological analysis. Diets consisted of a negative control (NC; 0 ppm DON), a positive control (PC; 3.9 ppm DON) and 3 treatment diets which consisted of the PC diet plus clay (PC+clay), SDAP (PC+plasma) or both (PC+both). Diet formulations are shown in Table 1. Throughout the course of the experiment we observed no evidence of animals being ill (no vomiting or diarrhea). Overall, relative to the negative control (NC; no DON), ADG and ADFI of pigs fed the positive control (with DON) were reduced by 60 and 100 g/d respectively (P < 0.01). There was no obvious benefit of supplementing the diets with the clay binder, as ADG of pigs consuming the PC+clay diet was similar to those consuming the PC diet (P > 0.05); feed intake, however, of pigs fed the PC+clay was numerically improved relative to the PC but was less than the NC (PC+clay 450 g/d, PC 400 g/d, NC 500 g/d).

“Pigs fed a DON contaminated diet plus SDAP performed as well as those consuming a non-contaminated diet in terms of ADFI and ADG.”

When SDAP was added to the DON contaminated diet (PC+plasma), ADG of pigs was similar to the NC pigs (420 g/d vs. 390 g/d; P > 0.05). The ADFI however, was greater for pigs consuming PC+plasma than the NC pigs (550 g/d vs. 500 g/d; P < 0.01). Performance of pigs fed the PC+both diet was also similar to the NC and PC+plasma fed pigs. Overall, gain:feed averaged 0.79 and was unaffected by DON, SDAP or the activated clay (P > 0.05). The effects of dietary treatment on ADG and ADFI are shown in Figures 1 and 2. In the intestine, mucosal thickness and villus height were unaffected by dietary treatment. Pigs fed a DON contaminated diet plus SDAP (PC+plasma) had reduced crypt depth (P = 0.04) and thus the villus height to crypt depth ratio tended to be higher.

Conclusion

Inclusion of SDAP improved ADFI and ADG relative to the positive DON control, and pigs consuming SDAP with DON performed as well as the negative controls. SDAP alleviated the negative effects of DON. In this experiment, SDAP was more effective than the activated clay. SDAP should be included into nursery diets if DON contaminated feed is suspected or known.

Acknowledgements

Strategic program funding was provided by Sask Pork, Alberta Pork, Manitoba Pork Council, Ontario Pork and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Development Fund. Specific funding for this project was provided by Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Development Fund.

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Health

New Tools for Improving BioSecurity

Submitted by Swine Innovation Porc

We all know biosecurity pays big returns. There are many practices we can think that fall within a biosecurity plan, from placing large distances between barns to daily occurrences that involve entrance showering, downtime, and cleaning anything brought into the farm. It’s also one of those things that can be taken for granted when problems don’t arise. When an outbreak occurs, contamination could occur from any number of sources, for example by feed, air, personnel, pigs, or transportation.

Results from this project will help the Canadian pig industry to be more organized, proactive in the management of contamination events and sanitary crisis.

What if we could better understand the dissemination of potential contamination and the relationships between stakeholders, such as producers, packing plants, feed companies and veterinarians? We would then be able to identify potential vectors, and quantify the relative risk associated with movements of animals, personnel or feed and develop efficient biosecurity measures to reduce the possibility of potential contamination.

Work conducted by Ann Letellier, University of Montreal, and funded through Swine Innovation Porc, documented the main movements and traffic between farms and slaughterhouses within a specific area. Using microbial indicators, geospatial data (GPS), analysis and characterization of interactions between stakeholders, it also identified potential main sources of contamination and the stages or practices and attitudes related to an increased risk of contamination.
Project Results

Microbial Indicators
- E. coli and Salmonella are good microbial contamination indicators to follow fecal contamination through a producer network (production facility-transportation-slaughterhouse)
- Farms and packing plant loading docks were the most contaminated environments
- Contamination was important on trucks (mud flaps, inside carpet) before and after washing and disinfection, and on tire tracks in the packing plant yard, which increase the risk of microbial transfer throughout the system

Geomatics
- Transportation is the main source of contamination throughout the system. More than 50 per cent of contamination identified came from the packing plant yard, tire tracks or trucks.
- Better understanding the main routes and movements by all stakeholders within the system indicates the location of the organization (producer, packer, veterinarian) directly influences the frequency of contact within the network.

Systemic point of view – stakeholder Interviews
- The swine industry requires partnership, transparency, ongoing trust, dialogue and a common approach among the stakeholders involved within the system

Risk factors associated with herd contamination, disease propagation and slaughterhouse contamination are not well understood in Canada and more information is needed by the industry to understand how this contamination is associated with people/vector movements. Results from this project will help the Canadian pig industry to be more organized and proactive in the management of contamination events and sanitary crisis. Improving biosecurity is a guaranteed means of increasing long-term industry profitability and sustainability.

For more information please visit www.swineinnovationporc.com
This issue’s Swine and Wine Me isn’t going to be in the traditional “he said, she said” format, so please bear with us. This edition was put to bed days before Christmas, and hours before we left for Winnipeg to visit family for the holidays. This time of year can be magical, but it can also be stressful, and we proactively decided to forego an intense competition during the season of sharing.

But we also had another mission – I wanted to use up all of the produce and pork we had in the fridge before we left! It was quite a sad lot of produce, I have to admit. The meat looked wonderful though. Pierre braised it with a little sea salt and black pepper, and once that was completed, we added the diced potatoes, carrots, endive, red onion, ginger, thyme, and green onion. And then it went in the oven at 425°F for the first 15 minutes, after which we turned the oven down to 350°F.

The peppers were cleaned and diced, and a clove of garlic was chopped finely. On the stovetop, I melted some butter in a pan, then added the garlic and pine nuts. Once those browned, I added the peppers and sautéed until some were just slightly browned. Then we added the old cheddar, which was finely shredded.

We checked on the meat several times, but found the potatoes took an
Our ingredient list looked something like this:

- Two small pork roasts cut from a whole loin,
- Four random pork chops,
- One endive,
- Seven somewhat soggy potatoes that had definitely seen better days,
- One bag of mini bell peppers,
- A bunch of parsley,
- The remainder of a bag of baby carrots that were buried in the produce drawer,
- One sprig of thyme,
- A small piece of ginger,
- Green onion,
- Red onion,
- A third of a bag of pine nuts,
- A little bit of left over five-year old cheddar, and
- Three cloves of garlic.

especially long time. Once they finally seemed close enough to done, we pulled the roast, and served everything with a tossed salad. For the wine, we chose a Canadian Pinot Noir called Gray Monk. I had been looking forward to it (admittedly, in large part because of the name) but we were disappointed. It just didn’t reach a depth that you expect of a Pinot Noir, and any notes it did manage to hit were rather shallow.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 57
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• What Surveillance Using CSHIIN Can Do for the Producer and the Industry
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Phone: (780) 492-3651  Fax: (780) 492-5771
The flavour of the meat was good, but actually more subtle than I expected. We found the meat a little dry, thanks to our mismanagement of the potato timing. The meal could have been turned from something mediocre into something pretty gourmet if we had thought ahead and created a sauce or a light gravy to go with the meat and potatoes.

All in all, I think we managed not too badly, especially since we didn’t as much as Google a recipe and we certainly didn’t shop for any ingredients specifically. Plus, despite the frantic and chaotic few hours we had to dedicate to the project, we managed to mostly keep our harmony intact.

We’re still working on teaming up with the Passion for Pork bloggers, though we’ll definitely have to kick it up a notch next issue if we hope to keep pace with their pork prowess!

Until next time... ■
Hi there! Welcome back to Your Daily Bacon!

This issue, we are going to look in a slightly different direction, setting aside bacon products momentarily and looking at another facet of the bacon craze. We’re talking about extreme bacon recipes. So, actually, this will be sort of a hybrid “Swine and Dine Me/Daily Bacon episode, with just a dash of meme.

Although personally I think the following dishes would be a great “Swine and Dine” subject, I doubt Sheri would agree. These are the sorts of recipes that go far beyond spreading out a few slices of bacon on top of Aunt Gertie’s World Famous Baked Beans. These are bacon dishes for the *hardcore* bacon fan... the very devout and loyal bacon consumer. These recipes are only for those with such discriminating taste that they think the only thing that tastes better than bacon is more bacon. A warning before we begin – none of these culinary masterpieces are endorsed by any known heart associations.

Now, dig out your best bacon-eating bib and prepare to dig in!

First there is the mighty and appropriately named Bacon Explosion, a barbecue bacon recipe. With this meaty monolith, you not only get your daily bacon, but you’re treated to sausage as well! Think of it – two of the tastiest pork products ever imagined, literally rolled into one! I’ll give a brief explanation of the process, just to give you an inkling of what it’s like and if you wish to investigate further, there are resources out there that can guide you specifically on how to reach porcine nirvana.

Basically, you take two pounds of bacon and make a weave from the strips, a 5x5 latticework of raw bacon. Think of a flat basket weave if you’re drooling too much to visualize this properly. When that is finished, you lay this component flat and then apply your favourite BBQ rub to its surface. Sounds tasty already! But we’re not finished yet...

You next layer the top of your bacon lattice with two pounds of pork sausage, flattening the sausage evenly across the bacon, clear out to the edge. Man, could it get any better than that? Yep! It sure does! Because after that step, you fry the excess bacon left over from the first step, and then crumble and spread it over the sausage layer. That’s right, we now have...
a bacon-sausage-bacon concoction, and we’re STILL not finished!
Now you drizzle the fried bacon with BBQ sauce. And what the heck, sprinkle some of the BBQ rub on it for good measure. Then it gets a little tricky. You must roll the sausage and its contents up as tightly as possible, leaving the latticework of bacon laying flat. Roll it to the end of the lattice. See where this is going?
Close the sausage roll off with a few pinches along the seam, trying to eliminate any air pockets. Now you roll it back, this time including the bacon foundation. That’s the construction! If all went well, you’ll have a gorgeous loaf of bacon, somewhat shaped like a large salami.
This goes into a smoker and needs to be cooked at 225°F until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. The rule of thumb is one hour for each inch of thickness, and thus a two inch roll should take approximately two hours. If you did it all correctly, not only will you have a masterpiece of pork overkill, but when cut, it will look like a work of art!
Next, is a rather cute offering, but perhaps not quite as extreme as the Bacon Explosion. We’ll just take a quick look at it for fun, and the details for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60
Pork Culture and Trends Continued

Preparing it are available online for those who wish to give it a try. What could be cuter than a Bacon Turtle Burger? With its center of lean ground beef wrapped in strips of bacon to

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TURDUCKEN – Courtesy Wiki Commons
A chicken inside a duck inside a turkey and wrapped in bacon – Thanksgiving will never be the same again!
make its shell, and the clever use of Wieners to make its legs, head, and tail, this tasty turtle is sure to give folks the giggles, right up until they are actually eating it. It’s sure to be a real crowd-pleaser – unless the crowd happens to be a group of vegetarians, that is.

Perhaps you’ve heard of the new Turducken tradition? If not, you’ve been missing out! A turducken is when you take a chicken, and put it inside a duck before putting the combination inside a turkey. Well, hold on to your hats because some brilliant mind kicked it up a notch by deciding to wrap the whole conglomeration in bacon! They took something already extreme and made it even more extreme... and even more delicious! It’s an odd looking thing, and I’m not sure what would be appropriate to serve with it as a side dish. Depending on your predilection, good old beer seems like it would suffice in a pinch. The problem with that is that is to the best of our knowledge, there isn’t a bacon-brewed beer on the market (yet)! But if you really want a beverage with a kick, there is a bacon vodka available for an extra-special martini.

As always, if you see a cool bacon product, or if you’ve used bacon in a unique way, we want to hear from you! Next edition we are going to focus on some of the more unique dishes that feature bacon, so please send your photos and recipes to bsimmons@ma.rr.com.

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