

BACON BITS

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Western Canadian Association of Swine Practitioners Annual Meeting 2002 in Saskatoon

The annual meeting of the Western Canadian Association of Swine Practitioners always strives to present a balance of foreign and homegrown wisdom to its members, and this year was no exception. Over 50 veterinarians and pharmaceutical industry professionals gathered in Saskatoon in October to learn about current issues in swine health.

The first of three featured speakers from the USA was Dr. Jerome Geiger of PIC in Franklin, Kentucky. Dr. Geiger discussed considerations when doing both a transport audit and a welfare audit on-farm. He stated that when auditing an operation for welfare, realistic expectations, rather than perfection, must be the goal. "It is unrealistic to expect that any pig should experience well-being all the time. We humans, with all our preventions, do not achieve that." Adequate staff training is critical as "it's no good to tell a guy he can't use a prod if you don't give him an alternative."

Dr. Steve Sorden of Iowa State University, formerly of Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN), reviewed the causes of diarrhea and the current state of knowledge about circovirus (Post-Weaning Multi-Systemic Wasting Disease (PMWS)). The diagnosis and control of this disease continues to challenge the experts, and PMWS is now creating significant production problems around the world.

Dr. Steve Dritz, a veterinarian with a PhD in nutrition from Kansas State University, gave informative presentations dealing with current research on feeding to control colitis and methods of handling data. Dr. Dritz reminded everyone that all data is not equal and that data alone does not prove that something will work under field conditions.

Dr. Gail Cunningham of Marshall Swine Health Service in Camrose, Alberta gave an excellent presentation on using her epidemiological training in veterinary practice. She described how to critically assess research results, especially with trials claiming that a product works. Many diseases are self-limiting. If you begin treatment when things are starting to improve on their own, you may wrongly assume that the treatment caused the improvement. She pointed out that how a study is set up can bias the results, and that even results that are statistically significant may not indicate that there is a real difference.

A second outstanding session was by Leanne Bergen, a veterinary student from WCVN. She presented her research on "Time to Critical Overcrowding in Isolated Nursery Barns Placed Under Quarantine." Using a real multiplier in

Manitoba, she measured barn space, inventories and throughput. She then calculated how long it would be before the overcrowding of animals would be a welfare issue in a theoretical FMD outbreak, where all transportation of animals is stopped. Results showed that nursery barns are the most vulnerable – less than one week would pass before pigs would need to be euthanized.

Dr. Josh Poppe of Morden, Manitoba, shared a challenging case he recently solved involving a nutritional deficiency caused by an error in feed mixing. Dr. Andrijana Rajic of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development gave an update on the antibiotic resistance patterns found in Salmonella bacteria from 90 selected finishing barns in Alberta. She found that antibiotic resistance is still quite low in bacteria from these farms.

In addition to the educational program, the business meeting covered some important issues for swine veterinarians. Members agreed to pursue the creation of a Canadian national swine veterinary association in order to have a stronger voice on national issues. In addition, a bid to host the International Pig Veterinary Congress (IPVS) was discussed. This bid would require a tremendous effort by veterinarians across Canada, but would raise the profile of the Canadian swine industry and veterinary research. The merits and concerns of the new Canadian Quality Assurance Program Drug Use Policy on using off-label products were also debated.

The annual meeting of the Western Canadian Association of Swine Practitioners still shines as one of the best continuing education opportunities for swine veterinarians in Canada.

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Coming Events

Banff Pork Seminar 2003

January 14-17, 2003

For more details, contact Ruth Ball, Conference Co-ordinator, at (780) 492-3651 or email: info@banffpork.ca

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Swill Feeding – A Serious Threat

Feeding waste food or food by-products to swine (swill feeding) is a practice that has sometimes been used in the industry. Some perceive swill feeding as a possible way of lowering cost of production, but there are serious risks to take into consideration. The outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the U.K. was reportedly caused by feeding uncooked swill that contained meat from animals infected with the foot and mouth disease virus to swine.

Risks associated with swill feeding:

1. Disease introduction. Several disease-causing viruses can survive for extended periods in meat and milk products. Diseases that can be introduced as a consequence of swill feeding:
 - foot and mouth disease
 - African swine fever
 - classical swine fever (hog cholera)
 - swine vesicular disease
 - transmissible gastroenteritis
 - vesicular stomatitis
2. Compromised growth of swill-fed swine due to the fact that swill feeding may not result in a diet that is sufficiently balanced with respect to energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. Fatty animals rather than lean ones can result from the unbalanced diet.
3. Low quality meat with undesirable odours and flavours.

The feeding of meat from Canadian animals generally does not present a foreign animal disease risk. However, the illegal importation of meat, intentional or otherwise, by international travelers and commercial operators presents an avenue for Edible Residual material (ERM) or swill feeding to result in a disease outbreak that could have a major economic impact, as occurred in the U.K.

Swill Feeding Regulations

The ERM program under the *Health of Animals Act* of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) controls the feeding of waste food, including meat, to swine. Prior to January 1, 2002, a Class A permit was required to feed ERM containing meat to swine, and there were requirements for cooking the material. The major economic implications of a disease outbreak and the concerns regarding the risk presented by ERM feeding resulted in a ban on the feeding of ERM containing meat or meat products and on the feeding of Restaurant and Institution Waste in Canada. As of January 1, 2002, the feeding of ERM containing meat or meat by-products, as well as the feeding of **any** plate waste from restaurants and food service establishments regardless of whether or not there is meat in the product, is prohibited.

The CFIA is consulting with involved parties concerning the most effective way of regulating and enforcing ERM feeding and controlling disease risk. At present, other waste foods (bakery, dairy, egg material, vegetables and fruits) may continue to be fed under a single class of permit for waste feeding, although this situation may change in the future. The permit must be applied for and renewed annually. Anyone seeking licensing to feed such a material should contact the regional CFIA veterinarian for their area.

For more information, contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency:

Edmonton office: (780) 495-3333

Calgary office: (403) 299-7660

or visit their website at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/>

50 Per Cent of Canadian Production is CQA™ Validated

Over half of Canada's swine herd is now fully validated under the Canadian Quality Assurance (CQA) Program. The CQA Program is our swine industry's on-farm food safety program. To be fully validated on this program a farm must fulfill all the CQA program's requirements and have a validation visit by a qualified CQA validator.

According to Dawn LeBlanc, National CQA Coordinator, 69 per cent of Canadian market hog production is enrolled in the CQA program, and 52 per cent is fully recognized based on 2001 Canadian Census in Agriculture numbers.

About 93 per cent of Alberta's market hog production is enrolled in the CQA program, and 65 per cent are fully validated. About 90 per cent of Manitoba's market hog production is CQA registered, and 60 per cent is fully validated. And, about 73 per cent of Saskatchewan's market hog production is enrolled in the CQA program, and 67 per cent is fully validated.

Packing plants are encouraging producers to join the CQA program:

- As of November 2001, discounts were introduced on non-CQA hogs slaughtered in Manitoba: non-CQA hogs from Alberta are discounted \$1.50 per 100 kilogram at Maple Leaf; non-CQA hogs from Manitoba are discounted 50 cents per 100 kilogram at Maple Leaf, and \$3 per 100 kilogram at Spring Hill.
- Nova Scotia's main federal packer will only accept CQA hogs, and Mitchell's in Saskatchewan will soon only accept CQA hogs.
- Arrangements have been made in Quebec for a premium to be paid on CQA hogs by the Quebec hog board pool.

Alberta Quality Pork is the delivery agency for the CQA program in Alberta.

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