

## Quality Topigs Norsvin Genetics from Canada to Japan

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Z-lines arriving in Japan

The Japanese consumer is a connoisseur of pork and is highly aware of the quality required in eating pork. Topigs Norsvin genetics have always done well in Japan and are rated highly for the efficiency of production and the quality of final consumer products.

More than fifty percent of pork consumed in Japan is imported from other countries. Access to land and feed limits pig production which is relatively small, with only 1.29 million metric tonnes (Carcass Weight Equivalent) of pork produced annually, while total pork consumption is 2.785 million metric tonnes (CWE) at a consumption of 23 kg of pork per capita.

Although pork production is relatively small in Japan, it must be of the highest quality. The domestically produced pork is used as “table meat” (fresh pork), while imported pork often is used in processed products.

On August 30, 2020, a shipment of live breeding pigs was dispatched to Japan from Topigs Norsvin Canada nucleus farms. “This is not the first

export we have made to Japan, but it is one of the largest to date” said Ron Musick, Export & Logistics Manager. “GGP breeding animals of both maternal and terminal lines were included in this shipment,” he went on to explain.

After a long flight of over 12 hours, the shipment arrived safely at Narita airport in Tokyo. After unloading from the shipping crates, the animals were transported to a Japanese State Quarantine barn for an 18 Day quarantine before being moved to their final destination at the Central AI Boar Studs, the new Topigs Norsvin Nucleus and customer farms.

Hinode Bussan Co. Ltd. has been a Topigs Norsvin customer for many years. Having imported breeding pigs from Canada several times, they and their Japanese customers know and appreciate quality of the breeding animals and the subsequent production efficiencies they experience in their barns. High quality animals with efficient production results in high quality pork for the Japanese consumer.

*Continued on page 2...*

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TN Tempo terminal boar

Besides their own production (6,000 sows in two site production facilities), Hinode Bussan is responsible for the distribution of Topigs Norsvin genetics in Japan. Progressive Japanese pig producers understand they must improve their efficiency of production to become competitive with regard to their fellow pig producers elsewhere in the

world. Because of the trade agreements as can be mentioned, Japan-EU Economic Partnership, USA trade agreement and Transpacific Partnership, import tariffs will decline in the coming years. The Japanese progressive pig producers do not see this as a threat but as an opportunity to modernize the swine industry. Topigs Norsvin genetics meets the Japanese meat market requirements extremely well and combines this with production efficiency.

We are grateful for the successful business relationship we have had for over 12 years with Hinode Bussan and its customers. "Topigs Norsvin Canada is a reliable source of high health, superior genetics. With high levels of investment in Research and Development, along with the central boar test station 'Delta Canada Research Centre' which includes the CT scan technology, we feel confident about the future. The balanced breeding program of Topigs Norsvin, using fact-based data, is what we need in Japan to respond to societal trends and developments in our Japanese swine industry" said by Mr. Motohiro Kudo (Manager, Hinode Bussan Co. Ltd.).



Safe and sound in Japan quarantine



Z-Line boar in Japan quarantine

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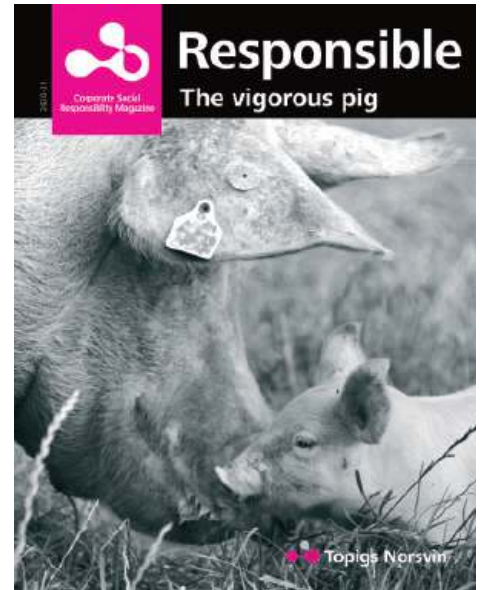
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# Do we need to rethink genetic selection?



Hans Olijslagers



Recently, **Pig Progress** magazine published an interesting article by Marcello Marchesi. In this article he asked the world: Should we fundamentally rethink our genetic selection in pigs?

In short, Topigs Norsvin's answer to Marcello's question is: No. We already anticipated all of the problems he mentions almost two decades ago by introducing balanced breeding. That means we do not always choose the economic optimum, but find the right balance between economics, animal welfare, ease of management, and societal concerns.

*From the Blog of Hans Olijslagers, CTO Topigs Norsvin:*  
I will briefly respond to the four trends Marcello describes in the **Pig Progress** article:

## Pre-weaning mortality

In 2001, Topigs Norsvin introduced a vitality, teat counting, and piglet weighing protocol. Breeding values for the mothering abilities of sows and piglet vitality were developed. The basis for our sow breeding goals is that every extra piglet born should be weaned at a sow. An increase in stillborn piglets is not acceptable for us. Thanks to this approach, piglet survival has increased.

## Backfat and pork flavor

Topigs Norsvin's balanced breeding concept includes desired gains for meat quality traits. A phenotyping program has been developed for quality traits to avoid leanness-related problems like drip loss, low intramuscular fat, and color issues.

In 2006, NIRS-phenotyping for meat quality was introduced and, in 2008, Topigs Norsvin became the first genetic company to use CT-scanning for carcass quality. Large-scale sib-testing is also done including carcass dissection to estimate more than a dozen meat quality traits.

Topigs Norsvin was the first to implement selection against boar taint in all its lines. Boar taint levels decreased by more than 50%, resulting in far fewer tainted carcasses in the packing plants.

## The cost of lameness

Topigs Norsvin has been farmer-owned for more than a century. Our farmers require a good conformation and need to work with robust animals that require little care and are easy to manage. This is reflected in our breeding goals. Intensive leg quality and locomotion scoring in nucleus farms, combined with CT-scanning for osteochondrosis and shoulder issues, delivers dozens of robustness traits. Result: longevity of sows is increasing.

## Hernias and other genetic defects

At Topigs Norsvin, genetic defects are defined as traits in the selection index. Improved genomic relationship matrixes have driven the genetic response to genetic defects faster in the desired direction so that full litters do not have to be discarded like in the past.

Full sequence genotyping is improving our knowledge about heritable deletions in DNA and providing us with extra selection tools to avoid genetic defects. We will soon enter an era of predicting phenotypes based on genotypes in our database.

Our customers can clearly see the outcomes of the Topigs Norsvin approach. For example, more piglets weaned, high sow longevity, more robust pigs, lower mortality, and increased efficiency.

To learn more about Topigs Norsvin's balanced breeding program please download our Corporate Sustainability Report **Responsible**.

-Hans Olijslagers, CTO Topigs Norsvin

# Producer PROfile -- Bright Pork Livestock Inc.



*The Vehof Family*

Bright Pork Livestock Inc. is a family owned and operated farm located near Bright, Ontario in Oxford County. The farm is owned by John and Tina Vehof and their four children, Jessica, Nicole, Ben, and Joshua. In addition to operating a 1,500 farrow-finish production unit, they farm 800 acres of land which supplies the bulk of their feed requirements. Additional corn and commodities are purchased, and all feed is then processed at their on-farm feed mill.

Getting a start in the pig business by contract finishing, in 2005 John started buying pigs and building more finishing barns. As his family grew so did the number of finishing barns. He says that he can now tell how old the barns are based on the ages of his kids.

In 2018, with children that were growing older and realizing they had a desire to farm, a decision was made to invest in a new 1,500 head sow barn to supply the piglets for their nursery and finisher barns. After looking at various designs of several barns, the Vehof's decided to build a curtain-sided gestation barn with a group housing concept using the Gestal electronic feeding stations.

After considerable research and talking to other sow farm owners, the decision was made to fill the barn with the Topigs Norsvin TN70 female. They began to populate the barn in late November of 2018. In addition to stocking with the TN70, purebred Z-line Large White gilts were also purchased. This would allow them to keep the herd closed and grow their own replacement gilts in a dedicated gilt-grow out barn. The breeding program is managed using the Topigs Norsvin InGene program. The terminal sire of choice is the TN Talent. The TN Talent progeny perform very well in the barn and have a great reputation for high carcass quality at their packer; Conestoga Meats.

Sows are bred in stalls and moved after 30 days, when confirmed pregnant, into static pens of 35 sows per group. The farrowing rooms utilize the Gestal Solo feeders for precise feeding management. The farrowing floors are a combination of cast iron and plastic flooring.

The staff love the TN70 females. They are very calm and are great mothers, able to raise large litters on their own with minimum need for foster sows. In the last quarter, the herd had an 87% Farrowing Rate, with 14.7 pigs born alive, 12.9 weaned, with a 10.9% pre-weaning mortality. John, Tina and all their children help in the barns, but they are extremely grateful and appreciative of the dedication and hard work of their barn staff.

John likes the look and efficiency of the TN Talent sired market hogs that are sold to the farmer-owned Conestoga Meats in Breslau.

The Vehof family, together with their team of employees, enjoy raising pigs on their farrow to finish hog farm.



*TN70 gilts in gestation*



*Bright Pork staff*



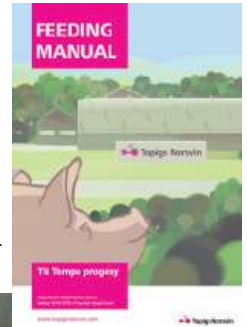
# New Nutrition Manual for TN Tempo Progeny

Progress in Pigs Dutch breeder, Martin van de Peut, recently off-tested a pen of ten TN Tempo boars that demonstrated an average daily gain of 1400 g/d (3.09 lb/d) from 30-120 kg (66-264 lb)! At the core breeding level, observations of 1300+ g/d (2.87+ lb/d) and feed conversions below 1.9 are no longer an exception. Topigs Norsvin continuously improves their genetics to help our clients stay ahead, and the genetic potential of the TN Tempo terminal sire continues to advance.

At Topigs Norsvin, our goal is to unlock the maximum potential of our genetics for all customers, to enable them to achieve the best possible performance results. Nutrition is a factor to unlock this potential and, therefore, our nutrition team is continuously updating our advice, protocols, tools and manuals.

The latest results are reported in the new **Feeding Manual for TN Tempo Progeny**. These recommendations were developed by the Topigs Norsvin Feed Group utilizing the TNRC (Topigs Norsvin Research Center) Pig Growth Model® and from the analysis of field data under various environments.

To receive a copy of the new manual, please contact your local Topigs Norsvin representative.



TN Tempo boar from DePuet nucleus

# Room to grow - Penetics Inc. barn expansion project



Penetics barn under construction



Penetics barn aerial view

The Pennings family has been a multiplier for Topigs Norsvin since 2011. Gary and Janet, along with their son Ben and daughter-in-law Courtney, own and operate their 250-sow Farrow-Finish unit near Wellandport, Ontario.

The demand for gilts has always been good, but since the introduction of the TN70, demand has increased even more. While the TN70 is extremely prolific, the productivity of the Topigs Norsvin Z-line GGP has also improved over the past 9 years.

Along with higher sow productivity comes the challenge of finding space to grow and finish all the breeding stock. With a weaning average

of almost 31 pigs / sow / year the Pennings family had two choices: reduce the sow herd or expand their grow / finish spaces. With high demand and being sold out continuously, the latter was the easy choice.

The new barn will have four rooms to house 280 animals each and provide the much-needed space. The fully slatted facility will have state of the art ventilation working in tandem with heat exchangers to reduce heating costs and provide the best air quality. The barn will also have a small office and house the feed processing equipment.

The Pennings family looks forward to having pigs in their new barn by early winter of 2020.

# MLBA Scholarship Winner -- Adrienne Lipinski

The Minnesota State Fair and the annual 4-H Purple Ribbon Livestock Auction were canceled for 2020, but support for Minnesota's 4-H participants continues to grow. This year, 51 4-H auction scholarships were awarded totaling \$87,000.

As described by the Auction Committee: "The future of the livestock industry lies in the hands of today's youth. They are producing and feeding livestock to meet the needs and objectives of the industry and for their own economic livelihood. The care and devotion they give their animals represents the very best in animal husbandry."

Adrienne Lipinski of Eden Valley, Minnesota is this year's recipient of the \$1000 MLBA (Minnesota Livestock Breeders Association) scholarship sponsored by Topigs Norsvin USA. Adrienne has been very involved with 4-H all her life in swine, beef, and many other projects, along with community work.



*Adrienne Lipinski - scholarship winner*

# Topigs Norsvin USA Summer Internship Program -- Josh Pieper



*Josh Pieper*



*Josh Pieper - student intern*

This summer, Topigs Norsvin USA hosted Josh Pieper of Wever, Iowa as a student intern. Josh was raised on a 450-head sow farrow-to-finish hog farm. As a result, Josh has had years of practical pig experience and is familiar with various aspects of pig production. Josh has also obtained experience in swine research by working as an animal technician for a contract research group in Ames, Iowa. Josh plans to graduate from Iowa State University this coming spring with a degree in Animal Science.

Josh's internship experience was completed by contributing to a research project at the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC) in Waseca, MN. The overall objectives of Josh's project were: 1) to estimate the effect of breeding gilts at a younger age on reproductive performance; and 2) to characterize the average age at puberty for modern TN70 gilts. While at SROC, some of Josh's responsibilities included performing twice-daily boar exposure, heat checking, detailed scoring of standing reflex, and collecting growth performance data at multiple timepoints throughout the study.

Josh made a number of important observations throughout his internship experience, including the observation that a standing reflex scoring guide (originally developed for sows) can be adopted for use in gilts. Josh also made detailed observations regarding the length of estrus, intensity of estrus, and the extent of naturally-occurring variation within these traits for TN70 gilts. Thanks to the help of Dr. Sam Baidoo, Dr. Hayford Manu, and the University of Minnesota swine farm staff, this project remains on-going, with the aim of continuing data collection on these gilts over multiple parities.

Topigs Norsvin USA thanks Josh for his hard work and valuable contributions to this important research project.

For more information about internships with Topigs Norsvin USA, contact Dr. Jenelle Dunkelberger at [jenelle.dunkelberger@topignorsvin.us](mailto:jenelle.dunkelberger@topignorsvin.us)

# Topigs Norsvin Canada Inc. Announces New Ontario Business Development Representative -- Jeff Crossman



Topigs Norsvin Canada announced today that Jeff Crossman has joined its staff as Ontario Business Development Representative, based out of the Southwestern Ontario region. In his new role, Jeff will be focused on Business Development and customer support in Ontario. This key appointment enhances Topigs Norsvin Business Development team.

Jeff has gained considerable experience in feeding strategies for swine operations including Organic and RWA (Raised Without Antibiotics) value-added programs. "He will be a valuable asset to the Topigs Norsvin Canada team and is eager to meet customers and prospects from the pork production sector" said John Sawatzky, Sales Manager for Canada.

In addition to pork production experience, Jeff worked in premix manufacturing while attending Brock University for Kinesiology.

"Having already worked with many customers of Topigs Norsvin Canada on the feed side, I am privileged to continue working with them and others on the genetic side now. I am excited about growing my career with Topigs Norsvin."

"Spending time with family and friends is on the forefront for me. In my spare time I enjoy traveling, watching, and playing many sports," said Jeff.

Jeff can be reached at (519) 496-4923 or [jeff.crossman@topignorsvin.ca](mailto:jeff.crossman@topignorsvin.ca)

# STRONGER TOGETHER

 **Topigs Norsvin**

Topigs Norsvin - WE are here for you



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**Mar-Ke Semen Service**  
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Keith & Marie Rithamel  
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**Ai Partners-Skylab**  
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Bruce Zierke  
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**Whole Hog AI**  
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**Ostler Sires**  
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**Long Creek Semen Center**  
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**BoarMax, Inc.**  
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**Magnum Swine Genetics Inc.**  
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**Carlo Genetics Inc.**  
Ste. Anne, MB  
Kyla Ripley  
(204) 355-4012

**Total Swine Genetics Inc.**  
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Stuart De Vries  
(800) 844-9913

**C & M Genetics**  
Lucan, ON  
Dr. Corneliu Oltean  
(888) 259-7594

**Sunrise Genetics**  
Amherst, NS  
Mike MacDonald  
(902) 661-7883

## Topigs Norsvin Insider Quiz

### How to Play

Please answer the questions in our Insider Quiz. All the answers are in this newsletter. Then fax, mail or email your answers, along with your name, address, and phone number to:  
Fax: 204-489-3152  
Email: info@topignorsvin.ca

Entries are to be received by **October 31, 2020**. The first 10 entries drawn with the correct answers will receive a \$20.00 gift card. The Topigs Norsvin rep in your area will deliver the prize. Employees of Topigs Norsvin and their subsidiaries are not eligible.

### Topigs Norsvin INSIDER Quiz Winners

Winners from the June 2020 issue will receive a \$20.00 gift card.  
Henry Entz, Carmichael Colony, SK; Daniel Wipf, Oaklane Colony, USA SD; Matt Rea, Rea Family Farms, USA IA; Chris Wurz, Keho Lake Colony, AB; Janelle Nagel, Tenth Line Swine Inc., ON; Robert Hofer, Crocus Country Pork, MB; Renee Waldner, Holmfield Colony, MB; Peter Waldner, Evergreen Colony, AB; Jesse Wipf, Wymark Colony, SK; Marlin Weber, Ervin Weber, ON. The Topigs Norsvin rep in your area will deliver your prize. Congratulations!

1. What was the average ADG of the ten TN Tempo boars off-tested at the de Peut Nucleus? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What year did Topigs Norsvin introduce NIRS-phenotyping for meat quality? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the average number of pigs weaned/litter in the last quarter at Bright Pork? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Who owns Topigs Norsvin? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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