

# the INSIDER

TOPIGS Canada Inc. | TOPIGS USA Inc. | Spring 2012

## In this issue:

- 1 • More in our Genes
- 2 • Sows and Group Housing
- 3 • TOPIGS Producer Profile
- 4 • Cramer Livestock Expo
- 5 • TOPIGS USA Hosts Seminars
- 6 • TOPIGS Team Update
- 6 • TOPIGS Insider Quiz



## TOPIGS – There's More in our Genes

Getting the most from your genetics is the key factor that could mean the difference between profit and loss in your hog production unit. Access to the correct genetic lines is only one element to consider in making your decision on which breeding company to use.

At TOPIGS, not only do we have the purebred lines to maximize your efficiency but we also have the genetic programs to continuously improve our lines, and your bottom line. Couple this with the world's largest swine database (PigBase), a comprehensive Research and Development program, and very large worldwide nucleus populations, and you experience an impressive performance result.

### Registered Purebreds

The genetic base in the TOPIGS program begins with the use of registered purebreds that originate from the Stamboek (herd books) dating back to the early 1900s. One hundred years ago Dutch farmers realized the benefit of working together as one to make faster progress and better pigs. This resulted in most of the Dutch purebred breeders uniting as one and working to be the best in the world. The evolution of these Dutch purebred breeders has become TOPIGS. Today, the pedigrees of these purebred lines are still maintained and are recognized by various purebred registries like the Canadian Swine Breeders Association and the National Swine Registry in the United States.



### PigBase

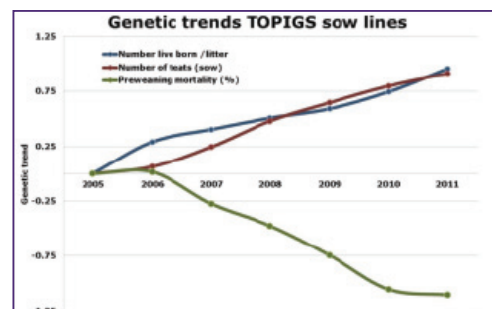
Along with having traceable breeding lines, the data generated from each of these lines are critical to the rate and the predictability of improvement. Today TOPIGS has more than 43,000 N Line (Dutch Landrace) sows, and more than 82,000 Z and A Line (Dutch Large White) sows participating in the nucleus breeding program worldwide. These herds generate a very large volume of data that must be collected and analyzed to maximize genetic improvement. To manage this volume of data and to ensure that information gathered can be properly applied, TOPIGS uses PigBase – the world's largest swine database. PigBase contains phenotypic information from more than 23 million pigs.



### Vitality, Feed Efficiency, Fertility, Carcass Quality

Information for PigBase is gathered throughout the TOPIGS breeding program. For example, each year the individual birth weight of more than half a million piglets is determined – these data have allowed TOPIGS to increase number born alive while decreasing pre-weaning mortality (see graph).

Additionally, the individual feed uptake of more than 20,000 breeding pigs is recorded each year and 3,500 carcasses are dissected. A wide range of growth data, back fat measurements, fertility data, litter data and other details are also collected and recorded and are available for application in the TOPIGS breeding program.



*Continued on page 5...*



## TOPIGS Sows – Group Housing in their Genes

Group housing is a hot issue at the moment. Companies such as McDonald's have stated that they only want to sell pork from systems where sows are held in groups during gestation. Group housing requires a different approach to sow production. Not only are management and feeding different, but genetics also play a prominent role in successful group housing.

TOPIGS has been breeding sows in groups for many years. In the Netherlands, group housing was introduced in the late '90s and the majority of TOPIGS nucleus herds already use group housing facilities. *Selection in a group housing environment is essential to produce a product that will perform successfully in this type of environment.*

### **Q & A with Jascha Leenhouders PhD., TOPIGS Senior Researcher**

#### **Q : How many nucleus sows are in group housing and for how long has TOPIGS been selecting in a group housing environment?**

A: Over 70% of our breeding sows in the Netherlands are kept in groups. This will increase to 100% in 2012 as group housing will become obligatory in the European Union (January 1, 2013). Many TOPIGS farms have used group housing extensively – some for more than 15 years – and the ability to perform in group housing systems is now a characteristic of TOPIGS sows.

#### **Q: What makes a sow successful in group housing?**

A: Suitable sows for group housing are strong, sociable, and robust. These sows have good leg structure and can manage with the freedom of the group and with their group mates. It is essential that sows have good positioning of the legs. This enables them to stand firm and consequently prevents damage to the legs, hips, and other joints.

#### **Q: And what about behaviour – is that important?**

A: Yes it is. TOPIGS breeding strategy has resulted in sows that are easy to handle, docile and not aggressive. TOPIGS sows are not only more manageable for the farmer, but also behave socially within a group.

TOPIGS is at the forefront of innovative research on social genetic effects. These are effects an individual has on its group members. By incorporating these effects into the TOPIGS breeding program, we will achieve a balanced improvement in productivity (e.g., growth) and welfare in group housing systems.

#### **Q: Why is it important to breed sows at nucleus farms with group housing?**

A: Only TOPIGS nucleus sows that produce at a high level in group housing are selected to stay in the herd, so they can pass these traits on to the next generation. TOPIGS selects against structure and fertility problems related to group housing and against sows that do not cope with the environment of group housing.

The TOPIGS technical team and its farmers in the Netherlands are experts at keeping sows in groups. We have many years of experience with group housing, and can successfully implement the system on new farms. This combination of genetics and experience makes TOPIGS the perfect partner for farms that want to start with group housing. If producers want to learn more about group housing, the service teams of TOPIGS Canada and TOPIGS USA are ready to help.



Group sow housing of TOPIGS 20s in 2,500 sow farm, USA



Group sow housing of N Line nucleus in the Netherlands





## Producer Profile – Adare Pork Ltd.



High quality weaners at Adare

The Kaumanns are a progressive and successful farm family that opened the door when opportunity knocked. Hilmar, Carol and their three children make their home between the towns of Exeter and Lucan in southern Ontario. Hilmar manages their arable farming enterprise consisting of 2,000 acres of cash crops. His wife Carol manages their Crabby Joe's franchise restaurant in the town of Exeter. A third enterprise of the Kaumanns is Adare Pork Ltd. Adare Pork is a 2,600-sow unit that produces 21-day old piglets under contract with F. Menard Inc. in Quebec.

Adare Pork began in 2004. Hilmar purchased the sow farm when it became available after the demise of a large pig production system in the Lucan area. Somewhat new to pig production, Hilmar did his homework before jumping into this new venture. After meeting with the production manager Dave Blais, Hilmar was confident that under Dave's superior management capabilities this unit would succeed. Having reached an agreement for Dave to remain on as the unit manager, Hilmar proceeded with the purchase and as they say, "the rest is history." Dave accepted the position and has managed Adare ever since.

Sharing duties and responsibilities has worked well for this team. Hilmar is in charge of all the feed purchases and the application of the valuable manure onto his surrounding crop lands. Dave manages the production in the unit as well as barn maintenance, ordering feed, semen and all supplies. He is also responsible for all of the staff management including hiring and training of new staff. There are eight full-time staff at Adare, working in rotation along with four part-time staff that help out on the weekends.

Replacement gilts are purchased from TOPIGS and are supplied from a multiplier in nearby Seaforth, Ontario. Adare uses an isolation barn for all gilt introductions. Gilts arrive into the isolation unit every eight

weeks. After completing the 30-45 day isolation period and receiving their vaccinations, the gilts are moved to the main sow barn. Here the gilts have their heat cycles recorded and are slotted into the breeding weeks as needed.

In August 2009, Adare made a change to TOPIGS Tempo terminal semen, and after several weeks of farrowing these litters, they had the proof they needed. The Tempo semen was giving them an increase in litter size of .8 of a pig per litter live born! Convinced by the TOPIGS reputation of very productive females, they made the change to TOPIGS 40 gilts in November 2009. The plan was to remain with the TOPIGS 40 until the TOPIGS 20 would be available in Ontario.

On July 26, 2010 Adare Pork Ltd. took delivery of the first 200 TOPIGS 20 gilts to be produced in Ontario. Since the change to TOPIGS, Adare has seen a continual improvement in their production numbers. With the herd at approximately 75% TOPIGS 20 females, litter size is exceeding 13 pigs born alive. Sow productivity continues to increase with the herd now at almost 30 pigs weaned/sow/year. This is something they were unable to achieve with their previous genetics.

"This TOPIGS 20 female is the best cycling and breeding sow I have ever seen," says manager Dave Blais. He concludes by adding that "She is very productive and also very easy to manage."



TOPIGS 20 – weaning 13 piglets is common

Piglets are weaned twice/week on Monday and Thursday. The Monday group is held until Thursday in one nursery room and then all pigs are shipped to Quebec after Thursday's weaning. Currently the average weaning age is at 20 days. Pigs weaned per litter are almost 12, with a group average piglet weight between 6.5 kg to 6.8 kg.

*Continued on page 4...*



...Continued from page 3.

In August 2011, Adare switched to TOPIGS Talent semen to take advantage of the Talent's superior feed conversion. The Talent boar is a Duroc sire that is unlike any Duroc in North America. Its genetic roots can be traced back to VION Foods in the Netherlands. The Talent was available only to VION Foods producers until 2005 when an agreement was made to allow TOPIGS to produce and market the

Talent line. The Talent was designed by packers and, in comparison with the North American Duroc, the Talent has more muscle and better confirmation.

Hilmar and Dave are very happy with the production gains they have made and expect to see more improvement as the herd rolls towards 100% TOPIGS 20 females.



Adare Pork Ltd.



Dave Blais and Hilmar Kaumanns

## The Cramer Livestock Expo



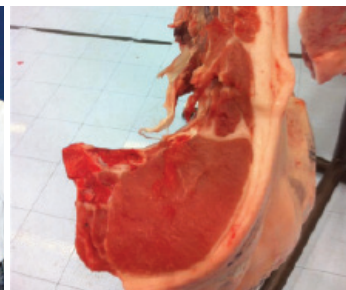
Spring Lake Colony



Ponteix Colony



Garden Plane Colony



Spring Lake high quality TOPIGS carcass

On March 1, TOPIGS Canada Inc. participated in the Cramer Livestock Expo. This is a small but fast growing exhibition and trade show held annually in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. The show is organized and managed by Doug Cramer, Tony Charanduk and Pam Heller of Cramer Livestock Nutrition, and it caters to producers of crops, cattle, poultry and hogs. While this was only the second year for the show, it has virtually doubled in size since its inaugural year, and had excellent participation from exhibitors and the farming community.

This year's show offered a new event – The Cramer Cup Hog Carcass Competition. Eight producers entered market hogs for this competition.

The hog carcasses were analyzed and judged by Bob MacKay of Brandon, Manitoba. Carcasses are scored various traits. Weight, meat quality, colour, loin eye size and several other aspects are judged or measured to determine the best ranked carcass.

When the judging was done and the winners announced, TOPIGS producers walked away with three of the top five awards. Congratulations go out to Spring Lake Colony, Ponteix Colony and Garden Plane Colony. The hogs submitted by these colonies were all sired by TOPIGS Tempo boars.

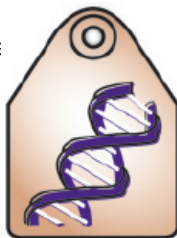




...Continued from page 1.

**Genomics**

In April 2011, TOPIGS announced the linking of PigBase data with genomic data. Together, this combination of phenotypic and genotypic data allows for Genomic Selection, a new tool that has increased TOPIGS' rate of genetic improvement. Genomics is especially effective for the improvement of characteristics that are only visible later in a pig's life, are sex-linked, or have a low inheritability. The vast amount of data in PigBase further enhance the benefits of genomics, allowing TOPIGS to increase the rate of genetic improvement by up to 30% for some traits and to remain one step ahead of other breeding organizations. Over the next few years, TOPIGS will invest several million euros in genomic selection to incorporate this highly promising technique into everyday breeding practice.



**TOPIGS A.I.**

TOPIGS A.I. provides advice and support to 37 A.I. stations around the world, producing over 7 million doses of semen annually. TOPIGS A.I. protocols result in improved on-farm results and allow producers to source the top indexing boars.



**Nador**

Recently, TOPIGS introduced the Nador concept. With Nador it is possible to select and use finisher boars that produce offspring with 40% less boar taint. With this innovation, one of the challenges of producing non-castrated male finishers is minimized. Compared to raising castrated males, production costs raising boars can be reduced by \$5 - \$10 per head. TOPIGS is the first breeding company that offers this solution for boar taint.



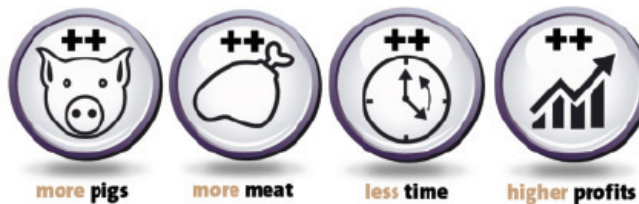
**Sustainability**

At TOPIGS, we keep the long term interests of all our stakeholders in mind including the environment, animal welfare, and genetic diversity.



**There's More in Our Genes**

At TOPIGS, there really is "More in our Genes." Being active in more than 55 countries gives us the background and knowledge to help our producers around the world be the most productive, the most efficient, and the most profitable.



# TOPIGS USA Inc. Hosts Regional Seminars

TOPIGS USA Inc. recently hosted seminars for local customers and prospects in Ohio and South Dakota.

Dr. Bruno Silva, TOPIGS Nutritionist, travelled from Brazil to present an overview of TOPIGS nutritional recommendations, research, and information to those in attendance at the Ohio seminar. Joining Bruno in Ohio were Dr. John Eggert, TOPIGS USA Technical Director, who gave a "Piglet Vitality" presentation, and Jeroen van Boekel, a TOPIGS Canada customer who shared his experiences with achieving 30+ pigs/sow/year with TOPIGS 20 sows.

In South Dakota, Dr. Carmen Alonso (Madrid, Spain) presented "How Does PRRS Spread? A Review of PRRS Transmission Research." Dr. Tim Snider (TOPIGS USA Veterinarian) presented "Practical Implications of Biosecurity to Protect your Production." Joining Tim and Carmen was Brandon Schafer, a TOPIGS USA customer who shared his experiences of achieving 30+ pigs/sow/year with TOPIGS 20 sows.

"TOPIGS USA is excited to bring the knowledge and experience of Drs. Alonso and Silva to our clients in the USA," commented Dr. Eggert, "And we greatly appreciate the testimonials that TOPIGS customers like Jeroen and Brandon continue provide to their fellow producers."

Dr. Silva will return to the USA in May 2012 to discuss the most recent updates to TOPIGS' sow feeding recommendations.



Dr. Bruno Silva, TOPIGS Brazil





# TOPIGS Team Updates – Key Appointments



Two key appointments have been recently announced by TOPIGS Canada. On January 31, 2012, **Fred Coykendall** joined TOPIGS as a **Business Development Representative**, and on February 6, 2012, **Gordon Edwards** was announced as the new **Ontario Sales Manager**.

Fred is currently based in Alberta and will develop sales and provide customer support in Alberta and Montana. Gordon will continue to sell and service TOPIGS products in the province of Ontario, but will also assume more of a management role in his region.

John Sawatzky, TOPIGS Sales Manager says, "We are excited to have Fred Join us at TOPIGS. His extensive knowledge of swine production and related industries will bring great value to the TOPIGS team. We also congratulate Gord on his promotion, and we're sure he will tackle each challenge and development with great enthusiasm."

Fred Coykendall, Business Development Representative



## 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. Entries to be received by April 30, 2012. Winners will receive a pair of genuine leather TOPIGS gloves. If you wish, the TOPIGS rep in your area will deliver the prize. Employees of TOPIGS and their subsidiaries are not eligible.

Please contact us for more information:

John Sawatzky, Sales Manager  
(204) 981-0243

Gord Edwards, Ontario Sales Manager  
(519) 440-8128

Rick Beunen, Ontario Business Development  
(519) 317-7403

Ron Musick, Manitoba Business Development  
(204) 223-3193

Sergio Sosa, Manitoba & Saskatchewan Business Development  
(204) 792-0776

Fred Coykendall, Business Development, Alberta and Montana  
(780) 878-5122

Craig Jarolimek, USA Business Development  
(701) 866-4444

Brent Eyler, Eastern USA Business Development  
(937) 733-8532

## TOPIGS INSIDER Quiz

What per cent of sows are kept in groups in the Netherlands?

How many sows of the Z & A lines participate in the TOPIGS nucleus breeding program?

How many sows of the N line participate in the TOPIGS nucleus breeding program?

How much did the Tempo semen increase the pigs born live at Adare Pork Ltd.?

Name:

Farm Name:

Address:

Phone #:

Email:

### TOPIGS INSIDER Quiz Winners

Here are the winners from last issue: Ben Entz Jr., Haven Colony, SK; Sarantha Wollmann, New Haven Colony, MB; Leroy Kleinsasser, White Rock Swine, SD; Joel Waldner, Coolspring Colony, MB; Lawrence S. Mandel, Standard Colony Farming, AB; Joseph Hofer, Spring Lake Colony, SK; Melvin M Wipf Jr., Grass Ranch Colony, SD; Paul Wurtz, Upland Colony, SD; Frank Entz, River Road Colony, AB; Martin Wipf, Glendale Colony, MT.

Each winner receives a stainless steel TOPIGS travel mug. The TOPIGS rep in your area will deliver your prize. Congratulations!

### TOPIGS Canada Inc.

201-1465 Buffalo Place, Winnipeg, MB Canada R3T 1L8

Toll-free: 1-866-355-5132, Fax: 204-489-3152, Email: topigscanada@topigs.ca www.topigs.ca

### TOPIGS USA Inc.

P.O. Box 897, Demotte, IN USA 46310 www.topigususa.com

