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TOPIGS Canada Inc.

Summer 2009



TOPIGS Exports from the Netherlands to Japan



Export to Japan

TOPIGS exported 355 gilts from the Netherlands to Japan in March. This is the first time that TOPIGS breeding material has been sent to Japan. The TOPIGS 20 gilts of various ages came from Van Beek SPF Varkens in Lelystad. The gilts flew to Tokyo via Schiphol. After a state quarantine period the gilts will go to their final destination, a group of cooperating pig farmers. This group of independent pig farms produces about one-third of Japanese pigs. In June a second consignment with purebred line animals and terminal boars will be sent from the SPF nucleus breeding farm of TOPIGS in Canada.

The Japanese group of pig farmers includes the most progressive farms in the country. To hold their own against the international competition, within their own country they have to compete with a large number of

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TOPIGS – 27.3 Pigs Weaned Per Sow Per Year

In 2008, Dutch pig farmers using TOPIGS genetics achieved an average production of 27.3 weaned piglets per sow per year. This is an increase of 0.9 piglets compared to 2007. The top 10% of farms managed an impressive 30.7 piglets per sow. The increased production is due to an increased litter size. In 2007 this was still 12.8 whereas in 2008 this was 13.1. For further data please see the table below. The data were collected from 1006 Dutch sow farms with a total of almost 415,000 sows.

These data prove the tremendous genetic potential of the TOPIGS sow and the immense genetic progress TOPIGS achieves. Moreover, these figures demonstrate that the balanced breeding approach of TOPIGS works. The number of piglets born per litter increased from 12.1 in 2004 to 13.1 in 2008. In the same period the pre-weaning litter mortality increased by just 0.5% to 12.3%.

	Number of farms	Average no. of sows present	Farm litter index	Weaned piglets per sow per year	Live births per litter	Still births per litter	Preweaning mortality (%)	Weaned piglets per litter
Average 2008	1006	412	2.37	27.3	13.1	1.0	12.3	11.4
Average 2007	942	391	2.37	26.4	12.8	1.0	12.1	11.2
Top 10% of farms 2008	101	506	2.46	30.7	13.8	1.0	10.6	12.3
Top 25% of farms 2008	251	465	2.44	29.7	13.6	1.0	11.2	12.0

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exporters to Japan, they sought improved genetics. The group therefore visited various large breeding organizations throughout the world and eventually TOPIGS emerged as the best choice. TOPIGS was selected due to its professional organization, high production and the high meat and carcass quality of the fatteners.

Henk Janssen, area manager at TOPIGS for Asia, visited the pig farms and slaughterhouses in the Netherlands with several Japanese delegates: "They were clearly impressed

by the high quality of pig farming in the Netherlands. Not only the breeding but also the pig farming and the entire structure strongly appealed to them. They considered the Dutch pig farming to be of a very high level." The health status of pig farms in the Netherlands also struck them. This was, just like in Canada, also of a high level. A high health status makes it possible to export from the Netherlands to Japan where the veterinary requirements are very strict.

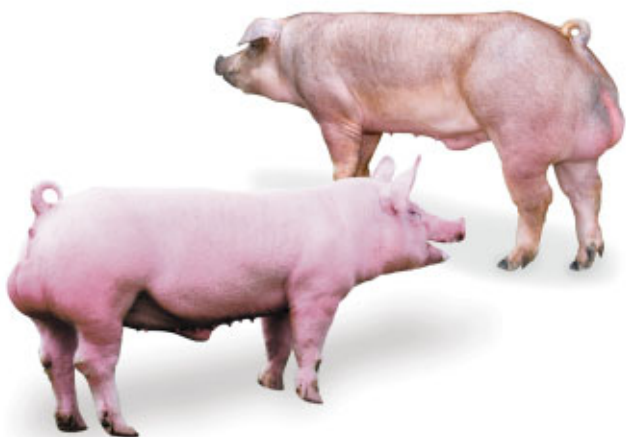
TOPIGS Z-Line

A great genetics program begins with a solid foundation and TOPIGS has that solid foundation. One of the key building blocks of the TOPIGS maternal program is the Z-Line female. A purebred Large White line, the Z-Line has been developed and selected for key performance traits over many years. This female will excel in traits of litter size, piglets weaned, maternal disposition and longevity. The basis of several breeding programs within TOPIGS, the Z-Line is prominent in multiplication units and InGene® programs around the world. The TOPIGS 20-Line female is created by using the N-Line (Landrace) semen on the Z-Line sows. Contact us for more information on producing your own 20-Line gilts with an InGene® program.



The highly prolific Z-Line

Tempo & Talent – they may be closer than you think!



The well-proven Tempo boar has been made available in many studs around the world, including Canada and the USA. The North American demand is increasing and TOPIGS is making sure that semen is available at a stud near you. In many studs, the Tempo is accompanied by the new Talent terminal boar. The Talent boar is well proven in many world markets, and will also be available in North America.

Semen from TOPIGS boar lines is available at the following AI studs:

Alberta Swine Genetics Corp.
Leduc, Alberta (800) 691-3060

Magnum Swine Genetics Inc.
Fort MacLeod, Alberta (888) 553-4844

Carlo Genetics Inc.
Ste. Anne, Manitoba (204) 355-4012

C & M Genetics
Lucan, Ontario (888) 259-7594

Total Swine Genetics
Tillsonburg, Ontario (800) 844-9913

Ai Partners, Morris, Minnesota (320) 589-8802
Bruce Zierke (320) 760-3504

Please contact the TOPIGS representative in your area for more details on both these lines or call TOPIGS at (866) 355-5132

TOPIGS Producer Profile - Jeroen & Sheila Van Boekel



Greyland Pork

The lure of wide-open spaces, large farms and opportunity brought Jeroen van Boekel to Canada in October of 2001. Jeroen had chosen Manitoba as the ideal place to purchase a pig farm, and took possession of his first Canadian farm upon his arrival in a new country.

A farm just north of Stephenfield, Mystique Pork, was purchased, and the adventure of entering into the North American pig industry began. As a 680-sow farrow-to-wean operation, having a reliable buyer for the weaned pigs was a key element to the success of the farm. Initially weaned pigs were sold to buyers in the US. Due to challenges with US contracts, border crossing and the Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) laws, Jeroen saw the best option was selling his pigs to finisher barns in Manitoba. In July of 2008, he stopped exporting his pigs and began selling them to a Manitoba Hutterite Colony for finishing. This has worked very well for both parties.



Jeroen and Sheila Van Boekel

Lower hog prices in the last quarter of 2003 put pressure on some hog farms in Manitoba. That presented another opportunity for Jeroen. A 700-sow unit with finishing for half of the pigs came up for sale near Fannystelle, Manitoba. Although this farm was 40 kilometres from home, Jeroen knew he could make it work by hiring good employees and managing it from a distance. In September of 2004, the deal for Greyland Pork was completed and the ownership of almost 1,400 sows was a reality.

In September 2004 a decision was made to change the genetic lines at both farms and a deal was completed to roll both herds to the Danbred 241 F1 females. While this change helped improve the productivity over the next few years, Jeroen was still looking for a better sow that was easier to manage.

Even though life in Canada was good, life isn't all about work. In August 2005 Jeroen married Sheila, his life-long partner. Sheila is actively involved in the farming business and is also employed as a Dietary Aide with the CRHA.

Several changes took place in 2007. The Greyland nursery and finishing was expanded to bring it to a full farrow to finish unit. While the Danbred females had performed better than



Tempo X 20 line high quality finishers

	Greyland Z-Line	Greyland 20-Line	Mystique 20-Line
Ave. Parity	2.4	1.5	1.2
Wean to 1st Service Days	5.6	6.0	5.8
Farrowing Rate	90.53%	91.40%	89.64%
Total Born/Litter	13.74	14.62	13.89
Born Alive/litter	12.57	13.96	13.24
Ave. Weaning Age	21.4	21.9	23.7
Pigs Weaned/litter	11.26	11.75	12.04
Pigs Weaned/sow/year	28.7	30.2	30.5

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his previous genotype, the first TOPIGS Z-line GGP females were purchased and production of F1 gilts for both farms was now possible at Greyland.

The TOPIGS Z-Line is a purebred Large White female that has been developed for high number of pigs weaned and mothering ability. The Z-Line females are bred to the TOPIGS N-Line (Landrace) to produce the highly prolific TOPIGS 20-Line F1 gilt. The first 20-Line females began farrowing in May of 2008 and Jeroen has never doubted his decision to make the genetic change.

While the average parity of both TOPIGS lines at each farm is very low, the TOPIGS females are achieving some outstanding production numbers never seen before on these two farms. Jeroen comments, "The TOPIGS sows fit in a barn where the sow has to do the work and she doesn't need much attention. In our barns we need sows that do the work and don't need baby sitting. The TOPIGS 20-Line farrows easily, starts milking well and goes onto feed well after farrowing, which is half the battle in sow management. She is an excellent mother and weans lots of high quality piglets."



Tempo X TOPIGS 20 produce large, uniform litters

The sire line semen was also changed a year ago to the TOPIGS Tempo boar. Known for producing uniform, fast growing and easy to manage pigs with a good survival rate, the Tempo boar has delivered that to the Van Boekel farms. His first pigs have gone through the barn quickly and problem free. His first few loads shipped to Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon have yielded some good results. At an average carcass weight of 93.53 kg Jeroen is happy

with the 16.9 mm back fat, 58.6 mm loin and 110.18 Index. This compares well with his previous results of 17.56 mm back fat, 58.07 mm loin and 109.24 index at a 97.05 kg carcass weight.

The Van Boekel's are not immune to the many challenges that face the Canadian pork producer today. Low hog prices along with record high feed prices are just two of the obstacles that must be overcome for sustainability. Jeroen is confident that the hog industry in Canada will turn around and he is positioning his farms to be the most productive and efficient. Having experienced what the TOPIGS program can deliver gives him confidence that his farms are on the leading edge and will survive for years to come.



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. From entries received by July 31, 2009, the first ten entries drawn with the correct answers will receive a TOPIGS hat, t-shirt and shorts. If you win, 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:

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(403) 763-0835

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(701) 866-4444

Dr. Neil DeBuse, USA Technical Consultant
(507) 301-2521



TOPIGS INSIDER Quiz

How many TOPIGS 20 gilts were exported to Japan from Holland? _____

How many piglets/sow/year were weaned in 2008 by the top 10% TOPIGS herds? _____

What are the names of the two Van Boekel farms? _____

What was the Netherlands' average number of piglets live born/litter in 2008? _____

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Top Ten Quiz Entries

The winners of the Quiz from the last issue are as follows: Paul Stahl (Torrington Colony, AB), John Wipf (Vanguard Colony, SK), Justin Stahl (Bon Homme Colony, MB), Titus & Ami Dueck (Elma, MB), Joe Wurz (Keho Colony, AB), Lawrence Tschetter (Estuary Colony, SK), Caleb Wurtz (Kingsbury Colony, MT), David Hofer (Spring Lake Colony, SK), Paul N. Wollmann (Bon Homme Colony, MB), Sam S. Wipf (New Rockport Colony, MT)

Each winner will receive a pair of handmade, genuine deerskin TOPIGS gloves.

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