Topigs Norsvin

THE INSIDER

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MATERNAL BEHAVIOUR SETS THE STAGE FOR PIGLET WELL-BEING AND SURVIVABILITY: THE TOPIGS NORSVIN APPROACH

A sow's maternal behaviour influences her nursing piglet's well-being and survival. These behaviours are partially under genetic control, meaning they can be selected for and improved over generations. Topigs Norsvin understands the importance of the role these behaviours play in the welfare of both sows and their offspring and the future of pig production. It is through research that these are being studied to investigate further.

On May 14 and 15, Victor (Huaigang) Lei, the Research and Development Manager at Topigs Norsvin, presented new research at the 2025 North American Regional Meeting of the International Society of Applied Ethology held at the University of Guelph. The meeting brings together students, researchers and university faculty members to share their work and collaborate in advancements in animal welfare. Victor's contribution highlights Topigs Norsvin's dedication to science-based innovation in swine production.

The objectives of the study were two-fold: (i) to evaluate the impact of the current selection strategy on the sow's mothering ability over time; and (ii) to determine whether cameras are appropriate selection tools for novel maternal traits.

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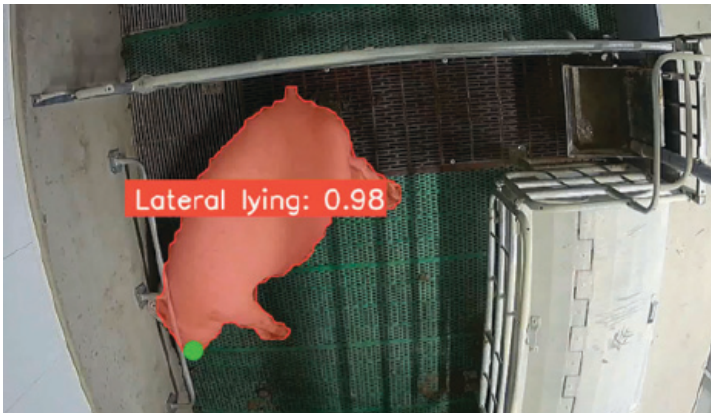
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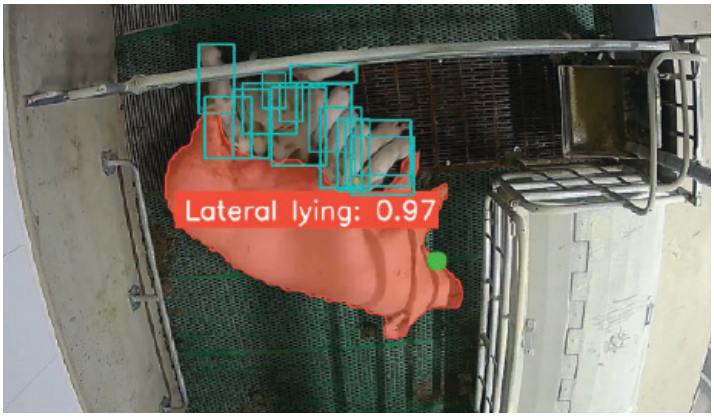
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MATERNAL BEHAVIOUR SETS THE STAGE FOR PIGLET WELL-BEING AND SURVIVABILITY: THE TOPIGS NORSVIN APPROACH CONTINUED...







TN70 breeding values for mothering ability (the sow's genetic contribution to piglet survival) were estimated using a mathematical model. Genetic trends over a ten-year period (2014 to 2023) showed a consistent improvement in mothering ability, demonstrating that the current selection strategy is delivering results. To support this, phenotypic data collected from commercial TN70 sows housed in free-farrowing systems also showed improved mothering ability, confirming that genetic progress is translating into real-world improvements on farm.

Innova Canada is one of Topigs Norsvin's core breeding sites and played a critical role in the study. The facility is equipped with free-farrowing pens, allowing sows to move freely and to fully express their maternal behaviours, ones which may be restricted with a conventional farrowing crate. Overhead cameras were installed above 40 pens and the data captured were then used to detect sows, piglets, and classify sow postures, such as lying, sitting, standing, and kneeling.

Following the study, the data collected were analyzed and modeled. There was high precision and accuracy across all postures, and performance metrics ranged from 0.969 to 0.997 in precision. There were similarly high scores for recall and mean average precision. These results confirm that camera-based phenotyping can reliably capture behavior traits in a commercial setting.

To summarize, the genetic capacity of mothering ability has consistently improved over the last decade and the use of advanced camera technology opens new possibilities for identifying and selecting behavioural traits that contribute to piglet survival and well-being. Ongoing data collection at Topigs Norsvin's free-farrowing nucleus in Canada is expected to further accelerate genetic progress in maternal behaviour, laying a strong foundation for healthier litters and more robust production systems in the years ahead.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT – ANNIKA STAMM

I was born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Growing up, I spent a lot of time competing in Water Polo. I began playing the sport at six years old and eventually played on the provincial Manitoba Team and the national team, representing Canada. After graduating from Kelvin High School, I attended Loyola Marymount University where I continued competing in Water Polo and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology.



I joined Topigs Norsvin Canada in 2019 shortly after graduating. I started my career in logistics and marketing, but over the years my focus has shifted towards logistics and health monitoring. While I never imagined myself in a logistics position, I've loved every second of the chaotic scheduling and planning, and my education in biology has proven to be a great asset for my involvement with health monitoring.

In the spring, summer, and fall, I enjoy spending time outside with my husband, son, and dog. We like to go running, biking, and swimming. This year we plan on running our first half marathon. During the winter, I enjoy avoiding being outside. I also have a diabetic cat.

MIKE SHAW: NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR TOPIGS NORSVIN CANADA

Topigs Norsvin Canada is pleased to announce the appointment of Mike Shaw as Managing Director, effective May 1, 2025. In his new role, he will report to Geert Rombouts, Regional Director North America. Mike Shaw succeeds Cam McGavin, who will continue to contribute with Key Accounts, special projects and as an advisor during the transition period.

With the appointment of Mike Shaw, Topigs Norsvin Canada has a Managing Director who is very familiar with the pig sector but also highly knowledgeable about the organization. He has held various roles within Topigs Norsvin since 2008. His last position was Director Operations. He also holds the position of Global Operations Manager at Topigs Norsvin International.

Mike Shaw, said this about his new position. "I'm very pleased to take on this leadership role at Topigs Norsvin Canada. With our world-class genetics program and talented team, we're uniquely positioned to help Canadian pork producers enhance efficiency, sustainability, and profitability. I look forward to strengthening our partnerships across the industry while driving continued innovation in Canada and beyond."

Geert Rombouts, Regional director North America emphasizes Shaw's qualifications for the position: "Mike's strategic insight, technical expertise, and customer-focused approach make him the ideal leader to guide our Canadian operations through their next phase of growth. His deep understanding of both our genetics programs and the broader market landscape will be instrumental as we continue to expand our presence in Canada."

Geert Rombouts also acknowledged Cam McGavin's significant contributions: "Cam has played an extremely important role in the very successful development of Topigs Norsvin in Canada during his long service. Under his leadership, Topigs Norsvin Canada has grown into the market leader in Canada and established one of our central nucleus breeding locations, which is crucial for the world market. We are very grateful for his efforts and thank him for his tremendous dedication."



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PRODUCER PROFILE:

FERME G. M. LE PORC INC.

What began in 1978 as a 1,300 head finisher barn has grown into a thriving, multi-site farrow-to-finish operation thanks to the vision, adaptability, and determination of the Gosselin family.

Ferme G. M. Le Porc Inc., located in Montmagny, Quebec, was founded by Mr. Gervais Gosselin. Just a few years later, in 1982, the operation expanded with the addition of a 250-sow unit, making it a fully integrated farrow-to-finish site. Gervais's wife, Manon, soon joined the business full-time, and together they began building the foundation of what would become a highly successful family farm.

From 2006 to 2010, the farm underwent significant growth. Two 2,400 head finisher barns were added, the original barn was converted into a 2,500 head nursery and 2,500 head finisher barn, and a new 700 sow unit was built. Around the same time, the family purchased a 300-sow farrow-to-finish site. In 2010, Gervais and Manon's son Maxime joined the business, helping drive production to around 25,000 pigs per year.

Recognizing the importance of sustainability and efficiency, the family focused on acquiring farmland to grow their own feed. Between 2010 and 2014, they built up to 1,200 acres of crop

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production, including corn, soybeans, and wheat.

In 2015, the Gosselins proactively responded to new animal welfare standards by converting their 300-sow site into a 3,000 head finisher barn and expanding their 700-sow unit to 1,200 sows with group housing. They also transitioned to a four-week batch system and built a central feed mill to supply their sites, complete with their own feed delivery truck.

Their growth continued in the years that followed. In 2018, a 2,400 head finisher site was added, and in 2019, an additional 900 acres of farmland brought their total to 2,100 acres.

2021 marked another milestone with the construction of a quarantine facility for incoming replacement gilts, the successful eradication of Mycoplasma, and a genetic switch to Topigs Norsvin's TN70 sows.

When asked about the switch, Maxime shared: "I just have good things to say about the TN70. She has great mothering qualities, and I tell everyone I know about how good she is. Even more, my productivity has increased by 15% since the switch."

Today, the farm produces 3,000 piglets per batch, and the Gosselins are already planning their next phase of growth. A new 3,000 head nursery barn is on the horizon, alongside the conversion of two existing nurseries into finisher barns, enabling a full 3-site rotation to support their increasing production.

Recent Performance – TN70 (July 2024 – April 2025)

- Adjusted farrowing rate: 95.39%
- Total born: 16.38
- Born alive: 15.04
- Stillborn rate: 5.72%
- Piglets weaned per litter: 13.75
- Weaning age: 20.29 days
- Pre-weaning mortality: 8.58%
- Sow mortality/culling: 5.03%
- Litters/mated female/year: 2.53
- Pigs weaned/mated female/year: 34.75

Congratulations to Maxime, Gervais, Manon, and the entire team at Ferme G. M. Le Porc Inc. on their continued success. Your dedication to innovation, sustainability, and genetic excellence is inspiring. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for your growing family farm.

What began in 1978 as a 1,300 head finisher barn has grown into a thriving, multi-site farrow-to-finish operation thanks to the vision, adaptability, and determination of the Gosselin family.



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PIG OF THE MONTH



March:
Greenwood Farming Co., AB

TN70 47674 at Greenwood Farming Co. is the Topigs Norsvin Canada March Top Pig of the Month. This sow recently farrowed her 7th litter with 13 born alive and she has taken on 3 more nursing piglets. Her lifetime averages are 14.3 born alive and 14 weaned per parity. Congratulations to the team at Greenwood Farming in Fort MacLeod, Alberta!



April:
Blumengart Colony, MB

The Topigs Norsvin Top Pig of the Month for April is TN70 sow 161 from Blumengart Colony in Manitoba. 161 recently weaned her third litter. She farrowed 22 total piglets, with 21 born alive and weaned 17. She has farrowed a total of 54 piglets in three parities and has weaned 17 piglets per litter. She is a very impressive sow! Congratulations to all at Blumengart Colony.



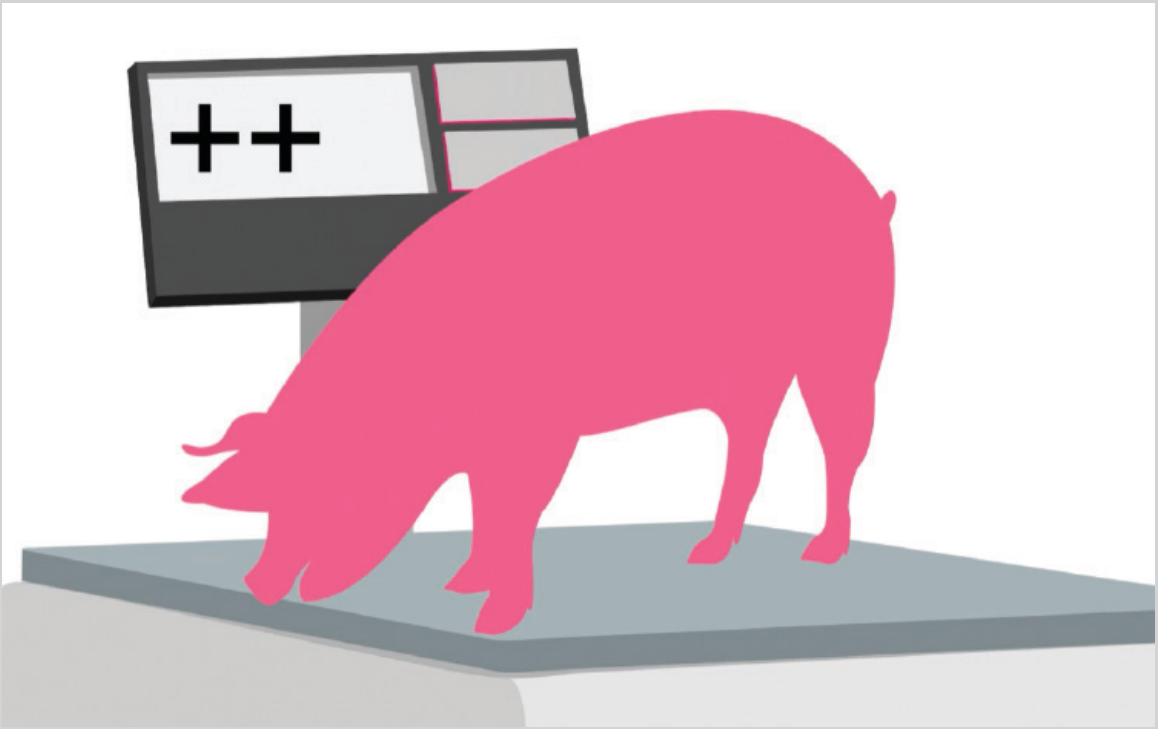
May:
Jomimaro Farms, Parkhill, ON

TN70 512 has farrowed 143 piglets over 8 parities averaging 17.9 born alive with only 3 stillborns in that time. She has weaned 143 piglets, including 2 nurse litters. Her average weaned per litter is 14.5, with 27 more as a foster sow. She is an impressive sow who cycles back in 4 days, every time. Rob, the farm owner and operator is looking forward to what she will achieve on her ninth litter. Congratulations to Jomimaro Farms!

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INSIDER INSIGHT

INSEMINATING UNDERDEVELOPED GILTS



There are several potential consequences to inseminating underdeveloped gilts, including:

- Will lead to less mature and underdeveloped gilts in the farrowing pen.
- Lowers overall lifetime reproductive performance.
- Lowers feed intake capacity.
- Will have insufficient body reserves to support bigger litters.
- Will lead to higher body condition losses during first lactation, which could lead to second parity dips or premature culling.



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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 or Email: info@topigsnorsvin.ca

Entries are to be received by **August 1, 2025.** 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. PLEASE INCLUDE FULL COMPANY NAMES AND ADDRESS DETAILS OR YOU WILL BE INELIGIBLE.

1. How are free-farrowing pens described in the headlining article?

2. What year did the Gosselins switch to TN70s?

3. TN70 512 at Jomimaro Farms has a lot of experience as a sow.. What number is her next parity?

4. How is lifetime reproductive performance affected by inseminating underdeveloped gilts?

Name:

Address:

Phone #: Fax #: Email:

Topigs Norsvin INSIDER Quiz Winners
Topigs Norsvin Insider Quiz Winners from the 2024 Winter (December) issue will receive a $20.00 gift card.
Reba Ann J. Kleinsasser, Kingsbury Colony, MT; Jerry Jr. Kleinsasser, Hidden Lake Colony, MT; Kathryn Entz, Brant Colony, AB; Tanner Entz, Bluegrass Colony, AB; Daniel Wurz, Three Hills Colony, AB; Melvin D. Entz Grassy Hill Colony, SK; Jonas Martin, Listowel, ON; Donovan Hofer, Willow Creek Colony, MB; Michael Waldner, Sturgeon Creek Colony, MB; Joe Waldner, Blooming Prairie Farms, MB.