

# the INSIDER

TOPIGS Canada Inc. | TOPIGS USA Inc. | Summer 2012

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## TOPIGS Number One in Total Feed Efficiency

Pig production is about converting feed into pork. Feed costs are the most important costs in pork production and are set to rise in the future. Feed efficiency is, therefore, a vital aspect of pig production.

TOPIGS genetics give the highest Total Feed Efficiency across the entire production cycle from farrow to finish. Our genetics are the most efficient feed to pork converters because our sows and finishers have both a low feed conversion and a low mortality.

### **Sow longevity**

TOPIGS sows are easy to manage, strong, and produce many large litters in a lifetime. Replacement rates are low. This saves feed costs in the production of rearing gilts to replace sows culled. A dry sow that is not inseminated uses feed. TOPIGS sows are known for how easy they come into heat and their high farrowing rates. TOPIGS sows therefore produce more litters per year.

### **Lactation efficiency and fertility**

The outcome of TOPIGS balanced breeding program for sows is a high number of piglets born per litter and good lactation efficiency. Large litters of heavy piglets stimulate the milk production of our sows. The piglets get a flying start that results in a higher daily growth throughout their lives and a higher feed efficiency. TOPIGS sows are also efficient with feed. They produce at a higher level than other sows using less feed.

### **Vigorous piglets and finishers**

For more than 10 years TOPIGS has bred for piglet vitality. The result is uniform litters of vigorous piglets. Combined with the good mothering abilities of the sows this means a high piglet survival rate during the farrowing period but also scientifically proven better finishing results. The well-nurtured finishers are stronger and more resilient. They therefore reach their slaughter weight in fewer days,

which means a higher feed efficiency.

### **Low mortality finishers**

A dead finisher is a double waste. Besides losing kilograms of produced pork, you also lose feed – feed that is used to produce the piglet as well as feed that the finisher consumed before it died. TOPIGS pigs are vigorous, which means they have a low mortality rate and high feed efficiency.

### **The bottom line**

TOPIGS is number one when it comes to Total Feed Efficiency. We have the genetics to produce the most kilogram of pork per kilogram of feed. Breeding for efficient production and breeding for vitality makes the difference! Years of this balanced breeding, the latest breeding techniques, and our large population of breeding animals mean that your farm can profit from rapid and effective genetic progress. With TOPIGS you can achieve maximum pork production with a minimum of feed!

### **Total feed efficiency**

Total Feed Efficiency is an index reflecting the amount of feed required to produce one kilogram of pork. Using this index makes it clear how efficient the whole production of pork really is in a system

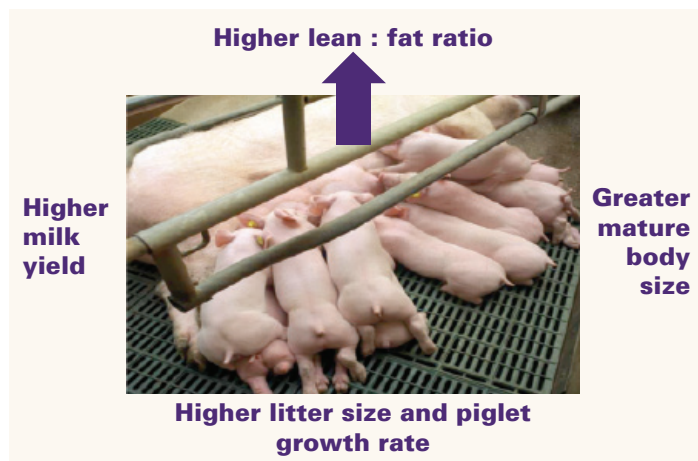
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# New Feeding Advice for Sows

Genetic improvements and changes in production targets in the last decade have led to the development of the Modern Breeding Sow.



These advances in production have increased the nutrient requirements of both gestating and lactating sows. TOPIGS has estimated the nutrient requirements using input-output calculations that relate the requirements for all TOPIGS sow lines under various production levels and environments.

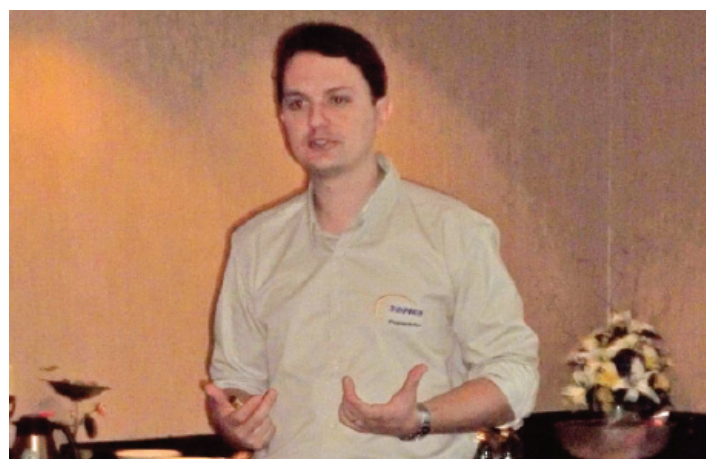
To feed these modern TOPIGS sows according to their requirements, TOPIGS has developed a new sow nutrition manual. This manual gives information about the nutrient content of feed and the feed level that the sow requires in every stage of production – this approach is called the **TOPIGS Integrated Feeding Strategy**.

The best production results in TOPIGS' vision are:

- To have strong and vital piglets at birth
- To have a high number of piglets born alive with low mortality rates
- To have sows with adequate body reserves during the gestation period
- To have sows with minimal body protein losses during lactation
- To have sows with satisfactory milk production during lactation
- To get sows into estrus as soon as possible after weaning

According to Dr. Bruno Silva, TOPIGS nutritionist, "Within each of these production phases the sow needs nutrients for different reasons and actions. By supplying the correct quantity and quality of nutrients in

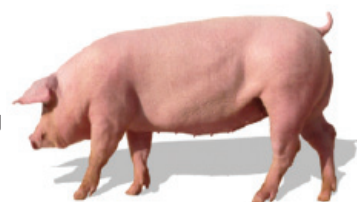
each phase, and by ensuring a good connection between the phases, the best production results can be achieved." Dr. Silva recently travelled to the USA from Brazil to present TOPIGS' new "Sow Feeding Manual for Corn-Soybean Markets" to gatherings of nutritionists in Ohio and South Dakota.



Dr. Bruno Silva

What are the advantages of following the **TOPIGS Integrated Feeding Strategy**?

- More uniform sows
- Good lifetime performing sows
- Healthy, well developed sows
- Well performing and vital offspring
- Overall increased feed efficiency
- Overall economic advantages

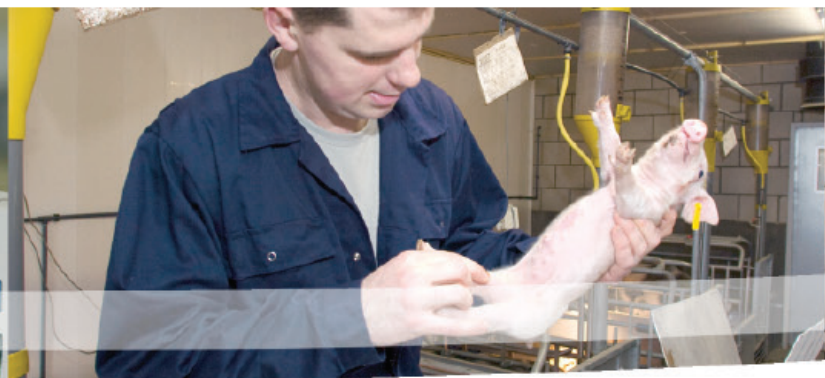


"The TOPIGS 20 sow consistently provides impressive numbers in terms of reproductive performance and efficiency. Our customers now expect large litters of uniform, vital pigs and 30+ pigs / sow / year is being achieved," commented Dr. John Eggert, TOPIGS USA Technical Director, "The expertise of Dr. Silva not only assists our customers with achieving their reproduction goals, but further contributes to the advantage our customers are realizing in terms of **Total Feed Efficiency (TFE)** for their systems."

Nutritionists also had the opportunity to discuss "Feeding TOPIGS Rearing Gilts" with Dr. Silva – this manual provides both management and feeding advice for raising TOPIGS replacement gilts. Updated versions of the grow / finish nutritional recommendations for TEMPO, TALENT, and TOP PI progeny will be published next month.







# TOPIGS Producer PROfile – Blumengart Colony



High Quality TALENT Finishers

Blumengart Colony was established in 1922 and is located just south of Plum Coulee in southern Manitoba. The rich, black soil of the Red River Valley is very capable of supporting the farming way of life in the North American Hutterite colonies. The warmer Manitoba climate lends itself to the production of wheat, corn and special crops such as soybeans and edible beans. The 6,000 acres of cultivated land is the base of the Blumengart farming enterprise. Livestock and poultry also play an important role of sustaining the 114 colony members.

The livestock and poultry enterprises consist of 600 sows farrow to finish, a 50 cow dairy, 20,000 laying hens and the production of 120,000 turkeys annually. The dairy herd is a high-producing herd of Holsteins utilizing the best genetics available. Value adding to the dairy enterprise is done by selling genetics to other producers via live animals and embryos.

The colony has always had a sow herd in production. In 2001 the 450 sow unit was depopulated and some renovations were done to expand to 600 sows. The herd was repopulated in 2002 with (at the time) GAP Genetics, and an in-house gilt production program was implemented. In 2009 the change to TOPIGS genetic lines began through the purchase GP semen and some TOPIGS Large White females. Using the TOPIGS InGene program, TOPIGS 20 females are produced. The herd has never looked back and has steadily increased in productivity since the introduction of TOPIGS.

With the expansion to 600 sows, the additional pigs being produced were sold at 50 lbs. until a new finisher barn was constructed in 2006. The new barn was sized to complement the existing finishing capacity



Many sows are weaning 13+ pigs per litter

and balance the production system. Rooms were designed with large pens and Pro-Sort scales accommodating 500-550 pigs / room.

Levi Waldner and his team of three other colony members continue to improve the performance of the hog enterprise. They strongly believe in accessing production advice and benchmarking their performance with others to continuously improve. For the sow productivity they participate in the Swine Management Service (SMS) Benchmarking program from Nebraska. For the year 2011, their sow productivity was amongst the best in North America. At 29.56 pigs weaned / mated female, they are in the 96th percentile from 790 farms and almost 1.4 million sows participating.

Currently the herd is at 30.84 pigs weaned / mated female. The average born alive is 13.4 pigs and the herd is weaning 12.3 pigs per litter. Many of the TOPIGS 20 fourth and fifth parity sows have averaged 13+ pigs weaned per litter in their lifetime. As the herd transitions to a 100% TOPIGS herd, the expectation is that these numbers will increase further. Of the 586 average sow inventory, only 402 sows are currently TOPIGS 20s. With the increased sow productivity the herd has been reduced from an inventory of 660 sows in 2007. The last year 17,106 pigs were weaned from 74 less sows than the 15,318 pigs weaned in 2007.

To produce their market hogs Blumengart uses the TOPIGS talent semen from Carlo Genetics AI Centre. "The piglets are very uniform and grow very well" comments Levi Waldner. "We see very consistent piglets at birth that remain very uniform from weaning through to

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finishing” he adds. Finished hogs are sold to Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon at a weight of 118 to 120 kg live weight. Days to market from birth are averaging 164 days with an Average Daily Gain of over 900 grams (1.98 lbs. per day). Grading at Maple Leaf is averaging an Index of 109.4. With the exceptional growth and grading, Levi feels he has the right combination for his production system.

Levi and his team face the same challenges as most hog producers. The economic pressures of production and the high cost of grain require them to be “at the top of the pile” and they use all the tools available to them. From improved production practices to forward contracting hogs, they are always willing to take advice and rise to the challenges. Levi looks for better things to come as his herd continues to produce more pigs from less sows. This, along with the use of efficient, proven genetics, is the key component to gain efficiency and remain in business.



Blumengart Colony

## Maple Leaf Agri-Farms

The Maple Leaf Foods Agribusiness Products Group includes rendering, biodiesel production and hog production operations. As part of this group, Maple Leaf Agri-Farms (MLAF) is one of the largest hog production systems in Canada. These hog production operations support the needs and specifications of Maple Leaf Food’s fresh and further processed facilities.

The MLAF head office is in Landmark, Manitoba, with most of the production facilities located throughout southern Manitoba, and one sow unit in the eastern part of Saskatchewan. Utilizing a three-site system the Breeding / Farrowing, Nursery, and Finishing sites are all on separate locations. The majority of the sow farms are 3,000 sows with a few 1,500 sow farms. The finished hogs are destined for the Maple Leaf processing plant located in Brandon, Manitoba. Maple Leaf Agri-Farms continuously seeks out the best production practices, animal welfare, and food safety programs while maintaining a low-cost, efficient system.

The commercial production systems are supplied with gilts from two 1,250 sow multiplication / nucleus farms. At an approximate age of 180-190 days, gilts are moved from the gilt grow-out facilities to the commercial sow unit quarantine. Gilts are held for a minimum of 30 days before being released into the gilt breeding area in the main sow barn.

With a production base of 35,000 sows, the productivity of these sows is a critical component to the total production chain. Sows must be capable of weaning large litters of heavy piglets that will transport well and adapt to the nursery feed and environment easily. The piglets have 7 ½ weeks in the nursery and must be of good body weight to go to the



MLAF Nursery Site

finisher sites. Not only is sow productivity crucial but the piglet quality that will impact pig throughput is also very important.

After a process of “due diligence” and analyzing how the TOPIGS lines perform, a decision to use the TOPIGS 20 was reached in April of 2011. Both of the 1,250 sow multiplication farms began receiving the TOPIGS Z Line gilts, and the rollover to production of the 20 Line began. The Z Line is a purebred Dutch Large White female and is known worldwide for its ease of management and high productivity levels. This has been the MLAF experience after one year with the Z Line.

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Dr. Tim Snider – Recipient of the Alex Hogg Scholar Award

## AASV Foundation Announces Recipient of 2012 Alex Hogg Scholar Award

Dr. Tim Snider was named the 2012 recipient of the American Association of Swine Veterinarians Foundation – Alex Hogg Scholar Award. The scholarship was presented during the Association's annual meeting in Denver, Colorado.

Established in 2008, the scholarship is named for Dr. Alex Hogg who was a leader in swine medicine and pursued a master's degree in veterinary pathology after 20 years in a mixed-animal practice. The scholarship, in the amount of \$10,000, is awarded annually to an AASV member who has been accepted into a qualified graduate program to further his or her education after years as a swine practitioner.

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MLAF – 2 x 3,000 Sow Site

The MLAF philosophy fits well with the TOPIGS core value of Sustainability that includes being responsible for the environment and animal welfare. MLAF strongly believes and impresses upon their staff to have respect for the well-being, proper handling, and humane slaughter of all animals within their care as a social and ethical responsibility. It requires maintaining respect for the animals while providing consumers with high-quality, wholesome and affordable food. Strict adherence to our animal welfare policy is monitored and enforced. Maple Leaf retains humane handling experts to inspect our hog and poultry primary processing facilities, which are also regularly monitored by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and veterinarians.

MLAF is very conscientious of the challenges facing modern livestock production. Maple Leaf Foods supports their commitment to animal welfare by:

- Providing employees with knowledge and skills in proper animal handling and welfare practices

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that works from farrow to finish. It takes account of the feed used during:

- the rearing of gilts
- the production of piglets (gestation and farrowing)
- the rearing of the piglets after weaning
- the finishing stage



MLAF Finisher Site

- Enforcing a ZERO tolerance policy for abuse of animals within their care
- Routinely testing the effectiveness of their practices and procedures based on quantifiable animal well-being guidelines
- Working with producers and transportation companies who share their commitment to upholding high standards of animal welfare

Maple Leaf Agri-Farms faces the same challenges as all North American hog producers. Feed costs are near record levels and pressures from society create challenges to adopt new production methods. They are prepared for the challenges ahead, and are currently researching the conversion to group sow housing in their farms. By the year 2017 or earlier, many of their sow farms will be in the process of converting from sow gestation stalls to group housing.

As a leader in the North American swine industry, Maple Leaf Agri-Farms strives to be the best. TOPIGS is honoured to work with such a first-class organization.

The Total Feed Efficiency index is easy to calculate. Add all the feed used and divide it by the live weight of the slaughter pigs.

Total Feed Efficiency = feed purchases / live weight sold

We make a special calculation tool to make it easier to calculate Total Feed Efficiency. Go to [www.totalfeedefficiency.com](http://www.totalfeedefficiency.com) and calculate your Total Feed Efficiency. On this site you will also find a short video explaining Total Feed Efficiency.

Learn more at [www.totalfeedefficiency.com](http://www.totalfeedefficiency.com)





Dr. Snider is currently the owner, and solo practitioner, of Snider Veterinary Services, Inc. — a 100% swine consultancy practice. He has spent his veterinary career in clinical swine practice. Following graduation from the University of Guelph in 1992, he worked as an associate veterinarian at Sheridan and Heuser Swine Health Services before starting Heartland Swine Health Services in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1995. His career has also involved working with an international breeding stock company and a large production system with farms throughout Canada. He began Snider Veterinary Services in 2007.

While continuing to maintain his private consultancy practice on a part-time basis, Dr. Snider is completing a residency in Veterinary Public Health and a Master's of Public Health at the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) at the University of Minnesota. This 24-month program provides participants with the competencies to become board certified in preventive veterinary medicine. His goal is to complete the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine board exams in June 2013.

In reflecting on his veterinary career, Dr. Snider noted that, "I have always had a special interest in pursuing continued education with the intent of further contributing to the swine industry in a positive and effective way. I have observed other practitioners

expand their knowledge base and their opportunities through more formalized continuing education programs. I was inspired by their example and felt positive that I would eventually find my opportunity. Dr Hogg's career story was especially inspiring for me because he undertook the challenge of continued education after being in practice for 20 years. I found myself in a similar position when my opportunity to join the team at CAHFS arose and I consciously considered his path when I was making my decision."

Upon graduation, he intends to pursue opportunities in the pork supply chain with the goal of combining the skills acquired during his veterinary public health training with the skills developed as a swine practitioner. Dr. Snider commented that he "strongly believes that our industry needs people who understand the world of swine health and production and how it relates to public health. My goal is to bring a proactive and science-based voice to the dialogue that will positively contribute to both public health and the success of the swine industry."

For more information, contact Harry Snelson at:  
Phone: 910-221-5316  
snelson@aaasv.org



## 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 August 31, 2012. Winners will receive a TOPIGS cookbook. If you wish, the TOPIGS rep in your area will deliver the prize. Employees of TOPIGS and their subsidiaries are not eligible.**

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## TOPIGS INSIDER Quiz

What is the current Pigs Weaned / Mated Female at Blumengart Colony?

How many sows are in the Maple Leaf Agri-Farms system?

What terminal boar line is used at Blumengart Colony?

How many sows are in each of the Maple Leaf Agri-Farms multiplier units?

Name:

Farm Name:

Address:

Phone #:

Email:

### TOPIGS INSIDER Quiz Winners

Here are the winners from last issue: Mark Waldner, Sturgeon Creek Colony, MB; Susanna Stahl, Westwood Colony, SD; Mike Waldner, Odyssey Farm, MB; Sam S. Hofer Jr., Hillcrest Colony, MT; Peter David Waldner, Plainview Colony, MB; Peter Snieder, Holyrood, ON; Mike Waldner, Pondera Colony, MT; Joel Waldner, Coolspring Colony, MB; Ryan Hofer, James Valley Colony, MB; Daniel Waldner, Evergreen Colony, AB. Each winner receives a pair of genuine leather TOPIGS gloves. The TOPIGS rep in your area will deliver your prize. Congratulations!

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