



In this issue:

- Norsvin Alfa Opening - 1
- Iowa State Visit - Sterksel Research Farm - 2
- Producer Profile: H & K Enterprise - 2
- Topigs Norsvin and Lar - 3
- Producer Profile: Broekman Hog Farms - 4
- New Geneticist - 5
- Staff and AI Stations Listing - 6
- Topigs Norsvin Insider Quiz - 6

Norsvin Alfa ribbon cutting

Norsvin Alfa: A Norwegian milestone

Norsvin's new AI centre, Norsvin Alfa, which will house 300 boars and provide the Norwegian and international pig industry with world-class swine genetics, was officially opened on May 9, 2017. All-in-all, more than 500 visitors found their way to Norsvin Alfa's opening day, with invited guests from Norway and abroad, including collaboration partners, suppliers, pig producers and others who had come to take a closer look at the 43,000 square foot facility.

Important investment

The Mayor of Hamar, Einar Busterud, officiated the opening, which marked the start of a new era in Norsvin's history. Norsvin Alfa is the largest investment ever made by the company, and is important in order to secure good Norwegian animal health and to meet the growing market demands, both nationally and internationally.

"This is a big day for the Norwegian farmer and Norwegian agriculture in general," said Board Chairman Geir Heggheim. Martin Bijl, CEO of Topigs Norsvin, put the investment in an international perspective, "With Norsvin

Alfa, Norsvin strengthens its position as supplier of two breeds in Topigs Norsvin's product portfolio." Through Topigs Norsvin, a total of 9 million doses of pig semen are sold globally; 500,000 of them being produced in Norway - and in a few weeks from Norsvin Alfa.

100 million slaughter pigs

A new AI facility has been important to safeguard the good health status of Norwegian pig production. Excellent animal husbandry and health, in combination with world-leading genetics, are important competitive edges for the export of genetic products. Semen is currently exported to a number of countries in the Topigs Norsvin system including the Topigs Norsvin nucleus farms in Canada and the USA. Norsvin Alfa's opening increases the ability to deliver the best quality boar semen to Topigs Norsvin's core herds in the most important market sectors such as USA, Russia, Germany and Brazil by making more top boars available for export. The opportunity for expansion is huge. Each year more than 100 million slaughter pigs are produced using Topigs Norsvin genetics.

Cyclones Visit Sterksel Research Farm

During a recent agricultural tour of Europe, a group of students from Iowa State University, led by Dr. Jack Dekkers, visited the Topigs Norsvin research farm Sterksel in The Netherlands. The students learned about the Dutch and European swine marketplaces, and about how societal attention and environmental rules regarding pig production are playing big roles in these markets.

Hans Olijslagers, CTO Topigs Norsvin, informed the group about how Topigs Norsvin will double genetic progress at the customer level over the next 10 years by applying genomics, implementing new reproduction techniques, and making significant investments in the breeding structure in Canada. The discussion also included how the latest technology will contribute to genetic progress in traits such as animal welfare, disease resistance, and animal behavior.



Iowa State group visits Sterksel Research Farm

Producer Profile: H&K Enterprise



Dr. Howard Hill, owner, H&K Enterprise and former President of the National Pork Producers Council

In 2010, Dr. Howard Hill was invited to speak at the Topigs Norsvin World Pork Event in Berlin, Germany. During that trip, Dr. Hill also visited the Topigs Norsvin Research Center and a number of Dutch swine farms. "The Topigs Norsvin researchers and research program impressed me – and so did the sow," reflected Dr. Hill, "Great structure and underlines, and the capacity to wean a lot of pigs – but what really caught my attention was their temperament. The sows were calm and easy to work with, and that was exactly what we needed at home."

Back home, Dr. Hill owns H&K Enterprise (Nevada, Iowa), a 300-sow farrow-to-finishing operation that was struggling with pen breeding, so they made the change to Topigs Norsvin. "The Topigs Norsvin sows mix after breeding with very little fighting," added Dr. Hill. "Our sow death loss from fighting went from significant to nil. They're like one big happy family, and we see the same quality in the finishing pigs."

"It's a very friendly animal," agreed Dave Moody, H&K farm manager. "Our Tempo-sired pigs are curious and social, without being aggressive." H&K Enterprise markets everything to JBS at 270 lbs, and the hogs cut well.



Dave Moody, H&K Farm Manager



H&K Sow Unit

"We get good premiums with the Topigs Norsvin program and the Tempo boar," added Dr. Hill. "You really notice the thriftiness in the finisher," continued Moody. "We switched away from the Tempo once and it was a huge mistake. It's a nice pig all the way through."

H&K Enterprise recently decided to switch to the Topigs Norsvin InGene program for the internal production of F1 TN70 gilts. They purchased Z-line (Large White) gilts to establish their baseline herd and were pleased with the quality of the animals they received. "The Z-lines were of high quality phenotypically. Someone's doing a great job of selection," commented Dr. Hill, "and we appreciate that Topigs Norsvin makes this program available to smaller producers. Now we can have the reproductive benefits of an F1 female and avoid the biosecurity risks of new animal entry into our farm."

"We are very pleased with the service we receive. The Topigs Norsvin team is very responsive and brings a lot of experience to our farm," said Dr. Hill.

Topigs Norsvin and Lar: a 19-year loyal partnership

53 years ago, the Lar Cooperativa Agroindustrial (located in the west region of Paraná, in Southern Brazil) was formed. Loyal to its origins, Lar has never stopped its pig farming activities.

Lar's transition from family-sized pig farms to modern pork production began 19 years ago when the cooperative started an InGene system for 12,500 sows, and a partnership with Topigs Norsvin was formed. In the following years, new investments increased the size of the production to 26,700 sows.

Next steps with TN70

The merger of Topigs and Norsvin, and the launch of the TN70 sow, gave the relationship between Lar and Topigs Norsvin another new boost. This new line, already producing their third litter at Lar farms, demonstrates excellent results. Lar is marketing hogs at 121.1 kg (267 lbs) with a feed conversion of 2.36. Once the herd is fully converted to TN70 parent females, feed conversion is projected to improve by another 8%.



Lar Gestation



Irineo da Costa Rodrigues, President of Lar

According to Dirceu Zotti, Production Manager at Lar, TN70s are already producing an additional 1.5 piglets total born per litter, which represents an increase of 3 to 4 weaned piglets per sow per year. Another advantage is the carcass quality. "At the farm, the TN70 adds extra value. We have evidence that the improvements are also seen in the carcass quality via lower backfat, increased loin depth, and increased carcass yield," said Zotti. "These changes in management, the field service we receive from Topigs Norsvin, and the launch of TN70 are building an even more promising scenario for the historical partnership with our cooperative," he concluded.

Lar Cooperativa Agroindustrial

Lar Cooperativa Agroindustrial is active in poultry and swine production, as well as feed, soya, cassava and vegetable processing, milk, gas stations, grocery stores and farm supply. The Paraná region of Brazil is the largest soya producer in the world, and it produces 2 or 3 crops per year.



Lar TN70 Gilts

The cooperative has shown continuous growth. In 2016, its earnings increased by 20.6%, reaching just over 1 billion US dollars. According to Irineo da Costa Rodrigues, President of Lar, pig production accounts for 6% of the cooperative's business. The cooperative's strategic planning foresees a growth to 50,000 sows by 2030 and that swine will account for 8% of their business in the future.

Building South America's biggest slaughterhouse

Pigs produced by Lar are slaughtered by Cooperativa Central Frimesa. Frimesa operates a plant that slaughters 6,500 pigs per day and it is building a new plant, for 15,000 pigs per day. It will be the largest plant in South America. Lar has 40 years of experience in the packing industry; 15% of the pork is exported and 85% goes toward domestic consumption.

"Pig production is a relevant economic activity, with an important social role. It helps settle families, promotes family continuity and improves quality of life. We add value by converting vegetable protein into animal protein", said Irineo da Costa Rodrigues, President of Lar.

During a recent marketing and sales meeting in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, members of the Topigs Norsvin management team had the opportunity to visit Lar headquarters, as well as sow and finishing farms.



Lar management with Topigs Norsvin guests, left to right:

Dirceu Zotti, Production Manager of Lar

Peter van Kemenade, Topigs Norsvin Regional Director, North and South America

Andre Costa, General Manager, Topigs Norsvin do Brazil

Irineo da Costa Rodrigues, President of Lar

Martin Bijl, CEO, Topigs Norsvin International

Urbano Inacio Frey, Second Vice President of Lar

Mike Terrill, President and CEO, Topigs Norsvin USA

Lauro Soethe, First Vice President of Lar

Cam McGavin, General Manager, Topigs Norsvin Canada

Producer Profile: Broekman Hog Farms



Broekman Farm

When Theo and Hanneke Broekman purchased what is now Broekman Hog Farm in 2004, the farm was already more than 20 years old. Today the farm is largely unrecognizable as a result of new buildings being built and new equipment being installed, but perhaps more importantly, because of new genetics replacing the old.

Broekman Hog Farms is a 330-sow farrow-to-finish operation (located in central Alberta) that is still very much a family farm. Hanneke Broekman explained that even though they employ one full-time employee, their four children, (Lucy, 17; Britt, 15; Thomas, 12; and Mike, 10) all help out with the pigs. She is optimistic one of them will be interested in taking over some day.

"Lucy and Thomas together are very active in the farm. We have some hope that one of them will take over the farm in the future. You never know."

In fact, Theo Broekman is carrying on in the footsteps of his own father, with whom he was a partner in a 200-sow farm in Holland. Their experience with the Z-line sow and the Talent boar in The Netherlands led to the decision to use those same genetics in Canada.

"Because we had such a good experience with the Z-line in Holland, we wanted to use it as soon as it was available to us in Canada." The Broekmans use a rotational breeding system that utilizes both Z-line and N-line semen for in-house multiplication. According to Theo, the influence of the Z-line in their farm gives them sows that can produce a lot of pigs and a lot of milk while maintaining body condition – something their former genetics could not do.

"In the farrowing crates, the former genetics would eat a lot but always seemed to develop shoulder sores and come out skinny." That is not the case with the Z-line, according to Theo. He added, "litter size is good, they produce milk, and they come into heat really well."

As for their choice in terminal sire, the decision was easy. Theo was already familiar with the Talent from Holland. He started using it as soon as it was available in Canada and has been using it ever since.

"At Olymel, the Talent pigs index really well. We find they are more even in terms of the back fat so we are really happy with that. We are really pleased with the feed conversion as well."

While the majority of their hogs are shipped to Olymel in Red Deer, the Broekmans have another equally important buyer for some of their animals – the National Meat Training Centre at Olds College. The Centre's Meat

Processing program is unique in that it includes the slaughter aspect of pork production. Broekman Hog Farm supplies 10 hogs per week to the Centre.

Brad McLeod, Program Manager, said the nearly 10-year relationship with Broekman Hog Farm has been outstanding. It's a relationship that he thinks has been instrumental in the success of not only the National Meat Training Centre's educational program, but also the retail meat store on campus that showcases the student's products and financially supports the program.

"We have a story to tell with every piece of pork," says McLeod. "The meat quality is unbelievable. People just rave about it. My only regret is we can't take more hogs from them."

McLeod adds that he and the students marvel at the ease with which they are able to handle the hogs at delivery. Something he says speaks not only to the genetics of the animal, but also the humane way in which they are raised on the Broekman farm.

That's music to the ears of Theo and Hanneke Broekman who plan to continue to invest in the next phase of Broekman Hog Farm this year by breaking ground on a new Gilt Development Unit (GDU) and group gestation barn, complete with Electronic Sow Feeding (ESF) stations. "We plan on doing this at least another 20 years before retiring. Then the kids or someone else can take over."



Theo and Hanneke Broekman



High quality meat from the Broekman farm

Topigs Norsvin USA announces new Geneticist

Key appointment enhances Topigs Norsvin Research team

Topigs Norsvin USA is pleased to announce that Dr. Jenelle (Kleinhesselink) Dunkelberger has joined its staff as Geneticist. Dr. Dunkelberger will be based out of Topigs Norsvin's Burnsville, MN office. In her new role, Dr. Jenelle's responsibilities will encompass research and development activities (USA and International), sales and marketing support, customer technical service, and allied industry support.

Jenelle Dunkelberger is originally from northwest Washington state in a small community near the Canadian border. She is a graduate of Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa and was admitted as a USDA National Needs Fellow to Iowa State University where she joined the research group of Dr. Jack Dekkers. Jenelle is a recent graduate of the Animal Science Department with a PhD in genetics and minor in statistics. The title of her thesis is "The role of host genetics in susceptibility to viral disease in pigs."

In the summer of 2016, Jenelle spent two months as a Research Intern at the Topigs Norsvin Research Center in Beuningen, The Netherlands.

"We look forward to Jenelle bringing her education, training, and expertise to Topigs Norsvin," commented Mike Terrill, President and CEO of Topigs Norsvin USA, "She is a dynamic and motivated person and a welcome addition to our team."



Dr. Jenelle Dunkelberger

"I am very excited to begin my career with Topigs Norsvin USA," added Jenelle, "and look forward to contributing to their unique and innovative R&D program."

Come see us at the World Pork Expo in Des Moines Booth #V651

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AI Stud Stations

Magnum Swine Genetics Inc.

Fort Macleod, AB
Andrew Buesekom
(888) 553-4844

Carlo Genetics Inc.

Ste. Anne, MB
Kyla Ripley
(204) 355-4012

Total Swine Genetics Inc.

Tillsonburg, ON
Stuart De Vries
(800) 844-9913

C & M Genetics

Lucan, ON
Dr. Corneliu Oltean
(888) 259-7594

Sunrise Genetics

Amherst, NS
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AI Stud Stations

Grand Vertex

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Doug Groth
(217) 357-2811

Eastern Iowa AI

Spragueville, IA
Doug Peterson
(563) 689-6661

Mar-Ke Semen Service

Sharon, WI
Keith & Marie Rithamel
(262) 736-2345

Ai Partners-Skylab

Morris, MN
Bruce Zierke
(320) 760-3504

Whole Hog AI

Hartington, NE
Ron Brodersen
(402) 254-2444

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 July 31, 2017. 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 last issue will receive a \$20.00 gift card. Here are the winners from the last issue: rendon Wipf, Shannon Colony, SD; Ted Wurtz, Newport Colony North Barn, SD; Jason Maendel, Pine Valley Farms, MB; Clinton Kleinsasser, Boundary Lane Colony, MB; Davin Waldner, Little Creek Colony, MB; Herb Hofer, East Raymond Colony, AB; David Wipf, Elm Spring Farming Co., AB; Ed Entz, Big Stone Colony, MT; Don Hofer, Rockport Colony, AB; Schotman Farms Ltd., ON.
The Topigs Norsvin rep in your area will deliver your prize. Congratulations!

What is the Feed Conversion of market hogs at Lar? _____

How many boars will the Norsvin Alfa AI Centre house? _____

Which terminal boar line does Broekman Farms use? _____

At what weight does H & K Farms market their hogs? _____

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____ Email: _____

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