

In this Issue:

A Busy 12 Months	1
TOPIGS Canada Inc. expands multiplication	1
2009 TOPIGS Awards Banquet	2
TOPIGS & Carlo AI Producer Meeting	3
New TOPIGS AI Stud	4

TOPIGS Canada Inc.

Fall 2009



TOPIGS Canada Inc. expands multiplication

TOPIGS is pleased to announce the addition of four multiplication farms in Manitoba and Ontario.

The two Manitoba farms are Cool Spring Colony of Minnedosa and Windy Acres Farm of Malonton. Cool Spring is a 650-sow farrow to finish unit. Already a TOPIGS customer, this farm is ideally suited for the multiplication of gilts. Windy Acres Farm is a 700-sow farrow to finish unit and began populating with the very prolific Dutch Large White Z-Line females in July. New Venture Pork (800 sows) and Venture View Farms (750 sows) in Ontario are also key additions to the TOPIGS Canada multiplication system. Ontario has always been an important market for TOPIGS. The establishment of these two multipliers will ensure producers have a local supply of top quality breeding gilts.

All four farms will produce the TOPIGS 20 Line, a highly prolific F1 female capable of producing 30+ pigs per sow per year. Results from Dutch farms for 2008 from almost 415,000 sows showed an average of 27.3 pigs weaned/sow/year. The TOPIGS 20 Line farms excelled in production with the best 100 farms averaging 30.61 pigs weaned/sow/year. The very best farm averaged 14.4 pigs born alive and 32.8 weaned/sow/year in 2008.

The TOPIGS 20 Line is a robust sow that is easy to manage along with being highly prolific. This female dominates the Dutch market and much of Europe as well. Producers in Canada & the USA have expressed a high level of interest in the 20 Line. The addition of these four multiplier farms will facilitate the supply of gilts to markets in all of North America and the world.

A Busy 12 Months!



The TOPIGS Board of Directors

One year has passed since TOPIGS acquired the genetics division of Maple Leaf Foods. In a time of record low hog prices and negative returns to producers, TOPIGS Canada has positioned themselves to work with producers and has extended products and technology to maximize farm efficiency. This has been well accepted by the swine industry allowing us to grow our customer base while providing the best genetics to the producer. Cash is king and there is not much of it in the swine business today. However as always, the best producers will prevail and come out of this poised to reap the benefits of high markets and profitability in the future.

TOPIGS has established several new multiplication units across Canada to produce the 20 Line female. Well known around the world, this female will now be made available to Canadian producers. (See article in this issue.) TOPIGS terminal boars and maternal boars have been strategically placed in AI studs across Canada and the USA. The TOPIGS InGene® is a cost effective and safe method to establish gilt production internally. Producers have been very accepting of this program for their gilt production.

Summer saw the TOPIGS Board of Directors from The Netherlands pay a visit to the Canadian operations. Being owned by a cooperative of 3,000 Dutch pig farmers, each one of the seven board members is a pig producer as well and fully understands the daily challenges and workings of a pig farm. Being a first time visit to Canada for each of the members, several meetings were organized to give them a good overview of our industry. A visit to Rock Lake Colony served as an excellent example of a sector of producers that play a key role in

Continued on page 4...

2009 TOPIGS Awards Banquet

On November 5th, TOPIGS held its 1st Annual Customer Appreciation and Awards Banquet in Winnipeg, MB for Western Canadian and U.S. customers. It is the first year that two banquets took place -- the second awards banquet for Eastern Canada was held on November 25th in Stratford, Ontario. It is also TOPIGS' first awards banquet since acquiring the GAP Genetics last December, welcoming an even greater number of producers than in the past.

Cam McGavin, General Manager of TOPIGS Canada, spoke to the audience of 150 about the exciting new developments within the organization and gave a general overview of where the company has come from, where it is today, and the direction in which it is moving in the future. Because of the recent changes, Cam let the audience know about the company's new structure, including nucleus farms and new multipliers and about the range of products and services that are available. He went on to speak about the initiative the company has recently undertaken to bring to North America the highly acclaimed Talent boar and TOPIGS 20 gilt lines which will officially be launched in North America in early 2010. The TOPIGS 20 female currently dominates the Dutch market and much of the European market.

Following dinner, the yearly production awards were handed out to the well deserving winners. This year, the results from more than 35,000 inventoried sows were submitted to our office by our customers. Of these farms, almost 30,000 sows or 83% produced over 25 pigs weaned/sow/year. This is an outstanding achievement!

Here is the summary of the winners and runner-ups listed by category.

500 sows or less category:

Farrowing Rate

Winner with 90.3% - Keho Lake Colony of Barons, Alberta
Runner-up with 90.2% - Pennant Colony of Pennant, Saskatchewan



Greyland Pork, Manitoba



James Valley Colony, Manitoba

Born Alive

Winner with 12.50 – Keho Lake Colony of Barons, Alberta
Runner-up with 11.74 – Albion Ridge Colony of Barons, Alberta

Pigs Weaned/Mated Female/Year

Winner with 28.60 – Keho Lake Colony of Barons, Alberta
Runner-up with 26.40 – Airport Colony of Portage La Prairie, Manitoba

501 – 1,200 Sows category:

Farrowing Rate

Winner with 95.0% - Starlite Colony of Starbuck, Manitoba
Runner-up with 92.5% - Garden Plane Colony of Frontier, Saskatchewan

Born Alive

Winner with 14.00 – Greyland Pork of Fannystelle, Manitoba
Runner-up with 12.60 – Super Gro 1A of La Broquerie, Manitoba

Pigs Weaned/Mated Female/Year

Winner with 30.20 – Greyland Pork of Fannystelle, Manitoba
Runner-up with 27.50 – Super Gro 1A of La Broquerie, Manitoba

1,200 Sows or more category:

Farrowing Rate

Winner with 89.8% - Quinfield Farms of Lowe Farm, Manitoba
Runner-up with 89.6% - Sierra Swine of Pansy, Manitoba

Born Alive

Winner with 12.90 – The Dutch Barn of Cardale, Manitoba
Runner-up with 12.3 – Ptarmigan Swine of Morris, Manitoba

Pigs Weaned/Mated Female/Year

Winner with 28.60 – The Dutch Barn of Cardale, Manitoba
Runner-up with 27.00 – Quinfield Farms of Lowe Farm, Manitoba



Starlite Colony, Manitoba



Quinfield Farms, Manitoba



The Dutch Barn, Manitoba



The Crowd

In addition to the production awards, a Dedication and Commitment Award was given to TOPIGS Multiplier James Valley Colony in recognition of their efforts in supplying quality breeding stock to the industry for over 20 years.

James Valley Colony is currently in the process of transitioning to the production of TOPIGS 20 gilts for customers.

Thanks to all who attended and helped make the evening a great success!

TOPIGS & Carlo AI Producer Meeting

September 23, 2009

The TOPIGS philosophy is to help our producers increase herd productivity while gaining efficiency in hog production. A wealth of technical expertise and knowledge on all aspects of swine production is available to TOPIGS customers worldwide. Along with one of the best genetic programs in the world our customers are poised to be the best in the world. This was evident at the open producer meeting sponsored by TOPIGS and Carlo AI held in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba on September 23. About 120 producers from Manitoba and Alberta were in attendance to hear three qualified people present talks on how to improve herd performance and efficiency.

Egbert F. Knol is a quantitative geneticist based at the Institute for Pig Genetics in The Netherlands. Dr. Knol has a PhD in Genetics of Piglet Survival. Since 2002 TOPIGS has been breeding for piglet vitality and piglet survival in maternal lines and in terminal boar lines as well. Selection for these traits along with selection for the number of good piglets weaned per litter instead of piglets born has resulted in large litters of vigorous piglets that wean at a heavy weight and go on with excellent performance right through the finishing barn. Dr. Knol went on to illustrate why the litter uniformity being achieved with this selection program pays huge dividends to hog producers. For the past eight years the TOPIGS program has increased sow productivity by .57 pigs weaned/sow/year. This is a phenomenal increase with Dutch herds increasing from 22.4 pigs weaned/sow/year in 2000 to an average of over 27.0 pigs weaned/sow/year in 2008. A key contributor to these results is the Tempo boar. Data collected from many farms proves the Tempo boar will improve litter size by an average of .3 piglets per litter.

Having been employed with TOPIGS for over 20 years as a reproductive specialist, Paul van den Oever is well qualified to speak on improving breeding techniques and efficiency in a sow barn. His presentation on heat detection and insemination practices gave a very good overview on how to achieve high farrowing rates and high litter size while reducing the amount of semen used.

A rigid, set routine that is followed from week to week pays huge dividends with weaned sows and open gilts. All of the basics such as lighting, boar exposure, insemination techniques and timing are taken to a higher level with Paul. Attention to these details becomes routine once they are applied on a regular basis. An overview was also given on PIGSIS®. A program designed to determine when ovulation occurs in your sow herd, PIGSIS® becomes a valuable tool to allow insemination of sows within 24 hours of ovulation. This results in less semen being required and higher conception rates being achieved.

Tying all of the technical aspects together at farm level was the third speaker, Jeroen van Boekel of Stephenfield, Manitoba. Jeroen is no stranger to the Canadian hog industry and was the featured producer in the summer issue of the TOPIGS Insider. He gave a good overview of how he achieves 30+ pigs weaned/sow/year. Both his farms of approximately 670 sows each are currently weaning over 31 pigs/sow/year with the TOPIGS 20 female. Jeroen reinforced the practice of having a rigid routine when working with sows. "Weaning occurs at 7:00 a.m. each time and if someone wants to speak with me at that time, they will have to wait" said Jeroen. A punctual weaning time leads to a regular breeding time which streamlines employee tasks and produces better results. His sows are currently weaning an average of 12.25 pigs per litter. This is the requirement to get to 31+ pigs weaned/sow/year. Jeroen uses the Tempo boar at one of the farms and results show a higher litter size of about .6 pigs per litter.

After digesting a wealth of information, guests were treated to a challenge of digesting an excellent dinner of barbequed pork ribs and chicken.

For more information on the above presentations or to receive the TOPIGS video on Piglet Vitality please contact the TOPIGS representative in your area or our head office in Winnipeg.

New TOPIGS AI Stud

TOPIGS is establishing a new AI stud in the USA. The 400 boar capacity stud is located in New Carlisle, Ohio. Dutch Sires will house TOPIGS maternal and terminal boar lines exclusively. Under the management of Mary Pavelko, semen from the high quality TOPIGS sires will be available commencing December 1, 2009. This is the second stud to be established in the United States for TOPIGS. Dutch Sires will complement the Ai Partners stud in Minnesota by providing product to producers in eastern regions of the USA. For more information please contact: Dutch Sires at (937) 846-1528.



Dutch Sires Barn

Continued from page 1...

Canadian hog production. Maple Leaf Agri Farms graciously participated in the visit by presenting an overview of an integrated hog production system. Lastly, a drive-by visit was made to the Paradise Valley nucleus unit acquired in the purchase from Maple Leaf Foods.

TOPIGS Canada plays a key role in supporting countries around the world with first class genetics. Due to the high health status of our Canadian nucleus farms, live animals can be exported to almost every country around the world. In the past year, thirteen exports have been successfully completed. Recipients of TOPIGS breeding stock from Canada have been, The Netherlands, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica and Japan.

As a new customer for TOPIGS, a group of independent producers in Japan had imported 355 TOPIGS 20 gilts from The Netherlands in March 2009. This was followed by an order to import 140 animals from Canada in early 2010. This shipment will include GGP boars and gilts as well as Tempo terminal boars. This purchase instills a vote of confidence in the capability of the TOPIGS animals being able to produce the meat quality required by the Japanese.

The Canadian TOPIGS team looks forward to the future and to working with producers across Canada and the USA. A well established breeding system and continued genetic development of breeding lines will lead to more benefits for producers in the TOPIGS program.



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 January 31, 2010, the first ten entries drawn with the correct answers will receive a TOPIGS winter toque. If you win, 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

Entries to be received by January 31, 2010. Winners will receive a TOPIGS winter toque.

How many countries has TOPIGS Canada exported breeding stock to?

What percent of sow herds weaned over 25 pigs/sow/year?

What is the highest born alive/litter from all the award winners?

Who was given a commitment and dedication award?

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Top Ten Quiz Entries

The winners of the TOPIGS Insider Quiz from the last issue are as follows: Shane Hofer (Starlite Colony, MB), Alessandra Maas (Greyland Pork Ltd, MB), Steven Gross (Clearview Colony, MB), Sol Waldner (Holmfild Colony, MB), Mike Hofer (Riverbend Colony, MB), Ronald VandeBruinhorst (Brussels, ON), Helmut Mergl (Brunner, ON), Elias H. Wipf (Parkland Colony, AB), Joe B. Wurz (Sandhills Colony, AB), Joel Mandel (Shamrock Colony, AB).

Each winner will receive a TOPIGS hat, t-shirt and shorts. The TOPIGS rep in your area will deliver the prize.

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