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1. You can still sign up for the PorkBridge distance education program

Although the first presentation has occurred for the PorkBridge grow-finish program, individuals can still sign up for the remaining presentations, and will receive the first presentation on CD. PorkBridge allows pork production owners, managers and employees to increase knowledge and skills in grow-finish production without having to leave the comfort of their home or the farm. The program combines electronic information viewed on computer with live oral presentations via phone by experts in topic areas.

The week before each session, subscribers receive a CD containing that session's topic-specific presentation, along with information on accessing the live speaker presentation. Subscribers call into a toll-free conference line to listen to speakers, and may ask questions anytime during or after the presentation. Each session is 1 ½ hours in length, beginning either at noon or 7 p.m. central time. In addition, a group discussion email list is available for individuals to post questions between sessions. Session dates, speakers, their university affiliations and topics are as follows.

- Dec. 7, 2006 Jay Harmon, Iowa State University, "How do ventilation controllers communicate with variable speed fans?"
- Feb. 1, 2007 Mark Whitney, University of Minnesota, "Pig handling techniques and options to maximize productivity"
- April 5, 2007 Locke Karriker, Iowa State University, "Why do you have to bleed so many pigs for serology tests?"
- May 31, 2007 Mike Brumm, Brumm Swine Consultancy, "Out-of-feed events - what we've learned"
- Aug. 2, 2007 Duane Reese and Al Prosch, University of Nebraska, "Ethanol, corn, and pig profits"

- Oct. 4, 2007 Dick Nicolai, South Dakota State University, "How do we improve the smell of producing pigs?"

The PorkBridge program is sponsored by the University of Minnesota, South Dakota State University, Iowa State University, University of Nebraska, Ohio State University, and the U.S. Pork Center of Excellence. Those interested in registering or learning more about the program can access material at the U of MN Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

2. Swine Training Program courses coming up

The next series of Swine Training Program courses will be coming up in February. A Wean-Finish Management course will be held at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris on February 8-9, and a second Wean-Finish course will be held at the Southern Research and Outreach Center in Waseca the following week, February 15-16. Choose whichever location is most convenient to learn about the latest in research and production practices concerning grow-finish and wean-finish swine production. Information will be provided on housing and equipment, health, nutrition, animal behavior and handling, and other various topics related to growing pig production. The first day is all classroom, going from 10:30 am to 7 pm and taught by UMN educators and local practitioners, while the second day consists of hands-on activities from 8 am to noon.

A second Artificial Insemination training course has also been added, and will be held February 22-23 in Waseca. Following a similar format, this program provides information on semen handling, estrus detection, proper insemination techniques, breeding herd troubleshooting, nutrition, and health.

Participants in all Swine Training Programs become POA certified when taking the course. Access more information on these courses at the UMN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine. To register, contact the MN Pork Board at (507) 345-8814.

3. Economic implications of ethanol on swine production

How will the current increase in demand for domestic corn, largely "fueled" by increasing production of ethanol, affect corn availability and profitability for swine, and to a larger extent, livestock production? These were just a few of the topics discussed during the "Distillers Grains: Implications for the U.S. Pork Industry" conference hosted by the National Pork Board and held in Des Moines on November 20th. One of the potential opportunities in light of the current and future challenges for corn procurement and/or cost involves feeding distiller's grains co-products, such as DDGS (distiller's dried grains with solubles) generated from the ethanol plants.

To access the full article, go to the UMN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

4. Use of farrowing room hovers saves energy

Hovers are simple, solid partition enclosures located in the farrowing crate or pen to which piglets have free access. A few commercial companies are selling hovers for use in farrowing, but a majority of the existing units are homemade. Plywood, fiberglass, and rigid board plastic

are the common building materials with the synthetic materials most popular because of easier cleaning. Although a number of producers are using them, very little research information on energy consumption, pig performance, and management requirements has been collected for hover usage in Minnesota. A fact sheet describing University of Minnesota research evaluating these items is available at

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/livestocksystems/DI6513.html>

5. MN Pork Congress is January 17-18

The annual MN Pork Congress will be coming to the downtown Minneapolis Convention Center January 17 and 18, and the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Ag Experiment Station will again be available to answer questions and display new research and technologies being used in swine research at our booth. Come learn about alternative ingredients available for use in swine diets, how odor is measured, the latest in swine disease prevention and eradication, or bring your own questions. Also, be sure to take in a special Mini-Conference the afternoon of January 17th at the Pork Congress addressing the current corn conundrum issue. Ideas for corn procurement and risk management, use of distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS) in sow and grow-finish diets, and flowability issues with DDGS will be presented by University of Minnesota experts. A Porcine Circovirus Disease forum will also be held on January 18th. Come one or both days, and don't forget to stop by our booth!

6. Manure management and air quality workshops are set for 2007

The Manure Management and Air Quality Team at the University of Minnesota Extension Service has just released details for their 2007 workshops. Since the year 2000 these workshops have provided research based education to a wide range of audiences from Minnesota as well as other states and Canadian provinces. The 2007 workshop series provides practical and applied research-based educational programs on odor and air quality, manure application, and feedlot runoff for a variety of audiences.

Please check the website (www.manure.umn.edu/workshops) for workshop dates and descriptions along with registration information for the following workshops.

- Animal Agriculture and Air Quality I
- Animal Agriculture and Air Quality II
- Biofilter Design and Construction
- Manure Management I - Nitrogen
- Manure Management II - Phosphorus
- Manure Management III - Developing A Plan
- Manure Management IV - Software for Manure Management Planning
- Current Issues in Manure Management
- MAFEM (Minnesota Annualized Feedlot Evaluation Model (formerly FLEval) - New User Training.
- Understanding Animal Agriculture
- Manure Storage Systems

Primary course instructors from the University of Minnesota join experts from federal, state, and local agencies such as the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to provide a comprehensive learning experience. Backed by current research from the University of Minnesota, these workshops offer the most unbiased, cost effective, and practical educational opportunities available on manure management today.

7. Now is the time to sign up for 2007 EQIP funds

The first scoring period for 2007 EQIP applications in Minnesota runs from December 4, 2006 through January 2007. If necessary, there will be a second scoring period from February 1 through February 28 to ensure all of Minnesota's 2007 allocation will be used. While Congress hasn't yet appropriated 2007 EQIP funds, it is anticipated that about \$25 million will be available for EQIP in Minnesota this fiscal year. Minnesota NRCS proposes to devote \$23.5 million of the anticipated \$25 million to the locally led process and the rest to special initiatives; for details, see the attached Minnesota 2007 EQIP Draft Allocations.

Producers may submit EQIP applications year-round, but funding decisions aren't made until the scoring period ends. Interested producers are advised to submit EQIP applications as soon as possible, as the funds are expected to be in high demand. Nationwide, NRCS aims to have all 2007 EQIP contracts selected by early March and in place by early June 2007.

The 2007 Minnesota EQIP Practice Payment docket and other information about the signup will be available soon on the Minnesota NRCS website at www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov.

8. Webcast resource is available for dealing with manure issues

Once-monthly web casts that are broadcast by the National Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center are available to listen to or download for free. This is an excellent series of webcasts that are broadcast on the third Friday of each month dealing with manure issues. To view the webcasts live or in archived form you just need Real Player on your computer. If you go to the LPELC website <http://lpe.unl.edu/> and look under the "Webcast Series" you will see upcoming webcasts and that there is a link to archived webcasts at <http://lpe.unl.edu/archive2.html>.

Questions?

It is our goal to bring University research to the Minnesota Pork Industry, ensuring the continued sustainability and competitiveness of producers and allied industry. Periodically check our events calendar on the U of MN Swine Extension website (www.extension.umn.edu) for upcoming workshops and seminars. Please email or call me if I can be of assistance:

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