



*University of Minnesota*  
**SWINE EXTENSION**  
Update

*December 22, 2005*

*Volume 10*

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**1. There is still time to register for PorkBridge 2005-2006**

Although the first session of PorkBridge has come and gone ("Impact of out-of-feed events and water restrictions on grow-finish performance" by Mike Brumm, University of Nebraska), spots are still open to register for the remaining 5 presentations. The program combines electronic information viewed on computer with live oral presentations via phone by experts in the topic areas. The week before each session, subscribers will receive a CD containing that session's topic-specific presentation, along with a short homework assignment and information on accessing the live speaker presentation.

Remaining dates, speakers, and topics are: Feb. 9, 2006 Locke Karriker, Iowa State University, "The basics of on-farm necropsy"; April 6, 2006 Rick Stowell, University of Nebraska, "The basics of ventilation controllers"; June 1, 2006 Robert Thaler, South

Dakota State University, "Keeping pigs eating in hot weather"; Aug. 3, 2006 Alex Ramirez, Iowa State University, "The basics of grow-finish biosecurity"; and Oct. 5, 2006 Lee Johnston, University of Minnesota, "Animal welfare considerations in grow-finish facilities."

To register, contact Sherry Hoyer at (515)294-4496. Cost is \$125 for all remaining 5 sessions, covers one phone line and CD, and multiple people can participate from one line and subscription. For more information, contact Mark Whitney at (507)389-5541.

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## **2. MN Pork Congress coming up January 18 and 19, 2006**

Held January 18 and 19 at the Minneapolis Convention Center, this annual event provides numerous opportunities to interact with exhibitors and swine industry experts. A number of seminars and training workshops are held throughout the 2-day event. Highlights of this year's training sessions include custom manure applicator and Operation Main Street training. Seminars will be presented on global animal disease preparedness, how to conduct on-farm necropsies, the upcoming market outlook, a Spanish Breeding and Gestation short-course demonstration, regional PRRS control research, managing your barn's ventilation system, and analyzing capital investment decisions. Additionally, information on recent U of MN research, including PRRS control, feeding DDGS to swine, and measuring odor, will be available at the U of MN Swine Center / Extension booth. Contact the MN Pork Producers Association for more information at (507) 345-8814 or [www.mnpork.com](http://www.mnpork.com).

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## **3. The economics of pig space in finishing facilities**

Animal welfare pressures have spurred researchers and producers alike to consider adding space for pigs in confinement barns. In view of animal welfare, the optimal levels of pig stocking density are measured as either improvements in growth performance or behavior (less fighting, dunging in sleeping areas, etc.).

A recent study sponsored by the National Pork Board and completed Brian Buhr, Derald Holtkamp, Micheal Brumm and Jim Kliebenstein sought to determine the economic implications of potential increases in pig space allocation. An industry survey of three-dozen producers, veterinarians, industry consultants and university swine specialists was completed and results showed that finishing pig space allocations currently used in confinement barns averaged 7.19 sq. ft. and 11.57 sq. ft. for hoop systems. Survey results of marketing practices found that 90% of the U.S. hog industry topped finishing pens and sold pigs from a finishing facility for 24.8 days on average, the critical weight for space allocation to maintain a space allocation of 8.73 square feet is also much reduced and would have tremendous impacts on prices received under current packer grids.

An economic simulation model was developed that estimated the cost of increasing pig space allocation at finishing. To access a full summary of the results, go to the UMN Swine Extension website at [www.extension.umn.edu/swine](http://www.extension.umn.edu/swine).

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#### 4. Pros and cons of the net energy system for swine

Feed is by far the single most expensive cost of producing pork, accounting for  $\frac{2}{3}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of total production costs on average, and on a nutritional basis, energy is the most expensive nutrient in the diet. I think we all understand the importance that energy intake and density in the diet plays on subsequent growth performance and carcass characteristics in the pig. Therefore, any means by which we can more closely meet the energy requirements of the pig without over- or under-feeding this nutrient can significantly improve not only feed conversion but also decrease the cost per pound of pork produced. Therefore, nutritionists formulating diets on a least cost basis pay special attention to energy level of the diet and cost to provide it. However, depending on energy system used, different ingredients (energy sources) may have different value in the diet.

This article describes the four main energy systems, their pros and cons, and discusses the value of using a net energy system for swine. Access the full article at [www.extension.umn.edu/swine](http://www.extension.umn.edu/swine).

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#### 5. Feral pigs are biosecurity risk

The Pork Checkoff is urging producers to be on look-out for feral pigs. Feral pigs, or wild pigs, can cause extensive damage to property, crops and are a threat to the health of the national swine herd. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are an estimated 4 million wild pigs distributed across 39 states in the United States. The population and distribution of these feral pigs has expanded in the last decade and wild pigs have been sighted and hunted in some of the country's largest pork producing states including Iowa, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Texas.

Wild pigs are carriers of external parasites and of diseases important to the pork industry. Wild pigs may carry brucellosis, pseudorabies (PRV), classical swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease, African swine fever, porcine reproduction and respiratory syndrome (PRSS), swine influenza virus and leptospirosis. According to USDA data in 2005, feral pig populations that are serologically-positive to brucellosis have been found in 14 states. Pseudorabies has been confirmed in feral pig populations in at least 11 states. In 2003, feral pigs sampled in South Carolina were found serologically positive to the H1 subtype of the swine influenza virus and serologically positive to PRRS.

Pork producers can protect their herds from contact with wild pigs through strict biosecurity including perimeter fencing. A good rodent control program, bird-proof buildings and no feed and grain spills are all important biosecurity measures to have in place." Pigs produced outdoors are especially vulnerable to the threat of feral pigs. Feral pig sightings should be reported to the state veterinarian's office as feral pig control and eradication techniques may be in process for the state.

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## 6. EQIP funding now available through USDA-NRCS

The USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) principal sign-up period is December 15, 2005 through January 31, 2006. After that, applications will still be accepted, but will be held in reserve. As with last year, the state is expecting to distribute \$25 million, mostly through county allocations. There is a long list of conservation practices available for cost-share or incentive payments, ranging from conservation tillage to managed grazing and manure storage. Even compost dairy barn construction is eligible if there is an existing pollution problem that it would correct. Livestock mortality composting facilities are another cost-share practice of interest. Producers should head to their local NRCS office as soon as possible to begin their applications. Consult the Minnesota NRCS Web site for details of practices and the application scoring process: <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

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## 7. Wean to finish management courses available in February

Two-day intensive workshops designed to address the basics of day-to-day management activities in pork production related to growing and finishing pigs will be held February 9 and 10 in Morris and February 16 and 17 in Waseca. The course is appropriate for people with a limited knowledge of pork production as well as veterans wishing to review the basics and stay abreast on recent developments. Topics that will be covered in the workshop include:

*Production Systems* : Comparison of wean to finish and conventional nursery/grow-finish systems; sorting systems; feeder types

*Preparing the Facility to Receive Pigs* : Maintain and repair equipment and facilities; clean and disinfect; pest management; space allowances; biosecurity

*Nutrition* : Feeding strategies; feed budgeting; feed quality; sampling and quality assurance; managing feeders and waterers; proper diet processing; alternative feed ingredients and additives

*Environment and Performance* : Temperature; air quality; ventilation management; sanitation; manure management; introduction to SWAP

*Animal Health* : Developing a herd health program; proper use of pharmaceuticals; control of existing herd health challenges; health monitoring; treatment options; review PQA good production practices, guidelines for on-farm necropsy

Classroom instruction is provided on the first day of the program, lasting from noon - 9 pm. A hands-on session, conducted at swine research facilities, is conducted the second day of the program from 8 am to noon. The hands-on session incorporates numerous activities relating to material covered in the classroom portion of the course in order to maximize student learning and understanding.

University of Minnesota faculty and educators and swine industry experts provide instruction for the course. Cost of the program is \$100 per person, and includes learning materials, lunches, breaks, instructor fees, and biosecurity clothing for hands-on training sessions. Reduced registration for multiple registrations is also available. For more information, contact Dr. Mark Whitney, swine extension educator, at (507) 389-5541. Individuals wishing to register for the workshop should contact the Minnesota Pork Board at (507) 345-8814.

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## 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](http://www.extension.umn.edu)) for upcoming workshops and seminars. Please email or call me if I can be of assistance:

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