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1. New SowBridge Distance Learning Program to Begin in October

Don't have a lot of time to attend a seminar or conference, but are still interested in staying current with new technology, research, and management techniques related to breeding, gestation, and/or farrowing management? A new educational series, entitled "SowBridge", allows sow unit owners, managers and employees to increase their knowledge and skills without needing to leave the comfort of their home or farm office, and is designed to aid in day-to-day activities and enhance profitability of their herd or unit.

The SowBridge Breeding Herd Education Program, modeled after the popular "PorkBridge" Grow-Finish Series, combines electronic information viewed on computer with live oral presentations via phone by national experts in topic areas. Presentations in the educational series will be held the first Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am CST (12:30 pm EST), starting October 3rd. Subject material is designed to cover topics and issues applicable to modern operations and systems of all sizes.

The week before each session, subscribers receive a CD containing that session's presentation, along with information on accessing the live speaker presentation. Subscribers call into a toll-free conference line to listen to and interact with presenters. Each program is 45 minutes in length, while cost for participating in this series of 12 programs (October 2007 - September 2008) is \$250. The SowBridge program is sponsored by the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, University of Nebraska, Ohio State University, and South Dakota State University. Mark Whitney and Lee Johnston of the University of Minnesota are coordinators for the program. For more information or to register, go to the UMN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine or call Sherry Hoyer at the Iowa Pork Industry Center at (515)294-4496. Register by September 24th to ensure access to the first program on Oct 3rd.

2. Leman Conference September 15-18

The Allen Leman Swine Conference will be held at the St. Paul RiverCentre on September 15 - 18. The program attracts swine practitioners and pork industry representatives from throughout the United States, as well as internationally. Of note this year are two pre-conference sessions that could be especially beneficial to producers.

The University of Alberta/University of Minnesota Reproduction Workshop on Managing Gene Transfer will be held Saturday, September 15th from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm and costs \$165. For more information or to register, go to <http://www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach/events/adl/preconf.html#1>.

The Kansas State/University of Minnesota Nutrition Workshop on Dealing with the New Realities of Higher Feed Costs will be held Sunday, September 16th, from 1 - 5 pm and costs \$95. For more information or to register, go to <http://www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach/events/adl/preconf.html#9>.

3. MN Nutrition Conference September 18-19

The 68th Annual Minnesota Nutrition Conference will be held September 18-19 at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Minneapolis. The Minnesota Nutrition Conference provides a forum for feed industry professionals to update their knowledge of beef, dairy, poultry, and swine nutrition. Speakers bring the latest concepts of livestock feeding throughout North America. Conference highlights include:

- Managing sulfur concentrations in ruminant diets
- Meeting energy needs in the biofuel age
- Feed processing to optimize energy nutrition
- Nutrition for optimal bone growth
- Vitamin E and fat for poultry
- Latest ideas for DDGS in non-ruminant diets

For more information or to register, go to the MN Nutrition Conference website at: <http://www.cce.umn.edu/conferences/mnnutrition/>

4. PorkCast Presentation on Gilt Management Available Online

If you missed the August 8 presentation from Dr. Don Levis, University of Nebraska, on "Bringing and Keeping Gilts in the Breeding Herd", you still have a chance to view the program from the PorkCast website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine/porkcast. The August 8th PorkCast program provided strategies and information on how to develop and manage gilts to maximize lifetime reproductive performance and longevity. Also available is the March 28th PorkCast program on proactive options for pork producers to deal with the challenge of increased feed prices.

PorkCast Online Seminars is a quarterly webcast series developed by the University of Minnesota Extension and Minnesota Pork Board to provide management level research-driven information to pork production managers and owners. PorkCast programs can be viewed from one's computer, and pre-registration is not required. For more information on this event, contact Mark Whitney, University of Minnesota Extension at 888-241-3214 or whitn007@umn.edu or Trudy Wastweet, Minnesota Pork Board at 1-800-537-7675 or trudy@mnpork.com.

5. Quality Considerations of 2007 Crops for Livestock Producers to Consider

The combination of potential drought and hail damage to crops for 2007 brings up the question of what sort of damage or toxins should livestock producers be looking for in new crop corn or forages. Dr. Mike Murphy, toxicologist with the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota, addresses these issues, looking at nutritional value, nitrate concentration, and mycotoxins in corn and nutritional value, weed infestation, and presence of toxic plants in forages. Sampling guidelines and considerations are also presented. To access the article, go to the University of Minnesota Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

6. Feeding Considerations with Gestating Sow Housing Options

With consumer interest and concern increasing over how gestating sows are being housed, many questions are arising concerning implications in managing different sow housing systems. Dr. Mark Whitney, swine specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension, discusses different feeding systems that are available for group housing, and how housing system may affect feeding management. To access the article, go to the University of Minnesota Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

7. New Alternative Swine Production Health Reference Available

Pork producers utilizing alternative swine production systems often encounter special opportunities as well as unique challenges when producing meat for specialty markets. A new guidebook, *Managing for Herd Health in Alternative Swine Systems*, provides information from veterinarians and experienced producers on how to creatively manage and maintain herd health in these types of systems. The guide was put together by Iowa State University (ISU) scientists and the nonprofit organization Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI), with funding support from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE). Copies are available free of charge from PFI by contacting Rick Exner, PFI/ISU Extension Farming Systems Coordinator, at 515-294-5486 or dnexner@iastate.edu. The 50-page guide can also be downloaded via the web at www.pfi.iastate.edu/pigs.htm.

8. PIG Opportunities Web Site Available with Pork Industry Careers Information

The U.S. Pork Center of Excellence (USPCE) has launched a new program, PIG Opportunities, within the Pork Information Gateway (PIG) Web site, which can be accessed through www.extension.umn.edu/swine. The program is designed to encourage individuals to pursue a career in the pork industry. There are several components to PIG Opportunities:

- Careers in Pork is a list of careers possible in the pork industry including experience needed, duties of the position and skill requirements.
- The Community College and the Swine Science 4 Year College and Institutions sections provide lists of educational institutions that offer swine science courses within their curriculum.
- The final component of PIG Opportunities, Internships, provides a listing of current internships available in the pork industry.

Employers, universities and community colleges are invited to share their opportunities in the swine industry free of charge in PIG Opportunities by contacting Sarah Beaman at sbbeaman@iastate.edu.

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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