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1. Circovirus Disease - What Have Vets Been Seeing?

Porcine circovirus type 2 disease, or PCVD, has become too common of a household name in the Minnesota and U.S. pork industry. A recent survey was conducted with members of the American Association of Swine Veterinarians to obtain general information on their experiences with the disease. Overall, 85% of vets had diagnosed PCVD in finishing pigs during 2006, while the vast majority of these vets relied on diagnostic laboratory support when diagnosing the disease. The vets represented 17 different states, indicating widespread of the disease. One third of the vets indicated that they observed wasting in all cases they diagnosed, while a fifth of the vets indicated that they observed respiratory signs in all cases diagnosed. The vets estimated that PCVD has occurred in approximately half of the sites they oversee. In almost three-fourths of those outbreaks, mortality was estimated to have increased three-fold.

Access the entire review article from the UMN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

2. Effect of Host-Microbe Interactions in the Gut on Pig Performance

The intestine of the pig is a key organ responsible not only for digestion and absorption of nutrients, but is also a key component in maintaining overall health. The microbial population in the gastro-intestinal system is a key component, and affects several aspects of nutrient utilization and animal health. This article provides an overall view of the defense system against pathogens that the intestine contains, and highlights the involvement and affect of bacterial colonization, both beneficial and pathogenic, on animal health and performance. Access the complete article from the UMN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

3. A Review of Large Group Housing of Grow-Finish Pigs

This review article, written by Harold Gonyou and Lee Whittington from the Prairie Swine Center, summarizes the recent movement towards larger pen sizes in grow-finish production, and most current understanding of effects. Four main drivers are identified for increasing size of pens: desire to reduce construction costs, increased herd sizes available to accommodate larger pen sizes, availability of electronic sorting technology, and improved utilization of space. The researchers estimate that reduced housing costs and better space utilization results in a net benefit of nearly \$5/pig when using the large group housing system. Research results indicate that average daily gain is slightly reduced in larger pens, but body weight variation is not affected, while aggression among pigs declines.

Access the entire review article from the UMN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

4. Employee Management Conference is June 26th in Mankato

Managing People in Pork Production: An Employee Management Conference for Swine Managers and Owners will be June 26th at the Best Western, North Mankato. Registration begins at 8 a.m. with program seminars from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The pre-registration fee is \$20, if paid by June 19. Registration at the door is \$40. The fee includes speakers, materials, lunch and breaks. Pork Checkoff dollars are also funding this event. To assist with planning, pre-registration is strongly encouraged.

The program goal is to provide tips and ideas on employee management that are easily and quickly transferable back to the office and barns. The information is adaptable to swine operations that hire many employees or those primarily run with family labor. For additional information contact MPB Education Director Trudy Wastweet at 1-800-537-7675 or trudy@mnpork.com. More information on the program and schedule is available at <http://www.mnpork.com/employee.php>.

5. Breeding and Gestation Management Course is July 26-27 in Waseca

The University of Minnesota Extension Service and Minnesota Pork Board will be offering a two-day course on Breeding and Gestation Management at the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC) in Waseca, MN on July 26-27. The course, part of the Swine Training Series, is offered once a year and is designed to increase participants understanding of the factors necessary to successfully breed females and to care for them during gestation. The course involves one day of classroom presentations and discussion (10 am to 7 pm) and a second half-day with hands-on activities (8 am to noon) at the WCROC sow unit. Univ. of MN educators and swine industry experts provide instruction and course content.

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 and current technology. Specific areas covered in the course include rearing replacement females, mating systems, breeding practices, pregnancy management, and preparing for parturition. Additionally, all participants will automatically be certified under the new PQA Plus program for 3 years. Cost for the entire workshop is \$100, and includes learning materials, meals, instructor fees, and biosecurity clothing for hands-on training. To register, contact Trudy Wastweet at the Minnesota Pork Board at (507) 345-8814. More detailed information is available on the UMN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

6. Upcoming PQAPlus Advisor Training Dates

The National Pork Board recently unveiled PQA Plus™, the pork industry's new on-farm quality assurance program that encompasses both pork safety and animal well-being. Pork industry customers' have endorsed PQA Plus as a credible solution to their consumer customers' concerns about the way pigs are raised. PQA Plus advisors are the educators who work directly with producers and who are the backbone of this new quality assurance program. PQA Plus advisors will educate pork producers on the PQA Plus program and will help producers obtain PQA Plus certification and PQA Plus site status at their respective production sites.

The University of Minnesota has partnered with the Minnesota Pork Board to present three training opportunities for individuals to become certified PQA Plus advisors. Current PQA educators who wish to continue certifying producers in PQA will need to become a certified PQA Plus advisor. PQA Plus Advisors must satisfy certain requirements (*on registration/application form*) and pass a training course. Upcoming training session dates and locations are:

- June 21st, 9 am - 3 pm, Southwest Research and Outreach Center, Lamberton, MN
- July 10th, 9 am - 3 pm, Midtown Square, Conf Rm 108, St. Cloud, MN
- Sept 15th, 9 am - 3 pm, Leman Conference, Crowne Plaza Hotel, St. Paul, MN

Individuals wishing to attend one of the training courses must register at least one week ahead of time by filling in the registration/application form (<http://www.mnpork.com/pqaapp07.pdf>) and sending to the MN Pork Board. More PQA Plus information is available at the National Pork Board website at www.pork.org or by calling Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-PORK.

7. Webcast on options for producers to reduce feed cost impacts available online

Presentations from the PorkCast program "Rising to the Challenge of Rising Corn Prices: Proactive Options for the Pork Industry" are now available online. A complete recording of the program, along with slides from individual presentations, are available free of charge at the Univ of MN Swine Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine. The webcast provides strategies and information on how to prepare for grain availability issues, how to manage price volatility, production strategies and options to control costs, and steps on assessing financial health and business goals.

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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