

The Mystery Colony

This month's mystery colony is west of Lethbridge, Alberta. If you can't figure it out, call your Standard Nutrition Consultant and have them give some hints. March's mystery colony was Downie Lake Colony.

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Tobin' Talk

Jason McNaughton



Our mission at Standard Nutrition Services is to assist livestock producers in meeting their life objectives through profitability producing pork and poultry. This mission was set many years ago and remains the ideological driver for each member of our team. As a manager for Standard I'm offered the privilege of spending time with clients and consultants from each region of our industry. Whether in Montana or Manitoba, South Dakota or Saskatchewan, Alberta or Iowa, the focal points of our on-farm visits have truly differentiated Standard and our clients from the rest of the crowd. It is this difference that has in part helped each of us not only survive through the trying times of the most recent past, but also has us poised to fully capture the opportunities of the future. With a relentless focus on the production criteria of records, environment, nutrition, health, and husbandry, our consultants' top the field. You can be sure that profitably raising animals requires a human touch. It's not as simple as plugging numbers in and having a computer provide its answer. The recent state of our industry and economy have allowed us many reasons to be pessimistic and be dominated by negativity, although during many recent meetings with producers, the vibe couldn't be more the opposite. I've sat and listened to many producers review the advantages that their own business has over ones that have exited. Some conversations then migrate to very specific production schemes or questions that revolve around a desired solution to a production challenge. I realize as the dialogue continues that both parties remain eager to learn from each other. The information, techniques, and practices exchanged have made each individual and their business stronger. We at Standard feel very fortunate that so many of you have put your trust in us to assist you with your production of pork and poultry and feel equally blessed to work with the greatest group of professionals anywhere in this industry.

Don's Deal

Don Deleurme



Spring is coming near when Red Deer Pork Congress has come and gone. Hope everyone had fun on the bus tour. Spoke with many producers and everyone seems to be a little more relaxed than a year ago. Due to feed costs dropping and hog prices on the rise, many producers are operating in a profitable situation where it is making life easier to go to work in the barns every day and knowing that you are making money again. As we sit down and speak to many producers it has become apparent that even though profitability is being achieved on farm one still needs to analyze where they are at with their particular operation. It seems to always happen when good profit is made one tends to overlook some inefficiencies which may become costly over time. That is why it helps to have someone knowledgeable come and visit to help overcome these areas to improve profitability. Ask your local Standard -Max Pro representative to aid you with improving your facility to become as profitable as possible. Many producers ask what is happening with COOL. In reading a lot of articles as of late it is apparent that the supply of pork is diminishing and many US producers are extremely worried of what is going to happen in a short time to for some their livelihood. Many producers who solely finish hogs rely on the Canadian market as their supplier so for those who leveraged themselves with new barns are in troublesome times. Hopefully for all, things will change for the better.

Craig's Corner

Craig Anderson



One year ago, our company decided as one of our key initiatives to increase our resources and focus on the turkey industry for our clients. I would like to recognize Mike McNabb, our Turkey Feed Sales Consultant, and Jim Plyler, our Turkey Technical Consultant, who together took on this challenge and I must say one year later have done an outstanding job bringing value to turkey producers. Jim has been extremely helpful to several colonies by detecting and recognizing challenges in their barns and working with them to turn those situations into positive outcomes. Jim is an efficiency expert and applies his expertise in a practical manner that adds considerable dollars to the bottom line, a task that is extremely valuable in times like these. Mike McNabb, with assistance from Dr. Tjardes, has focused on the nutritional needs of specific flocks by determining the diets that are needed and then incorporating those diets into the management protocols that are necessary for the desired efficiencies and outcomes. Whether your focus is on cost, feed efficiency, or best case, both, Mike knows how to help achieve those needs. Jim, Mike, and Michelle communicate frequently and work closely to ensure that all the pieces we have just discussed come together in an orderly fashion, and just as importantly, meet the desired results that are expected to add value to the bottom line. This team has done an outstanding job in meeting the needs and expectations of our turkey clients. My congratulations to each of them. We welcome the opportunity to work with you in your operation, please feel free to contact us for any ideas or help!

Nutritionally Speaking

Michelle Tjardes, Ph.D.

Standard Nutrition Nutritionist

Vaccines, Nutrition, Performance



It is interesting the Colin would write on the positive affects of the circovirus vaccine. I just returned from the Midwest Animal Science Meetings in Des Moines, Iowa past week and there was a lot of discussion on vaccines, especially the circovirus vaccines. There were numerous different research presentations on the effect of nutrition and the timing of the circovirus vaccine on piglet performance.

Specifically, one study done by Kansas State where they compared 3 different “diets” all containing the same level of nutrition, just different feed ingredients and whether the pigs were vaccinated at weaning or 8 days after weaning. Interestingly, nutrition in this study had an effect on performance, but there was no interaction between diet and vaccination timing. The diets were formulated to contain the same energy and amino acid levels, but pigs on one diet grew slower and ate less feed compare to the 2 other diets. The researchers noted it must be due to nutrient availability from the ingredients used in this third diet. They commented on how important it is to know the digestibility of your ingredients and make sure you are purchasing the best quality available to optimize nursery pig performance.

Additionally, day of vaccination did affect performance. Pigs vaccinated at weaning ate less feed and grew slower

for the first 8 days after weaning that pigs vaccinated on day 8. That is not surprising, vaccination asks the body to react like the pig had the disease. This build up of immunity to a disease costs energy and that reduces the amount of energy available for growth. By day 20 after weaning both vaccinated groups weighed the same. Thus, pigs vaccinated on day 8 grew slower than pigs vaccinated at weaning from day 8 to day 20. Also it is important to note, pigs that were never vaccinated with the circovirus vaccine weighed about 1 lb more at day 20 after weaning than the 2 vaccinated groups of pigs. The researchers noted this was a pretty typical result when they reviewed other studies that looked at the effects of vaccination on growth performance of nursery pigs. They are doing a follow up study to see if this weight difference is carried through the finisher.

The researchers are NOT suggesting we eliminate vaccinations in nursery pigs. These pigs came from a high health sow herd and were managed in a clean, research type environment. In today’s operations, vaccines are critical to profitable hog production. The cost of disease is significantly higher than the slight weight reduction in vaccinated pigs.

Swine Health Update

Colin Kirkegaard, DVM, MS

Circovirus Vaccines: Conclusions 1 Year Later



Porcine circovirus type 2 (PCV2) was first described in 1998. Since then it has come to be known as the primary etiologic agent in a number of diseases that are included in the acronym PCVAD (porcine circovirus associated disease). Today PCVAD includes systemic infection or post weaning multisystemic disease (PMWS), PCV2-associated pneumonia, PCV2-associated enteritis, PCV2-associated reproductive failure, and PCV2-associated dermatitis and nephropathy syndrome (PDNS). Lesions can vary from mild to severe.

It has been a little over a year since circovirus vaccines became readily available to large number of US swine producers. Vaccine usage was rapidly adopted by a large segment of the swine industry with 73,000,000 doses used in 2008. The conclusion in the industry is the vaccines have significantly reduced mortality and morbidity in our pig populations. Some producers and veterinarians have

referred to PCV2 vaccines as “miracle vaccines”. Many industry watchers have attributed some of the recent low market prices to the availability and success of the circovirus vaccines.

In addition to reductions in mortality and morbidity, grow-finish closeouts are documenting a number of other benefits from using circovirus vaccines. These include improved average daily gain, improved feed conversion, more full value pigs, increased lean meat yield, decreased back fat depth, and reduced medication cost. These economic benefits are being seen in herds without the classical symptoms of PCVAD.

No vaccine can be 100% effective in every situation. It is important to follow label recommendations to keep the efficacy as high as possible.

From the Field

Bill Sharp

Working with Your Consultant to Improve Performance

Standard Nutrition Swine Consultant



Hello to all the loyal readers of the Standard Nutrition Newsletter. My name is Bill Sharp, and I’ve been consulting for Standard Nutrition with our clients’ for the past eight years. My territory covers most of Northern Alberta, where my clients are a mix of colony farms and a few private producers.

For my wife Judy, daughters Lindsay (21 years), Daniel (18 years), and me, the real joy of this industry/company has been the wonderful people we’ve be given the chance to meet that have become our dear friends.

When joining the Standard team, I came in as a very confident nutrition formulator across all the species of livestock production. In recent years, my focus has revolved mostly around swine nutrition. My favorite area

of a barn to tackle has always been the nursery, and this often becomes a focal point for my initial barn walk-through.

When viewing the nursery pig, we start by accessing the growth potential, based on environment, genetics, and health. Once this has been established, we must gain a sense on how the specific herd performance measures in comparison to this potential. Whether the weaner hogs are performing close to their goals or not, there are many small points that can improve overall gains and future feed efficiencies to these growing hogs. We all know that fast growing, high premium, profitable market hogs are created in the nursery rooms, which presents the best opportunity to work closely with your nutrition consultant.

Turkey Talk

Jim Plyler, M.S.

Standard Nutrition Turkey Consultant

Poult Immunity



Immunity can be described as the ability of the poult to recognize the presence of material normally within the body, and being able to eliminate the materials that are not normal. When a disease organism invades, the bird’s body usually produces antibodies and the bird has specific cells whose purpose is to attack and destroy these foreign substances. Substances that are identified by the bird’s body as foreign are known as antigens. In other words, antigens are substances that cause the immune system to develop a defense against an invading organism (disease).

We all realize that diseases increase cost to produce, and we strive to avoid the consequences of a disease outbreak. Diseases can be caused by microbes (viruses, bacteria, fungi or protozoa), internal or external parasites, genetic disorders, nutrient deficiencies or mismanagement. Today’s poultry production methods have virtually eliminated nutrient deficiencies and most genetic disorders. However, we continue to battle with microbes and parasites. Mismanagement is a totally separate book, which should be discussed at a later date. Since fewer and fewer antibiotics are available or being used in poultry production, we are forced to depend more heavily on the immunity provided, sometimes by using vaccines.

When birds are exposed to a disease, the bird can be protected by parental immunity or protected by immunity from vaccines (development of immunity). If the bird does not have this immunity, infection usually occurs, allowing

the disease to attack various parts of the body producing sickness.

Those birds that survive the disease have an active immunity that allows their body to respond to future invasions of similar microbes. While performance may return during recovery from the disease, performance lost during the sickness is often never regained, especially if the challenge occurred early in the bird’s life. As the embryo develops within the egg it has no immunity of its own, but antibodies from the breeder hen are absorbed; protecting the poult from disease. However, this is short lived and the poult can be challenged by environmental and disease organisms as they age.

Sometimes we are faced with using vaccines to get the protection, from challenges the birds encounter in their lifetime. Vaccines trigger the bird’s body to think that it’s being invaded by a specific organism, and the immune system goes to work to destroy the invader and prevent it from infecting the bird again. If the bird is exposed to a disease for which it had been vaccinated, the invading germs are met by antibodies that will destroy them. The immunity the birds develops following vaccination is similar to the immunity acquired from natural infection. Vaccines come in a wide array of forms and strengths including: live or killed vaccines, recombinant-vector vaccines and DNA vaccines. Farm history, flock history or laboratory diagnostic will assist you with what program your operation requires.