

# The Mystery Colony

This month's mystery colony is west of the capital city of Manitoba. If you can't figure it out, call your Standard Nutrition Consultant and have them give some hints. February's mystery colony was Crystal Spring Colony.

- Mitch DeSorcy (204) 299-6424
- Dave Johnson (204) 479-7974
- Sean Johnston (204) 799-8822
- Jason McNaughton (204) 941-3370
- Kenny Prychun (204) 471-5678
- Patrick Prychun (204) 471-7287
- Trevor Speirs (204) 470-9772



Standard-Max Pro Nutrition  
851 Lagimodiere Blvd Unit #14  
Winnipeg, MB R2J 3K4

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### Tobin' Talk

Jason McNaughton



While preparing my monthly installment of the Newsletter, I took a moment to review our previous issue. One of the sentiments expressed surrounded the swine production shortages seen through the Midwest and Canada. I then poured through articles posted or published (320 of them) by authors outside Standard Nutrition and found that the views being expressed were in agreement that meat protein markets should trend upwards through the first half of 2009. Some definitely have been more bullish, predicting "relentless" upward trending, yet we are still waiting for this to come to fruition. In the last 18 months we've seen market dynamics swing from one extreme to other in a matter of days. Although we must continue to post information on the most relevant of topics, lately this is without question the markets.

As of mid-February we've seen the lean hog futures losing much of their recent gains, slaughter levels at near pace with the same time last year, carcass cut values are low due mostly to ham prices, but for some reason packers are bidding up daily cash hogs. Corn and soybean meal continue to lose strength due partly to some strong fund selling. Soybean meal has also been affected by needed rains in areas with crops planted and the realization that soybeans should get some added planted acres in the US this year. These factors have provided new opportunities to shore up some of our input costs for 2009. Canadian producers have also benefited from a weakening currency which had them in deep trouble during most of 2008. The lower currency does mean higher input costs, but adds value of the meat we produce. This next three months will be critical for many businesses in our industry. If the hogs hit the highs that some have predicted, we'll all take a good breath, and then get poised for the next challenge.

### Don's Deal

Don Deleurme



Many producers many are asking the same type of question, should have we locked in hog prices for the 2009 year? It is a difficult question to answer because everyone has different goals that they want to achieve. Some have booked commodity prices at different values so profitability will be different compared to someone who has not booked their ingredients. Talking with many people within the industry, 2009 is supposed to be the year where hog prices are to reach an extremely high level. According to the stats we should see a significant decrease in supply in May and prices should reflect that situation. Back to the question at hand should you lock in hogs, my answer is yes. Not to say one should book all your hogs unless the price hits a value in which you are totally satisfied with, but book half to three quarters where if it goes up great, if it goes down you are covered. No one can afford another year like 2008. It comes to setting your ego aside and telling yourself we will make a reasonable profit for the coming year. My philosophy is this, it is better to have one duck in the frying pan than one hundred flying. Red Deer Pork Congress is around the corner and we hope to see you all there. Please stop at our booth to visit us and ask our representatives some valuable questions and ask how they can help your facility be as efficient and profitable for the upcoming year.

### Craig's Corner

Craig Anderson



I am continually being asked what I think the hog prices will be this summer .As I write this article, February 11, we are starting to see some very encouraging signs of a price recovery in the hog industry. The futures rallied over \$2.00 yesterday for no other reason than to improve price. I feel, however, that the cash price will be the catalyst to bring the futures prices back to reality. We now think that there will definitely be a production hole in the kill schedule starting sometime in the second quarter. There are currently finishing spaces coming open throughout the Midwest, even to the extent rents are being re-negotiated. The price of early weaners has come down some from the highs a few weeks ago, for the most part, because producers have refused to pay the higher prices that were demanded in the marketplace, rather than a function of the supply of pigs increasing. It was announced yesterday that the implementation of Cool has been moved back at least 60 days, due to funds being pulled for the implementation of the launch. We made reference to the Cool start-up and implementation in a previous article, and this confusion is proving to be the case!

If the overall economy can start to move in a positive direction in the next few months, we feel that the lean price of hogs in the second quarter will reach somewhere in the eighties, maybe even higher. The opportunity to replace some lost equity should present itself as we move forward through the summer months. The pork producer needs the boost!

March 2009

#### ANSWER KEY

- A 14
- B 11
- C 10
- D 12
- E 8
- F 3
- G 2
- H 15
- I 13
- J 6
- K 7
- L 1
- M 5
- N 9
- O 4

## From the Field

Roxann Bjelica

### Evaluating Wean-Finish Performance - Records are a Must

Standard Nutrition Swine Consultant



I enjoy completing a group closeout when performance is optimal and profits are in the black. Too often when the economics of the pig business are poor, we want to turn our backs on evaluating records because we know it is bad so why look. Without accurate records group after group, it is difficult to identify where management and/or disease control needs to be improved.

#### Records provide:

- early warning of developing problems
- a means to monitoring health
- clues to the weak links in your operation
- a basis for making seasonal adjustments in management
- a way to identify major costs
- information for budgeting and what if scenarios
- comparisons with other producers

After a closeout is complete, I choose the performance factors that could have been better and then apply the economic impact. For example, a group with a \$4.00 per head profit and a 2.70 feed conversion could have made \$7.00 per pig (dependent on grain prices) if a 2.50 feed conversion had been achieved.

If the industry is meeting certain performance parameters, are my pigs performing better or worse and at what costs? Can I compare my records with someone who gets pigs from the same sow farm?

What are my feed antibiotics costs per pig? Is my antibiotic program positioned right for my herd health? Am I selling at the best weight? Are there management practices that I would change now that grain prices are higher?

Data needed to keep the most basic wean-finish records include: actual or estimated weaning weight, carcass data from packer with live selling weight and feed costs with pounds fed. Today's all-in/all-out practices have made recordkeeping easier than ever.

Records can be kept on simple spreadsheets or entered into a low cost computerized recordkeeping system. Whatever the system, select the one that you are comfortable with and then dedicate yourself to keeping them as accurately as possible.

## Nutritionally Speaking

Darrelle Embury, M.Sc.

Standard Nutrition Nutritionist

### The Importance of Water in Swine Production



Water is an often overlooked nutrient in swine production. It is important both in terms of the quality and the quantity of water available to the pig. Good quality water that is consistently and appropriately available has benefits for improved feed intake and subsequent pig performance. Generally, pigs will consume 2.5 to 3 times more water than feed. Factors that influence a pig's water requirement include the age (class) of pig, health status, salt intake, and environmental temperature. Water quality, water temperature, water delivery system (bowl vs. nipple), water flow rate, and correct drinker positioning influence water intake.

The two time periods where swine are most susceptible to a lack of water intake is at weaning when pigs are transitioning from a liquid to a dry diet and during lactation when sows require adequate water to maintain milk production and subsequent litter weight gain. In gestation reduced water intake can promote constipation and some studies have linked insufficient water intake to an increased incidence of urinary tract

infections in susceptible sows. Insufficient water intake during the grow / finish period is associated with reduced feed intake and poorer growth performance.

In providing adequate water supply it is important to measure flow rate (litres per minute) and water pressure for each class of pig and to adjust drinker height as the pig grows. The effect of a water flow rate that is too low or too high is the same – an overall reduction in water intake. Partially or completely blocked water lines or nipples reduce water intake. These are items that are easily corrected to maintain pig access to water.

Determine if water flow is present from each nipple daily and adjust flow rates and drinker heights prior to moving in new groups of pigs. In addition to supplying adequate water for all pigs in the barn these checks help avoid water wastage due leaky nipples and water flow or pressure above that required by the pig. Your Standard Nutrition consultant can assist you in determining appropriate water quality testing and in monitoring water flow and usage rates in your barn.

## Nutritionally Speaking

Michelle Tjardes, Ph.D.

Standard Nutrition Nutritionist

### How To Achieve Optimal Growth Rates in your Flock



The genetic companies have done an excellent job of selecting turkeys that will grow quickly and efficiently. However, their selection has been conducted under the best environment and management scenarios. So this leads to the question, what can I do as a producer to ensure I achieve the best growth from my turkeys?

First and foremost, get your poults off to a good start. Previous articles have discussed the how and the why to a good brood. The first six weeks of a bird's life are critical for the proper development of their skeleton and immune system. Exposure to high levels of stress during this period compromises their development. Good health, management, and feed consumption allow your poults to establish a solid foundation necessary to carry them through the finishing barn.

Second, make sure your birds achieve the genetic company's recommendation for target weight out of the brood barn (6 week target weight). Research indicates slow early growth followed by rapid growth in the finisher may result in weakness in respiratory and/or skeletal systems. Stress later in life will then result in high mortality. This late mortality can surface as leg weakness, cull birds, and respiratory problems. Flocks coming out of the brood at target weight do not show this period of recovery or rapid growth. Thus these birds will have less issues with late mortality.

Third, records, record, records. To achieve the best results, it is important to know how your flocks are performing. It is critical to get accurate weights when moving birds from the brooder to the finisher. Ideally all flocks should be weighed at the same age and at least 50 birds need to be weighed to obtain meaningful information.

Fourth, if flocks are not meeting target weights, you must identify why a particular flock is underweight. Management practices in the brood barn are as important as nutrition in achieving target weights. A review of health, cleaning & sanitizing programs, feed & water quality and availability, and environment is critical for determining which factor(s) are negatively affecting growth rates.

Finally, it is important to evaluate feed consumption. Again, a quality nutrition program is one of the keys to success. But no nutrition program will succeed if the birds are not consuming the right amount (enough) feed. During the first weeks of the poult's life, the amount of feed consumed is directly responsible for the poult's weight at the end of the brood.

Early growth pattern will play a significant role in final bird weight and performance. Flocks that achieve good growth rates early in the brood will finish with the best results. If you are concerned about early growth performance, please contact your Standard Nutrition Consultant today!

## Turkey Producer Quiz

Colin Kirkegaard, DVM, M.S.

Match the clues in the column on the left with the answers in the column on the right  
Answers on the Back Page—Good Luck!



- A) THE SMALLEST OF TURKEYS
- B) OPPOSITE OF A HEN
- C) CAUSE OF LOOSE DROPPINGS
- D) 3 LETTER ABBREVIATION FOR FEED MEDICATION APPROVED FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL OF NECROTIC ENTERITIS
- E) GENUS FOR ALL TURKEY COCCIDIA
- F) WATER COCCIDIA TREATMENT
- G) TURKEYS HAVE TWO OF THESE WHERE MAMMALS ONLY HAVE ONE
- H) MOST FLOCKS ARE VACCINATED FOR THIS VIRUS AROUND 5 TO 6 WEEKS OF AGE
- I) FEED MEDICATION USE TO CONTROL COCCIDIOSIS
- J) INFECTIVE COCCIDIA AGENT
- K) PROCESSORS LIKE TO SEE A LARGE \_\_\_\_\_
- L) BOTH TURKEYS AND PIGS CAN GET THIS DISEASE
- M) THE STRUCTURE WHERE FEED FIRST ACCUMULATES IN THE TURKEY'S INTESTINAL TRACT
- N) WHERE GRIT HANGS OUT
- O) MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE USED TO REDUCE PROCESSOR CONDEMNATIONS

- 1) ERYSIPELAS
- 2) CECA
- 3) AMPROLIUM
- 4) FEED WITHDRAWAL
- 5) CROP
- 6) OOCYST
- 7) BREAST MEAT YIELD
- 8) EIMERIA
- 9) VENTRICULUS OR GIZZARD
- 10) ENTERITIS
- 11) TOM
- 12) BMD
- 13) COBAN
- 14)POULT
- 15) HEMORRHAGIC ENTERITIS