

Hoof Trimming Prevents Lameness, Increases Longevity of Sows

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CANADA - Research conducted by the Prairie Swine Centre suggests as high as 60 per cent of sow herd could benefit from hoof trimming as a method to prevent lameness and increase longevity, writes Bruce Cochrane.

The Saskatoon based Prairie Swine Centre's just released research report for 2012-2013 includes 14 scientific articles, plus updates on activities in the pig production unit and technology transfer activities during 2012.

President and CEO Lee Whittington expects the report to be of particular interest to pork producers as they evaluate proposed changes to Canada's Pig Code of Practice.

Lee Whittington-Prairie Swine Centre:

I think there's a couple of interesting areas.

Of course the biggest area is loose sow housing, group housing and in that area there's a couple of projects but the one I'd point out is we've been doing some work for the last year and a half on hoof trimming.

This is a technique that the dairy producers have used to combat lameness for some time but the Zinpro people have developed something called a feet first chute and we've been the first one to use it in Canada and look at whether or not we can create a situation where we have preventative hoof trimming, so anticipating how a hoof is going to develop over time.

This is particularly important when we get sows in groups where they're on their feet longer and they're going to be more active.

In our first survey we found that perhaps as many as 60 percent of the sows in a herd could benefit from preventative hoof trimming in order to lengthen their life and reduce the amount of lameness in the herd.

This area, I think, will have a huge bearing on producers who are looking to go into group housing.

For more information on the research conducted by the Prairie Swine Centre or to access the annual research report visit the Prairie Swine centre web site at prairieswine.com.

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