



Communiqué



A NEW RESEARCH PROJECT - USE OF THE IGF2 GENE TEST FOR GENETIC IMPROVEMENT OF SOW PRODUCTIVITY

LACOMBE, August 4, 2006 - Western Swine Testing Association (WSTA) and Canadian Centre for Swine Improvement (CCSI) are launching a new research project on molecular genetics for improving sow productivity of Canadian pigs.

This new project, entitled “Use of the IGF2 gene test for genetic improvement of sow productivity” will be supported by the Alberta Livestock Industry Development Fund (ALIDF). In December, 2005, the same research team successfully completed the project entitled “Development of a system for recording, evaluation and improvement of pork quality” with support from ALIDF.

The results of the previous research projects suggest that the Insulin-Like Growth Factor 2 (IGF2) gene has a large, favorable effect on backfat thickness, lean yield, lean depth and loin eye area. As a special case, IGF2 gene can also be used to produce leaner pigs from fatter dams, because the IGF2 gene from the dam has no effect in progeny due to its imprinting effect. Therefore, sows can be fatter, have better body condition, higher fertility and will produce more as well as better quality hogs. The new research project will test this concept in Canadian purebred pigs. About one thousand sows from western Canada will be tested for the IGF2 gene and the effect of the gene absence or inclusion on litter size and other sow productivity traits will be evaluated.

The proposal of the new research project has been peer-reviewed, and approved by ALIDF in July of 2006. The research project is another effort by WSTA breeders and CCSI, aiming at improvement of swine genetics by adopting recent advancement of science and technology. The research will be undertaken jointly by WSTA and CCSI, with assistance of collaborators of the National Swine Improvement Program, such as Lab Services Division at University of Guelph and federal research labs.

Western Swine Testing Association (WSTA) is a non-profit organisation providing swine testing and evaluation services in Western Canada. WSTA offers technician service or owner tester programs for commercial or seedstock swine operations, carcass evaluation programs and genetic evaluations.

The Canadian Centre for Swine Improvement (CCSI) was created by the Canadian pork industry to provide leadership, coordination and services for swine genetic improvement. Its member organizations are the Canadian Pork Council, the Canadian Meat Council, the Canadian Swine Breeders Association and regional swine improvement centres in Western Canada, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

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