

**Report on the 55th Annual Meeting  
of the European Association for Animal Production (EAAP)  
Bled, Slovenia,  
September 5th – September 9th, 2004**

**1. The Congress**

The annual meeting of the European Association for Animal Production (EAAP) is a major scientific meeting, attended by most large swine producing countries and breeding companies. Those attending include not only European representatives but also representatives of countries which are important markets for Canada (Eastern Europe, South America, and South Asia). Very often they include experts whose advice is sought by the importers in those countries. Canada had an opportunity to present some of its achievements in the science and innovation area in this forum, as well as keeping abreast of new scientific developments which may be applicable to its programs. Canada is considered a world leader in swine genetic improvement, and must participate in such technical venues to maintain its reputation.

The EAAP annual meeting gives the opportunity to present new scientific results and discuss their potential applicability in animal production practices. The 2004 issue was of particular interest for participants from a wide range of animal production organisations and institutions, especially coming from the ten new countries that joined EU in May 2004. Discussions stimulate developments in animal production and encourage research on relevant topics.

**2. Highlights**

The main reasons for attending the Congress were to gain scientific and other knowledge applicable to the Canadian context, to increase the awareness of Canadian achievements in other countries and to network with scientific and key individuals at the international level. All these objectives were achieved.

**Scientific Program**

The Congress lasted five days, with 31 sessions in total, and about 700 papers presented, including theatre presentations and posters. Topics which were relevant to the pork industry included the following themes:

- Societies Needs in Relation to Animal Production Systems
- Effects of Globalization on Livestock Systems
- Ethical Issues in Animal Agriculture
- Large-Scale Pig Farming Systems
- Animal Health and Welfare in Intensive and Extensive Systems
- Genetics of Disease Resistance
- Management of Genetic Variation
- Regulation of Food Intake
- International Genetic Evaluation
- Genetics of Disorders
- Longitudinal Data in Genetics

### **Showcasing recent developments in the Canadian swine improvement program**

A theatre presentation was given, based on a paper co-authored by Laurence MAIGNEL(CCSI), Pramod Mathur(CCSI), Brian Sullivan (CCSI) and Isabelle Delaunay (ITP, France) entitled “*Use of foreign EBVs in genetic evaluation : example of French EBVs conversion in the Canadian Swine Improvement Program*”, during the session dealing with International Genetic Evaluation. Methods and results about international genetic comparisons in swine, taking France and Canada as an example, were presented. This topic has been studied in dairy cattle for many years, but it is in early stages in other species, and Canada and France are pioneers in this area for swine breeds. This collaboration was very much of interest for the audience, and might result in collaborations with other countries already using, or willing to use, Canadian and/or French genetics.

### **Networking**

This congress is always a good opportunity to keep informed about recent work in animal production, especially in genetics and pig breeding, in European countries. Moreover, over time other countries are more and more represented, especially US, Australia and Japan. There were several requests favourable with a larger participation of Canada in the next years. Above all, EAAP is a good place where to network with scientists and key individuals in homologous organizations.

We had interesting discussions with several European working groups involved in international genetic evaluation, the collaboration with France being cited many times as a good example in a context of growing competition.

Several scientists from ITP (Institut Technique du Porc), and INRA France (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique) also attended the meeting and it was a good opportunity to provide some updates on areas of collaboration.

Other topics of interest dealing with piglet survival, meat quality and disease resistance were raised with other groups, especially geneticists from Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, France and Spain.