

# Swine Grist

A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY GRAND VALLEY FORTIFIERS LTD.



Jim Ross, Chairman

## Blessed Christmas

Dear friends,

Summer has come and gone, autumn has once again put on a splendid show with the orange, red and yellow foliage, providing a spectacular climax to what turned out to be a beautiful summer. We are so fortunate to live in such a country as Canada, not only because of its beauty, but also because of its stability, its peace loving people, its abundance of food and many comforts. We are privileged people, indeed.

This year, after a wet cold start and periods of very hot, dry weather, for the most part we can be thankful for a pretty decent harvest. As hog producers it is a great encouragement and relief to finally experience the return to profitability in our hog operations. Even more encouraging is the indication that prices will remain profitable well into the foreseeable future.

Markets - Although the U.S. continues to kill over 2.2 million hogs per week, the huge export demand is helping to keep prices up. This week we have heard that the broiler egg set is down 8% which will greatly reduce the threat of cheap poultry. It's also predicted that because of a reduced beef cow herd, supplies of beef will also be reduced. Presently "pork" is king! This situation is a great encouragement for us all.

The grain markets have also been moderating and lower feed costs are adding dollars to those buying their feed inputs. If corn and soymeal needs to be purchased we think this could be the right time to tie down your feed needs for the next year.

On behalf of all of us at Grand Valley Fortifiers, we want to say thank you for the privilege of serving you. Our greatest joy and satisfaction comes when we can successfully enable our customers to reach their production goals. We also want to wish each of you a blessed Christmas season and a beautiful New Year filled with faith, peace, good health and much joy.

Sincerely, The Grand Valley Fortifiers Family

Dear friends,

Thursday, November 3rd was a momentous day for Grand Valley Fortifiers and for the Free From™ pork program when Grand Valley Fortifiers, the Free From™ pork producers and Quality Meat Packers were awarded the President's Choice Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Supplier of the Year award at the President's Choice Annual Innovation Summit. Truly, the entire value chain shares in this prestigious honour.



Ilan Ross, GVF President & CEO

Similar to the Academy Awards, the people at President's Choice nominate three companies for each of their annual awards which include: Supplier of the Year, Innovative Product of the Year, Most Improved Product of the Year, Supplier Life Time Achievement Award and the CSR Supplier of the Year.

The Loblaw group of companies have established five pillars of Corporate Social Responsibility which include: 1) Respect the environment 2) Source with Integrity 3) Make a positive difference in our community 4) Reflect our nations diversity 5) Be a great place to work.

By virtue of the value chain that we have all worked hard on developing from administration, production, protocol management, nutrition, rearing livestock, audits and slaughter, our combined efforts fall squarely within Loblaw's second CSR commitment, *Sourcing with Integrity*. We have communicated over and over again that it's all our job to protect the President's Choice brand by ensuring that everything we do for and with the Free From™ program has consistent and robust integrity resulting in safe, consistent, high quality product.

All of us are extremely proud of our entire value chain, fully aware that we are all being honoured with this award. Integrity of this value chain requires a full commitment from everyone involved from nutrition to production to slaughter to packaging. Special thanks needs to go to the Free From™ pork producers for their ongoing passion and daily commitment to the program.



## WHAT WILL TAKE THE PLACE OF PIGLET CASTRATION?

By: Jim Ross, Chairman

In the latest edition of *International Pig Topics* (volume 26 Number 4, 2011), there is an article entitled "What will take the place of piglet castration?". This article assumes that the days of piglet castration on the farm are numbered. I ask "Why"?

The article points out that in the European Union (EU), the animal welfare lobby groups look forward to an almost complete ban on physical castration in the next few years. Animal welfarists have effected a number of changes in raising livestock in recent years. Some of the changes which they have been instrumental in bringing about deserve merit. However, a number of the now government mandated animal husbandry regulations make little or no practical sense. These regulations are being foisted on livestock and poultry producers often by people who have little or no practical experience in working with or caring for livestock. Because of new regulations, very often producers cannot afford the required investment in facilities and equipment to bring their operation into compliance. As a result, many small producers are being forced out of business, particularly in Europe at this present time.

Today's producers are well informed and diligent in following good management practices in raising and caring for their livestock. With regards to the matter of the physical castration of piglets, the animal welfarists believe it is a cruel practice, causing unnecessary pain and suffering to the piglets.

The truth of the matter is that male piglets grow quickly into young boars and by the time they reach market weight they become sexually mature and the resulting meat from "intact" uncastrated boars becomes a source of "boar taint", a very objectionable smell and taste to consumers. It is for this reason that male piglets are still castrated surgically in much of the world. This task is accomplished quickly and efficiently by individuals who have been trained in the procedure. After disinfecting a specialized scalpel, two small 1/2" slits are made in the scrotum and the tiny testicles removed. The piglet is returned to the farrowing crate and is soon snuggling up to the warm udder and suckling mothers milk. The whole procedure takes place in less than a minute. To the welfarists this is cruelty. To the piglet and producer it is practically a non-event but very necessary to prevent the obnoxious "boar taint" from developing in male market hogs.

Over the last 25 years, a great deal of effort has been put forth to ensure that pork meat carries no trace of any antibiotics and/or other disease or growth promoting products. Some excellent antibiotics have been removed from the list of formerly allowed drugs for pig production to prevent consumers from possibly building up antibiotic resistance to some of these same antibiotics used in human medicine.

Recently the pork industry has become aware of a new Pfizer product called Improvac which when injected into the male piglets, prevents the maturing of the sexual organs thereby preventing the production of boar taint in male market hogs. The product is listed as a "vaccine". It is understood by most people that vaccines are developed to prevent disease problems. Sexual development in male pigs results from the production of hormones which are produced by maturing testicles. When the testicles are removed by castration, sexual development is

prevented from taking place. To prevent sexual development in the pig by using Improvac, one has to question what Improvac contains to alter the production of testosterone and androstenone, the two hormones responsible for male sexual development.

From reading reports on the use of this "vaccine", it recommended that piglets would need to have two injections of Improvac at two different ages. The second injection can take place up to two weeks before slaughter.

In my research I have found considerable information on the effectiveness of this vaccine in preventing "boar taint" in pork production. However, I have been unable to find any reference to the possibility of Improvac residues in pork from the injected product. Of the several different reports regarding Improvac, none of them have even mentioned the possibility of residues of Improvac in the carcass.

Today's sophisticated consumers are very concerned about traceability in the production of their food. The management practices of the producer and the use of hormones and/or antibiotics, GMO's, etc., all hold much interest. The use of an injected chemical to prevent the sexual development of male pigs could initiate a very real concern and drastic backlash not only against pork from chemically treated pigs but pork from all pigs.

We all know what occurred to pork consumption when the H1N1 virus was mislabelled as "swine flu". Consumers feared the worst and pork sales and prices plummeted. The possible damage to the pork industry from the introduction of the use of Improvac into swine production could very possibly result in severe ongoing damage to the marketing of pork throughout the world.

I believe the use of Improvac is imminent. Pfizer has invested heavily into the development of this product. They report that close to 60 countries in the world have approved the product including Canada. It would be surprising to me if very many producers would want to use the product voluntarily because of the extra work and costs entailed. However, our concern is the possibility that the powerful, humane society/welfarists lobby groups will continue pursuing the governments of the world to outlaw surgical castration and mandate all castration of male hogs be carried out by injection of Improvac or other similar products and perhaps the procedure be carried out only by licensed veterinarians.

Recently I have made contact with Quality Pork, Ffarmans Pork and Maple Leaf Pork of Brandon, Manitoba, and each of these companies has assured us that they are not presently purchasing any hogs that have been chemically castrated. Maple Leaf Pork did indicate that they are presently conducting some trial work with the product. It is our understanding that several large slaughter plants in the U.S. have stated that they will not purchase chemically castrated hogs.

We believe that these are wise decisions. However we also believe that to protect our industry, we need to take action now to prevent any effort to foist an unwanted and unneeded chemical piglet castration practice on to pork producers around the world. ■



## BIOSECURITY PROGRAM

By: Dr. Mike DeGroot



ONTARIO PORK

The biosecurity training program is important for the industry so that each producer has the opportunity to be educated on biosecurity standards for Canada and improve their current biosecurity practices. Improved on-farm biosecurity will aid in the control of disease, including PRRS. PRRS control efforts are increasing throughout Ontario, and proper biosecurity practices are essential to PRRS control. Improved on-farm biosecurity practices can reduce disease spread. Disease prevention is often less costly than disease treatment, which can lead to increased profits. A well-designed biosecurity program can improve farm profitability, pig health, and animal welfare.

The biosecurity training program will provide information on the best management biosecurity practices to control disease spread. Topics covered include farm zoning and signage, entry of new stock, transport, barn entry of staff/visitors, control of pets, wildlife, rodents, birds, equipment, feed and bedding, manure and dead stock handling, aerosol spread, herd health, and cleaning and disinfection protocols. The in-class training program is comprehensive and covers a wide variety of topics. Producers then have an opportunity to discuss issues specific to their farm during the veterinarian farm visit.

### National Biosecurity Training Program

The Canadian Swine Health Board (CSHB) launched a National Swine Farm-Level Biosecurity Standard in the fall of 2010. For implementation of the biosecurity standard, a farm-level training program has been developed. Ontario Pork will be coordinating the biosecurity program provincially.

### Program Overview

The National Biosecurity Program provides funding for producers to:

1. Attend an "in-class" training session from a certified veterinarian on the National Swine Farm-Level Biosecurity Standard. Producers will be eligible to receive \$150 per barn site. To receive funding for multiple sites, different farm personnel must represent each site at the training session.
2. Fill out a self-assessment of their current biosecurity practices and develop an action plan to improve biosecurity on-farm. Producers will be reimbursed \$500 per barn site for the self-assessment.
3. Arrange a farm visit with your herd health veterinarian to review the action plan and make additional recommendations on biosecurity practices as required. The producer will be reimbursed an additional \$500 per barn site to cover the costs of the vet visit.

Note: No funding for the self-assessment (point 2) will be provided until the veterinarian visit is completed.

Producers (barn sites) participating in the training program must **have a valid CQA registration**. Producers without a valid CQA can attend the initial training session and receive \$150, but would need to renew their CQA prior to receiving further funding.

### Program Update

As of September 30th, over 500 producers have had attended an in-class training session.

A list of training session dates and locations for November and December are on the Ontario Pork website ([www.ontariopork.on.ca](http://www.ontariopork.on.ca)) and also posted in the Ontario Farmer. To register, contact the veterinary clinic hosting the training session. Producers who have completed an in-class training session are encouraged to arrange a farm visit with their herd health veterinarian to complete the program.

Any further questions regarding the biosecurity program can be directed to:

**Dr. Mike DeGroot**

**Ontario Pork Biosecurity Coordinator**

**Phone: (519)767-4600 ext 1305 Cell: (519) 829-6342**

**[mike.degroot@ontariopork.on.ca](mailto:mike.degroot@ontariopork.on.ca)**



Canadian Swine Health Board  
Conseil canadien de la santé porcine

This project is an initiative of the Canadian Swine Health Board. Financing was made possible by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. [www.cshb.ca](http://www.cshb.ca)  
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### PIG TRADER

By: Paul Ferreira, Technical Field Support Mgr



Somewhat of a play off of the Auto Trader where people connect to buy or sell cars a couple years ago we developed our Pig Trader, in a similar manner to connect producers to buy or sell pigs.

Our thought was that with our Sales Team spread across the province and individually working with many different farms, there needed to be a method of improving the communication in relation to pig movement. Instead of one team member having to call six others to see if they knew of a producer who had feeder pigs for sale, as an example, they would only need to make one call and a list was updated that was sent by email to the entire team.

There wasn't a measure of success set when we started; we knew that if we could even connect two producers to fill each others need, then the process was of value. To date, Pig Trader has exceeded our expectations. In the two years since its inception, we have solved the needs of many producers and improved our communication and networking within the team and out in the field.

If you have a requirement for current or future pig sales or purchases, equipment or labour needs or you are looking for a barn to place extra pigs into, please contact your Sales Representative and we will add it to the Pig Trader and work at getting a solution. ■

## CASH FOR LIFE

By: Bruce Schumann, Monogastric Nutritionist



When feed prices are high, producers will do one of two things; cheapen their rations as much as possible or try to maximize their feed efficiency. The first option usually results in using feedstuffs, such as wheat shorts and DDGS that will save money (\$/MT) over their current conventional corn, soybean meal and oil rations. Many of these ingredients are lower in nutrients in comparison to corn, soybean meal and oil. The prices for commodities are not random. If a commodity is priced lower relative to another, it is for a reason...you don't get something for nothing! Commodity prices are both a function of the supply & demand and the value of the nutrients they provide (amino acids and energy) relative to one another. Most lower-cost, "alternative feed ingredients" are higher in fiber, lower in protein quality and have lower nutrient digestibility overall. While higher fibre diets can be beneficial to the gut health of the animal, they often reduce average daily gain, increase the number of days to market and decrease feed efficiency. Couple this with the fact that most of the diets are not balanced-back for metabolizable energy in order to save on total feed cost. We are trying to save money after all, aren't we? Whether these reductions in performance from our decision to reduce the cost of expensive feed are detected, depends on the number of animals you have and the accuracy with which you can measure performance in your operation.

Strategies to improve feed efficiency usually results in an increase in the cost of the ration, but the performance; measured as average daily gain and feed conversion, are improved. At today's feed prices, improving feed conversion of a \$360.00 feed (Grower 2 diet) by 10% will result in savings of \$9.00 per hog. This sounds great at first, however, the improvement of feed conversion comes at a cost. 50 kgs of

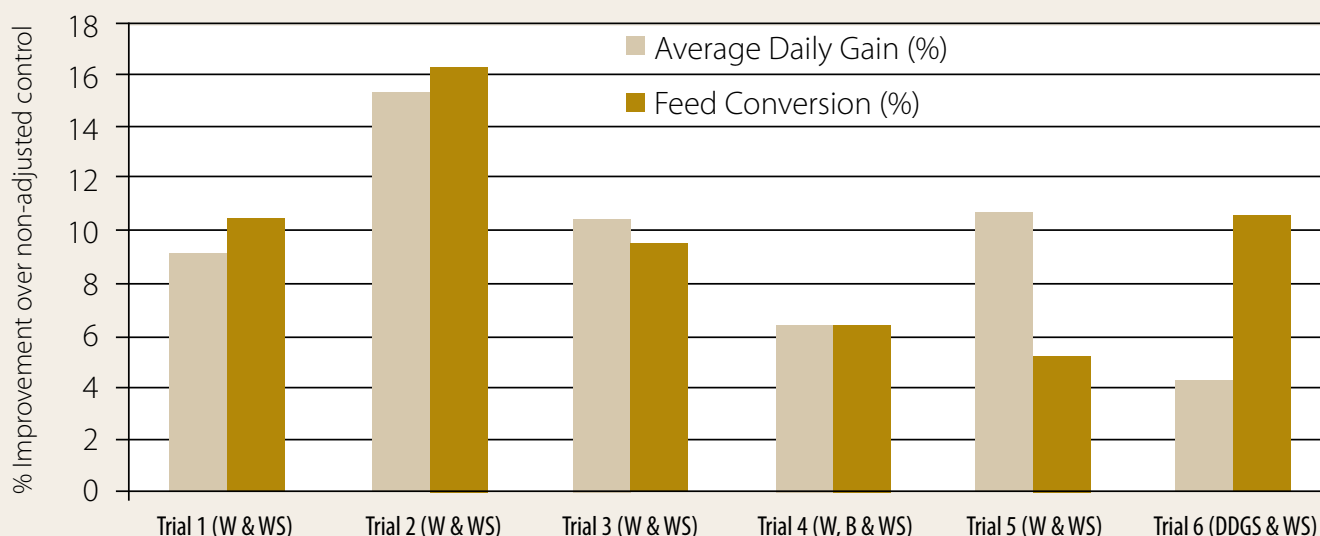
additional tallow is required to attain the 10% improvement in feed conversion, which would cost \$34.10 per tonne of complete feed or \$8.53/ hog (using the difference between tallow and corn cost as \$0.682/kg). As a result, nearly all your savings is lost through the increase in your input costs. Congratulations, you have just broke-even!

So, is there a way to have your cake and eat it too? The answer is yes! High-fibre feeds contain Indigestible Fibre Fractions (IFF's) that tie up nutrients such as amino acids, energy, minerals and reduce diet digestibility. This is a big contributing factor to the loss in performance we see. Pigs lack the enzymes in their digestive system necessary to break these IFF's open so that the nutrients can be utilized. Adding specific enzymes to the feed allows pigs to digest those previously "locked nutrients". Figure 1.0 is a summary of six grow-finish trials showing the % improvement in average daily gain and feed conversion of pigs fed high fibre diets with enzyme addition. These are significant improvements in both average daily gain and feed conversion.

The amount of enzyme required is dependent on the total amount of IFF's that are in the ration. If you're a producer feeding rations with DDGS, wheat shorts or a combination of the two, and you included the right enzyme in your hog diets, you could potentially save over \$7.00 per hog (remember the average improvement in feed conversion from the enzyme trials was 9.22%). It's like winning "Cash for Life", literally! Using this strategy, a producer with 2500 finishing spaces could save \$52,500.00 per year!

Contact your Grand Valley Fortifier's Swine Specialist or Swine Nutritionist today to find out how you can improve the economics and performance on your farm. ■

**Table 1.0 Effect of enzyme addition on % improved performance in grow-finish hogs over non-adjusted control diets.**



W – Wheat, WS – Wheat Shorts, B – Barley, DDGS – Distillers Grains with Solubles

## THE ROYAL WINTER FAIR: ONTARIO JUNIOR BARROW SHOW

By: Ron Gunson  
Business  
Development  
Manager



This year's Ontario Junior Barrow Show (OJBS) was held on Friday November 4, and included 60 competitors who traveled from across Ontario to be part of the show. The OJBS is always a highlight of the 10 day Royal Winter Fair and nothing quite compares to "getting ring side" and watching as the students show their barrows.

For the first time in the history of the OJBS, a female judge from Albany, Indiana was chosen to come up and critique the animals and students. Aimee Inskeep has judged multiple county shows across the Midwestern US and she presently works on her family's swine operation, Shaffers Goldrush. This operation is famous for producing show pigs for sale to youth who exhibit across the USA while they also have an 800 sow commercial unit and a 78 head boar stud dedicated to raising show pigs. We were privileged to have Aimee as our judge this year.

Aimee was extremely impressed with the quality of the market hogs and gilts shown at this year's show and made each student comfortable by shaking their hands as they entered the show ring. Aimee was a fantastic judge as she took the time to talk with each student sharing her reasoning for placing the animals in the order she did.

The morning kicked off with the senior showmanship class (16-21 years of age) followed by the junior showmanship (12-15 years of age) and finally the novice showmanship class, which included first time competitors as well as children 10-11 years of age. At the end of each class two or three individuals stayed with their animals in the ring awaiting the results of the other classes to determine the Grand Champion Show person. Congratulations to Brad Ypma of Tillsonburg for being named Grand Champion Showman this year.

The afternoon session included the confirmation class, which was divided up into barrows and gilts and different weights. This class' results was a combination score with 60% of the total score based on estimated lean yield, via the ultra sound scan performed the previous day, and 40% based on the score the Judge awarded the animal. Congratulations to Kristan Gunson of Wellington County who was the winner of this year's Grand Champion Market Hog and to Michelle Robinson of Perth County who was named Reserve Grand Champion.

The day ended with the much anticipated Top 30 barrow auction which was well supported by many industry partners this year and Grand Valley Fortifiers was honoured to discover that 18 of the top 30 barrows were fed utilizing Grand Valley Fortifiers premixes. Congratulations to all top 30 exhibitors who made it into the auction.

The Ontario Junior Barrow Show would not be the successful event it is without the exhibitors, parents and many volunteers who contribute so much to this show. A special "thank you" to Rob Gribble, this year's Chairperson, along with his committee of volunteers for making the OJBS a tremendous success.

Also thank you to all the industry partners for their generosity

in both sponsoring the show and purchasing animals at the Auction sale. Without this strong support of our youth, the OJBS would not be the successful event it is year after year.

A special thank you to Ron Douglas, the Swine Superintendent and his wife Sharon for answering many questions about the hog industry in front of the "Pig Mobile". ■

## POTENTIAL FOR EAR MOLD CHALLENGES IN 2011 CORN CROP

By: Jim Ross, Chairman

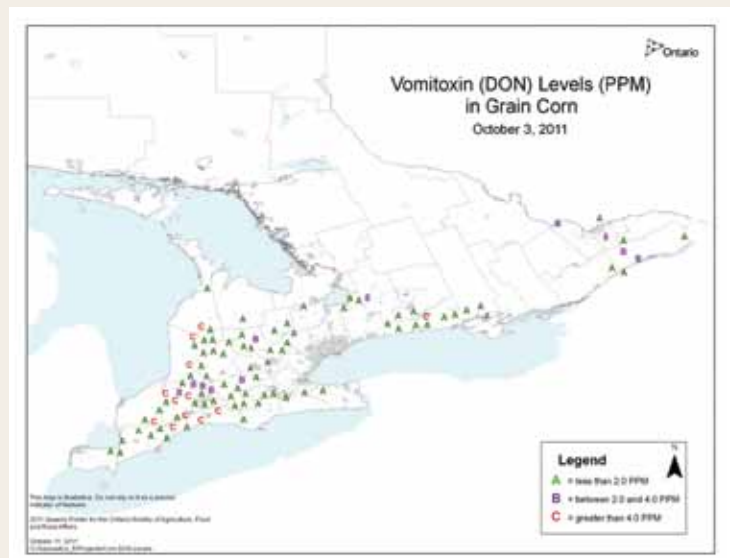


In the recent issue of Crop Pest Ontario (Vol. No. 16, Issue 15) Greg Stewart, corn specialist and Albert Tenuta, field crop pathologist have provided an excellent report regarding the potential for mycotoxins in the 2011 corn crop. This is an important management matter for we all know that mycotoxins, particularly DON, the source of vomitoxin can be disruptive when fed to hogs.

As evidence grew that this year's crop was indeed suspect an ambitious survey was conducted across Ontario identifying the various molds and measuring the level of DON found in the corn samples from each location. A map was made and toxin levels for vomitoxin (DON) identified for each sampled area. See the map below.

Because of the results of the testing we want to stress that pork producers should take the time to sample their own fields for toxins. Grand Valley Fortifiers works with an excellent laboratory where we can send your corn samples for testing. This service is provided at no cost to our premix customers. Grand Valley Fortifiers can also recommend various products and management ideas that should be followed to minimize the detrimental effects of feeding mold infected corn.

Talk to your Grand Valley Fortifiers Swine Specialist or call our head office at 1-877-625-4400 today for more information. ■





# Holiday Delivery Schedule



Dear Customer,

In order for us to best help you prepare for the holidays, please be advised that our Christmas and New Year's hours of operation are as follows:

### Order Desk & Farmers Farmacy Hours:

<b>Christmas Eve</b> - Saturday, December 24	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b> - Sunday, December 25	<b>CLOSED</b>
Monday, December 26	<b>CLOSED</b>
Tuesday, December 27 (no deliveries)	<b>7:00 AM – 6:00 PM</b>
Wednesday, December 28	<b>Business as usual</b>

<b>New Year's Eve</b> - Saturday, December 31	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>New Year's Day</b> - Sunday, January 1	<b>CLOSED</b>
Monday, January 2	<b>CLOSED</b>
Tuesday, January 3	<b>Business as usual</b>

## COMMODITY REPORT

By: Steve McGuffin, Commodity Specialist



**A**s most have found or heard by now, vomitoxin is an issue in certain areas of this year's Ontario corn crop. Early test results from Hiram Walker DDGS have shown levels in the 3.5 – 5ppm range while Chatham and Sarnia are reporting 8 – 9ppm. Knowing the VOM levels of your own corn will be key in your decision on continued usage of this product. Early Marysville, Michigan reports on VOM levels show them to be lower than the Sarnia/Chatham results. I will continue to monitor the plant VOM test results on a weekly basis. Demand for wheat has increased as producers look for alternatives with soft red wheat supply getting tighter. The same thing is happening with the wheat shorts market. Please contact me if I can be of assistance sourcing alternative commodities and keep in mind that we do have the opportunity bin program available to you. ■

If you would like to receive daily or weekly commodity/market reports from DSC, please contact Steve McGuffin at [stevemcguffin@grandvalley.com](mailto:stevemcguffin@grandvalley.com)

## NEWS FROM OUR ORDER DESK

By: Jim Ross, Chairman

**T**hank you for all who are assisting us in getting their orders phoned in before our 1:30 p.m. cut off time for next day delivery. Your help in this regard is not only appreciated but very necessary to give us time to process your order, custom manufacturing, set up the delivery schedule and the loading of trucks.

If you can give us 2-3 days notice before required delivery of your feed and premix needs we are very grateful, many thanks. ■

## YEAR END PAYMENT PROGRAM

**I**n order to minimize taxes payable for your 2011 year, we are able to accept in 2011 any prepayment that you wish to make toward your 2012 feed requirements. Ask your Swine Specialist for details or call Peter Faus at 1-877-625-4400. ■

## SWINE SYMPOSIUM

January 31st & February 1st, 2012

We are excited to announce our upcoming SWINE SYMPOSIUM.

Save the dates, January 31st and February 1st. Watch for your invitation coming to your mailbox. The invitation will include speaker bio's and locations. This year we will offer two different locations to make it easier for you to enjoy one of these days with us. One location will be Stratford, ON. and the second location is to be determined.

### *A Meditative Christmas Prayer*

*Giver of all that is good,  
we thank you today for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
who was born into poverty in a hard and cruel time,  
who gave himself for us,  
and lives with you in glory.*

*We thank you for all your friends and prophets who have gone before us,  
and those who taught us to celebrate this feast of the Nativity with beloved  
Scripture, and beloved carols, and loud rejoicing;  
Help us to teach those who came after us that Christmas is a Holy time,  
a time to seek reconciliation and peace.*

*Bless us, Lord, as we seek Christ in the lowly mangers of this world,  
Bless us, as we seek to honor the mystery of the Incarnation in our midst,  
remembering always that you made us, and all humanity, In your divine image.*

*Help us to gladly welcome today, and all days,  
your Wisdom, your Power,  
your Emmanuel, your Prince of Peace*

*Sincerely,  
Jim Ross  
On behalf of all our Grand Valley Fortifiers Family*