



BANFF PORK
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news release

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For Immediate Release:

Banff Pork Seminar honors three industry innovators

Banff, Alta., Jan. 21, 2010: Three Canadian pork industry innovators were presented with awards for their accomplishments at the 2010 Banff Pork Seminar, held Jan. 19-22.

The winners of this year's F.X. Aherne Prize for Innovative Pork Production include Paul Wurz of Butte Colony in Bracken, Sask., Stephane Clement and Alain Lefebvre of JYGA Technologies in St. Nicolas, Que., and Thomas Jacob of Genetic Alliance Ltd., in Acme, Alta.

"All three of this year's award winners are very deserving," says Ruurd Zijlstra of the University of Alberta, chair of the F.X. Aherne prize committee.

The F.X. Aherne Prize for Innovative Pork Production is an opportunity for the industry to recognize those individuals who have developed either original solutions to pork production challenges or creative uses of known technology.

The awards are named after the late Dr. Frank Aherne, a professor of swine nutrition and production at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and a major force for science-based progress in the western Canadian pork industry.

"These awards honor the memory of Dr. Aherne, who was responsible for a number of innovations that the pork industry still benefits from today," says Zijlstra. "They are an important recognition of those who continue to make innovative contributions to the pork production industry."

Wurz received the award for his invention of a "pregnancy check extension." This extension, which fits onto a typical pregnancy checking tool, allows for pregnancy checking sows from the front of stalls, or from the back, without bending over or getting into the stall. This innovation can also be used to pregnancy check sows or gilts in group pens, when a bit of feed is placed on the floor to keep the livestock occupied and still.

...Banff Pork Seminar honors – continued

Clement and Lefebvre earned the prize for their invention of the gestalt feeding station, a computerized feeding system for farrowing sows. The feeder communicates with a computer using wireless technology and provides sophisticated management feedback to the farm that offers many possibilities to optimize the productivity of each sow and the follow-up of the herd. The invention is touted as a simple solution that will feed small amounts of fresh feed on demand by the sow, resulting in less feed wastage. The data it gathers provides a wealth of information to support farm management.

The recognition for Jacob was for his innovative new design for a safe and efficient boar training pen. Highlights of the system, which is based on a two-dummy method, are up to 90 percent success rate in the first training session and the ability to train up to 10 boars per hour, resulting in major time and cost savings.

Held since 1972 in Banff, Alberta, the Banff Pork Seminar is coordinated by the Department of Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science, University of Alberta, in cooperation with Alberta Pork, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and other pork industry representatives from across Canada. Program and proceedings of the Banff Pork Seminar are available on the Seminar Web site, www.banffpork.ca.

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Photos of the F.X. Aherne Prize for Innovative Pork Production recipients will be available under the 'Inside Banff Pork Seminar Special Meeting Report' at www.meristem.com.