

Midwest Boar Stud Managers Conference To Draw International Audience Aug. 9-10 In St. Louis

ST. LOUIS, MO.

When it comes to improving animal reproduction, the males of most species usually get the short end of the stick.

But the Midwest Boar Stud Managers Conference in August will explain the newest advancements in academic and industry research to better manage male pigs.

"The bulk of hog reproductive research is on the female side like in most animal research, but we want to help make boar stud owners, managers and employees aware of opportunities to improve sperm production and quality," said Tim Safranski, University of Missouri Extension state swine specialist. "Part of what we try to do with this conference is challenge managers and anyone who thinks they do a good job to be the best they can be, because most are a long way from being the best in the world."

The Boar Stud Managers Conference will draw professionals from around the world to St. Louis Aug. 9-10 for the latest in research to run boar operations more efficiently. This conference is the only one to focus on boar studs in North America. Held once every four years, it has gained popularity since it began in 2000.

More than 95 percent of sows in North America are artificially inseminated (AI), so efficient use of high-quality sperm can mean increased productivity and profitability throughout the industry.

Safranski said attendees will learn that when it comes to litter size and semen, less can be more.

"We'll learn information about how male piglets raised in smaller litters produce more sperm in their lifetime," he said.

And thanks to recent advances, boar stud operations can make better use of that sperm.

U.S. producers have been hesitant to adopt techniques that use less semen than traditional methods, but industry presenters from the Netherlands will explain how they have been used successfully in Europe.

"It's called the Dutch system, and uses 2 billion cells," Safranski said. In most American operations, AI uses 3 billion cells. The Dutch system results in higher farrowing rates with a third less sperm.

The average AI sample costs U.S. producers \$4-8 per dose. The Dutch system would let producers use less semen without sacrificing productivity.

Those savings are also why interest has increased in intrauterine insemination.

"It's a technology that was talked about 12 years ago, and is just now being used to allow us to get by using less sperm," he said. One presentation will talk about using the intrauterine insemination in a 50,000-sow system and what that requires studs to do differently.

Industry professionals will explain how using data from PRRS tests can help herd management, impact studs and prevent transmission of the disease in semen.

Two days of topics promise to bring participants from more than 18 states and five countries.

"Some people have attended the conference three times and keep coming back," Safranski said. "This brings together the industry leaders from businesses and academia to present the latest information in an attempt to keep these folks as updated as possible."

Registration is \$200 if paid by June 3 and \$250 thereafter. Space is limited.

For the conference schedule and online registration, go to <http://bsmc.missouri.edu>. Δ



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