

# SowBridge Begins Fifth Year Of Distance Education

**URBANA, ILL.**

The distance education program SowBridge will begin its fifth year Nov. 7. University of Illinois animal science associate professor and extension swine specialist Rob Knox said suggestions from subscribers help maintain the program's value.

"We asked participants for suggestions on topics and speakers so that we can tailor the content to topics people are currently interested in," Knox said. "SowBridge provides all participants with the opportunity to hear directly from experts and to contact those experts following the individual sessions for more information if needed."

Knox, who also is the Illinois contact for SowBridge, said the program is intended for people involved in managing or caring for boars, sows, and/or their litters, including operation owners, employees, technicians, managers, and technical service providers. SowBridge is designed to improve the understanding and application of various tools and techniques involved in daily care of the breeding herd and piglets.

"People from the United States, Canada, Australia, Ireland, and West Indies took part in this past year's program, and they told us they appreciated having the opportunity for all employees to participate in the sessions without requiring any travel or other expenses," Knox said. "With the live phone presentation and slideshow viewed on computer, participants do not need Internet access and can participate from anywhere."

Entities with more than one location have the opportunity to add locations at a lower rate. The

cost is \$250 for the first registration from an entity and \$125 for each subsequent subscription from the same entity. This provides access to one phone line per session and all program materials for each registration. Knox said materials, delivery process, and program costs are slightly different for those with non-U.S. mailing addresses and encouraged potential subscribers from outside the U.S. to contact Sherry Hoyer by phone at 515-294-4496 or email [shoyer@iastate.edu](mailto:shoyer@iastate.edu) for more information.

Before each session, U.S. subscribers receive a CD containing that session's presentation, along with information on accessing the live speaker presentation. Most participants will call a toll-free conference line to listen to and interact with presenters. Each session begins at 11:30 a.m. Central Time and lasts approximately 45 minutes.

Knox said the year-long program is offered by subscription only with an Oct. 15 deadline to ensure participants will receive materials for the first session on Nov. 7.

A brochure with information and a registration form is available on the University of Illinois SwineReproNet <http://www.livestock-trail.illinois.edu/swinerepronet/> website under EVENTS, then click on the SowBridge Event to see the brochure that is an attached file on the bottom of the page. Illinois residents who want more information can email Knox at [rknox@illinois.edu](mailto:rknox@illinois.edu) or call 217-244-5177.

SowBridge is sponsored by a group of 11 state universities, including the University of Illinois, from the major swine-producing states.      Δ