

Sustainability central to
pork producer priorities

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Pork promotion renaissance awakens consumers

Andrew Heck



Pork remains a popular and affordable option for Canadians. But as the protein landscape diversifies, the Canadian pork industry is working to win over younger generations, building trust and loyalty into the future.

The 2010s and early-2020s were a tumultuous time for the Canadian pork industry. The political and logistical turmoil caused by H1N1, mandatory U.S. country-of-origin labelling (mCOOL), Chinese and Russian geopolitics, African Swine Fever (ASF), COVID-19 and other circumstances caused global markets to behave strangely at the best of times. In the aftermath of each situation, belts were tightened, and the industry got to work repairing itself. Consumer marketing on the national level – out of sheer necessity – took a back seat.

Fast-forward to today. Pig prices are reasonably strong, comparatively stable and forecasted to hold. For producers, processors and marketers alike, it has created breathing room and opportunity. That stability has allowed the industry to re-focus on what was neglected for years: domestic consumer marketing for Canadian and generic pork.

This renewed emphasis has required intention, coordination and consumer first thinking. Increasingly, value chain partners like the Canadian Pork Council (CPC) and Canada Pork have embraced the shift.

Consumer research exposes vulnerabilities

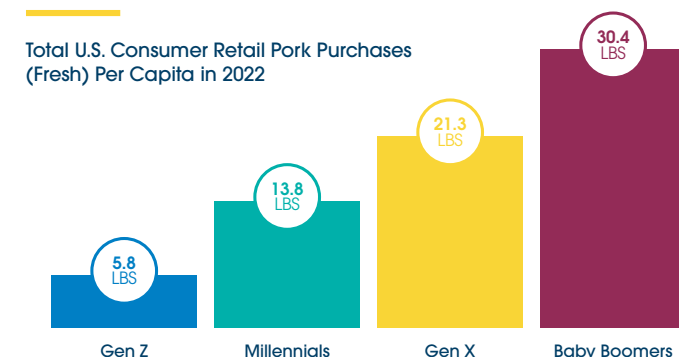
Millennials and Gen Z – those aged 10 to 45 – together represent more than 40 per cent of the Canadian population. As Millennials enter their child-raising years, and as Gen Z becomes independent as adults, marketing must meet them where they are. And it's more urgent than ever.

Data shows that fresh pork consumption is falling with each successive generation from Baby Boomers and Gen X to Millennials and Gen Z. Alternative proteins, food delivery apps and simply less food consumption overall – driven by price inflation and the growing popularity of GLP-1 drugs – are causing marketers to think harder about how to reverse the trend and put pork back into the spotlight.

For years, other Canadian commodities have been afforded the resources to fund long-term, far-reaching campaigns. For example, since 2022, Dairy Farmers of Ontario's 'Milk' has appeared on the front chest of the Toronto Maple Leafs jersey – a lucrative sponsorship opportunity that appeals to major companies. The visibility of this campaign cannot be understated. Egg Farmers of Canada's 'Get Cracking' and Canada Beef's 'Love Canadian Beef' are other popular campaigns, which have even had tie-ins to restaurants, including McDonald's.

Likewise, the U.S. National Pork Board has long understood the value of creativity and innovative approaches. 'Pork: the Other White Meat' was launched in 1987 and used in various formats until 2010. The slogan had so much staying power that it jumped borders and took hold in foreign markets, including Canada. More recently, in 2025, National Pork Board launched 'Taste What Pork Can Do,' a campaign that promises to "flip the script" to prioritize consumer needs over industry features... successfully re-positioning pork for a new generation of consumers and creating long-term demand by highlighting pork's flavour and versatility."

Younger Americans Eat Pork Less Frequently



Research from the U.S. National Pork Board shows an alarming trend for domestic pork consumption.



Pork imported into Canada is subject to a levy, paid to the PPRA to be used for generic marketing. Image © Dietmar Rabich

While these tried-and-true concepts represent effective conventional approaches, there exists even more opportunity to pursue modern tactics. For nearly two decades, pork has failed to break into the mainstream with compelling marketing. As highlighted, a lack of resources has been the most significant problem, but thankfully, that's changing.

PPRA supports generic marketing

Chloe Belchamber is Manager of Operations and PPRA, CPC. The PPRA, established in 2021 under the *Farm Products Agencies Act*, works to support and promote pork across Canada. The PPRA plays an active role in consumer education and marketing. Through its partnership with Canada Pork, the agency runs broad-reaching marketing campaigns to promote pork's value without highlighting any specific brand.

"Rather than focusing on branded campaigns, the agency supports generic pork research and promotional efforts that benefit the entire sector," said Belchamber. "The PPRA is intended to fuel innovation and research, support marketing efforts and lead to collaboration across sectors while facing evolving challenges with a forward-looking approach."

The PPRA's activities are funded through an import levy system. This levy – equal to the domestic check-off amount – is applied to all imported hogs, pork and pork products. The information used to calculate the levy comes from the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). This information is used by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to generate invoices, which are distributed on the PPRA's behalf by the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency. Levy funds are re-invested into strategic initiatives aimed at making the pork industry more competitive and sustainable.

"By complying with World Trade Organization regulations and principles of national treatment, the agency's model ensures fairness between imported and domestic products," said Belchamber. "A unique aspect of the PPRA's work is that its promotional and research materials are made available to all industry players, including producers, importers and processors."

Potential foreign animal disease outbreaks are another challenge that should not be underestimated. If African Swine Fever (ASF) or Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) were to be discovered in Canada, it could devastate pork production and processing by shutting down access to export markets, triggering major backlogs of domestic pigs and pork that would ultimately need to be absorbed by Canadian consumers.

"If something like ASF were detected in Canada, domestic demand would matter a lot," said Belchamber. "Building awareness and trust with Canadian consumers ahead of time is a form of risk management."

Canada Pork builds Pick Pork brand

Claire Jiang is Senior Director, Consumer Marketing, Canada Pork. Since coming on board with Canada Pork, she has been instrumental in laying the groundwork for a lot of national marketing initiatives that have elevated pork's presence. 'Pick Pork/Choisir le Porc,' launched in 2025, is a digital first, bilingual consumer campaign designed to speak directly to Millennials and Gen Z.



Restaurants Canada's annual RC Show has been attended by provincial and national Canadian pork industry representatives since 2024. The conference provides an opportunity to engage with pork end-users in foodservice and retail.

PORK PROMOTION RENAISSANCE AWAKENS CONSUMERS

“These generations are digital natives,” said Jiang. “Leveraging social media trends is a new consideration that didn’t exist for previous generations.”

While traditional media like magazine advertisements and point-of-sale signage in stores continue to serve an important role for Gen X and Boomers, as the Canadian population becomes more tech-savvy and multicultural, the playing field has broadened.

“Think about the last stop of this industry: it’s consumers, on their tables,” said Jiang. “Times change, and consumers need to see the relevancy of pork.”

Pick Pork addresses consumers through several angles: taste, affordability, nutrition, versatility and convenience. Depending on the segment of the target audience, and which type of vehicle is used to deliver messaging, any combination of those angles may form the strategic basis that flourishes once a creative touch is applied.

“When other commodities were marketing heavily, we were slow to catch up,” said Jiang. “Marketing is exciting. The whole point is to be seen, and we want people to remember pork.”

Digital presence also extends to websites, like the newly launched *PickPork.ca*, which includes free-to-use, customizable resources for the entire pork value chain, including promotional assets like images, videos, nutrition fact sheets and consumer studies. For consumers, the site also has information on pork cuts, cooking methods, recipes and nutrition. It’s designed in a fresh-looking, mobile-friendly format and includes contemporary approaches to pork that younger consumers gravitate toward.

Recognizable Pick Pork partnerships have included advertisements in *Canadian Living* and *Today’s Parent*, a unified presence at events such as the Restaurant Canada’s RC Show and working with food influencers to expand pork’s reach on social



The Canadian pork industry would be wise to stay the course, when it comes to consumer marketing, for the sustainability of domestic pork purchases.

media. By carrying this excitement forward and continuing to reinforce the campaign’s messages, Pick Pork is poised to increase consumer exposure for pork as a preferred protein.

Momentum must be maintained

Pig prices will inevitably continue to rise and fall with conditions outside of producers’ and processors’ control. With sustained attention on domestic consumer marketing, the Canadian pork industry is better equipped to withstand volatility – whether from market cycles, competition or disease risk.

A visible, relevant and trusted pork industry benefits not only producers, but everyone throughout the value chain, right down to consumers deciding what to put on the dinner table. The renaissance may have arrived later than ideal, but for pork marketing, momentum has finally returned.



PickPork.ca is the latest item in Canada Pork’s marketing toolkit.



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Sustainability central to pork producer priorities

Sara Porras

Editor's note: Sara Porras is Communications Coordinator, Canadian Pork Council (CPC). She can be contacted at 'porras@cpc-ccp.com.'

Canadian pork producers are operating in an environment shaped by constant change, from global market shifts to on-farm pressures. In response, the Canadian Pork Council (CPC) team is focused on a set of priorities aimed at helping to bring more stability, strengthen competitiveness and support long-term growth across the sector.

In this conversation, Stephen Heckbert, President and CEO shares how CPC's work connects back to producers and the broader direction of the industry today.

Porras: *Given the range of challenges for the sector, how do you see CPC's current priorities reflecting what's facing producers right now?*

Heckbert: One of the realities of the pork sector is conditions change very quickly. A big part of CPC's role is to help bring more stability where we can.

Our priorities are focused on the areas that have the biggest impact on producers: trade and market access, labour, foreign animal diseases and biosecurity, and overall competitiveness. These are areas where work happens at a national level, but they directly affect how producers operate day-to-day, even if it's a longer lead time until the impact of some of those decisions hit the farm gate.

Porras: *When it comes to producers' levies, how should producers think about where those investments are being directed today?*

Heckbert: We receive about 10 per cent of the levy, and we look at that investment in terms of the biggest pressures coming at the sector. A large share of the challenges that producers are facing are tied to trade barriers and expansion, so a significant portion of our work is focused there.

The goal is to direct those investments where they have the most impact. That includes protecting market access, strengthening preparedness and supporting the overall stability of the sector.

One clear example is the work done to secure a dedicated, billion-dollar funding commitment from federal and provincial governments to support emergency response and impact mitigation in the event of an African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak. We also have an emergency response plan in place for producers. This level of preparedness is unique. We are the only commodity group with funding set aside in advance for such an emergency.

A lot of the value from this work is not always visible day-to-day, but it plays a direct role in stabilizing the sector.



Stephen Heckbert, President and CEO, Canadian Pork Council (CPC) recently discussed how the organization is advocating for producers and the entire value chain.

Porras: *In a global and export-driven industry, what role does CPC play in supporting Canada's position in international markets?*

Heckbert: About 70 per cent of what affects the pork sector is tied to international markets, so maintaining and expanding market access is a major priority.

That's where CPC plays a role, working with government and industry partners to represent producers and ensure their interests are reflected in trade discussions and market access decisions.

That includes supporting existing trade agreements that benefit the sector and opening new opportunities. Recent progress with Indonesia – including expanded access for Canadian pork – is one example of how that work translates into outcomes for the sector.

Porras: *When it comes to risks like foreign animal diseases, how is the sector positioned today?*

Heckbert: Preparedness is key. The work done on biosecurity, traceability and emergency response is what allows the sector to respond effectively if needed.

Success, for us, should be measured by what does not happen. Every day without a major disease outbreak reflects the strength of those systems and the collaboration across the industry. That level of preparedness, supported by dedicated funding and planning, helps protect producers and maintain market confidence.



In 2024, for the first time ever, Canada ranked first by volume in pork imports to Japan.

Porras: *Labour continues to be a major topic across the industry. How is this issue evolving from CPC's perspective?*

Heckbert: Labour is one of the top challenges in the pork sector. It is not a question of willingness to hire. The reality is, producers and processors cannot find people in their regions willing to do the work required to keep operations running.

This is our number one point to governments at both the federal and provincial level: it is not about working conditions or compensation. People are not moving to where pork production and processing take place, nor are they considering that type of work.

We are working with federal partners to push for a labour strategy that reflects the realities of the pork sector and rural Canada, which are very different from urban Canada. This is not just a farm issue; it's a rural Canada issue. It extends across the pork value chain, including processing.

Porras: *Processing capacity has been an ongoing conversation. How do you see this issue developing in the coming years?*

Heckbert: Today, a significant number of animals are exported to the U.S. for finishing and processing because of capacity limitations here in Canada.

We need to be thinking about a future where we may need to do more domestically. At the same time, the focus must



Canadian pork processing continues to undergo changes in response to market factors.

be on building sustainable capacity in the long term. It's not just about expanding capacity – it's about making sure these investments are economically viable.

Porras: *When it comes to tools, research and innovation, what should producers be paying attention to right now?*

Heckbert: Part of producers' levy supports research and innovation through organizations like Swine Innovation Porc and other research centres. That work is focused on improving systems on farm, whether it is manure management, animal health or overall efficiency.

At the same time, innovation in the pork sector is not always straightforward. It's not just about adopting something new; it needs to be accepted by our trading partners and work within the realities of an export-driven sector.

A big part of the work is making sure new tools can be used without creating issues for market access and making them make sense for producers over the long term.

Porras: *As the sector evolves, what does success look like for producers over the coming years?*

Heckbert: Success is a sector that is stable, competitive and adaptable. A sector with access to more markets, effective risk management tools, and the ability to respond to both challenges and opportunities.

It also means continuing to position the pork sector as a key contributor to food security, both in Canada and globally. There is a growing recognition that food security is part of national security, and the pork sector has a role to play.

At the same time, if we want to strengthen that position, it will likely require a greater level of investment from the sector in areas like marketing and how we communicate with consumers. We need to support demand and reinforce the value of pork in the marketplace over the long term. We must tell our story more broadly, and better, because no one else will do it for us. I have a sign in my office that says, "No-one is coming to save us." We all need to think that way every day. 🗣️



“

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Emerging markets show promise for Canadian pork

Treena Hein

Canadian pork has been shipped to many markets around the world – some for many decades – but Indonesia hasn’t been one of them. The announcement in December 2025 that Canada secured access to that market for pork products, therefore, marks a historic breakthrough.

Indonesia is one of Southeast Asia’s fastest-growing pork markets. According to Canada Pork, Indonesia imported pork valued at approximately \$42 million in 2024.

Canadian Pork Exports by Volume (in kilograms)					
	2024	2025	% Total exports 2025	% Change 2024-2025	5-Year Average
United States	413,367,878	378,391,817	25.96%	-8.46%	421,925,768
Japan	279,002,062	337,127,028	23.15%	20.83%	263,061,027
Mexico	197,330,706	229,362,925	15.75%	16.23%	196,840,112
China	215,775,378	172,774,280	11.86%	-19.93%	218,858,599
South Korea	76,156,759	89,495,871	6.15%	17.52%	66,848,337
Philippines	102,999,527	88,521,481	6.08%	-14.06%	113,254,351
Taiwan	44,177,752	50,861,067	3.49%	15.13%	38,282,434
Colombia	26,388,501	28,258,381	1.94%	7.09%	19,381,379
Viet Nam	12,016,253	9,008,935	0.62%	-25.03%	12,142,778
Australia	12,373,693	8,707,788	0.60%	-29.63%	9,413,220
Total	1,475,599,795	1,456,347,591	100.00%	-1.30%	1,423,972,986

Source: Statistics Canada. Prepared by AAFC/MISBAID/Market Information Section.

While traditional markets for Canadian pork remain strong, various factors contribute to demand.

“Indonesian market access – and market access to other jurisdictions – is an important step for producers,” said Stephen Heckbert, President and CEO, Canadian Pork Council (CPC). “The more places we can sell our top-quality products, the better. This latest agreement reflects years of coordinated work to address regulatory barriers and indicates the trust global markets have in Canada’s animal health and food safety systems. This work is a great example of how trade agreements, technical engagement and industry alignment come together to create new opportunities for the sector.”

Securing Canadian pork access to Indonesia

Indeed, successful entry into this market began earlier, in July 2025, when Heath MacDonald, Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) visited Indonesia. In September, the

two countries signed the Canada–Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

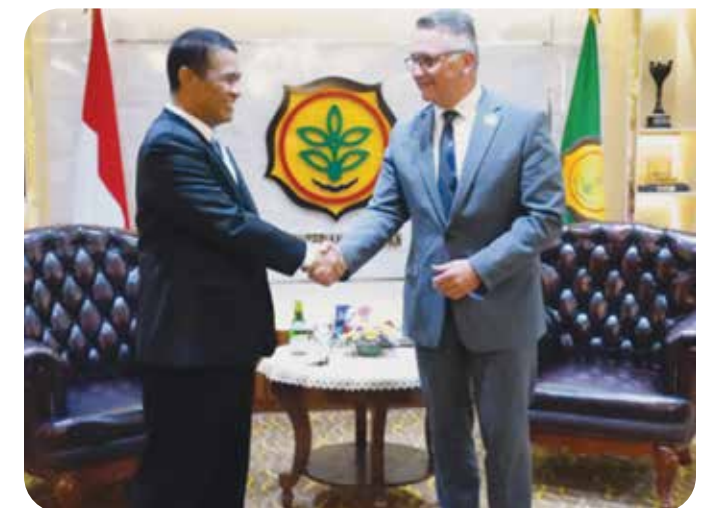
After CEPA was signed, Canada and Indonesia negotiated a joint health certificate. During the next step, audits of selected Canadian pork firms were completed by Indonesia’s animal health authorities, confirming their compliance with Indonesian import and food safety standards.

“CEPA tariff reductions make Canadian pork price competitive,” said Annie Tremblay, Director of Market Access, Canada Pork. “The audited processors were then authorized to export to Indonesia,”

In total, nine processors have been approved so far, including Conestoga Meats of Breslau, Ontario. David Thompson, VP of Sales and Business Development, Conestoga Meats believes there is no question that the Indonesia agreement marks a breakthrough for Canadian producers.

“Given approximately 70 per cent of Canadian pork is exported to other countries, market access is essential to ensure ongoing diversification and market optimization flexibility,” said Thompson.

CEPA negotiations are ongoing for Canadian export certificates for live swine, genetic material, breeding cattle and bovine embryos. Under CEPA, Canada can now ship tariff-free beef products from cattle over 30-months-old, bone-in beef, boneless beef and beef offal to Indonesia, as well. Singapore, Denmark and the U.S. have also secured access for pork exports to Indonesia.



Heath MacDonald, Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) visited Indonesia in July 2025 – an effort that has paid off so far.



Babi guling is considered a cultural icon. Whole suckling pigs are seasoned, then roasted on a spit over charcoal to create a crispy texture. The cooked pork is chopped and served with side dishes.

Inside the Indonesian market

Most Indonesians are Muslim and do not eat pork, but the market remains significant.

“Even in a Muslim-majority country, there is demand for pork,” said Tremblay. “Many non-Muslim communities in Indonesia are composed of people of Chinese descent.”

While pork consumption in Indonesia is relatively small overall, it’s worth noting that Indonesia is currently the world’s fourth-largest country, at an estimated 287 million people, just behind the U.S., at an estimated 350 million people. Indonesian authorities place the proportion of non-Muslims at around 13 per cent of the total, mostly concentrated in the south and east of the country. Even at 13 per cent, that’s about 37 million people, or a demographic just smaller than Canada, at 40 million people. In fact, in regions like Bali, North Sulawesi, North Sumatra and East Nusa Tenggara, pork is a dietary staple, rather than a marginal food.

Looking at which specific Canadian pork products will be in demand in Indonesia, Tremblay reported that Canada Pork is currently working with the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service to strengthen its market intelligence there.

“It can be inferred that products such as pork bellies, loins, ribs and offal have strong potential, particularly in the restaurant, retail, food service, food processing and tourism sectors, especially in destinations like Bali,” said Tremblay.

Thompson concurs that, with more than 15 million tourists visiting Indonesia in 2025, hospitality is a key opportunity that is driving increased interest for cuts like loin, hams and ribs in this market. In addition, he says historic products in demand have included whole pigs for roasting (called *babi guling*), shoulder, bone-in cuts and sausages (called *urutan*).

Looking at the significance of the entire Asia market for Canada, Tremblay explained that the majority of Canada’s pork production – nearly 65 per cent of the total – is exported to that region of the world.

“Canada has developed strong, stable trade relationships in Asia, particularly with Japan, China and South Korea,” said Tremblay. “Canada’s recognized pork quality and the reliability of its food system are key assets in meeting the expectations of these demanding markets. In the Indo-Pacific region, the Philippines is already a major importer of Canadian pork, while emerging markets such as Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia present new opportunities for further diversification and growth in the sector. Colombia and Central America are also part of our global strategy.”

Growing Canadian pork in Mexico

Mexico is another important market for Canadian pork; however, in Mexico, there are shifts and tensions in the market right now.

“Recent re-alignment by the U.S. has sparked renewed interest and strengthened relationships with Mexican pork importers, who are seeking to diversify their supply source,” said Tremblay. “In 2025, Mexico moved from the fourth- to the third-largest destination for Canadian pork exports, valued at approximately \$552 million. We see further growth opportunities with new Mexican importers and in new sectors such as restaurants, supermarkets and hotels.”

Thompson agrees that Mexico is an important market for the Canadian pork industry, given continued high pork consumption there as well as geographical proximity that enables fresh sales opportunities for Canadian processors. However, he points to heightened current challenges and costs to servicing this market right now.

“We’re being challenged by ongoing driver availability constraints,” said Thompson. “These are driven by the amplified U.S. immigration crackdown and skyrocketing fuel surcharges resulting from the war in Iran.”

To maintain a strong presence in Mexico and with the hopes that that presence will grow, Canada Pork has several initiatives underway.

“In January 2026, we organized a member mission to Mexico City and Monterrey, including business-to-business sessions with local importers, distributors and processors,” said Tremblay. “Canada Pork also participated in the Team Canada



Mexican nationals and tourists in Mexico have a growing appetite for pork. Canada is poised to fill need.

trade mission to Mexico, including a roundtable with Canada’s Minister of Agriculture and Mexican pork importers, to explore ways to strengthen bilateral meat trade.”

In May 2026, Canada Pork organized a cutting and tasting demonstration event with local importers in Guadalajara to promote Canadian pork. This was followed by participation in ANTAD 2026, the leading retail trade show in Latin America, organized by the National Association of Self-Service and Department Stores and held in Mexico.



Canada Pork’s mission to Mexico in January 2026 continued to strengthen ties between our countries.

Market development builds resilience

Canadian pork’s entry into Indonesia and continued efforts in markets like Mexico reflect ongoing efforts to generate resilience and long-term growth for the Canadian pork industry. Pairing strong international access with a reinvigorated focus on domestic demand is positioning the industry well for continued success. As new opportunities emerge across the Asia and Latin America, coordinated trade development is helping to ensure Canadian pork remains competitive and desired for years to come. 🌱

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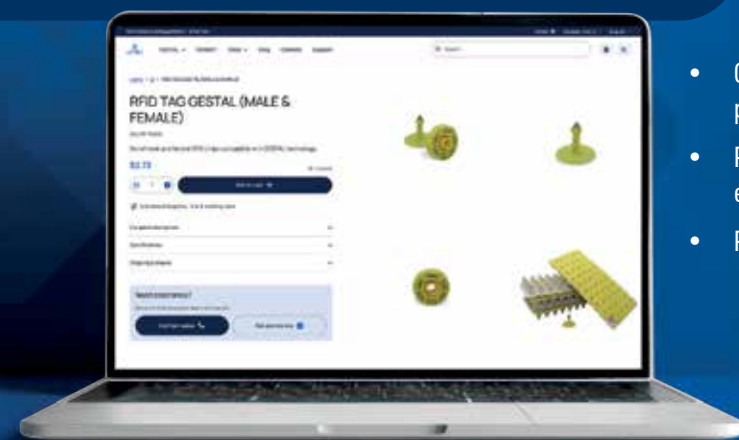


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FEATURES



Herd health impacts production and profitability

Jette Christensen

Editor's note: Jette Christensen is Manager, Canada West Swine Health Intelligence Network (CWSHIN). She can be contacted at 'manager@cwshin.ca.'



Maintaining herd health not only encourages a high standard of animal welfare, but it has downstream implications for producers and the broader industry.

Maintaining strong animal health is fundamental to the long-term success and competitiveness of the Canadian pork industry. Diseases can influence production, market access and profitability in many ways, which is why minimizing their impact depends on coordinated action across the sector. Effective collaboration among producers, herd veterinarians, laboratories, provincial pork organizations and governments is essential to monitor and prevent disease threats.

Even a small number of cases of certain foreign animal diseases can trigger severe trade restrictions and disrupt the movement of animals and pork products across international borders. In addition to these high-impact diseases, a range of other conditions can reduce productivity and increase costs, often with less immediate but still significant consequences.

Understanding the full spectrum of disease risks – from export-threatening outbreaks to everyday production challenges – is critical for everyone in the value chain. By working together, the industry can protect herd health and maintain market access.

Animal movement disruptions cause challenges

Some diseases have the ability to disrupt the movement of animals through the production system, even when their direct impact on animal health is less concerning. A recent example is Senecavirus A (SVA). To date, SVA cases in Canada have typically been mild, with animals showing blisters on the snout that resolve within a few days. In some cases, diarrhea and sudden death in piglets under 10-days-old have also been observed.

SVA produces blisters that are indistinguishable from those caused by Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD). Because of this similarity, any appearance of blisters must be investigated, triggering precautionary responses that can slow or halt animal movements. This becomes particularly important in the cull sow market.

Most cull sows from Canada are shipped through assembly yards in Ontario and Manitoba before being exported to U.S. processing plants. If sows arrive at the border or at a U.S.



A truck hauling cull sows from Canada was stopped at the U.S. border in 2022, on suspicion of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD). Senecavirus A, which mimics FMD, was the culprit.

plant showing blisters – or even healed lesions that could have been blisters – they may be rejected and returned to Canada. Repeated occurrences from a specific assembly yard can result in export restrictions until enhanced surveillance and corrective measures are implemented.

Such restrictions have occurred in both Ontario and Manitoba, sometimes lasting weeks or months. These disruptions can have cascading effects across the system, including reduced market access, backlog of animals and overcrowding in sow herds.

Disease management strategies can also influence production flow. For example, during efforts to eliminate Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED), pig movements may be redirected based on disease status, limiting contact between infected and non-infected sites. While effective for disease control, these adjustments can add complexity to production flow.

Although diseases that disrupt animal movements may not be clinically severe, their potential impact should not be underestimated.

Production-limiting diseases are costly

Most diseases encountered in commercial barns reduce productivity in some way, making them a constant challenge for producers. These production-limiting diseases can cause both direct losses, such as mortality, poor growth, abortions and reproductive failure, along with indirect costs, including treatment, labour and enhanced biosecurity measures.

Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED) is a clear example of a disease that significantly affects production efficiency. Because of its impact, the industry in western Canada has made a coordinated effort to control and eliminate PED. During major outbreaks in Manitoba and Alberta over the past decade, collaboration has been essential reducing its spread.

The virus can persist in the environment both inside and outside barns, making it difficult to eliminate completely. While individual farms may successfully eradicate PED, they remain



Your provincial pork organization can provide valuable resources and insight, when it comes to managing diseases like PED and PRRS.

at risk of reintroduction if the disease is still present in nearby operations or within their production network.

Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) is another major production-limiting disease. It can cause reproductive failures such as abortions and respiratory disease in growing pigs. This virus can spread over short distances through the air. Although PED and PRRS can be managed or eliminated at the farm level, regional coordination is often more effective, particularly in areas with high farm density.

Finally, we have production-limiting diseases that currently are tackled farm-by-farm. One that stands out is the condition ‘diarrhea in young pigs’ because the cause is complex and could be a combination of *E coli*, Rotavirus, Salmonella, Sapovirus, feed and management.

Addressing these complex conditions requires detailed investigation, including laboratory diagnostics and analysis of on-farm practices. Effective solutions must be tailored to each operation, relying on close cooperation between producers, veterinarians and laboratories to identify causes and develop targeted control strategies.

African Swine Fever (ASF) Outbreaks, Cases & Losses since 2022					
Region	Outbreaks		Cases		Losses
	Domestic	Wild	Domestic	Wild	Domestic
Africa	1,160	6	141,672	0	137,586
Americas	65	0	467	0	9,412
Asia	7,246	110	310,633	568	724,615
Europe	5,408	30,314	699,597	48,045	1,699,547
Total	13,879	30,430	1,152,369	48,613	2,571,160

ASF has shown no sign of easing up in most regions where it is found. Source: World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

Exports threatened by foreign diseases

The Canadian pork industry pays careful attention to diseases that threaten international market access. Certain foreign animal diseases are considered high-risk because even a single case can lead to immediate trade restrictions.

African Swine Fever (ASF) is one of the most widely recognized threats. Since its spread in China in 2018, ASF has affected many regions across Europe, Asia and parts of the Americas. Although it has never been detected in Canada, its global impact highlights the importance of prevention and preparedness.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) is another major concern. While it affects multiple livestock species –including cattle and sheep – it would have severe consequences for the entire Canadian livestock sector if introduced. In recent years, FMD has spread across regions of North Africa, Europe and Asia.

Both ASF and FMD have the potential to shut down export markets almost immediately, disrupting not only international trade but also the internal movement of animals and products

within Canada. Movement restrictions would likely be imposed around infected areas, affecting farms based on their proximity to outbreaks and disease status.

In addition to trade impacts, these diseases can also severely affect production at the farm level. ASF, for example, can cause extremely high mortality rates. In its acute form, it can kill nearly all infected animals, often following rapid onset of symptoms such as fever, loss of appetite and sudden death.

Less severe, chronic forms of ASF can still cause significant production losses, including abortions, weight loss, respiratory issues and lameness. While mortality rates may be lower – around 20 per cent—the overall economic impact remains substantial.

Given these risks, preventing the introduction of foreign animal diseases is a top priority for the industry.

Swine disease surveillance provides useful data

Ongoing surveillance is essential to understanding and managing animal health risks across regions. The Canada West Swine Health Intelligence Network (CWSHIN) plays a key role in monitoring disease trends and supporting decision-making.

CWSHIN operates with four main objectives: detecting emerging health issues, identifying unusual presentations of known diseases, providing information on endemic diseases, and supporting evidence of disease freedom – particularly for ASF and FMD.

Through its network, herd veterinarians share knowledge and observations, contributing to a broader understanding of disease patterns across the four western provinces. Laboratory data complements this information, helping confirm diagnoses and track disease presence.

Surveillance data show that ASF and FMD have not been detected in the region. Models and testing results are used to support evidence of disease freedom, which is critical for maintaining trade relationships. Other findings include the presence of Senecavirus A at assembly yards over several years. Data shows that PRRS is generally well-managed, though occasional outbreaks or instability still occur.

CWSHIN has also been effective in identifying new and emerging diseases. For example, *Streptococcus equi zooepidemicus* was first reported in 2019 and caused significant losses for the affected farms due to high sow mortality. More recently, SVA was detected at a sow site, with early information shared through the network before laboratory confirmation. For both diseases, the road to elimination was shared with the CWSHIN network for the benefit of other swine health experts.

A key feature of CWSHIN is its use of anonymous data sharing. Information that could identify farms is not collected, which encourages early reporting and builds trust among participants. While this approach limits geographic specificity, it enhances participation and improves overall knowledge sharing, supporting the network’s surveillance goals.



On-farm biosecurity is still the most important thing when it comes to protecting your herd.

Producer efforts can limit disease impact

Reducing the impact of swine diseases requires a proactive and coordinated approach built on prevention, early detection and effective response. Each of these strategies depends on shared responsibility across the industry.

For foreign animal diseases, current prevention efforts include strict import controls, border biosecurity, on-farm biosecurity, and early detection through CanSpotASF. This enhanced surveillance program, established in response to the rapid spread of ASF in 2019, has received much voluntary support across Canada. Preparedness planning – a natural next step to prevention – is also an area of focus.

For production-limiting diseases, collaboration is equally important. PED elimination programs include biosecurity at farms (prevention) and surveillance at high traffic sites, which supports detection in herds and plans for effective response to an outbreak.

For production-limiting diseases in general, producers, supported by veterinarians and laboratories, are responsible for:

- Maintaining strong biosecurity practices within and around barns
- Monitoring animal health daily and responding quickly to changes
- Seeking timely veterinary advice when unusual signs appear
- Using accurate diagnostic tools, including laboratory testing
- Implementing effective treatment and herd management strategies

These measures are essential for controlling both common and complex diseases and minimizing their impact on production.

Disease control is in our hands

Diseases pose ongoing risks to the Canadian pork industry. They can reduce productivity, increase costs and disrupt market access, ultimately hurting the sector.

Reducing the impact of swine diseases requires a proactive and coordinated approach

To address these challenges, the industry must consistently apply three key strategies: prevention, detection and treatment. Success depends on strong collaboration among producers, herd veterinarians, laboratories, provincial pork organizations and governments

By working together, the Canadian pork sector can better protect animal health, maintain trade opportunities and ensure a resilient and competitive future 🐷



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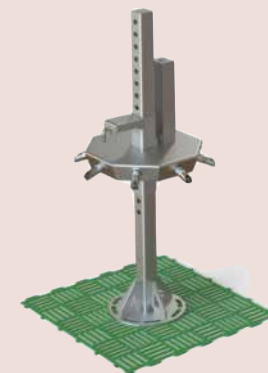
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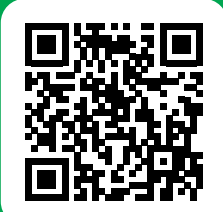


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Putting powerful protein on Canadian plates

Shannon Crocker

Editor's note: Shannon Crocker is Director, Nutrition and Health, Canadian Pork Council (CPC). She can be contacted at 'crocker@cpc-ccp.com.'

PROTEIN QUALITY AND DENSITY – YEP, PORK'S GOT BOTH.

Lean, powerful, and packed with goodness. Discover why pork delivers big nutrition in every bite, and how it helps fuel strong bodies, growing families, and balanced meals.

LEARN MORE



Among pork's many virtues, nutrition continues to be a central feature for consumers seeking complete protein and many essential vitamins and minerals.

Access to quick, credible nutrition information remains important for consumers. Newly created fact sheets make it easy to understand the nutritional value of pork at a glance, as part of the 'Pick Pork/Choisir le Porc,' campaign.

The fact sheets – now available in both English and French on the newly launched *PickPork.ca* – are designed to help Canadians see how pork fits into a healthy eating pattern. Each fact sheet highlights key nutrition benefits and includes a delicious recipe to inspire Canadians to put the information into action in their own kitchens.

The fact sheets cover four timely topics that reflect common nutrition questions and trends:

- **Pork and Plants** – Demonstrates how pork pairs perfectly with plant foods like vegetables, legumes and whole grains. Together, they provide complementary nutrients and help create balanced, satisfying meals.
- **Protein Powerhouse** – Highlights pork as a high-quality protein that provides all the essential amino acids needed to support muscle, immune function and overall health.
- **Pork and Chicken** – Takes a fresh look at how pork compares with chicken, showing that many lean cuts

of pork are just as lean as skinless chicken and can be part of a healthy eating pattern.

- **Agging Well** – Showcases how pork provides protein plus key nutrients such as B vitamins, iron and zinc that help support health and vitality as we age.

In addition to the fact sheets, the site also features a colourful infographic: "**3 Reasons to Put Pork on Your Plate.**" It highlights three simple takeaways:

- **Nutritious** – Packed with high-quality protein and essential vitamins and minerals.
- **Versatile** – Works in a wide range of cuisines and meal styles.
- **Budget-friendly** – A practical protein choice for everyday meals.

These resources make it easy for you to communicate the nutritional value of pork and help inspire Canadians in the kitchen. You can download and share the new fact sheets by visiting the 'Resource Centre' page found on the main navigation bar on *PickPork.ca*. From there, click 'Nutritional Resources' to be brought to the webpage with the full set of PDF files. 📄

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Getting enough protein from both animal foods and plant foods is key to optimal health. And Canada's Food Guide recommends enjoying a variety of nutritious protein foods as part of healthy eating.¹

Pork + Plants = Perfect Partners

Think of pork and plants as best friends: they work better together. Each one provides essential nutrients that help your body get what it needs to stay healthy.

- Lean pork delivers high-quality protein, along with nutrients such as vitamin B12, heme iron, and zinc.
- Plant-based proteins give you nutrients such as fibre, complex carbohydrates, antioxidants, and folate.

Eating a combination of animal- and plant-based protein foods boosts the overall quality of your eating pattern and helps you meet your daily nutrient needs.²

Pork doesn't just bring the flavour. Like other meats, it also boosts the iron and zinc your body absorbs from plant foods.³ This is called "the meat factor," but we call it "teamwork."



Pork Makes Plant-Filled Meals Even Tastier

Pork pairs well with plants – whether that means fresh vegetables and fruit, or whole grains and legumes – to make balanced, tasty, and satisfying meals. Both pork and plants belong on your plate. Who's hungry for Vietnamese Style-Grilled Pork Tenderloin with fresh crunchy veggies?

Good to know!

Pork is an affordable protein choice, serving up fabulous flavour and big nutritional value – without stretching your grocery bill.

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PICK PORK



Let's Cook!

VIETNAMESE-STYLE GRILLED PORK TENDERLOIN

Get ready for a flavour explosion! Juicy grilled pork tenderloin meets fresh, crunchy veggies and tender rice noodles for a meal that's nourishing and absolutely delicious.

Prep: 20 min **Marinate:** 30 min **Cook:** 12 min **Serves:** 3 to 4

Ingredients

- 1 pork tenderloin (about 14 oz/ 400 g), trimmed of silver skin
- 8 oz (227 g) fine rice noodles
- 1/2 small head iceberg lettuce, shredded
- Garnishes such as sliced cucumber, sliced red onion, sliced radish, carrot ribbons, fresh mint and/or cilantro, and chopped salted peanuts (optional)
- Nuoc cham

Marinade:

- 1 shallot, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) each canola oil and granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) each fish sauce and soy sauce
- 2 tsp (10 mL) chili garlic sauce

Directions

1. Marinade: Stir shallot, garlic, oil, sugar, fish sauce, soy sauce, and chili garlic sauce until well combined; set aside.
2. Slice tenderloin lengthwise, almost all the way through and opening like a book; score a cross-hatch pattern on both sides with a sharp knife.
3. Transfer pork to a resealable bag; pour marinade over pork, massaging to coat. Marinate for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 day.
4. Soak noodles according to package directions and rinse under cold water.
5. Preheat grill to medium-high (400°F/200°C). Remove pork from marinade; reserve marinade in a small bowl.
6. Set pork on grate; baste top with some reserved marinade. Close lid; grill, rotating pork halfway through, for 4 minutes. Flip, baste with additional marinade; close lid and grill an additional 4 minutes. (Discard any unused marinade at this stage.)
7. Open lid and continue to grill, flipping once or twice, for 3 to 4 minutes, or until pork is lightly charred and internal temperature reads 155°F (68°C). Remove to a cutting board; rest for 5 minutes before slicing thinly across the grain.
8. Serve sliced pork with rice noodles, lettuce, garnishes (if using), and nuoc cham on the side, to add to taste.

Nutrients per serving (1/4 recipe, pork with noodles, lettuce and 1 tbsp/15 ml nuoc cham): 530 calories, 35 g protein, 14 g fat, 65 g carbohydrates, 3 g fibre, 16 g sugars, 960 mg sodium.



News & Views —

Public Affairs VP joins CPC

Claire Citeau joined the Canadian Pork Council (CPC) in mid-April as Senior Vice President of Public Affairs & International Trade.

Citeau brings more than 20 years of experience in public policy, stakeholder engagement and government relations. She has served as Executive Director of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA), Senior Director of Internal Trade and Relations with the Government of Alberta, and Senior Vice President, International Trade at the Canadian Meat Council (CMC).

Throughout her career, Citeau has worked closely on trade and policy issues that are directly relevant to Canada's agri-food sector. As CPC continues to advance priorities related to trade, market access and the broader policy environment, her expertise will be an important asset.

CPC is the national voice for Canadian pork producers, composed of nine provincial producer associations across the country, representing more than 7,000 farms. 🇨🇦



Claire Citeau is the new Senior Vice President of Public Affairs & International Trade for the Canadian Pork Council (CPC)



Canadian Pork Council
Conseil canadien du porc

Policy & Market Development VP joins Canada Pork

Sonja Froberg joined Canada Pork in early May as Senior Policy & Market Development.

Froberg brings over 18 years of experience in the Government of Canada, most recently serving as Canada's Agricultural Counsellor at the Embassy of Canada in Washington, D.C., where she represented Canada's meat and livestock sector.

Throughout her career, Froberg has held senior policy and technical roles across key departments, including Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. She will be focused on leading Canada Pork's policy and market development initiatives, helping drive success for Canada's pork industry both domestically and internationally.

Canada Pork is the market intelligence and promotional organization for the Canadian pork industry. It was established in 1991 by the Canadian Pork Council (CPC) and Canadian Meat Council (CMC). 🇨🇦



Sonja Froberg is the new Senior Vice President of Policy & Market Development for Canada Pork.



Dylan Hellwig is the new Director of Government Relations for the Canadian Meat Council (CMC).



Government Relations Director joins CMC

Dylan Hellwig joined the Canadian Meat Council (CMC) in late April as Director of Government Relations.

Most recently, Hellwig served as Manager of Government Relations at Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada (FHCP). Prior to that, he served as Manager of Public Affairs at Impact Public Affairs Canada. His career also includes time on Parliament Hill, where he served as a Special Assistant to former Senator Doug Black.

With his experience across industry associations, consulting, and government, Hellwig is well positioned to advance CMC's advocacy priorities and support its members.

CMC represents Canada's federally licensed meat packers, meat processors and suppliers of goods and services to the meat industry. 🇨🇦



CANADIAN MEAT COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES VIANDES DU CANADA

CPC, CMC join CFA for Hill Day

CPC leadership engaged in key conversations on trade challenges and opportunities shaping Canada's pork sector during Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA)'s annual Hill Day in late April.

René Roy, Chair, Canadian Pork Council (CPC) focused on competitiveness, risk management and coordinated action on food security and innovation for producers. Claire Citeau, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and International Trade, CPC hosted a fireside chat on the evolving Canada-China relationship and its implications. Kyle Larkin, CEO, Canadian Meat Council (CMC) also discussed the importance of the Canada-China trade relationship to processors.

Notable meetings included those with Heath MacDonald, Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC); Anita Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Kody Blois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

The team highlighted the punitive 25 per cent tariffs that continues to impact Canadian pork exports to China and the need for their removal. Since the introduction of tariffs, pork processors have lost approximately \$175 million.

CFA was formed in 1935 as a unified voice to speak on behalf of Canadian farmers. The organization includes more than 25 provincial producer organizations and national commodity groups. 🇨🇦



Hill Day invites Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) members to visit Ottawa for in-person conversations with decision-makers.

Sask Pork enters new biosecurity partnership

Sask Pork and Farm Health Guardian announced in mid-April that the organization have teamed up to provide digital transport biosecurity technology to all commercial swine farms in the province. Sask Pork represents more than 140 farms in Saskatchewan and is offering the software system as part of its ongoing commitment to enhance biosecurity and disease prevention.

"We're pleased to provide this technology to help producers improve biosecurity and protect their herds from disease across Saskatchewan," said Mark Ferguson, General Manager, Sask Pork. "Having real-time truck movement data for swine farms can help protect healthy animals and speed up response time in the event of a disease outbreak."

Truck GPS data and geofencing technology will be used. Third-party vehicles, including feed trucks, maintenance vehicles, live haul trailers, and delivery trucks, will all be linked to the Farm Health Guardian software, creating a comprehensive, real-time view of movement across these farms. Trucks that do not already have GPS can purchase devices directly from Farm Health Guardian to become part of the network.



Farm Health Guardian uses GPS devices to automatically track vehicle movements in and out of a farm. Creating a virtual perimeter around a farm is called 'geofencing.'

"Today's integrated pork production systems are highly connected by people and vehicles that move frequently between sites," said Adam Black, Customer Success Representative, Farm Health Guardian. "This means that managing biosecurity and disease risk is even more critical and yet more complex. Farm Health Guardian addresses this challenge by monitoring and digitizing movements between farms to identify risks and respond quickly when issues arise."

The service is expected to be available to producers by August 2026. 🐷



Quebec's hog marketing plan currently does not grant exceptions to producers who wish to market outside of the agreement.

Quebec producers face marketing referendum

The Superior Court of Quebec ordered *Les Éleveurs de porcs du Québec* in mid-March to move forward with a referendum process regarding the potential exclusion of organic and animal welfare certified pork production from Quebec's collective hog marketing plan.

The ruling comes after Quebec-based integrated producer-processor duBreton filed an application with the *Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec* in 2023, requesting organic and animal welfare certified pork to be excluded from the agreement, based on its specific production practices and the specialized markets these products serve.

"This decision confirms that it is both legitimate and necessary to collectively examine how our marketing model can be adapted," said Vincent Breton, President, duBreton. "Organic and animal welfare certified pork is not commodity pork, and it is time for the regulatory framework to reflect that reality." 🐷

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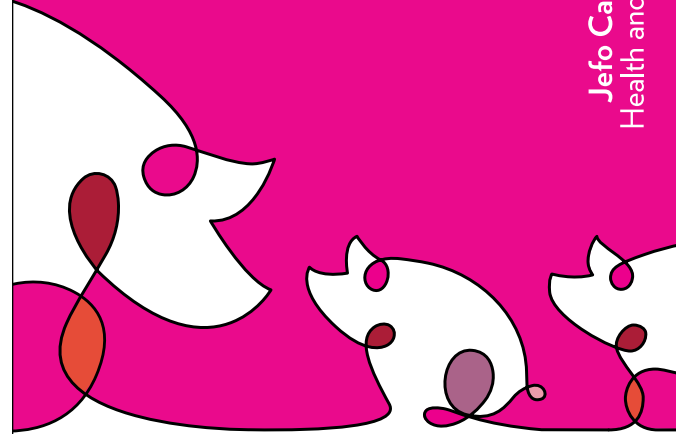
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Supplementing sows can combat heat stress

Olufemi Babatunde

Editor's note: Olufemi Babatunde is Technical Specialist, Swine/Poultry, Jefo Nutrition. He can be contacted at 'obabatunde@jefo.ca.'

As we move toward another Canadian summer, heat stress is no longer just a seasonal inconvenience; it is becoming a predictable production challenge. Over the past few years, we have seen more frequent temperature spikes, longer heat waves and greater humidity swings across key swine-producing regions. Even in areas traditionally considered 'cooler,' the number of days where barn conditions push sows beyond their comfort zone continues to increase. This shift matters because modern sow productivity is tightly linked to consistency. When the environment becomes less predictable, so does performance.

A different kind of summer stress

Traditionally, we have always associated heat stress with obvious high temperatures. Today, it is more subtle. Prolonged periods of moderately elevated temperatures, combined with high humidity and limited nighttime cooling, are just as impactful. From a sow's perspective, the response is well understood but still underestimated. Feed intake drops first. Then comes a cascade of downstream effects, including reduced milk production, poorer body condition, compromised reproductive recovery, and ultimately variability in litter performance. What is changing is not the biology, but the frequency and duration of the stress.

Genetics: progress with a trade-off

Modern sow genetics have delivered remarkable improvements in litter size and efficiency; however, this progress has come with a biological cost. High-producing sows generate more metabolic heat, particularly during late gestation and lactation. Practically, this means that the very animals driving productivity gains are often the most vulnerable to heat stress. It is now more common to see herds where top-performing sows struggle disproportionately during hot periods. The gap between genetic potential and realized performance becomes wider in the summer months thus raising an important question: *are we adapting our nutritional strategies fast enough to match the animals we are producing?*



Nutrient efficiency is important for sows experiencing conditions that could lead to heat stress. Liquid supplementation can help.

Nutrition under heat stress: more than just intake

One of the biggest challenges during heat stress is that we are asking sows to perform with less feed. That shifts the focus from total intake to nutrient efficiency, and this is where targeted nutritional strategies become critical. Liquid supplementation of nutrients offers a practical advantage during these periods. When feed intake is inconsistent, water consumption becomes the most reliable route to deliver nutrients. Providing vitamins and functional compounds through water allows for rapid intervention, flexible dosing and consistent delivery across animals. In heat-stressed sows, maintaining vitamin status is particularly important for supporting oxidative balance, immune function and overall resilience, which helps to support reproductive performance and reduce mortality in sows and piglets (Figure 1).

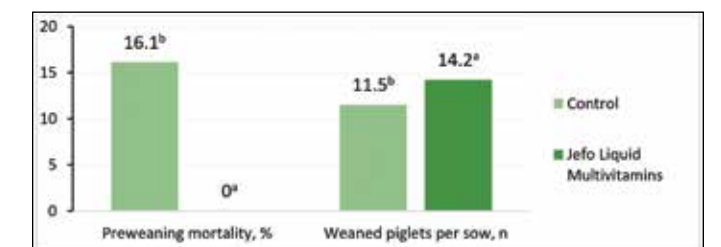


Figure 1: Prewearing mortality (%) and number of weaned piglets per sow in sows given Jefo Liquid multivitamins at 5 mL/sow/day for the first 7 days after farrowing (ab P < 0.05).



Figure 2: Total number of piglets born, born alive, and weaned per sow in sows fed Jefo Xylanase at 100 g/t in the lactating diets (abP < 0.05).



Figure 3: Average litter weight gain in sows fed Jefo Protease at 125 g/t from 7 days before farrowing until weaning at 21 days (ab P < 0.05).

Enzymes: reducing the heat load from within

While environmental management focuses on removing heat, nutrition can play a role in reducing how much heat the animal generates in the first place, and enzymes can play a key part in that strategy. By improving nutrient digestibility, enzymes such as xylanase and b-mannanase help extract more energy from the diet at a time when intake is limited and support reproductive performance (Figure 2). This becomes especially valuable in summer formulations where energy density is critical.

Protease, on the other hand, offers the additional benefit of improving protein utilization, which allows for lower crude protein diets without compromising amino acid availability, hence supporting reproductive performance in sows (Figure 3). This is important because excess protein fermentation contributes to metabolic heat production. In other words, better protein efficiency can translate into a lower internal heat load for the sow.

Integration is key

What stands out today is that no single strategy is sufficient on its own. Ventilation, cooling systems, stocking density and water availability remain foundational. But nutrition is increasingly becoming the lever that determines how well sows adapt when conditions are less than ideal. The combination of liquid additive supplementation and enzyme technology provides a way to address both sides of the equation by supporting the sow externally through hydration and internally through improved nutrient efficiency.

Looking ahead

If recent weather patterns are any indication, summers in Canada will continue to challenge conventional assumptions about heat stress.

The question is no longer whether heat stress will occur, but how long it will last and how often it will return within a production cycle.

For producers and nutritionists, this means planning earlier and acting more proactively. Supporting sows through heat stress is not just about preventing losses; it is about protecting the genetic and nutritional investments already made in the herd. In many cases, small nutritional adjustments implemented at the right time can make the difference between maintaining performance and spending the rest of the year trying to recover it.

Don't hesitate to ask your nutritionist or sales representative if you have any questions. 🐷



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Supporting pig immunity with yeast beta-glucans

Brenda Christensen

Editor's note: Brenda Christensen is Swine Researcher, Trouw Nutrition. For more information, contact 'lauren.dawson@trouwnutrition.com.'



New immunity strategies, such as including beta-glucans in pig diets, show promise as the industry shifts away from zinc oxide and antibiotics.

Health challenges remain one of the biggest factors affecting pig performance and profitability. While genetics, biosecurity and management play critical roles, nutrition also influences how well pigs cope with stress and disease pressure, particularly at key points like weaning, vaccination and regrouping.

As the swine industry continues to reduce our reliance on antibiotics and zinc oxide, there has been growing interest in nutritional strategies that support the pig's own immune system. One group of feed ingredients that has received significant attention is yeast-derived beta glucans.

What are yeast beta glucans?

Beta glucans are naturally occurring carbohydrates found in the cell walls of yeast, fungi and certain plants. In swine nutrition, the type and structure of beta glucans matter. Yeast derived beta 1,3/1,6 glucans have a branched, three dimensional structure that allows them to interact with the immune system

in a way that differs from cereal beta glucans commonly found in barley or oats. Because of this structure, yeast beta glucans are not used as an energy source by the pig. Instead, they function as immune active compounds.

The pig's first line of defence against pathogens is its innate immune system. Yeast beta 1,3/1,6 glucans interact with specific receptors on immune cells, such as macrophages. This interaction helps prepare these cells to respond more quickly and effectively when a pathogen is encountered, as well as improving barrier function in the gut. Weaners at 21- to 35-days-old have an undeveloped acquired immune system and therefore rely heavily on the innate immune system for pathogen defence. The innate immune system (including the intestinal epithelial cells, mucus layer and immune cells) is vital in resisting pathogens from interacting with the gut, causing diarrhea. Yeast beta glucans help to strengthen the innate immune system, improving immune readiness, limiting the impact of disease and reducing the recovery period.

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What does research show in pigs?

Controlled studies have shown that yeast beta glucans can support immune function during periods of stress or elevated disease risk. Research trials using one specific processed yeast beta glucan product (Fractigel) have reported improved immune responsiveness around weaning and vaccination, along with reduced mortality and more stable performance under disease pressure.

Additional research in sows has shown that supplementation during late gestation and lactation can improve immune transfer to piglets, reflected in higher immunoglobulin concentrations in colostrum. Stronger passive immunity in early life can help piglets navigate the high risk period before their own immune system is fully developed.

Controlled studies have shown that yeast beta glucans can support immune function during periods of stress or elevated disease risk.

Additional improvements in suckling piglet growth (as much as 28 grams per day) and weaning weights (as high as 650 grams at 21-days-old) have been reported without providing creep feed. Weaning weight is an important predictor of lifetime performance, with previous studies suggesting every 100-gram increase in weaning weight corresponds to one less day required to reach market weight.

These findings are in line with broader scientific literature showing that yeast beta glucans can support vaccine response, improve resistance to common bacterial and viral challenges, and contribute to more consistent performance in herds facing health pressure. By including yeast beta glucans in sow diets, their offspring receive increased passive immunity and are heavier at weaning, which can benefit pigs at weaning despite low nursery feed intake.

When does immune support make sense?

From a practical standpoint, immune supporting feed strategies are most effective when used selectively. Periods such as weaning, vaccination, transport, or known disease challenges place added demands on the immune system. Targeted nutritional support during these windows may help pigs handle stress more efficiently.

It is also important to recognize that immune activity requires energy. For that reason, yeast beta glucans are generally used strategically, with the goal of supporting immune

resilience without compromising growth. It is also important to include yeast beta glucans in recommended amounts in the diet to elicit an immune response without sacrificing growth by directing too much energy towards immune activation.

Timing is everything

As zinc oxide and antibiotics are being limited in pig production, it is important to shift our focus to supporting the pig's immune system so they can better respond to pathogens as opposed to requiring treatment. Producers considering nutritional immune support should focus less on 'boosting' immunity and more on timing and intent.

Research suggests that yeast beta glucans are best suited for use during predictable high risk periods, such as weaning or vaccination, when pigs are most vulnerable to immune stress. Yeast beta glucans are a particularly beneficial product for weaners, as their acquired immune system is not fully developed, therefore by boosting the innate immune system we can provide an improved first-line of defence to pigs, better supporting the adaptation to the nursery phase.

When used strategically and as part of an overall herd health and management program, yeast beta glucans can help pigs respond more efficiently to challenges and return to growth sooner, supporting both health and performance without relying on continuous stimulation of the immune system. 🐷



CANADIAN
HOG JOURNAL

Smarter mineral strategies improve efficiency

Bradley Lawrence

Editor's note: Bradley Lawrence, is Senior Manager, Global Swine Technology, NOVUS. For more information, contact 'elizabeth.davis@novusint.com.'

Producers want to deliver more pork with a lower feed conversion ratio and improved survivability, all while managing input costs and external pressures. To support this goal, trace mineral nutrition has re-emerged as a critical lever, not because requirements are new, but because new tools are available to meet those requirements while improving revenue per pig placed.

Research presented at the American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) Midwest 2026 Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska from March 8 to 11 offers a compelling perspective: the source of trace minerals, not simply the inclusion level, can influence growth rate, close-out performance and total pork produced per pig placed.

Moving beyond minimum requirements

For decades, trace mineral nutrition has been guided by requirement tables designed to prevent deficiency. Zinc, copper and manganese are well established as being necessary for nearly every function associated with growth, feed efficiency and survival (including protein and energy metabolism), immune function, and antioxidant systems.

The control diets in the research presented at ASAS Midwest were formulated using inorganic trace minerals that met or exceeded U.S. National Research Council requirements. These diets were compared with pigs fed less total trace mineral, but in the form of methionine hydroxy analogue bis-chelates (MINTREX® Bis-Chelated Trace Minerals). This is an important distinction. The observed differences in performance were not driven by correcting a deficiency, but by how effectively the minerals were delivered and utilized in the animal.

This aligns with a broader industry shift. Nutritionists are increasingly asking not only, 'How much mineral is required?' but, 'How much of that mineral is available to the pig?' This philosophy is evidenced by the shift over the last decade or so to formulation on an available phosphorus rather than a total phosphorus basis.

Why source matters

Trace minerals supplied as inorganic forms such as sulfates and oxides can vary widely in bioavailability. The presentation at ASAS Midwest underscores this variability, noting that manganese sources, for example, can range from 30 to 100 per cent relative bioavailability depending on their chemical form.



According to researcher Bradley Lawrence, by rethinking trace mineral sources and focusing on bioavailability, producers can unlock incremental gains in growth, feed efficiency and overall system productivity.

The reason lies in what happens between feed intake and cellular utilization. Mineral delivery is not a single step process. It involves multiple stages, including:

1. Stability in varying pH environments
2. Dissociation in the digestive tract
3. Interactions with antagonists, such as phytate and vitamins
4. Absorption across the intestinal wall
5. Transport in circulation
6. Delivery to target tissues
7. Cellular uptake and regulation
8. Secretion, reabsorption or excretion

Each of these stages represents an opportunity for loss or inefficiency. Inorganic minerals, due to their ionic nature, are more susceptible to antagonisms and precipitation reactions in the gastrointestinal tract, which can reduce their availability for absorption.

The role of bis-chelated trace minerals

Bis-chelated trace minerals, specifically those bound to hydroxy analogue of methionine (HMTBa), are designed to address these inefficiencies. Their structure forms a stable,

	30.7 kg To Market (118-d)		
	ITM	MHAC	P=
ADG, kg/d	0.834	0.846	0.08
ADFI, kg/d	2.248	2.286	0.01
ADFI, kg/d	2.69	2.70	0.64
Closeout FCR	2.89	2.82	0.19
Morbidity, %	7.71	4.66	0.04
Mortality, %	2.44	2.05	0.67
Total Removals	10.15	6.70	0.04

Figure 1: Performance of pigs fed inorganic trace minerals (ITM) vs bis-chelated trace minerals (MHAC).

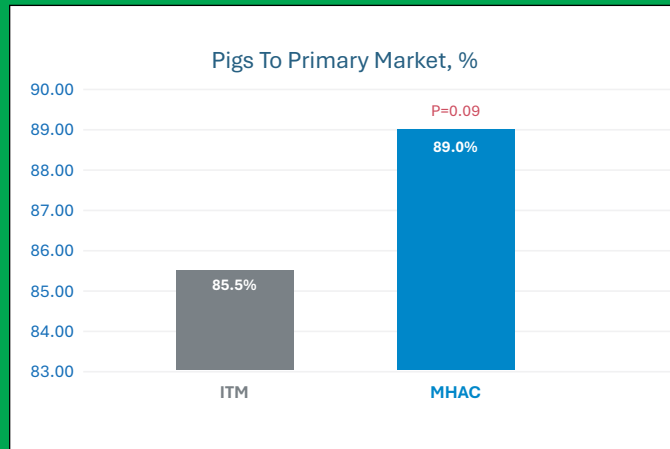


Figure 2: Total pork sold to primary market from pigs fed inorganic trace minerals (ITM) vs bis-chelated trace minerals (MHAC).

neutral bond that helps protect the organic mineral as it moves through the digestive tract. This structural stability has practical implications for how much mineral reaches the site of absorption and ultimately contributes to metabolic processes in the animal.

As mentioned, the study presented at ASAS evaluated grow-finish pigs fed diets containing HMTBa bis-chelated trace minerals (MHAC = MINTREX® Bis-Chelated Trace Minerals) at lower rates compared to inorganic sources that met or exceeded NRC requirements. The results demonstrated measurable differences in performance outcomes (Figure 1), including:

- Increased growth rate
- Improved close-out feed conversion ratio
- Greater total pork sold to the primary market (Figure 2)

These outcomes suggest that improving mineral bioavailability can translate into tangible production benefits, even when total dietary mineral levels are reduced.

Performance implications in grow-finish systems

From a production standpoint, three metrics stand out: average daily gain, feed conversion ratio and mortality.

Growth rate

Enhanced mineral availability supports key biological functions such as protein synthesis and enzyme activity. Zinc, copper and manganese are cofactors in numerous metabolic pathways that drive tissue accretion. When these minerals are more efficiently absorbed and utilized, pigs can express more of their genetic growth potential.

Feed conversion ratio

Feed represents approximately 65 to 70 per cent of total production cost in swine systems. Even small improvements in feed conversion can have a significant economic impact. By supporting energy utilization and metabolic efficiency, more available trace minerals can contribute to improved feed efficiency.

Mortality and survivability

Trace minerals play a role in immune function, oxidative stress management, and gut integrity. Improved mineral status can help animals maintain physiological resilience, particularly under commercial conditions where health challenges and environmental stressors are present.

While the presentation focuses primarily on growth and feed conversion, the biological roles of these minerals suggest that improved survivability is a logical extension of enhanced mineral nutrition.

A shift toward utilization efficiency

One of the most important takeaways from this research is the shift in mindset it represents. The industry has historically addressed variability in mineral availability by increasing inclusion levels; however, this approach has limitations.

Higher inclusion rates can increase costs and contribute to greater mineral excretion, which means money wasted. In contrast, selecting minerals with reliable, scientifically verified bioavailability allows producers to achieve performance goals with more efficient nutrient use.

This concept aligns with the broader trend toward precision nutrition, where the goal is to match nutrient supply with animal requirements as closely as possible, minimizing both deficiency and excess.

Practical considerations for nutritionists

For nutritionists and producers, the implications are clear. When evaluating mineral programs, it is not sufficient to consider only total dietary inclusion. The source and form of the mineral must also be considered.

Key questions to ask your mineral supplier:

- How stable is the mineral source in the digestive environment?
- How susceptible is it to antagonism?
- What proportion of the mineral is absorbed and retained?
- How does it influence overall performance metrics at close-out?

By focusing on these factors, nutrition strategies can move beyond meeting minimum requirements toward optimizing performance outcomes.

Next steps

As genetic progress continues to push the boundaries of growth and efficiency, the margin for nutritional inefficiency becomes smaller. Trace minerals, though required in small quantities, play a big role in systems that highlight performance, which means meeting requirements is no longer the endpoint. How nutrients are delivered, protected and utilized within the animal is equally important.

For producers navigating tight margins and evolving production demands, this research represents an opportunity. By rethinking trace mineral sources and focusing on bioavailability, it may be possible to unlock incremental gains in growth, feed efficiency and overall system productivity. In a production environment where small improvements compound across thousands of pigs, those gains can make a meaningful difference. 🐷

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Vaccine study concentrates on coronaviruses

Swine Innovation Porc

Editor's note: This article is a summary prepared for Swine Innovation Porc. For more information, contact 'christensen@swineinnovationporc.ca.'

Producers are sick of pig diseases, and given their impact on production and performance, who can blame them? Two of the worst offenders today are prime examples of disease fallout.

Porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED) causes vomiting, dehydration, anorexia and diarrhea, leading to almost 100 per cent mortality in nursing piglets. While its effect is less severe in sows, it can inhibit their performance, leading to economic loss for producers.

Porcine deltacoronavirus (PDCoV) is another highly infectious virus. Like PED, it causes severe diarrhea, dehydration and even death, affecting pigs of all ages. The clinical signs for both conditions can be hard to spot in finishing, as their symptoms are often attributed to a feed change, ileitis or colitis.

Together, these two diseases pose a significant threat to the sector, harming pig health, animal welfare and producer revenue. Estimates for the economic harm from PED alone are as high as \$400,000 annually for an average farm.

In battling viruses, one of the chief weapons is vaccine. While vaccines are complex and technical, the bottom line is simple: they work. Developing effective ones is critical to safeguarding pigs from disease, so Swine Innovation Porc (SIP) is funding a project to support that effort: "Developing a bivalent vaccine for porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) and porcine deltacoronavirus (PDCoV)."

The study is part of SIP's recent call for proposals to address the greatest issues facing the pork sector today. Research priorities were shaped through collaboration with provincial pork organizations and industry stakeholders, ensuring the call for proposals reflects what matters most to the sector.

In response, this project will develop a subunit vaccine that offers strong protection against both viruses. Because subunit vaccines don't contain 'live' pathogens, there is no risk of disease introduction to a hypothetical herd. Subunit vaccines train the immune system by presenting only specific, purified components of a pathogen, such as proteins or sugars. These components are selected because they are recognized by the body's defenses and can trigger a protective response. This allows the immune system to learn how to identify and fight off a threat without encountering the whole pathogen.

"My interest has always been in protecting the pork industry from disease, so I keep my eyes open at all times," said Qiang Liu, Senior Principal Scientist, Vaccine and



Porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED), and more recently, porcine deltacoronavirus (PDCoV) have proven costly and devastating to North American hog farms.

Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO). "I monitor the disease surveillance reports from Ontario Pork each month, and I noticed that the case numbers were steadily increasing for both PED and PDCoV."

Although enhanced biosecurity measures are effective in containing virus spread to some extent, this approach has not been successful in eradicating the disease, making the availability of effective vaccines the ultimate solution. On top of this, additional variants could emerge, as was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic – more specifically, with the associated virus, SARS-CoV-2.

Just as timing is critical for containing a virus when it hits the barn, the launch of this study is timely for producers.



Research is taking place at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), located at the University of Saskatchewan.

"The current vaccine landscape for these two diseases is bleak," said Liu. "The one that exists for PED does not provide complete protection, and there is no licensed vaccine for PDCoV. I can't find any research out there on a bivalent vaccine either, which makes this a novel project."

Since PDCoV is milder than PED, Liu thinks people may not take it seriously enough, but he notes that co-infection rates and disease consequences for both are significant.

Like all good science, this study will evolve in stages to design a bivalent vaccine, progressing systematically from mice to piglets to sows.

"We will begin with mouse and piglet trials to find the best vaccine formulation before proceeding with trials on sows," said Liu. "After vaccinating the sows, we will collect 12 neonatal piglets from each sow and challenge them with the two viruses. In doing so, we can evaluate the level of protection conferred by the vaccine."

To ensure that the final version of the vaccine is available to industry, researchers are collaborating with potential manufacturers by sharing results and technology.

Vaccine research involves many challenges, as finding a formulation that produces a strong immune response is no easy task. But given the many potential benefits of doing so, which include enhancement of animal welfare, better mental health for barn workers and reassurance of consumers, Liu is excited at the prospects.

"This is sometimes overlooked, but an effective vaccine against PED and PDCoV also benefits the environment," said Liu. "Because both viruses trigger higher feed and energy inputs for sows, they increase greenhouse gas emissions per unit of pork."

The three-year term of this study won't allow for on-farm testing of the vaccine, but that remains a key objective given the stakes.

"To put a dollar amount on the PED outbreaks in the U.S. in 2013 and 2014, where they lost 10 per cent of the pig population, it would be anywhere from \$900 million to \$1.8 billion," said Liu. "If we can play a part in reducing those numbers, we've done our jobs." 🐷

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A pig's hoof is shown stepping on the moon's surface, with the Earth visible in the dark sky above. The pig's skin is pink and the hoof is light-colored. The moon's surface is grey and dusty.

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