

THE INSIDER

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LOOKING AHEAD: THE JOURNEY TOWARD INTACT TAILS

Tail docking has long been a standard practice in pig production across Canada and much of the world. However, global expectations around animal welfare are evolving. In parts of Europe, legislation restricting or banning tail docking is already being introduced. With an eye on the future, Topigs Norsvin is taking proactive steps to move away from routine tail docking, supporting long-term readiness for evolving production expectations.

This initiative builds on proven experience with other Topigs Norsvin lines, such as the TN Tempo and TN Duroc, which are raised successfully without tail docking and without welfare or performance challenges.

Understanding the Challenge

Tail docking is typically performed shortly after birth in an effort to decrease the risk of tail biting – a behaviour which can lead to injury, infection and necrosis. However, tail biting itself is a complex multifactorial issue. Contributing factors include feed composition, barn climate and ventilation, access to enrichment, genetics, and even the individual pig behaviour. Due to this complexity, managing tail biting in a barn can be challenging and requires a comprehensive approach.

Beyond welfare considerations, eliminating tail docking also reduces labour and equipment needs during piglet processing. As industry standards evolve, producers are increasingly exploring alternatives that support operation efficiencies and animal well-being.

Project Long Tails Takes Shape

As a part of this effort, Topigs Norsvin has launched “Project Long Tails” at Innova Canada. The project focuses on raising select Z-line piglets with intact tails, carefully managing their environment to support success. Early results of this project are encouraging, and demonstrate that Z-line pigs can be raised successfully without tail docking when proper management practices are in place.

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This project reflects a broader commitment to improving animal welfare while advancing genetic development.

Collaboration, Research, and Management

Project Long Tails is a long-term initiative involving collaboration between Canadian teams and European experts from Germany and Norway. Initial research included studying two German farms with firsthand experience raising pigs with intact tails to identify best practices. Those insights were then applied in a Canadian setting using a sample population at Innova Canada, flowing through Delta Canada, as well as Innova's gilt pool.

Given the complexities of tail biting behaviour, several variables are carefully managed and adjusted over time. These variables include;

- Providing enrichment materials
- Optimizing feed ingredients and pellet quality
- Maintaining proper airflow, ventilation and temperature in the room.

Pig behaviour is closely monitored using cameras to track daily activity and identify potential issues early.

Currently, all boars entering Delta Canada have intact tails, and approximately 50 gilts per month that return back into Innova Canada gilt pool.

Building Toward the Future

While still in its early stages, this project represents a meaningful step toward the future of pig production. Over time, boar studs will

begin receiving more Z-line boars with intact tails, with additional gilts following as the program expands.

By investing today in research, collaboration and proactive management, Topigs Norsvin is helping prepare producers for tomorrow – supporting a future that balances performance, efficiency, and animal welfare.



Innova Canada sow barn: Genetics nucleus site for the Z-line



Delta Canada Research Station: Topigs Norsvin's boar test facility located in Manitoba

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: ANDRIY KORBETSKYY

I am originally from L'viv, the largest city in Western Ukraine. I grew up in a family where microelectronics and computing were constant topics at the dinner table, and it was expected that I would follow that path. I sometimes joke that I learned coding before writing. However, I chose a different direction -- veterinary medicine and biotechnology. That early technical environment shaped my mindset, giving me strong analytical and technical skills that I apply in my work today.

I obtained my Veterinary degree from L'viv Veterinary University and later completed a PhD in Reproductive Biotechnology at the Institute of Animal Biology. My professional development was influenced by both Eastern and Western veterinary and scientific schools, allowing me to integrate diverse

methodologies into a practical, results-oriented approach.

After many years working in animal reproduction across species and technologies in Ukraine, my career took a new direction when we moved to Canada. I joined Topigs Norsvin as a Male Reproduction Specialist within the GMRS team, focusing on boars. This transition felt natural, as I share the same values and professional approach with Topigs Norsvin.

Outside of work, I am fortunate to have a very supportive wife and our three children. Much of my free time is spent with them -- whether through sports, outdoor activities, or simply enjoying time together -- which brings balance and another meaning to my life.



NEW APPOINTMENTS WITHIN TOPIGS NORSVIN CANADA

Topigs Norsvin Canada is pleased to announce the appointment of Russ Penner to the role of Manitoba Sales Manager as well as the addition of Shelby MacGregor to its Ontario Team as Technical Support Services.

For over eight years as Manitoba Business Development Representative, Russ played a key role in supporting business growth and expanding customer relationships. In his new role, he will oversee regional sales initiatives, lead customer engagement efforts, and continue to drive growth opportunities across Manitoba.

National Sales Manager Marcos Amorim said, "Russ Penner's new role reflects his strong market knowledge and his consistent focus on customer partnerships. Penner's practical, market driven approach will support sustainable growth and reinforce our position with producers across Manitoba."

Ontario Sales Manager, Veronica Anderson said, "We are very excited to have Shelby MacGregor join our team. As Technical Support Services in Ontario, she will work closely with customers and the sales team to deliver technical support, assist with implementation strategies and ensure customers receive the highest level of service."

Shelby MacGregor developed her interest in the swine industry through many years of hands-on experience gained at her grandparents' pig farm and has worked on sow farms owned by prominent Ontario pork producers. She obtained her Agriculture Business Diploma at Georgian College in April 2026.



Russ Penner



Shelby MacGregor

Are you ready for the storm?

With us, resilience comes naturally

 **Topigs Norsvin**

 Scan and Find out more

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PRODUCER PROFILE:

CANBOROUGH SOW UNIT

Building a Fully Integrated System for the Future of Pork Production

In the evolving landscape of Canadian pork production, Canborough Sow Unit (CSU) stands as a clear example of how strategic investment, genetics, and technology can come together to build a system designed for long-term success.

Located in Canborough, Ontario, CSU operates as the cornerstone of the Canborough Farms system, fully integrated within its management and production structure. With a capacity of 4,500 sows, the unit combines scale with precision feeding, reflecting a deliberate approach to modern sow production.

A System Built from Transition

Canborough Farms was established during a period of industry change, emerging as Elite Swine exited Ontario production. From that transition came an opportunity — not just to continue production, but to reimagine it.

CSU, originally built in 2001, had been a productive and well-established sow unit within the Elite system. It has operated as part of the Canborough Farms system since 2008, continuing through to its full renovation in 2024. This history provided a

strong operational foundation, while also highlighting a clear opportunity to modernize.

The 2024 renovation marked a significant step forward — transforming the site into a system built not just for today's requirements, but for the future of sow production. Rather than relying on legacy infrastructure, the operation invested in a model centered on efficiency, animal care, and data-driven management.

Integrated Gilt Development Through InGene

A key strength of CSU is its internal gilt development program, powered by the InGene system. This allows the operation to maintain tight control over herd quality while strengthening long-term performance.

As CSU manager Lucio Leite explained:

“Using the InGene program allows the farm to take full control of its genetics by producing its own replacement gilts, reducing reliance on external suppliers. This improves biosecurity by keeping the herd closed and lowering the risk of disease introduction. At the same time, it provides continuous access to high-quality genetics, leading to steady improvements in sow





productivity and overall herd performance. Over time, this results in better consistency, greater efficiency, and stronger long-term cost control for the operation.”

This closed-loop approach enhances both biosecurity and genetic alignment, supporting consistent improvement across the herd.

Technology Supporting Precision at Scale

Technology is a defining feature of the operation. CSU utilizes Nedap systems across both gestation and farrowing, including loose housing with electronic sow feeding and Nedap farrowing feeders.

These systems allow for individualized sow care at scale—ensuring each animal receives the appropriate nutrition while enabling real-time monitoring of performance and condition.

The result is improved feed efficiency, better sow condition, and more consistent reproductive outcomes across the herd.

“A key strength of CSU is its internal gilt development program, powered by the InGene system.”

TN70: A Reliable Maternal Foundation

At the core of the herd is the TN70 sow, selected for its balance of productivity and maternal strength. According to Leite, the genetic line has integrated well into CSU’s system:

“I have had a positive overall impression of the TN70 sow. The sows demonstrate strong maternal traits, including good litter size, piglet vitality, and calm, attentive behaviour, which supports solid survival rates in the farrowing unit.”

“They adapt well to our system, with adequate lactation feed intake and reliable reproductive performance, including consistent return-to-estrus and breeding results.”

“Overall, the TN70 sow has proven to be a productive and dependable genetic line in our operation, with good potential when supported by proper management and nutrition.”

This combination of maternal ability, adaptability, and consistency reinforces CSU’s focus on delivering high-quality piglets into the broader system.

Strength Through Integration

CSU operates as part of a broader, highly coordinated system within the Minor Bros. network, where alignment across all stages of production is a key driver of performance.

A central component of this integration is the CFI system, which plays a critical role in finishing and overall system flow. By aligning sow production with downstream capacity, the operation maintains consistency, optimizes throughput, and responds effectively to production demands.



Equally important is the role of feed. The Canborough feed mill, in partnership with SMI Nutrition, ensures that nutrition programs are tightly aligned with both genetic potential and production goals. This collaboration supports precision feeding, consistent feed quality, and ongoing performance optimization.

Together, this integration — from genetics to nutrition to finishing — creates a system where each component reinforces the next.

Supporting the Canborough System

CSU plays a central role within the Canborough Farms network, supplying piglets that feed into a large, integrated production system.

By focusing on piglet quality, uniformity, and predictable output, the unit drives performance not just within the sow barn, but across the entire value chain.

Looking Ahead

With a modernized facility, integrated gilt program, and advanced feeding technology, Canborough Sow Unit is positioned for continued growth.

The focus moving forward remains clear: refine performance at scale, leverage data for continuous improvement, and maintain consistency across an expanding system.

As the industry continues to evolve, CSU represents a model of how Canadian sow production can adapt, integrate, and perform in a competitive environment.

Leite added, “Our goal is consistency at scale—and building a system that performs every day,” said Leite.




 **Topigs Norsvin**

Partners in Progress

annual charity golf tournament

register here 

in support of **CancerCare Manitoba Foundation**

Quarry Oaks Golf Course, Steinbach, MB | July 23rd | 10am

PIG OF THE MONTH



March: Butte Colony, SK

Topigs Norsvin's Top Pig of the Month for March is TN70 sow tag #70 from Butte Colony in Saskatchewan. Her outstanding performance is a great example of the productivity and maternal strength for which the TN70 is known. Paul, the barn manager, is very impressed with TN70 sow tag #70, sharing that she is "living up to the TN70 name." During her most recent litter, she farrowed 22 piglets born alive with an average birth weight of 1.3kg per piglet. After fostering 5 piglets off, she successfully weaned 16 pigs and was bred back just 4.5 days after weaning.

A big congratulations to Paul and the team at Butte Colony for their hard work and commitment to excellence in the farrowing barn!



April: Suncrest Colony, MB

Topigs Norsvin's Top Pig of the Month for April is TN70 sow #5164 from Suncrest Colony in Manitoba. This sow has farrowed 5 litters, producing an average of 18.2 piglets born alive. She has demonstrated excellent maternal ability across these litters, successfully weaning an average of 17.4 pigs per litter.

Congratulations to the team at Suncrest Colony for their hard work and dedication in the sow barn!



May: Maternité Roger Camiré Inc., QC

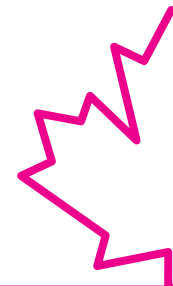
Topigs Norsvin's Top Pig of the Month for May is TN70 sow #27491 from Maternité Roger Camiré Inc. in Quebec. This excellent TN70 is now pregnant with her 7th litter. In her previous 6 litters, she has produced an average of 16.83 born alive / per litter. With a farrow-to-wean mortality rate of 10.9%, she has weaned an average of 13.17 piglets / litter at an average weaning age of 33 days. It should be noted that Maternité Roger Camiré Inc. produces under the "Certified Humane" label, meaning they raise their pigs on bedding and without farrowing crates or gestation stalls.

Congratulations to the Boivin family for their excellent performance!

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Magnum Swine Genetics Inc.

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Mike MacDonald
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Total Swine Genetics Inc.

Tillsonburg, ON
Stuart De Vries
(800) 844-9913

INSIDER QUIZ

HOW TO PLAY

Please answer the questions in our Insider Quiz. All the answers are in this newsletter. Then fax, mail or email your answers, along with your name, address, and phone number to: Fax: 204-489-3152 or Email: info@topignorsvin.ca

Entries are to be received by **August 1, 2026**. The *first 10 entries drawn with the correct answers* will receive a \$20.00 gift card. The Topigs Norsvin rep in your area will deliver the prize. Employees of Topigs Norsvin and their subsidiaries are not eligible. PLEASE INCLUDE FULL COMPANY NAMES AND ADDRESS DETAILS OR YOU WILL BE INELIGIBLE.

- How many gilts per month enter Innova Canada's gilt pool with intact tails?
- What is the name of the college where Shelby MacGregor earned her education?
- What is the capacity of Canborough Sow Unit?
- On average, how many pigs per litter has sow #5164 from Suncrest Colony weaned over her 5 litters?

Name:

Address:

Phone #: Fax #: Email:

Topigs Norsvin INSIDER Quiz Winners

Topigs Norsvin Insider Quiz Winners from the 2026 Spring (March) issue will receive a \$20.00 gift card. Michael T Hofer, Rosedale Colony, AB; Daniel Hofer, James Valley Colony, MB; Nathan Weber, Listowel, ON; Josh Waldner, Eagle Creek Colony, MB; Lila S Wipf, Baildon Colony, SK; Dennis Wipf, Vanguard Farming, SK; Bradin Wipf, Parkland Colony, AB; Eli Walter, Spring Point Colony, AB; Clara J. Kleinsasser, River View Colony, MT; Michelle J. Kleinsasser, Cool Spring Colony, MT.