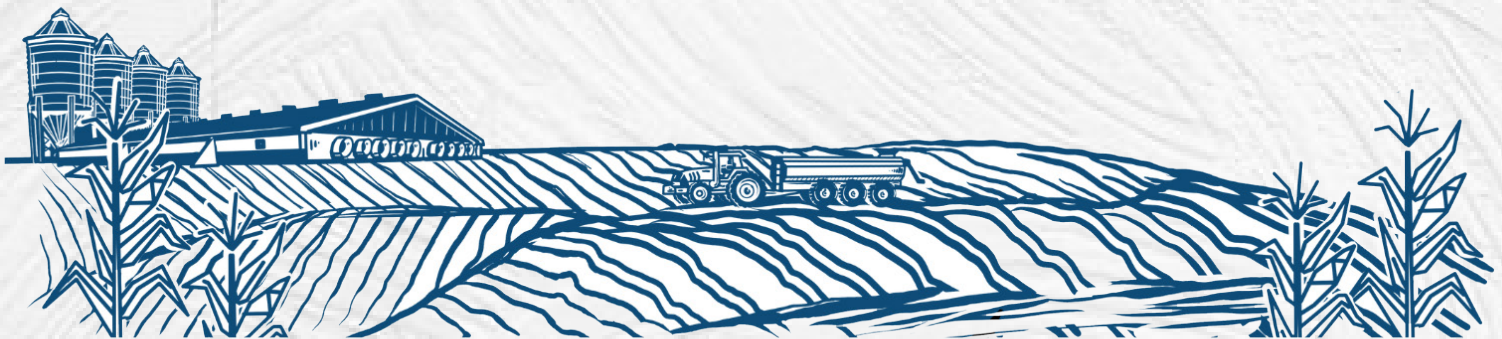


APRIL 2023



# PIPESTONE JOURNAL

APRIL 2023



**STRATEGIES**  
AT WORK

# RESOURCE GUIDE

## Pipestone Veterinary Services

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PIPESTONE Antibiotic Resistance Tracker (PART) -

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Bethany.....Cassie Felix (815) 756-3279

Rensselaer.....Daniel Van Deursen (708) 638-7712

Orange City.....Nicole Plendl (712) 707-1245

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**STRATEGIES  
AT WORK**

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Welcome to the *PIPESTONE Journal*, the premier pork journal featuring and serving farmers just like you. The challenges and speed of business that independent farmers face today are different than the generations before them. By utilizing PIPESTONE's world-renowned resources and expertise, we can work together to create the farms of tomorrow.

At PIPESTONE, we are committed to providing you top-notch, timely information in the areas of Health, Management, Nutrition, Marketing, Research, and Business. Please feel free to communicate with us, your input is appreciated.

### EDITORIAL COMMENTS



Have you considered the strategies at work on your farm? I bet in more ways than one, you have. But have you been intentional about writing them down, sharing them with others in your team, or benchmarking progress toward goals? Have you given the big picture another look or made any adjustments as the world of agriculture changes?

In our April 2023 issue of the *PIPESTONE Journal*, we examine different strategies and share examples of how you can put them to work for you in the areas of health, management, nutrition, marketing & business.

The Journal is kicked off by Sean Simpson, PIPESTONE Strategy Officer, giving an overview of business strategy.

On behalf of the team at PIPESTONE, I send you and your family our best as we are reminded of the joys of Spring.

*Abby Hopp*

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# Developing your Business Strategy



Sean Simpson  
Chief Strategy Officer  
PIPESTONE

Sean Simpson has been with PIPESTONE for a number of years, serving as General Counsel and has recently transitioned into the role of Strategy Officer. Sean also serves on the Board of Directors for Pipestone Holdings, LLC.

What is a “Business Strategy” or a “Strategic Plan” for my business? It may be best to start with what is “not” strategy. Strategy is not operational best practices. Strategy is not a forecast. Strategy is not simply a plan to make more money this year.

Business strategy is a long-term plan of action that an organization takes to achieve its goals and objectives. It outlines how the organization will use its resources to create a competitive advantage and increase its value to its stakeholders. Being different from your competitors is the core of a successful strategy. Business strategy is crucial for the success of any organization as it helps to align the resources and efforts of the organization toward a common goal. Implicit in these statements is the fact that a strategy must be communicated throughout an organization.

A successful business strategy comprises several elements, including the organization’s mission and vision, its competitive environment, its resources and capabilities, and its strategic goals and objectives.

**Mission and Vision:** The mission and vision of an organization define its purpose and guide its decision-making.

The mission is your north star, the vision is your map to the vision. The competitive environment refers to the external factors that affect the organization’s ability to compete in the market. The resources and capabilities of an organization are the internal factors that determine its ability to achieve its goals – do I have the right team, do I have the right systems, equipment, and assets?

**Analyzing external and internal environment:** Creating a successful business strategy requires careful analysis of the organization’s external and internal environment. This involves understanding the market dynamics, the competition, and the organization’s strengths and weaknesses. Based on this analysis, the organization can identify its core competencies and competitive advantage. It can then develop a strategy that leverages these strengths and capabilities to achieve its strategic goals. Understanding and leveraging your uniqueness (your competitive advantage) is the key to a successful strategy. What do I do differently from my competitor that will increase a consumer’s willingness to pay for my product or service?

**Implementation:** The implementation of a business strategy requires a clear understanding of the organizational structure, processes, and culture. A strategic plan must be communicated effectively to all stakeholders, and the organization’s structure and processes should be aligned to support the strategy. This involves creating a culture of accountability and measuring progress toward strategic goals. Without a system to measure success and maintain accountability, there is no need for a strategic plan.

## What is Business Strategy for PIPESTONE

At PIPESTONE, our mission is “Helping Farmers Today Create the Farms of Tomorrow.” It is extremely important that our strategy aligns with this Mission. If we are offering services that ultimately result a competitive advantage for the farmer - it does no good for the farmers we work for.

Over the past few years, PIPESTONE has placed a focus on partnerships as a competitive advantage for farmers.



Wholestone Farms was founded in 2018 with a vision to bring the consumer closer to the farmer. Today, Wholestone Farms is owned by 200 family farmers and continues to follow their vision to cre-

ate a unique and authentic pork supply chain. On the farm, the 200 farm family owners proudly raise over 12 million market hogs per year and care for 400,000 acres of land across the Midwest. At the plant, WholeStone Farms proudly harvests 2.9 million pigs per year and produces ~567 million pounds of nutritious quality pork. WholeStone Farms is a pork processing facility in Freemont,

Nebraska. Announced in February 2023, WholeStone Farms partnered with Prestage Foods of Iowa to form a joint venture, Prestage Wholestone, LLC. Prestage Wholestone will enhance customer offerings while streamlining pork sales and partnering in hog processing operations. The company will operate from two plant locations Fremont, NE & Eagle Grove, IA.



PIPESTONE is offering investment in YellowStone Cattle, LLC to create and capture value in the beef supply chain for cattle owners. The YellowStone Cattle Board of Directors is value driven and is working to find an opportunity that will benefit the 300+ farmer owners.



GreenStone Farmers is an ownership investment facilitated by PIPESTONE to create and capture value for farmers in the U.S. carbon market. Taking a common-sense approach to carbon farming, GreenStone

Farmers will focus on positioning farmers for success in a new economic opportunity. GreenStone Farmers is directly owned by farmers and the Board of Directors is working to find an opportunity that will be a difference maker for climate change and a market maker for farmers.

## FEED MILL OWNERSHIP

Feed is one of the single largest cost categories in pig production. When feasible, farmers ought to own their own mill and run it as a cost center. Pipestone Nutrition is working to make that feasible for all farmers. The model of owning a feed mill in partnership with other geographically strategic

producers is much like the sow farm ownership model. Pipestone Nutrition has the depth and talent to manage those farmer-owned mills. This model allows producers to own the feed mill without some of the headaches (labor, time, expertise) of operating them, while also operating at some level of scale. Today, PIPESTONE manages two feed mills on behalf of family farmers.

## SOW FARM OWNERSHIP

The independent pig farmer of today faces challenges different than generations before them. Managing a successful pig business today is both labor and capital intensive. Started in 1988, Pipestone Management offers farrow-to-finish management services to help pig farmers compete and grow in a consolidating industry. Today, Pipestone Management works with over 450 independent farmers, providing them management services while they maintain ownership of their pig business.

## What is Business Strategy for Me?

Strategy is not hope. Strategy is an intentional long-term plan to be different from your competition. Finally, strategy is not written in ink – it is an evolving and iterative plan that seeks to stay ahead

of the market and requires a change in thinking when your uniqueness comes into question.

# CVO COMMENTS

## Important Updates for Producers



Dr. Joel Nerem  
Chief Veterinary Officer  
Pipestone Veterinary Services

Dr. Joel Nerem joined the PIPESTONE team in July 2006 and comes with vast swine health experience. Dr. Nerem is currently serving as Pipestone Veterinary Services Chief Veterinary Officer.

Our vet team is frequently asked, "What's new at PIPESTONE?" This often elicits a casual response of "Oh, not much." But, as I sat down to write my CVO commentary it occurred to me that there has been a lot happening at PIPESTONE that we'd like to share.

Here is a brief list of updates and how they might affect you as a pig farmer:



Several weeks ago, PIPESTONE hosted Dr. Jack Shere, Deputy Administrator for Veterinary Services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In that role, he is responsible for the USDA's response to a foreign animal disease. Dr. Shere was accompanied by 13 other key USDA individuals focused on African Swine Fever. We were pleased to host Dr. Shere and his team on a sow farm tour, a feed mill tour, and a visit to a wean-to-finish site. Many of these folks do not regularly visit farms so they greatly appreciated the opportunity to get out where the pigs are. We were also fortunate to be able to convene a meeting with the USDA group and our entire swine vet team.



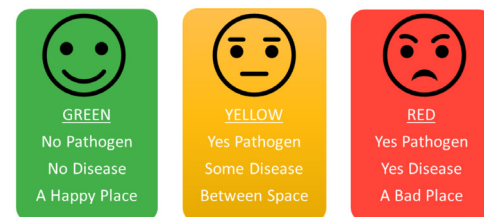
Dr. Gordon Spronk addresss the assembly at AASV.



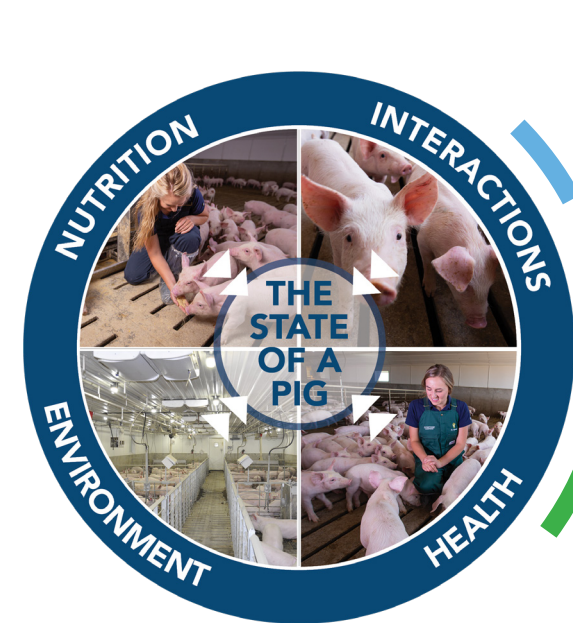
The American Association of Swine Veterinarians recently held its annual meeting in Aurora, CO. Pipestone Veterinary Services was well represented at the meeting with many of our team presenting in various sessions. PIPESTONE speakers included Drs. Karyn Havas, Taylor Spronk, Adam Schelkopf, Cameron Schmitt, and Molly Peterson. The highlight for PIPESTONE was Dr. Gordon Spronk's keynote address where he challenged swine veterinarians to lead the U.S. swine industry in national disease elimination and keeping ASF out.



Wean-to-market biosecurity has been identified by many in the pork industry as needing significant improvement. The Swine Health Information Center recently committed significant funds to further research in this area. We at PIPESTONE agree that our U.S. industry needs to get better at biosecurity on growing pig farms. For this reason, last summer we launched our PIPESTONE wean-to-market biosecurity scorecard initiative. This scorecard is a tool for farmers, working with their PIPESTONE vet, to assess the biosecurity of their farms. The tool identifies areas for farm biosecurity improvement and allows farmers to benchmark their level of biosecurity with other farms. To date, we have about 200 farm assessments completed. If your farm has not yet participated in this assessment, please contact your PIPESTONE veterinarian.



PIPESTONE launched a wean-to-market biosecurity scorecard to help producers asses the biosecurity level of their farms.



- 1 To Equip**  
To create a culture focused on promoting and protecting pig welfare by equipping all staff with clear guidelines, tools, and training.
- 2 To Verify**  
To verify welfare culture through internal and external audits.
- 3 To Respond**  
To respond to animal welfare concerns in a way that results in continual improvement of pig welfare on PIPESTONE managed farms.

Dr. Cara Haden and her team use this infographic as a tool to educate employees, shareholders, and the general public about the Animal Welfare policy at PIPESTONE.



Dr. Madie Wensley recently joined the Pipestone Nutrition team. Her Ph.D. work at Kansas State focused on starting newly weaned pigs and she recently presented her findings to our PIPESTONE team. Ask your vet about it, or turn to [page 14](#) to learn more from Dr. Wensley.

In addition, the PIPESTONE vet team has had some really good clinical experience using a product called Activate WD in the water in the early nursery period. This product is a non-antibiotic acidifier that improves gut health and reduces E. coli infections. Ask your farm vet to learn more.



Dr. Cara Haden, Director of Animal Welfare for PIPESTONE, recently convened an Animal Welfare Expert Panel of leading university researchers. PIPESTONE is committed to advancing pig welfare and this panel of experts is key to advising us on practical ideas and techniques to benefit the pig and the farmer. Dr. Haden's primary area of focus has been sow farms, but in the near future she plans to launch a pig welfare initiative catered to wean-to-finish farms.



The U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) initiative is focused on the prevention and preparedness of African Swine Fever and Classical Swine Fever in the USA. PIPESTONE is fully supportive of this initiative.

We are active on the three major working groups that are recommending Standards for the program: Biosecurity, Traceability, and Sampling/Testing. We view the U.S. SHIP initiative as the best-coordinated effort to prevent and respond to a Foreign Animal Disease and highly encourage all of our customers to participate. If you have any questions about U.S. SHIP check out their [website](#), contact your local state pork association, or give me a call (507-215-2149). Remember, to be prepared for a FAD event, all swine producers should have (1) a completed Secure Pork Supply Plan for each of their sites and (2) at least the most recent 30 days of pig movement data ready to provide to state and federal authorities.

If you have questions about any of these topics, or anything else related to Pipestone Veterinary Services, please contact your PIPESTONE vet or call me at 507-215-2149. Thanks for working with PIPESTONE. Find the U.S. SHIP website at: <https://usswinehealthimprovement-plan.com>

# Health Strategies at Work

## Three Case Studies to Consider



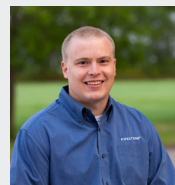
**Dr. Rachel Jensen**  
Veterinarian,  
Pipestone Veterinary Services

*Dr. Rachel Jensen grew up near Cresco, Iowa and attended Iowa State University. In college, she discovered a passion for swine production and joined PIPESTONE in 2021.*



**Dr. Emily McDowell**  
Veterinarian,  
Pipestone Veterinary Services

*Dr. Emily McDowell grew up near Primghar, Iowa. She attended Iowa State University and joined the PIPESTONE team in 2013.*



**Dr. Evan Koep**  
Veterinarian,  
Pipestone Veterinary Services

*Dr. Evan Koep, a southwest Minnesota native, completed undergraduate degrees at South Dakota State University and DVM at Iowa State. He joined PIPESTONE in 2019.*

### 1 Streptococcus suis by Dr. Rachel Jensen

Streptococcus suis is a challenging bacterial pathogen when it comes to swine health since it can cause infections in the brain, joints, heart, and lungs of young pigs. Strep. suis is a normal inhabitant of the respiratory tract and is found in all swine herds. It becomes a problem when it expresses virulent factors that cause disease. When you have a disease-associated Streptococcus suis (DASS) in your sow herd, the only way to eliminate the pathogenic strain is to complete a depopulation and repopulation of the herd from a source that is negative for DASS. It is a difficult decision to depopulate and repopulate a herd. A good time to consider it as a viable option is when there is a new disease break in the herd such as porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV) or the bacterial burden of the DASS in combination with other pathogens, like Glaesserella

parasuis, are causing significant reduction in production.

Since a depopulation and repopulation is a very expensive and not always feasible option, there are tools that we can use to reduce the impact of DASS in our pigs and production. Things to address are immunity, environmental stress reduction, decreased pathogen co-infections, and strategic antibiotic therapy.

An example of this was a producer in Iowa who was struggling with DASS both at the sow farm and in the nursery. To reduce the burden of their DASS, we worked on building immunity within their sow herd and in the piglets. An autogenous vaccine was made to perfectly match the strain of DASS in the herd. The next thing to adjust was eliminating environmental stresses like overcrowding, poor ventilation, humidity, and poor sanitation. Ventilation was adjusted both in the farrowing rooms as well as the nurseries to ensure that the rooms stayed warm and dry. The sow farm was also influenza positive. By

having the viral co-infection with the DASS, it created the perfect breeding environment in the lungs for the DASS to systemically infect the pig. To reduce DASS impact, an influenza elimination protocol was performed and successfully turned the herd to influenza negative status. Antibiotics also play an important role in DASS reduction but need to be used in a strategic manner. The goal is to set up the farm and pigs for success with minimal antibiotic intervention. For the Iowan producer, antibiotics were given to the sows in a one-time pulse to reduce shedding and help stabilize the farm as well as an antibiotic given at processing to help the piglets fight off the natural infection. After implementing these modifications, the Iowan producer saw a significant reduction in their DASS burden to their pigs' health and production.

There is no easy or quick fix for DASS. However, there are many health and management tools that can be utilized to reduce the impact of DASS and improve swine health and production in your herd. ■■■

### 2 MHP elimination by Dr. Emily McDowell

A producer in northwest Iowa sources pigs from a sow farm out in South Dakota that is Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae (MHP) positive. MHP is a bacterial respiratory disease that you see in downstream pigs but has a sow farm origin. This bacteria can cost \$5-8/ downstream pig due to losses in gain and mortality specifically in the mid-late finishing phase. In addition, the medication use in this downstream flow is also high. These losses can be even higher when you are located in pig dense areas as respiratory co-infections with influenza and PRRSV elevate the challenges.

PIPESTONE has been doing MHP eliminations on sow farms for the last 5-6 years. The MHP elimination process involves (1) loading the farm with gilts, (2) closing the farm to gilts/ gilt delivery disruption, and (3) exposure of the entire population to MHP. The MHP elimination can be done for MHP only but, most commonly, these eliminations have been paired with PRRSV eliminations as the timeline for gilt disruption/herd closure are similar. Our initial MHP elimination success rate was around 50% but we have learned from the challenges and would estimate our success rate to be around 80-85% today.

We presented the pros and cons of this strategy and walked the sow farm through each step of this process. At the end of the

herd closure timeline (estimated to be around 280 days), we tested the population to verify that the sow farm population was no longer shedding and introduced gilts again. Over the next year, we verified that the sow farm was indeed negative. The downstream flow to this sow farm no longer has chronic, coughing pigs mid-late finishing and has reduced their medication use, reduced their death loss (2-3%), and improved their gain. When looking at the costs of the MHP elimination and the benefits to the downstream health and performance, we would expect a return on investment of less than one year. ■■■



# 3 Pig Flow: the biggest influence on health and performance

by Dr. Evan Koep

Producers think of disease in two words: bugs and drugs. Bugs are the disease and drugs are the medication to treat the disease. When bugs and drugs are used, it means that disease was present

and needed to be treated. How do we prevent disease in the first place? Then, how do we stop the disease cycle? And lastly, how do we lessen the performance drag of disease and maximize revenue?

Let's take a step back and look at the big picture of animal health in your operation. Is your pig flow designed to prevent disease spread between groups, start better at weaning and maximize your pigs' performance potential? Rethinking the pig flow and design of your operation may fix

issues or improve performance. Do not be afraid to think outside of the box and try something new. Just because 'that's how we've always done it' does not mean that's how we need to operate today.

### BIG PICTURE DESIGN

How your operation is designed matters. This includes your pig source and where/how the pigs are placed. Fundamental goals to improve health and performance include:

## goals

## why


<b>ALL IN/ALL OUT BY SITE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limits disease to a single group</li> <li>• makes for easier and more successful disease clean up, if needed</li> </ul>
<b>SINGLE SOURCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all pigs on the site carrying same bugs</li> <li>• no spreading disease between source groups</li> </ul>
<b>SINGLE AGE GROUP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prevents spread of disease from older pigs to younger pigs</li> </ul>
<b>MINIZING AGE SPREAD WITHIN GROUPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limits the compounding effect of the disease from older pigs to the youngest pigs</li> <li>• easier to start pigs</li> <li>• better match of the right diet to right age of pig</li> <li>• impact of long fill times can equal \$0.25+/pig for each added day of fill time due to mortality and production drag</li> </ul>
<b>CONSISTENT, HEALTHY PIG SOURCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• healthy pigs perform better than sick pigs</li> <li>• consistent source allows you to know the health status and be familiar with what to expect</li> </ul>
<b>BIOSECURITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prevents disease spread</li> <li>• needs to be thorough, but practical</li> <li>• fundamentals such as entryway benches, and shower-in/shower-out work</li> </ul>

### CASE STUDY

A producer in South Dakota had 15-20% mortality groups for almost two years after the pig source eliminated PRRS. The producer sourced their pigs from one farm but housed six different age groups on one site. This setup had worked well for over ten years, but the introduction of PRRS changed everything. The site was emptied to break the chain of PRRS infection,

then the flow was redesigned to create fewer age groups on the site. Having fewer age groups decreased the performance drag of all groups, but also increased the chance of cleaning up diseases, such as PRRS, should it be introduced again. Since making these changes to their pig flow, the producer's wean-to-market mortality has been normalized between 4 to 7%.

### SUMMARY

Pig flow plays a crucial role in the health of the operation. Striving for all-in/all-out sites, a fast fill with a large pig source, and a larger, 24-day-old pig at weaning have proven to be successful. Consult with your veterinarian on areas to improve your health, reduce the need to use antibiotics, and increase your bottom line. 



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# Nutrition & Production Strategies for the Weaned Pig



Madie Wensley  
Nutritionist,  
Pipestone Nutrition

Madie grew up near Parma, Michigan and obtained her undergraduate degree in animal science from Michigan State University. She completed her master's and PhD in Applied Swine Nutrition at Kansas State University. Her research while at K-State focused on feed management strategies to improve the weaning transition, with the goal of decreasing mortality. Madie joined Pipestone Nutrition in 2023.

When we consider the number of stressors wean pigs face, it's no surprise that starting pigs in the nursery can be challenging. So, the question becomes, what can we do to help?

There are several practical ways to reduce stress, encourage pen exploration, and promote earlier feed intake to ensure a successful weaning transition.



### CREEP FEEDING

Creep feeding litters during the suckling period is one strategy that helps acclimate pigs to solid feed before weaning. Creep feeding should be considered for older wean-age pigs (> 21 days), as litter intake remains relatively low up until approximately 20 days of age. As wean ages across PIPESTONE managed sow farms have increased, creep feeding strategies are being evaluated through internal research trials.



### BARN PREPARATION

Making sure nipple waterers are turned on and cup waterers are full, feed is available in feeders, barn temperature and ventilation are at the appropriate set points, mats are in place, and brooders are lit are all crucial first steps before pigs arrive at the nursery or wean-to-finish site.



### SORTING STRATEGIES

Upon arrival, it is recommended to sort lightweight pigs (approximately 10% of the population) into uniform body weight groups and the rest of the population into mixed groups. This reduces initial aggression in heavyweight pigs and provides greater feeding opportunities for lightweight pigs.



### NURSERY FEEDING PROGRAM

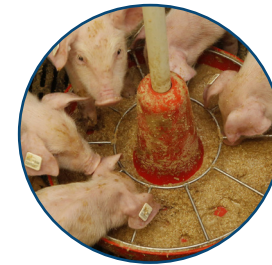
Providing an appropriate phase feeding program to match the nutrient requirements and digestive abilities of weaned pigs is critical. Dietary phases are typically matched with the age and/or body weight of pigs at weaning, such that older, heavier weaned pigs ( $\geq 14$  lbs.) can receive less total nursery feed compared to younger, lighter pigs. This is because nursery diets are often more expensive due to diet form and complexity.



### MAT FEEDING

Mat feeding is used to stimulate group feeding behavior like suckling and has been shown to reduce fallout rates. Mat feed should be provided

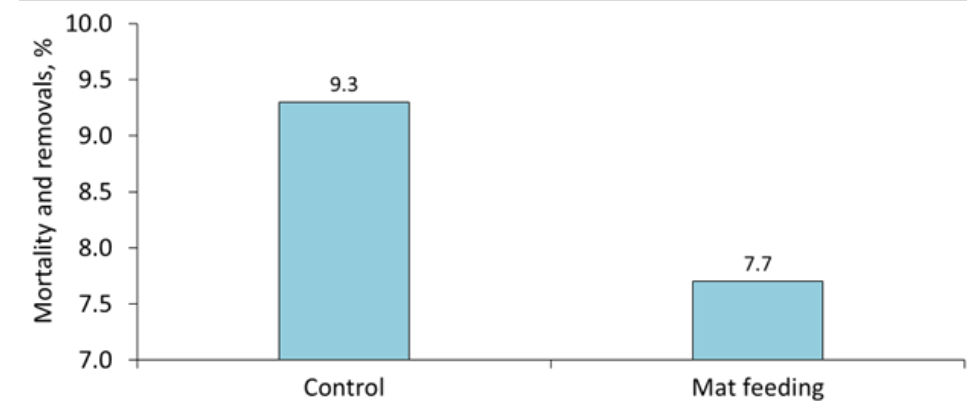
three to four times per day for up to 10 days post-placement depending on pig age at weaning, with younger pigs mat fed longer. Despite age, all pigs should be mat fed. This can be accomplished by taking one to two handfuls of feed from the back of the feeder and applying it in a straight line directly onto floor mats when you first get to the barn, prior to walking pens. Then repeating this process as you walk pens and again before leaving the barn. Mats should be located close to the feeder with the goal of driving pigs toward the feeder as frequently as possible.



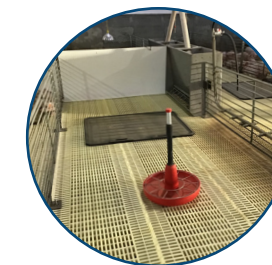
### GRUEL FEEDING

In addition to mat feeding, pens of small pigs should receive gruel three to four times per day up to 10d post-placement. Gruel feeding is accomplished by adding a small amount of water and feed to either round rotecna bowls or trough feeders, starting with a more liquid mixture (think oatmeal consistency) and gradually transitioning to a dry mixture over time. The key with gruel is to not overfill feeders so that feed begins to spoil if not fully consumed. Hence, pigs should consume all gruel within 30 minutes of mixing. Another thing to consider is how and where gruel is being mixed – take care and prevent excess water from making the pen wet and chilling pigs.

EFFECT OF MAT FEEDING ON THE MORTALITY AND REMOVAL RATE OF PIGS POST-WEANING



A total of 10,795 mixed sex pigs were used in four experiments to determine the effect of mat feeding the first 6 to 10d post-weaning on nursery mortality and removal rates.



### HOSPITAL PENS

Hospital pens should be equipped with a brooder to keep pigs warm and dry. Limiting drafts to these pens is also important. When considering the location of hospital pens in relation to wall fans and ceiling inlets, it's typically recommended to place pens of at-risk pigs in the center of the room, away from outside walls. In some cases, this may still require a solid partition to be added to the fence lines of pens to prevent excessive drafts. Mat and gruel feeding this population of pigs for an extended period is necessary until full bellies are observed and pigs can be graduated to recovery pens. The target for caretakers should be to graduate 60% of pigs within five days of placement into hospital pens. Each of these

management strategies is only successful when available to the pig, thus it's important to make sure feed, water, mats, and brooders are all located in a central area so that pigs do not have to travel far to access what they need. Frequent observations of hospital pens throughout the day should also be top priority, with caretakers focused on getting pigs up and moving them toward feed and water.

To set your pigs up for future success, it has been well established that the 3 to 10 days post-weaning are crucial. Aside from environment and health, the most important, and frankly, most overlooked component of wean pig care is the act of caretakers getting into pens. Executing the strategies above will create added opportunities for caretakers to get pigs up and observe them several times each day. Consistent observation is one of the greatest tools we can utilize to help the weaned pig. 🏠



# Marketing Strategies

## for Pork Producers



Brian Stevens  
President,  
Big Stone Marketing, LLC

*Brian Stevens grew up on a farm near Blair, Nebraska and attended the University of Nebraska pursuing a degree in Animal Science. Brian joined PIPESTONE in 2010 and is currently the President of Big Stone Marketing and an owner within the company.*

Revenue is a key metric for a producer to be successful in their pork production enterprise. As we consider strategies for success, I'd like to highlight a few key tactics producers can adopt that, in the long run, will help to improve revenue. Some of these are basic and some of you will say, "yea, duh," but it never hurts to review the basics.

### ➤ Understand the markets

The first thing you should understand is all of the different "markets" that relate to your farm business. For example, do you understand mandatory price reporting for the Western Cornbelt hog market, the National hog market, the CME Index, and the Pork Cutout? Before you sit down to negotiate any hog procurement agreement with your packer/buyer, you will be at a disadvantage if you do not understand these markets in detail. Key questions to ask are how are they derived, what are the differences, who does them, why do they sometimes say 'not published due to confidentiality', and are they audited? You should also understand the details on the grains, particularly corn and soybean markets.

### ➤➤ Know your buyer(s)

The second strategy that is overlooked is to know all of your regional packer buyers. It is easy to develop a relationship with your local country buyers, but I also suggest to get to know the head buyers in your area. Ask them questions and try to understand aspects of their business that you don't understand. There are not very many companies left to buy your hogs, so be respectful and don't burn bridges. We learned during COVID that when plants are going through shutdowns, having more than one packer agreement was beneficial and allowed producers to get their hogs harvested. I firmly believe that every producer should have a minimum of two agreements with different packers; I like three and maybe even four agreements better depending on your individual situation. This helps in situations where shutdowns could occur - weather (tornado or fire damage, etc.), foreign animal disease, or COVID are a few examples. Another advantage is that it allows you to diversify your pricing, if you can negotiate hog procurement agreements

that have differentiation. This is especially true today when attributes like open pen gestation, Prop 12, and Duroc sired all have different value opportunities between the different packers. Not one market seems to stand the test of time so diversify your pricing and you will always be half right.

### ➤➤➤ Implement risk management

The third tactic is to implement a consistent risk management strategy that allows you to 'crush' your hogs to a consistent profit margin. Today I deal with a third of producers who do a great job, a third that do a mediocre job and a third that don't do any risk management. In this world of extreme volatility you really need to adopt risk management strategies for your business. Remember consistency is the key. So often I see producers who have fallen into the trap of trying to hit the top of the market and are left with no coverage when it crashes. Focus on the crush margin and lock-in your profit margin when they hit levels you've already predetermined. For example, when the markets allow you to crush \$10/head maybe you should do that on

10% of your hogs, do another 10% when you get to \$12.50/head and another 10% when it hits \$15/head. The point here is to get started, and if the markets keep allowing a higher crush follow it up and keep doing some until you have half or two-thirds covered. Then it is up to you if you want to do more or let the market run. If it does, don't be afraid to lock those margins when you can. If you set your targets in advance and have a plan, you'll be more successful. It should be understood that you

really need good records and financials so that you know your breakevens. That will allow you to know exactly what the markets are offering you on that crush margin per head. Almost every year the futures markets have allowed pork producers to lock in very good margins. If you utilize this type of strategy your margins should be more consistent year after year.

Lastly, know when you need help. If you don't understand the markets or how to do risk management, I encourage you

to find an advisor or consultant that does. It will take some determination on your part and a willingness to learn new skills, but understanding these things will pay off in the end. In addition, if the next generation is coming into the operation include them in this learning process as it will benefit both of you and your business over the long term.

Reach out to Big Stone Marketing at (507) 825-4211 if you'd like to discuss further.



# Providing *Solutions* for Independent Pork Producers

## Maurer Farms attribute increased performance to FarmTeam

In rural southwestern Minnesota, Preston Maurer works alongside his dad, Rick, on their family farm near Morgan. "We raise corn, soybeans, wheat, and hogs - finishing approximately 22,000 head each year, plus we do tiling on the side," said Preston. With his diversified family farm in mind, Preston obtained his degree from South Dakota State University and returned home to work full-time at Maurer Farms. The Maurer's

soon found themselves stretched thin as the demands of the field in the Spring and Fall left them with little time for their hogs. "We had been looking to fill a role specifically on the livestock end, so when we discovered FarmTeam, a service through PIPESTONE, right away we were interested," said Rick. "We have been working with FarmTeam now for about two years, and it has been a real positive experience so far."

In the summer of 2022, FarmTeam staff selected Jonathon "Jony" Rueda Hernandez to join Rick and Preston at Maurer Farms as a full-time FarmTeam member. Jony is from Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, and speaks little English. Prior to his arrival in the U.S., he attended the University of Chiapas, studying Veterinary Medicine & Animal Husbandry. After accepting the position with PIPESTONE and moving to



FarmTeam member Jony Rueda Hernandez and owner of Maurer Farms, Rick Maurer.



Minnesota, Jony was enrolled in the FarmTeam training program for 6 weeks. During that time, FarmTeam trainers put him through a rigorous Pig IQ training program, provided support as he acclimated to his new environment, and assisted him with his U.S. documentation and banking details. FarmTeam Coordinator, Giovanna Penuelas oversees the training program and notes the importance of the time spent with new team members, "Training is not just about acquiring job skills, we also try to make the transition to living in a new country a positive experience."

Although Jony didn't know a lot about the swine industry when he arrived, like other FarmTeam members, he came with an agricultural-related education and a desire to learn.

After completing the training program and placement at his permanent farm with the Maurer's, Jony assumed the daily responsibilities of the barns. "Having a FarmTeam member allows us to dedicate a lot of time and care to the health of our pigs, and that has paid off big for us," states Preston. Jony agrees, "I accepted the position as FarmTeam because it really is an area of great interest. You have many responsibilities on the farm, and you are like your own farm boss. I really learn a lot in this area."

### CHALLENGES

Of course, inviting an individual from another country and culture to live and work in your operation day after day

does present challenges. But, both Rick and Preston agree they pale in comparison to the benefits. "It is a big learning curve for them when they come here, as well as, for us, to get used to them, them to get used to us, and the job. But it has met our expectations. It's just a good fit," stated Rick. "The language barrier is definitely a challenge, both ways - it is for Jony and it is for us. We've learned the biggest key is patience. We use translation apps on our phones to help bridge the gap. Having someone here from a completely different environment, and seeing them change and grow as Jony has, is really fun."

Together, the team at Maurer Farms is off and running, the Maurer family has encouraged Jony to take a college English



FarmTeam staff provide support at every turn to both independent pork producers and new employees relocating to the midwest. (l-r) Preston Maurer, Jony Rueda Hernandez, Rick Maurer, and Dan Hanson, Director of FarmTeam at PIPESTONE.

course and folded him into their active community. FarmTeam doesn't just deliver a team member to a farm, but rather walks alongside family farmers helping them identify needs, then begins the process of selecting, developing, and backfilling the right team

member for the operation to solve their labor shortage challenge. "For us, willingness to learn and the ability to learn are key factors in the success of an employee. With each FarmTeam member we've had, we always see a desire to learn, a desire to be better, and a desire to be

incorporated into our farm... and that is very, very important," said Preston. "We are on this journey with Rick and Preston from start to finish, their success is our success," stated Dan Hanson, Director of FarmTeam with PIPESTONE. Rick agreed, "Once you find that fit, it can be amazing and a long-term work and friend relationship."

### OUTCOMES

Rick and Preston feel they are unique in what they have to offer Jony. "We are a very diversified farm; so we've made his job diversified. The hogs are his top priority, but then he is able to work with us in our shop, help with tiling, harvest, and other things; we try to expose him to as much as we can."

Preston added, "FarmTeam has opened the door for us to tackle tasks that were not easy in the past because we were always short-handed. It really helps us specialize and be a lot more efficient as a farm altogether."

But Rick admits that taking the plunge isn't as easy as it sounds. "I think it is human nature as a farmer to try and do everything yourself, to always be thinking that you can't afford more expense or can't hire another person. It's a big step, and it's a difficult step, but we feel it can really add a lot to your operation. We've seen it firsthand, and now wouldn't want to do it any other way." He adds that another draw is allowing FarmTeam to manage the payroll and benefits for Jony. As a FarmTeam member, Jony is employed by PIPESTONE, with the same benefits package as the rest of their employees. Family farmers can trust their FarmTeam member is taken care of - from health insurance to their U.S. VISA. "PIPESTONE and FarmTeam make it pretty easy, we don't worry about the HR stuff because we know that it's handled. Instead, we can focus on Jony, helping him to become a part of our operation more quickly."

At the end of the day, the guys at Maurer Farms are advocates of the FarmTeam program, including Jony. "I am



Together, Jony Rueda Hernandez and Preston Maurer have overcome the language barrier with the help of Google Translate and patience. When not in the barns, Jony is able to learn new skills working on a diversified operation.

really satisfied because every day I learn and try to improve myself. It really is a very good experience and I would really recommend friends or family to FarmTeam or to work at PIPESTONE."

"For us, to know that our hogs are being WELL cared for when we have to focus on other aspects of the farm is just huge. Since bringing on a FarmTeam member, we've seen improvements in performance in our livestock," concluded Rick.

### NEXT STEPS

If your farm is experiencing the same challenges as the Maurer family, or if you are looking at growing your operation, FarmTeam may be the right fit for you. FarmTeam utilizes the human resource expertise of PIPESTONE to

provide independent pork producers access to qualified farm employees for grow/finish teams. All new FarmTeam employees start in a team-based environment where PIPESTONE staff provide grow/finish pig care training based on current swine-industry standards.

PIPESTONE is helping farmers by providing expertise and resources in pig health, management, nutrition, marketing, research, and business. If your family farm is interested in utilizing the human resource expertise of PIPESTONE contact us at 507.825.4211 or visit us online at [www.pipestone.com](http://www.pipestone.com).

*FarmTeam is a service offering of Pipestone Business.*

"For us, to know that our hogs are being **well** cared for when we have to focus on other aspects of the farm is just huge. Since bringing on a FarmTeam member, we've seen improvements in performance in our livestock."

Rick Maurer  
Maurer Farms



# GET COOKING

## Carnitas Tacos

Everybody loves tacos! And if you don't, you're wrong. This homemade carnitas recipe is a great way to bring your taco game to the next level. These slow cooker pork tacos are easy to make, featuring pork roast and plenty of flavor. If you're looking for a flavorful twist on your traditional Mexican dishes, this recipe is perfect for you!

Now, grab your Crock Pot, some wine, and get going!

### DIRECTIONS

Combine carrot, onion, and wine in slow cooker. Sprinkle roast on all sides with chili powder, rubbing it into meat. Season on all sides with salt and add to slow cooker. Cover and cook on low until roast is falling-apart tender, about 6 hours.

Use tongs or a slotted spoon to transfer meat to a large bowl. Use two forks to shred meat into bite-sized pieces. Moisten/season with cooking juices to taste. Cover to keep warm and set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine cabbage and mayonnaise. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange 2 tortillas on each serving plate. Fill tortillas with pork, cabbage mixture, and avocado and serve. (Alternately, arrange pork, cabbage mixture, and avocado on a platter and let guests make their own tacos.)

Tasty Tip: For even more flavorful carnitas, brown roast on all sides in a lightly oiled skillet before sprinkling with chili powder.

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 pound boneless pork shoulder
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 1/4 cup dry red wine OR chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 4 cups red cabbage, thinly shredded
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- salt and pepper
- 12 8-inch corn tortillas, warmed
- 1 avocado pitted, peeled, and thinly sliced



Pork makes a great meal for families, tailgating and special holidays. For more tasty pork recipes, visit: [www.cookpork.com](http://www.cookpork.com)

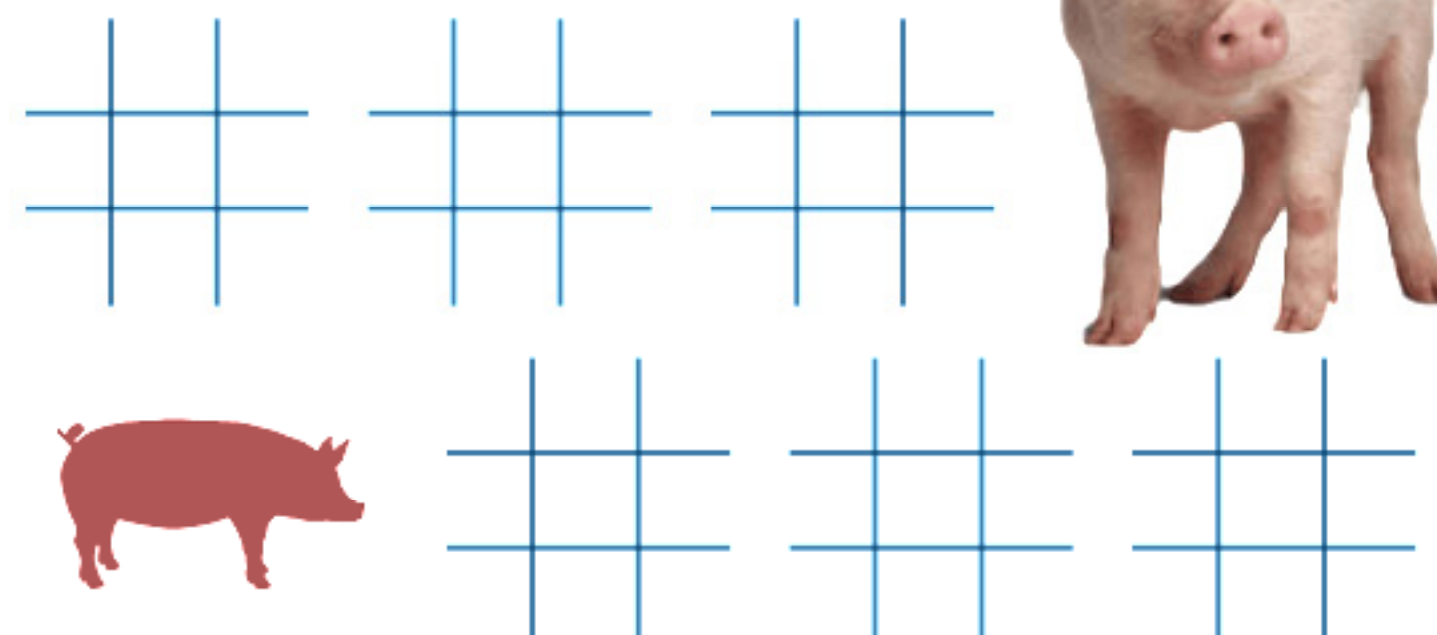
BONUS: check out the virtual sow farm tour available on the site!



# KIDS ACTIVITY

### TIK TAK TOE

An epic game of strategy, take turns with a friend placing X's or O's in empty spaces. The first player to get three in a row, wins.



Our favorite pig words are listed below in pink, read their definition see how many you can find!

## word search

D B G R T A G K C D P X S I J O Q R W S  
 D E A J W F K V G M B P S D R E P X U B  
 L Z D B Q Y A X F O A A W N H A B A Q B  
 I F U M J W E I Z A B N R A O P K Q N P  
 Y H Y X C M W I G H Y T U R T G T V V E  
 V M X T F O E A B F L O T R O E D W U Q  
 A V L Y K A J H W I Y V T D E W R W N I  
 Q Y G U A C F A R M E R S W O N N V R W  
 W D T K L V D F P U F H J K W B B K L S  
 F E P P I G L E T Y K E A G X S P A R O  
 S W I X T K S D J S C G R I B Y B N A W  
 F I O S U C S N J H R W C L W A D I B P  
 X H Z O E D Y I P B T A U T W R C O Q E  
 I J A Y R Z U J R D M P S X C M E O V O  
 M K D B I N K E K G D F H N V N K E N X  
 X Z R E I T E K E I D B P O R K P K A B  
 F J Z A E U L A P W V I O W K W C F G U  
 G F S N X H X U W K Z R P A X E J O I L  
 I T R S D V X L P P M H L A R V P I R X  
 E J J H T C J X I F A R R O W H M B V N







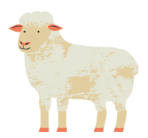







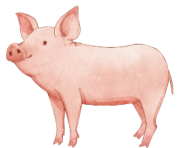
- piglet** a baby pig
- sow** a mother pig
- boar** a father pig
- gilt** a female pig that hasn't had piglets
- barrow** a young male pig
- farrow** when a sow gives birth
- manure** pig poop - the perfect fertilizer for crops
- water** what pigs drink
- corn soybeans** crops farmers feed their pigs
- bacon** the food pigs provide for us to eat
- pork** the food pigs provide for us to eat
- farmers** caretakers of land and livestock

# KIDS ACTIVITY

## FARM OR FOREST SORTING

Farm animals provide us with many foods, like ice cream, eggs, bacon, cheese, and hamburgers. In return, farmers work hard to make sure their animals are well cared for and content. Decide if each animal below belongs in the farm or the forest, then cut out the pictures and glue them into the correct box.

FARM	FOREST

 goat	 duck	 cow	 deer	 raccoon
 wolf	 sheep	 goose	 beaver	 fox
 chicken	 horse	 owl	 hedgehog	 pig

# GREENSTONE FARMERS

## Farmer-Owned Carbon Farming Company

GreenStone is an ownership investment facilitated by PIPESTONE to create and capture value for farmers in the U.S. carbon market. As a farmer-owned company, GreenStone will take a common-sense approach to carbon farming, with a focus on positioning farmers for success in this new economic opportunity for their farms.



### OWNED DIRECTLY BY FARMERS

This is an investment opportunity for farmers to own the company that sells their carbon credits.



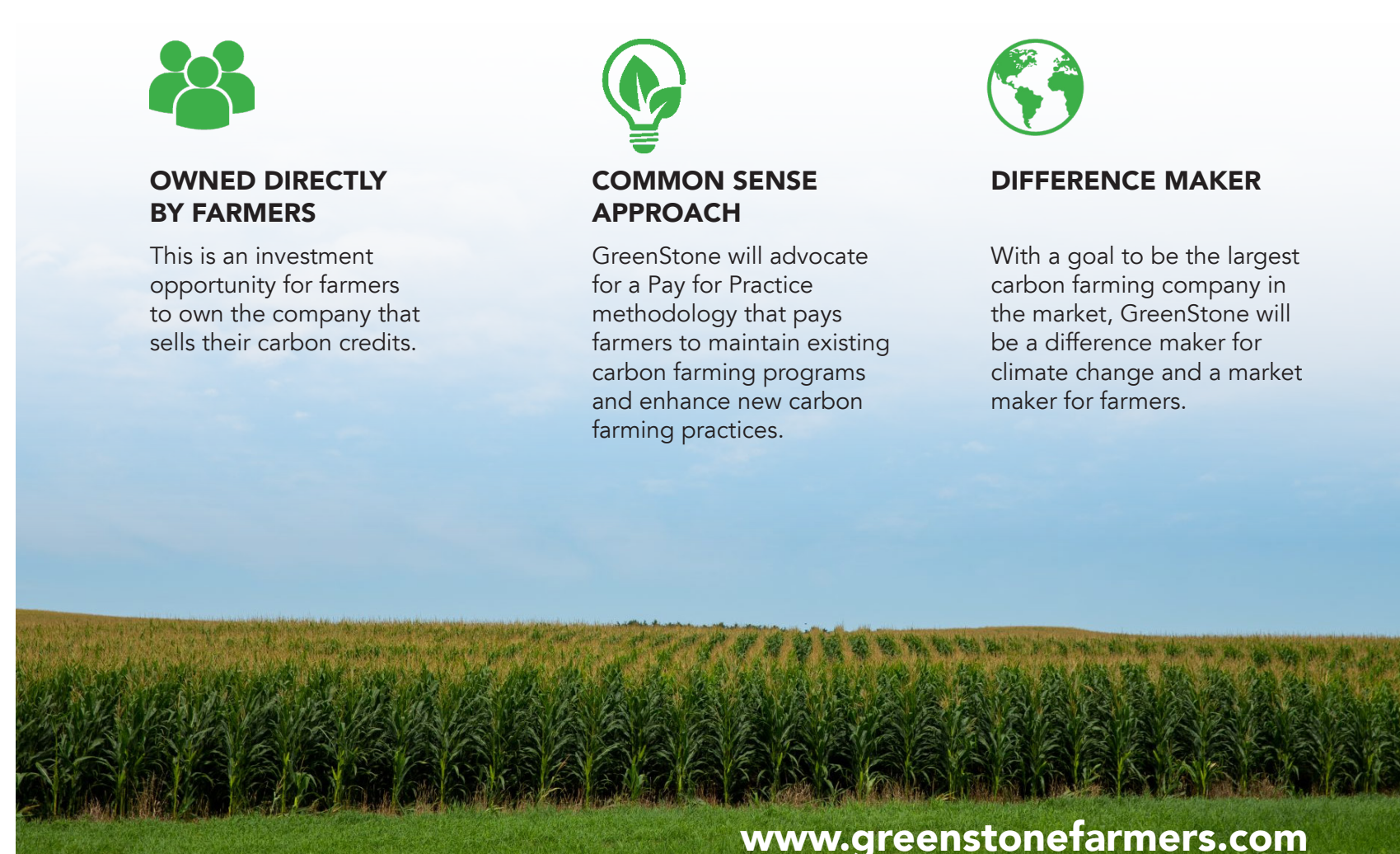
### COMMON SENSE APPROACH

GreenStone will advocate for a Pay for Practice methodology that pays farmers to maintain existing carbon farming programs and enhance new carbon farming practices.



### DIFFERENCE MAKER

With a goal to be the largest carbon farming company in the market, GreenStone will be a difference maker for climate change and a market maker for farmers.



# HOW'S YOUR WATER?

## Activate®

The ACTIVATE® nutritional feed acid family of products contains a blend of organic acids and methionine hydroxy analogue (HMTBa), a highly bioavailable source of methionine. The combination of organic acids in ACTIVATE effectively reduces the pH of the gastrointestinal tract, promotes the establishment of a desirable and more balanced intestinal flora and aids in digestion, providing more nutrients from feed and improving performance.

*Activate is a great tool used in reducing the risk of pigs breaking with an enteric disease like hemolytic E.coli during stressful periods. It is helpful to run this product to gut-challenged flows during critical periods like placement or diet transitions in the nursery.*

**Talk to your vet to learn more about utilizing this product in your operation.**

Dr. Rachel Jensen,  
Veterinarian  
PIPESTONE



### ACTIVATE WD 5GL HZ

ACTIVATE® US WD MAX is for use in drinking water, providing nutritional benefits (methionine activity) and drinking water acidification, making the drinking water a less favorable environment for pathogen growth (e.g., Salmonella, E. coli, Campylobacter, etc.).



### pH Meter

Easily test and monitor pH and temperature of water with a HM Digital Pro HM pH Meter.



## SWINE RESOURCE TEAM

Online  
[www.pipestone.com](http://www.pipestone.com)

Phone  
507-562-PIGS (7447)

Email  
[pvsorders@pipestone.com](mailto:pvsorders@pipestone.com)



# DID I GET WHAT I ORDERED?

Something looks different!

You may notice items in your order look different than your last order. We are constantly searching for cost saving opportunities for our customers and **sometimes** generic options offer those savings.

**It is important to note, even though they may look different, generics will act and mix the same!**

Different bottle presentations can be confusing, here is a handy guide for like items.

### DENAGARD (TIAMULIN)



### BAYTRIL (ENROFLOXACIN)



### DRAXXIN/DRAXXIN 25 (TULATHROMYCIN)



### R-PEN (PENICILLIN)



### TYLAN (TYLOVET)



### MATRIX (ALTRENOGEST)



### PULMOTIL AC (TILMICOSIN)




### ORDER PRODUCTS WITH EASE:

[www.pipestone.com](http://www.pipestone.com)  
507-562-PIGS (7447)  
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# FILL YOUR CART WITH REPRO SUPPLIES

**NEW!**




**KUBUS XL SOW AI CATHETER  
- NO HANDLE** SKU 23022

Artificial Insemination catheter with foam tip and no handle. XL format, longer. 22 inches + 56c. Translucent natural PP tube, Polymer Ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) foam tip Orange color. 25/Pack and 500/Case




**NEW!**




**KUBUS SOW AI CATHETER  
- NO HANDLE** SKU 23021

Artificial Insemination catheter with foam tip and no handle. Translucent natural PP tube Polymer Ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) foam tip Orange color. 25/Pack and 500/Case




**NEW!**




**KUBUS GILT AI CATHETER  
- NO HANDLE** SKU 23023

Gilt's artificial Insemination catheter with foam tip and no handle. Translucent natural PP tube Polymer Ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) foam tip Orange color. 25/Pack and 500/Case




**NEW!**



**KUBUS POST-CERVICAL SOW  
AI CATHETER - WITH HANDLE** SKU 23024

Artificial Insemination catheter with foam tip and intrauterine cannula for post-cervical semen deposition with handle. Translucent natural PP tube, Polymer Ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) foam tip. Orange color Thermoplastic rubber (TPR) handle. 25/Pack and 500/Case



**Should I order catheters with a handle or without a handle?**  
Dr. Joseph Yaros, PIPESTONE Veterinarian answers this commonly asked question, "A handle allows for prevention of back-flow, but is not necessary for successful insemination."



KUBUS  
catheters  
exclusively  
available from  
Pipestone  
Veterinary  
Services.



### LUBE JELLY

A sterile, non-spermicidal water soluble lubricating jelly for all types of medical procedures. Featuring an easy to use flip-top tube.



### CLARITY LUBE JELLY - 12OZ

Clarity A.I. Lubricating Jelly is a preserved, isotonic, pH buffered, non-spermicidal, non-irritating, water-soluble lubricating jelly for catheter lubrication and all types of non-sterile medical procedures.



### CLARITY ULTRASOUND GEL

Clarity Ultrasound Gel is a medium viscosity conductive, salt & alcohol free, water-soluble contact medium. Developed as a coupling medium to facilitate transmission of the ultrasound energy from the machine head to the tissues. One Gallon.



### SWINEMATE 1000ML

Swine Mate is used for the synchronization of estrus in sexually mature gilts that have had at least one estrous cycle. Developed with the exact formulation and active ingredient as Matrix, it is the cost-effective alternative.



### SWINEMATE DOSING GUN

The SwineMate Dosing Gun is specifically designed to be used with the SwineMate (altrenogest) product.



### CLEAR O.B. SLEEVES

Thickness and durability assures effective use on the farm when performing your necessary duties when it's time to inseminate or deliver. Made from a high quality polyethylene fiber for maximum strength and optimal sensitivity. 1.25 mil, 36" length. 100/bag; 20 bags/case.



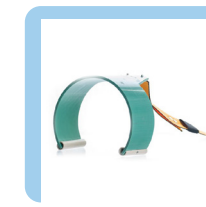
### BREEDING SADDLE

Artificial insemination (AI) saddle is an effective hands-free breeding saddle for efficiently artificially inseminating sows. The AI Saddle's stiff strap and Velcro® hold bottles or bags upright for complete emptying while the breeding saddle applies necessary pressure to the sow.



### HUSKY BREEDING SADDLE

The AI Husky Saddle is a new larger breeding saddle option for easy application on larger sows and with a wider opening to the saddle, the Husky Saddle for artificial insemination breeding practices can be slipped on the sow with one hand, yet remains in place throughout the breeding process.



### GREEN BREEDING SADDLE

The breed saddle is used to assist in the artificial insemination process.



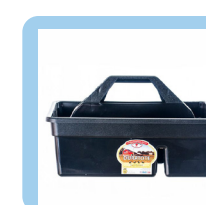
### SEMEN FRIDGE

These 4.4 cu foot semen fridges come in two options to fit the needs of each farm, right or left hinge.



### TRANSPORT COOLER

This multi-use cooler bag will keep semen cool for transport. Comes with adjustable shoulder strap, zippered top and two front pockets.



### CARRY CADDIE

This plastic carry caddy is convenient to use at processing or when working with animals. The design allows it to wedge over a gate and individual compartments keeps things organized.

Contact a swine resource team member for more information!

507-562-PIGS (7447)

# CONNECT



## SwineTime Podcast

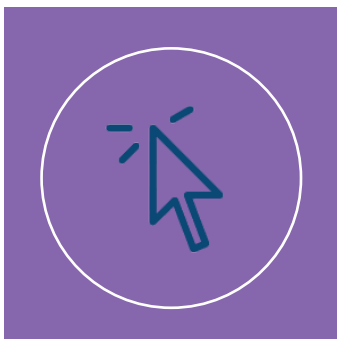
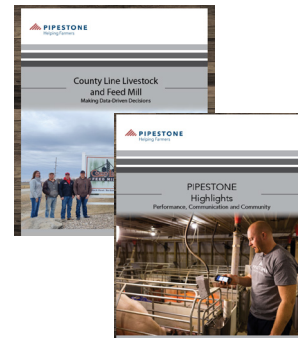
The SwineTime podcast is released monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday. Find the podcast on [www.pipestone.com](http://www.pipestone.com) or on your favorite podcast listening platform.



## Swine Newsletter

Bi-monthly, PIPESTONE sends a newsletter containing timely, accurate and top notch information directly to your inbox.

Sign up on our website: [www.pipestone.com](http://www.pipestone.com)



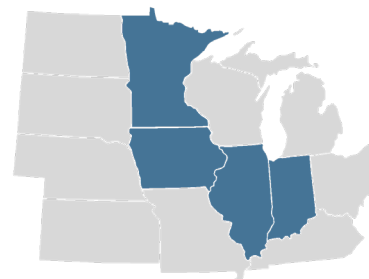
## Social Media

- Pipestone\_pigs
- Pipestone Discovery
- Pipestone - Helping Farmers
- PIPESTONE - Helping Farmers
- [pipestone.com](http://pipestone.com)



## Office Locations

- Pipestone, Minnesota
- Independence, Iowa
- Orange City, Iowa
- Sycamore, Illinois
- Rensselaer, Indiana



Thank you,  
Farmers

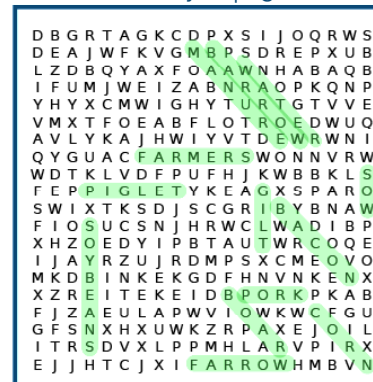
## We want your feedback!!

Please scan the code to tell us how you enjoyed this issue of the PIPESTONE JOURNAL.

Your feedback is valuable to the success of the magazine.



answer key to page 23.







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