



Pork Producers Announce Award Recipients

SIOUX FALLS — The South Dakota Pork Producers Council (SDPPC) recognized several outstanding individuals, organizations and businesses for their dedication to the pork industry on Jan. 10 during the annual Pork Congress at the Sioux Falls Ramkota Hotel & Exhibit Hall.

Jim Anderson of Dell Rapids received the Dedicated and Distinguished Service award for his years of service and dedication to the pork industry. Anderson has worked in the pork industry for just over 34 years and has been a huge supporter of the South Dakota Pork Producers Council. Anderson has also been a long term sponsor of the SDPPC Annual Taste of Elegance.

Ken and Lynn Wintersteen, owners of the Menno Livestock Auction, were honored with the 2012 Friends of the Industry Award. They received this award for their outstanding support to the pork industry and their involvement in the community.

KWAT Farm Director Jody Heemstra received the 2012 Media Award for her outstanding media coverage of the pork industry news and events in South Dakota.

Each year the South Dakota Pork Producers Council (SDPPC) recognizes restaurant owners and managers for their efforts in preparing and promoting quality pork products. This year Bros Brasserie Americano of Sioux Falls received the Restaurant of the Year Award, during the 44th annual Pork Congress Awards Luncheon at the Sioux Falls Ramkota.

The South Dakota Pork Producers Council announced that Ray and Pam Epp Farms of Mission Hill as their 2012 Pork Environmental Steward. This award goes to a pork farmer to recognize his dedication to the industry through outstanding environmental stewardship practices and community relations. The applicants were evaluated on their manure management systems; water and soil conservation practices; odor-control strategies; farm aesthetics; wildlife habitat promotion; innovative ideas used to protect the environment and an essay about the meaning of environmental stewardship.

Epps' hog enterprise was started in 1979 he built a 900 head wean-to-finish barn and remodeled a 1979 natural ventilation 300 bed barn into a curtain ventilation unit. They receive 1,200 isoweans at a time, and also farm 1,100 acres which consist of alfalfa, corn and soybeans. Epp's have always believed they have a site to be proud of and they continue to strive for excellence. They have really done an outstanding job and have an operation they truly can be proud of.

Northern States Beef Conference Jan. 17-18

BROOKINGS — SDSU Extension and the South Dakota State University Animal Science Department, in conjunction with the Animal Science Departments and Extension at North Dakota State University and University of Minnesota, will host the Northern States Beef Conference Jan. 17-18.

This is the first of what is planned to become a bi-annual event. SDSU Extension will host the first conference at the Watertown Regional Extension Center, 1910 W. Kemp Ave., Watertown.

The Northern States Beef Conference is designed as an in-service training for beef producers and will feature well-known speakers who will provide updates on production topics addressing changes in the beef industry along with potential management options and technologies.

The conference is open to producers and industry-affiliated people and includes a day and half educational program, opportunity to visit with speakers in the evening and a trade show with displays from the beef industry.

Further information will be available as the date grows nearer. For additional information, contact Julie Walker, SDSU Extension Beef Specialist, 605-688-5458 or email, julie.walker@sdstate.edu or Warren Rusche, Extension Cow/calf Field Specialist, 605-882-5144, or email, warren.rusche@sdstate.edu.

SDCGA To Meet In Sioux Falls Jan. 19

SIOUX FALLS — Seven nationally known agricultural specialists will give presentations during the 27th annual meeting of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association (SDCGA). Another will be the evening's keynote speaker. The meeting, which is one of the largest single-day agricultural events in the state each year, will be held Saturday, Jan. 19 at the Sioux Falls Convention Center.

"This year's offerings are a smorgasbord of highly respected agricultural experts and officials," SDCGA President Mark Gross of Bridgewater said. "It's rare to bring together so many top experts at one time in any one place. South Dakotans are fortunate to have an opportunity to not only hear the freshest information, opinions and advice from these individuals, but also to ask them questions."

The lineup includes John Phipps, host of U.S.Farm Report; Charlie Arnot, CEO of the Center for Food Integrity; Fred Below, a University of Illinois crop specialist; Mike Walsten, editor of ProFarmer newsletter; Mark Gold, managing partner of Top Third Marketing; Bill Davis, senior vice president of Farm Credit Services of America; and Ross Korves, an economic policy analyst with ProExporter Network.

Nearly 1,000 farmers, industry partners and legislators are expected to attend South Dakota Corn's annual meeting. The educational seminars will begin at 9:30 a.m. and continue until 5 p.m. All of those presentations are free. Lunch is \$10, with all proceeds donated to Feeding South Dakota.

Carl Casale, president and CEO of CHS Inc., will be the keynote speaker during the evening banquet, which will include dinner, a program and music by the Rumbles. The theme of this year's event is "Backyard Barbecue." During the evening banquet, the Corn Growers will present four awards: Legislative Appreciation; Excellence in Public Outreach; Excellence in Agriculture; and MVP in Agriculture.

For information, visit www.sdcorn.org.

The Sting Thing

Are Biocontrol Wasps About To Go Commercial?

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

Are you bugged by a munching, gnawing, tree- or crop-decimating, even cattle-annoying, insect?

It just happens that there is probably a wasp for that.

Wasps have a reputation of being indiscriminate stingers of anyone who happens to pass. But the wasps best known for daubing mud, building paper nests hanging in the patio, or swarming from an underground lair are few in number compared to the wasps that are increasingly being used as a biocontrol agent in the protection of agricultural crops — parasitic wasps that prey on such pests as the alfalfa weevil that damages hay fields, emerald ash borer that kills ash trees, whitefly that attacks greenhouse tomatoes, even biting flies in livestock pens.

And the best thing about these wasps: they don't sting humans.

Just as good, parasitic wasps do as their name implies: The adult female stings her host and lays her eggs inside the host's abdomen. The wasp larva hatch and consume the host from the inside, leaving the host's dead body to pupate into adults.

Parasitic wasps are very specialized in which hosts they select and are very effective at controlling that host's numbers. They are a very real way to decrease the use of pesticides without sacrificing crop yield. Frank Stonaker, pest management advisor for Colorado Greenhouses near Denver, says that biocontrol is about 25 percent less expensive than using pesticides and can be just as effective, without the damage to the beneficial insects and environment that chemicals have.

"In areas where three or more parasitic wasps are established, alfalfa weevil is seldom of economic importance," agreed Anthony Shelton, professor of entomology at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., "even in areas once requiring multiple applications of insecticide."

However, parasitic wasps have had limited use as a widespread pest control because of a lack of efficiently producing populations of the wasps.

Piet-hein van Baar, manager of Willcox Greenhouses in Willcox, Ariz., worked with the University of Arizona and the USDA in using parasitic wasps to control greenhouse pests. He says he was impressed by how little pesticide needed to be used, and if not for timing difficulties with wasp releases, he might not have needed to use chemical at all.

Shelby Fleischer, entomologist at Penn State University in University Park, Pa., adds that orders of biocontrol insects need to be made well in advance and producers do best if they know exactly how many they need which weeks. The progress isn't flexible enough to allow producers to adjust releases according to regular monitoring of their crops.

That's why a team of researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been working on ways to stockpile a certain species of parasitic wasp, Habrobracon hebetor, that attacks the Indianmeal moth — the insect that at-



PHOTO: USDA

Parasitic wasps are being increasingly used as a biocontrol weapon for protecting crops. While they can be effective tools, that effectiveness may be limited in areas of widespread need because of reproduction issues.

tacks stored grain products, including bagged flour and boxed cereal in household kitchens. These moths not only cause product losses, but even in small infestations where their effect on stored food isn't noticeable, they can leave behind contaminants.

USDA studies indicate that releases of the H. hebetor wasp can reduce Indianmeal moth populations by 71 percent, or by as much as 97 percent if H. hebetor is combined with another parasitic wasp that targets the moth's eggs.

H. hebetor adult wasps can be conditioned to remain in a resting state through two months at 41 degrees Fahrenheit and then be revived without ill effects. According to James Throne, research entomologist at the USDA's Center for Grain and Animal Health Research in Manhattan, Kan., this cold-storage technique could open the door for wasp-rearing operations to go commercial by increasing flexibility of wasp releases and reducing the expense of maintaining wasp colonies between releases.

If the research continues to hold promise, this could significantly upgrade the use of parasitic wasps as a biocontrol industry-wide.

That's what Helmuth Rogg, manager of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program, is hoping. Oregon is battling a new, invasive insect threatening major agricultural regions, such as Willamette Valley

"On a pest risk scale of one to 10, I would say the brown marmorated stink bug is a 15," Rogg said. "Biological control can help. It's a perfect choice for a classic, biological control program. We have an exotic pest that comes into a new environment without its natural enemies where it can easily multiply. Parasitic wasps are found in its native Asia and brought to the U.S. Hopefully, biocontrol will be successful, because there aren't really any other viable management options at the moment."

Research: Cow Temperament Affects Reproduction

BROOKINGS — Sometimes we wonder if that cow rattling the chute is worth keeping. Recent research suggests maybe not, said Elaine Grings, SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Management Production Specialist.

Grings points to studies conducted several years ago with Brahman-crosses which found that cows with excitable temperaments had lower pregnancy rates than their calmer herdmates. Researchers at Oregon State University expanded the study to look at the effect of cattle temperament and acclimation to handling on reproductive performance in Angus and Hereford cross cows. Their results were reported in the October issue of the Journal of Animal Science.

More than 400 spring-calving range cows at two locations in eastern Oregon were tested for temperament using both a chute score and measurement of exit velocity from a squeeze chute. The chute score is a 5-point scale, 1 being assigned calm cattle which exhibited no movement and a 5 assigned to violent animals which exhibited continuous struggling.

Exit velocity was also measured with an infrared sensor and converted to a 1-5 point scale - 1 given to the slowest and 5 to the fastest. The chute and exit scores were averaged to give a temperament score, animals with a score of less than 3 received an adequate score whereas, animals receiving a 3 or greater received a temperament score of aggressive. About 25 percent of the cows were scored as aggressive and these cows had lower pregnancy rates of 89 percent compared to the adequate temperament cows, which had a pregnancy rate of 95 percent.

At one location, cows were bred by AI and then exposed to

natural service clean up bulls. The second location used natural service mating only," Grings said. "The fact that bulls were used indicates that the lowered pregnancy rates in the aggressive cows were not due only to stress during handling at AI."

Cow body condition and calf birth and weaning weights were not different between the groups and there were also no difference between groups in pregnancy loss or loss of calves from birth to weaning. Decreased weight of calves weaned per cow exposed in the aggressive groups was related to the effect on pregnancy rate alone.

"Based on this and other studies, the researchers suggest culling on temperament or adapting cattle to handling could help in maximizing reproductive performance in beef cows," she said.

These researchers reported on a second study on the effect of acclimating heifers to handling on reproductive performance. After weaning, they divided 6-month-old heifers into two groups of about 44 heifers each. One group was processed through a handling facility three times a week for four weeks. Heifers receiving more frequent handling reached puberty at

an earlier age than their herd-mates, but pregnancy rates after AI were not different. The more frequently-handled heifers had lower exit scores, but not chute scores compared to those handled less frequently.

"The researchers therefore suggest that exposing heifers to handling and human interaction may improve reproduction," Grings said. "They do caution that this training needs to occur when animals are fairly young."

In a previous study, when they attempted to acclimate mature cows to handling, they were not successful at improving pregnancy rates. Grings says there are still some questions left to be answered.

"We still need to determine, what the minimum amount of handling needed to train an animal and what is the best age for training," she said.

In summary: Pregnancy rates were improved in groups of cows with less aggressive temperaments. Heifers acclimated to handling at about 6 months of age reached puberty at an earlier age and had lower chute exit scores than heifers handled less frequently. Acclimating young animals to handling and culling on temperament may have beneficial effects on reproduction in beef cattle.

To learn more about this and other cattle-related studies, visit iGrow.org

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