PIGS 03/26/17 S. KOCH

The Mann (MAHN) Valley Farm at U-W-River Falls is raising a new genetic line of pigs after it was hit last year with a disease called Porcine (POHR-seen) Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome. Sophia Koch (COOK) has the story.

MP3 RUNS: 1:16 O/C: STD

SOPHIA KOCH: PORCINE REPRODUCTIVE AND RESPIRATORY SYNDROME, OR PRRS (PURHS), IS A VIRAL INFECTION THAT INFECTS PIGS. IT CAUSES BIRTH DEFECTS IN THE LITTERS OF ADULT FEMALS, AND PNEUMONIA-LIKE SYMPTOMS IN PIGLETS. IT ISN’T AS DEADLY AS CERTAIN OTHER DISEASES, BUT BECAUSE OF THE EASE WITH WHICH IT IS TRANSMITTED AND THE ABILITY OF THE VIRUS TO ADAPT TO NEW VACCINES, PRRS HAS BECOME A HUGE ECONOMIC DRAIN ON THE SWINE INDUSTRY.

GARY ONAN: IT’S A VERY FRUSTRATING DISEASE. PROBABLY COST, HAS COST THE SWINE INDUSTRY MORE MONEY THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE DISEASE EVER.

SOPHIA KOCH: THAT WAS GARY ONAN (OH-nan), PROFESSOR OF ANIMAL SCIENCE AT U-W-R-F. AFTER THE OUTBREAK, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE REMAINING PIGS AT THE MANN (MAHN) VALLEY FARM WOULD BE SOLD FOR BUTCHER, LEAVING THE BARNS EMPTY OF PIGS WHILE THEY WERE CLEANED. THIS PAST SEPTEMBER, FORTY NEW FEMALE YORKSHIRE PUREBREDS WERE BROUGHT IN AS REPLACEMENT.

BILL CONNOLLY: RIGHT NOW THEY’RE DOING WELL, AND UH, YEAH SO WE’RE BACK INTO HOGS. LAST SUMMER IF YOU WERE OUT THERE IN JULY YOU DIDN’T SEE A PIG, WHICH IS REALLY UNUSUAL.

SOPHIA KOCH: THAT WAS BILL CONNOLLY (CON-oh-lee), DIRECTOR OF THE LAB FARMS. THE NEW PUREBREDS OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO PRACTICE TRACKING PEDIGREES AND REPORTING PERFORMANCE DATA TO THE BREED ORGANIZATION. A HUNDRED FORTY YORKSHIRE PIGLETS HAVE BEEN BORN SINCE SEPTEMBER, WITH MORE DUE AROUND THE FIRST OF APRIL. FOR FALCON NEWS, I’M SOPHIA KOCH.

Because of a shortage of pigs, there will be no spring pig auction this year at U-W-R-F. However, next year’s sale will likely go ahead as planned.

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