

This Boar Sires Champions, According To Strauss Brothers

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The brothers brought the boar home, and immediately began to see the impact on the herd. The brothers, who finish and sell about 150 pigs a year using 10-12 sows, began to mate him with their best gilts, usually Hampshire/Yorks or Duroc/York crosses. They use the Duroc crosses because they grow the fastest and are most efficient, according to Rick. Yorks are used for their maternal and strong weaning ability, and provide a lot of heterosis, or hybrid vigor. After obtaining the boar, pigs born alive increased to about 12, and litter size stabilized at about 10.

Rick said that consumers are demanding more leanness from hogs, and getting it. At this year's KILE, the barrow champion carcass weighted in at 219 pounds with .6 backfat, a 7.7 square inches of loin eye, and 58.81 percent lean on rail. The third overall barrow, also sired by their boar, weighed 241 pounds and had .7 backfat, with a 7.4 loin eye and measured 56.72 percent lean on rail.

In 1992, according to Rick, the reserve crossbred on rail weighed 246 pounds with .7 backfat, a 7.4 loin eye, and 60.54 percent lean.

The goal of the Strauss farm is to raise hogs for showing and selling some of their top animals to 4-H members. They raise the rest for their finish operation, and also sell individual hogs for butchering. (Recently, they butchered a barrow from their first inbred litter, which measured over a 9-inch loin eye.)

To do this, selecting the right crossbred sow and mating it to the prize boar is key.

"You can't take an average-muscled boar and use him on an average-muscled sow and get a pig that's really heavy muscled and lean for what the packer wants,"

said Rick. "It just doesn't work. You have to have a boar that's heavily muscled and lean."

Improvements have been quick and sure, resulting in pigs that are more consistent in leanness and muscling than what the brothers had before. They pick selected gilts from the better litters and use them in the herd. According to the brothers, the pigs they sell at the market, mostly New Holland, have been fetching a good price.

Some of the gilts have been saved, and the brothers have used AI to breed them, but haven't been pleased with the results. They intend to continue to use the boar for at least another two years.

As to why the brothers don't start boar breeding as a separate business, Rick said that because of the nature of the hog market around here (too many contract operations), breeders couldn't survive.

"That's what's hurting the purebred industry in Pennsylvania," he said.

As for their champion boar, they've obtained about 50 litters from him so far, and expect another 50.

"When you spend that kind of money, you hope maybe you can win (KILE) one time to pay for the boar," said Rick. "There's a lot of competition up there, there's a lot of other good hogs."

Rick said that beginning this year, they're going to twice a year farrowing, once in April and then in September-October. The April pigs will be used for local fairs and the better barrows for KILE. The ones in the fall will be finished.

Rick said he learns a lot about breeding stock by reading a lot of magazines, but mostly by attending KILE.

"If you see what the pigs look like on foot, and then you see them on rail, and you see a lot of pigs



Steve, left, and Rick Strauss finish about 150 hogs a year, but also raise many show hogs on their farm. Photo by Andy Andrews

like that over a period of time, you have a lot better idea of what you have," he said.

Rick said by raising your own hogs, you learn a lot more. The

brothers have been showing pigs since 1974. "Anybody that's been around pigs for 20 years, raising your own pigs, you should have learned something," he said.

"That's the show where you learn something," said Mrs. Strauss. "Anybody who wants to learn about hogs, that's the place to go."

ASA Pleased With Approval Of Ink Act

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The American Soybean Association (ASA) is pleased the Senate passed the Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1993 by unanimous consent, and is hopeful the House of Representatives will act on the legislation next year.

"U.S. soybean farmers have worked many months for this victory in the Senate," said ASA president and South Dakota soybean farmer Larry Diedrich. "We appreciate the leadership of Sena-

tors Christopher Bond (R-MO) and Paul Wellstone (D-MN) who served as original co-sponsors of this legislation and helped to get it passed so swiftly in the Senate."

The bill requires federal government agencies and their contractors to use the maximum amount of vegetable oil ink that is technologically feasible, provided printing costs are cost-competitive with printing using petroleum-based inks. Lawmakers consulted with ASA to determine minimum percentages of vegetable oil

required for use in various printing applications.

"We are pleased Senators have recognized the value of soy ink, and look forward to similar action by the House of Representatives after Congress returns in January," Diedrich said. "Soy ink is easier on the environment and has several advantages over petroleum-based inks in the printing process. And expanding soy oil use helps improve soybean producer profits."



HE'S REPLACING SOYBEAN MEAL AND CORN TO IMPROVE HIS PROFIT... SHOULD YOU?

This dairyman just took a delivery of brewers wet grain from the Miracle Feeds division of Furst-McNess. When he put a sharp pencil to it, he found that each ton of Miracle brewers wet grains could replace 230 pounds of 48 percent soybean meal (@ \$250/ton) and 195 pounds of shelled corn (@ \$90/ton) making brewers wet grain worth over \$35.00/ton in his ration. With the average price of brewers wet grains running at approximately \$25.00-\$27.00/ton (depending on distance from the brewery) this dairyman has realized that brewers wet grains is an excellent buy versus soybean meal and shelled corn.

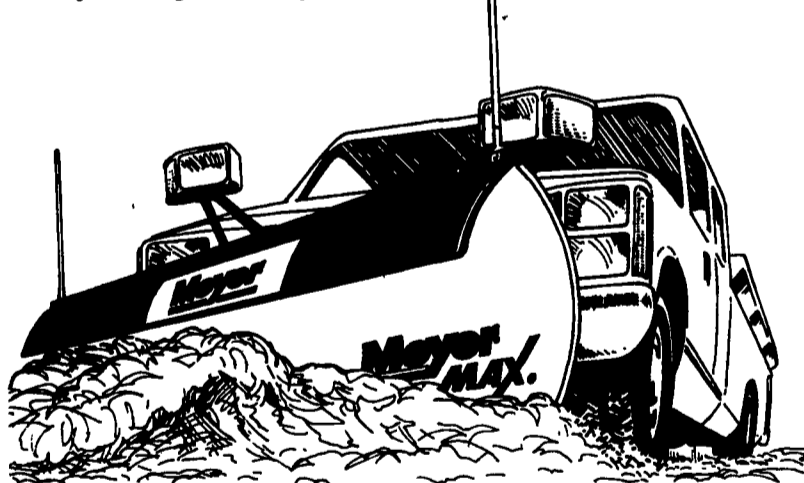
And, the dairyman found Miracle brewers wet grain also enhanced his cows' production since it is an excellent source of bypass protein and helps make up for some poor quality forage he is forced to feed this year. It also improved the palatability of his total ration. Brewers wet grains also contains 9% fat making it an excellent source for this important nutrient.

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