

Professor presents seminar on pork production

By Jim Garrett

A UNL professor recently returned from the People's Republic of China, after presenting a series of seminars on pork production in Nebraska emphasizing research on the value of feeding fat to hogs.

Prof. Bill Ahlschwede, a UNL Extension swine Specialist, participated in the U.S. National Economic Trade Exhibition organized by the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Ahlschwede said animal fats have been used in swine feeding for a number of years as feed supplements with the base diet, used in pork production.

Ahlschwede said numerous studies show the economic benefits and feasibility of using non-edible fat products—traditionally used to manufacture soaps and detergents—for all livestock feeds, specifically in swine.

He said the poultry industry currently uses non-edible fats recycled into the base diets of poultry feed. He added that the swine methods of using fats in feeds are some what more refined.

The fats not used in human consumption contain high-energy nutrients, Ahlschwede said. He said the fats are substituted into the base animal diets in place of grains normally used.

Relatively cheap

Because the animal fats are cheaper than most grains (depending on the current market values of grain), economic benefits apparently are obvious, Ahlschwede said.

The classing of grades of animal fats plays a significant factor in supplementing base diets, Ahlschwede said, adding that the lower classes, which are generally not suitable for detergents and soaps are not sought after for other industrial use and are still valuable in feed use.

The feed grade fats, used as supplements, also contain some vegetable fats, he said, which are recycled after their usefulness is expended from their use in cooking and deep-fat frying operations.

Ahlschwede said the calorie content of the feed fats is the same as in corn, but the advantage comes not only from the lower feed fats price but in the ability of the fats to perform better than grains during grain-and-final feeding operations.

Other benefits are the fats' ability to reduce the dustiness of the feed. Dust loss and nuisance from dry feeds adds up, he said, and with the use of fats as part of the base diet, feed loss and dust problems are reduced. Ahlschwede said the fat-added feeds are more palatable to the hogs.

Ahlschwede said one of the surprising factors encountered in research of hogs on fat-added feeds was the increase of the litter size by three-tenths of a pig per litter. In addition to the population increase, Ahlschwede said, the baby pigs, farrowed from sows fed with fat-supplement feeds before and after farrowing, show improved ability to handle stress and are less susceptible to diseases.

Economic benefits

Ahlschwede said a recent research project on the use of dry fat feed as opposed to the conventional method of melting and spraying fats on feed supplement has economically benefited the producer.

He said the small producer often doesn't have the equipment needed to apply feed fats directly to the base diet, and he must rely on feed manufacturers to supply him with the feed fats in a feed-form supplement.

Ahlschwede said the new research study shows the use of dry fats incorporated directly into the producer's base diets equals or improves on the results from the sprayed feed fats.

As for the China exhibition, Ahlschwede said it was the biggest trade show ever sponsored by the Department of Commerce and the largest one ever by American industry.

He said the Chinese were primarily interested in technology from the United States, like center-pivot irrigation systems and computer controls on machines.

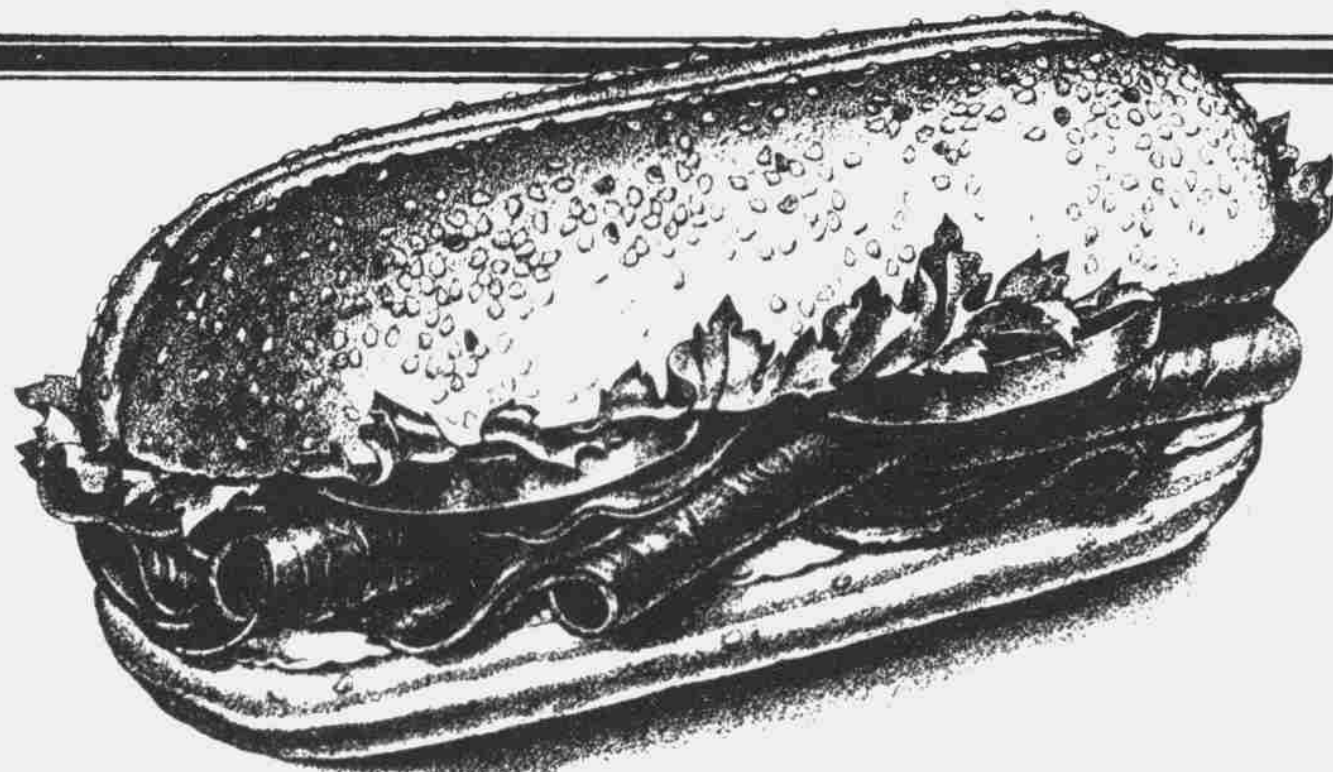
Ahlschwede said more than 20,000 people per day attended the two-week exhibit. He said things that the Chinese don't normally have were shown, which generated interest on the part of the Chinese.

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