



Media Release

Pork Producer Receives Prestigious Emerald Award for On-farm Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Efforts

For Immediate Release

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Ottawa, ON – As Dennis McKerracher heard his name called last week during the annual ceremony of the Alberta Emerald Foundation for Environmental Excellence, he could hardly believe his ears. The High River, Alberta pork producer was chosen as a recipient of the coveted Emerald Award, which recognizes outstanding environmental achievements.

McKerracher's award, presented in the Research and Innovation category, is the result of a year-long on-farm research project to examine how water wastage, as well as greenhouse gases, can be reduced in hog operations.

Supported by the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program for Canadian Agriculture, Climate Change Central, Canadian Pork Council and Alberta Pork, McKerracher's project measured and compared the impacts of using ball bite versus standard water drinker systems in his 500-head all-in, all-out grower operation.

His research found that, over a one-year period, the group of pigs selected to drink from the ball bite system used 35 per cent less drinking water than the group using the standard drinkers. Ball bite drinker systems release water when the pig bites down on a ball, pushing a lever that releases water.

The study results are significant. Water savings on McKerracher's operation means that he has to pump less of it. Not only is this more cost effective, but it also saves him time. And, with less water used, comes the additional benefit of more efficient manure management – resulting in the production of fewer greenhouse gases.

Canadian Pork Council President Clare Schlegel applauds McKerracher's efforts. "As farmers, we are always striving to improve what we do, and look for new ways to be more efficient, while protecting our important natural resources. We are very proud Dennis' achievement," he says.

McKerracher's work is already having an impact in the pork sector. "I already know a number of other producers in my area who have changed their drinker systems in their barns because of this project," he says. "It's exciting to know you can help effect a positive change in your industry."

Cedric MacLeod, Environmental Programs Coordinator with the Canadian Pork Council, underscores the importance of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canadian agriculture. Explains MacLeod, "Funding from the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program and Climate Change Central makes

it possible for agricultural innovators to find creative ways to enhance our environmental and economic sustainability. Dennis' work is an excellent example of this."

As for McKerracher, he asserts, "I'm one hog producer, not a large multinational corporation, which just goes to show that anything is possible, if you think creatively. Receiving this Emerald Award is a thrill and an honour."

He adds, "To leave as small an ecological footprint as possible is my responsibility, as a farmer. To be able to make a difference on my own hog operation is great. But to see the potential far-reaching, positive effects that my project could have on the environment and my industry is the best reward to me."

More information on Dennis McKerracher's study is available in Volume Three, Issue Three of Alberta Pork's *Industry Report* at www.albertapork.com. Further information on the Emerald Awards is available at www.emeraldawards.com. To learn more about the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program for Canadian Agriculture, please visit www.agr.gc.ca/progser/ghg/ghgm_e.phtml

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