

NSIF'S FUTURE ROLE

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There were five basic purposes for organizing the National Swine Improvement Federation in 1975. These included:

- *Uniformity*: To establish accurate and uniform procedures for performance testing.
- *Development*: To assist member organizations in developing and utilizing performance testing.
- *Cooperation*: To facilitate cooperation among all segments of the industry in developing and utilizing performance testing.
- *Education*: To work with member organizations in developing programs emphasizing use and interpretations.
- *Confidence*: To increase the swine industry's confidence in performance testing.

During the past three years, significant progress has been made in fulfilling the purposes of the Federation. However, the challenge is for us to maintain free and open communications among all segments of the swine industry in order to formulate breeding programs to optimize genetic improvement. In the past, this has been done in segmented form--there have been show and type conference participants in one arena, breed organization and extension personnel in another arena and geneticists in the third arena. Not enough emphasis has been given to communication among these three arenas. The best breeding program in the world is no good unless it can be put to use to achieve genetic improvement.

As we look to the future, the primary goal for NSIF should be to provide the resource base for maximizing our efforts in achieving genetic improvement. There probably is as much confusion in the industry today as at any time in the past. General concern has been expressed that we have more sophistication in performance testing today but less performance information is available to potential boar buyers. The increased difficulty in getting carcass information is also of concern as we look to future swine improvement programs.

Central test stations and on-the-farm testing programs are the foundation for the National Swine Improvement Federation. Central swine test stations have contributed to swine improvement through indirect methods outlined by P. J. Cunningham and Larry Rus in their presentations at this conference. However, on-the-farm testing programs hold the greatest potential for genetic improvement of the swine industry. Two examples of how breeding programs can be effectively implemented were reviewed by Lynn Cole and Max Waldo in the on-the-farm testing program sessions at this conference. However, these two programs are exceptions rather than the rule as most producers do not take advantage of on-the-farm testing programs at the present time.

Genetic improvement and progress are expected to be more difficult to obtain in the future. This means that all segments of the swine industry will need to keep their pencils sharp and utilize every avenue available to them to optimize the genetic improvement possible. Who will be the seedstock producers of the future is dependent upon who can best provide the commercial producer with what he wants and needs. Variance is the basis on which genetic principles are developed and our challenge is how to best capitalize on this variance. NSIF is like a breeding program in which the member organizations contribute collectively in developing a management system that utilizes the knowledge and expertise available in the NSIF membership.

The membership of the National Swine Improvement program needs to put high priority on listening to other segments of the industry and maintaining an open mind as to what is most desirable from a genetic improvement standpoint. Differences of opinion is what has made this industry truly great. If we did not have differences of opinion, the swine industry would be in deep trouble. One purpose for these conferences is to present programs that will stimulate thought. The Board of Directors needs to be sure that they have the necessary facts before establishing policies and procedures that get set in concrete. This is a dynamic industry and we have to be in a position to accept change as new information and opportunities present themselves.

All segments of the National Swine Improvement Federation have the same goal--to provide the basis for maximizing genetic improvement for economically important traits in swine.