

# Alberta study shows ball bite nipple drinker cuts water consumption

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A water consumption study underway near High River, Alberta shows swine producers can save substantial volumes of water by simply switching drinkers. A study being conducted through the Canadian Pork Council's Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program is comparing the volumes of water consumed by pigs drinking from the standard bite type nipple drinker to that of pigs that drink from a ball bite type drinker. High River producer Dennis McKerracher divided his grower finisher herd into two groups and has been tracking per animal water consumption on a daily basis for almost a year. He says the preliminary results have been impressive.

Using the ball bite nipple we're using, I would say, on average 30 to 40 percent less water. Right now in southern Alberta we've had some hot weather. We've had three days in a row over 30 degrees, hitting 32s, 33s. When you get those type of temperatures you will see 100 percent difference in the amount of water used in each side of the barn. It's interesting. When we first started this I got a bit concerned because the difference between the two groups was to the point where I was wondering if performance might be suffering but the pigs looked the same. They looked fine. They looked happy. We have at the end of particular batches weighed the pigs going out of the barn and, as our visual inspection indicated, there was no difference in performance. Neither of them had any difference with regards to weight gain. McKerracher says he was concerned that the reduced water use might impact the consistency of the manure but his custom applicator hasn't given any indication that that has been a problem. For Farmscape.ca, I'm Bruce Cochrane.

\*Farmscape is a presentation of Sask Pork and Manitoba Pork Council