

Scott Van Deest of Wakefield Pork, Inc.



“The best part of my job is getting to work with others,” said Scott Van Deest, farm manager for Wakefield Pork, Inc., Gaylord, Minn., and this year’s recipient of the Minnesota Pork Industry Swine Manager of the Year Award.

“I am always learning something new from my supervisors, fellow managers and employees. I truly enjoy going to work every day,” he said.

Van Deest manages a 2,400-head farrow-to-wean sow facility near Lafayette, Minn. Management of this site includes the utilization of veterinary services from the Swine Vet Center, St. Peter, Minn., nutrition formulated by Cargill Animal Nutrition, and a genetics program set up by PIC Genetics.

Van Deest’s passion for people and enthusiasm for learning makes him a valuable leader and dependable resource for the Wakefield system. Van Deest’s investment in his staff, combined with the staff’s 65 plus years of production experience, allows him the flexibility to participate in Wakefield Pork, Inc., research trials, client visits, media-marketing projects, in-house training tool development and taking part in leadership conferences.

Van Deest’s employee training has set the standard for other farms. Wakefield Pork, Inc. has even utilized Van Deest and his staff to assist in the training of employees from other farms.

Van Deest’s passion for pork production and his desire to continually learn match well with Wakefield Pork, Inc., business goals. He has successfully utilized these traits to carryout a number of research and animal health improvement projects at the sow facility. Wakefield Pork, Inc. co-owner Steve Langhorst said Van Deest and his crew’s willingness to put forth time and effort into these projects, along with their normal day-to-day operational activities, is truly a benefit to the company.

Under Van Deest’s management, his farrow-to-wean sow facility was one of the first farms of its size

in Minnesota to receive air filtration technology. Installed in 2008, the air filtration project was done in conjunction with the University of Minnesota and swine researcher Dr. Scott Dee. Since installing the air filtration system in the Van Deest-managed barns, a number of other Wakefield farms have incorporated the technology as a way to control disease transmission and improve pig health. Van Deest shares his experience and knowledge by working with other system managers who are installing similar air filtration systems.

“Scott’s skill and dedication for continually improving the efficiency of his farrowing operation is quite remarkable,” Langhorst said. “Meticulous attention to detail inside the operation allows Scott’s production to continually rank at the top amongst his peers.”

Van Deest supports incorporating the ‘We Care’ program principles and action steps into barn management and he is passionate about educating consumers on how pigs are raised and answering their questions on properly cooking pork to get the best eating experience possible.

“Scott understands the goals and purpose of the organization both internally and within the local communities we live in,” Langhorst said. “Scott is always one of the first to volunteer within Wakefield Pork.”

In addition to being involved in the Nicollet County Pork Producers Association, Van Deest is a volunteer on Lafayette’s fire department and ambulance service. He also enjoys outdoor activities, including hunting and fishing.

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