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Award for Technical Innovation in Enhancing Production of Safe and Affordable Food

Saskatoon, SK., July 24, 2009: Last week the Canadian Society of Animal Science held its annual conference in Montreal. In addition to the broad range of scientific presentations the society also takes time to honour the outstanding achievements of its members. Dr. Harold Gonyou, Research Director and Research –Scientist in Ethology at the Prairie Swine Centre received the Award for Technical Innovation in Enhancing Production of Safe and Affordable Food - This award recognizes excellence in technical innovation and teaching with particular emphasis in the fields of biotechnology, genetics, physiology and animal behaviour.

In presenting the award, Dr. Luigi Faucitano, Meat Scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada noted “Dr. Gonyou's interest in the science of animal production began while on the family farm in Ontario, and developed as he earned degrees in Animal and Poultry Science, in the fields of animal physiology and animal behaviour. Dr. Gonyou's nomination is based on his combining strong research, teaching and leadership roles in the field of animal behaviour, resulting in a significant impact on the efficient and welfare appropriate production of animals.”

Noting the close link between the pork industry and Dr. Gonyou’s work at Prairie Swine Centre over the past 17 years, Dr. Faucitano comments “Harold possesses the ability to anticipate and address, using the study of animal behaviour, specific industry issues very early.” Examples of Dr. Gonyou developing research-based solutions for the industry have included the design and management of feeders through the study of feeding and waste-causing behaviours, the development of production trends leading to group housing of gestating sows and large group housing for growing/finishing pigs. He also developed a stressful handling model to assist research programs addressing the incidence of non-ambulatory pigs at

market. Dr. Gonyou currently leads a collaborative project involving five universities and research stations on pig handling and transport.

Other notable accomplishments: Dr. Gonyou has instructed over 750 students in farm animal behaviour and animal welfare. Seven of his nine Ph.D. graduates currently hold tenure-track or research appointments in four countries. His leadership in the field of farm animal behaviour has led to his serving as President of the International Society for Applied Ethology and as Editor of Applied Animal Behaviour Science, the leading international journal in the field.

Lee Whittington, President of Prairie Swine Centre, noted “Dr. Gonyou's career represents a successful example of applying a relatively new field of study (applied animal behaviour) to practical industry challenges. By combining research, teaching, and technology transfer, Dr. Gonyou has successfully provided the tools industry needs to address changes in technology, best management practices and the marketplace.”

Previous CSAS award winners at Prairie Swine Centre have included Lee Whittington...Canadian Animal Industries Award in Extension and Public Service, and Dr. John Patience...Award for Excellence in Nutrition and Meat Sciences.

Prairie Swine Centre Inc., located near Saskatoon, is a non-profit research corporation affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan, and is recognized globally for its contributions to practical, applied science in pork production in the disciplines of nutrition, engineering and applied animal behaviour.

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