

SDSU Animal Science Honors Don Levis



BROOKINGS, S.D. - An alumnus whose contributions to swine reproduction have impacted the pork industry throughout the world was recently honored by the South Dakota State University Animal Science Department. Don Levis, who received his Ph.D. from SDSU in 1976 while working with Dr. Lowell Slyter and Dr. Rick Wahlstrom, was awarded the department's Distinguished Alumni Award during an awards banquet in Brookings on Sept. 25.

"Dr. Don Levis' impact on pig production has been one of international importance," says Joseph Cassidy, SDSU

Animal Science Department Head. "Pig producers throughout the world utilize the 'Levis System' that Don developed for managing breeding programs."

Levis has been a leader in developing swine breeding systems and helping pave the way for successful adoption of artificial insemination within the swine industry. His career has included professorships at North Carolina State University, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he held responsibilities in research, teaching and extension. Levis also led research programs at the U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture's Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Neb., and was the first Director of the Ohio Pork Industry Center.

Based out of Lincoln, Neb., Levis is one of the most highly respected swine reproductive physiologists in the world today and continues to travel worldwide assisting production companies with swine reproductive management issues. Levis has consulted with more than 1,230 individual swine operations in the United States and 15 foreign countries. He is a frequent presenter at boar management conferences where he provides practical advice and sound management recommendations based on a thorough knowledge of the recent and applicable scientific information.

"Adoption of artificial insemination by pig producers throughout the world has reduced the costs of production and increased the rate of genetic improvement," Cassidy adds. "Over 90 percent of all pigs produced in the United States today are the result of artificial insemination, and Don played a key

role in making that possible."

Levis has received numerous awards, including Honorary Fellow and Distinguished Extension Specialist from the American Society of Animal Science, along with numerous Extension awards from the National Pork Board and the University of Nebraska, among others.

"One of the things that's so special about Don is that he truly cares about the people he works with. They are more like family than clients to Don," says Dr. Bob Thaler, SDSU Extension Swine Specialist. "Don was a great mentor in my development as an extension swine specialist, and he was ready to help any way he could."

National Hog Farmer magazine named Levis one of top 50 people influencing the United States swine industry in the last 50 years, and also named him a 2007 Master of the Pork Industry.

"Dr. Levis is widely respected for his ability to turn the latest research into practical application," Cassidy says. "The SDSU Animal Science Department is very proud to call him one of our own." ■iGrow

5 Myths about Kidney Disease Debunked

(StatePoint) Think you have the facts about kidney disease? Here are five common misconceptions debunked.

Myth 1. Kidney disease is rare.

Twenty-six million American adults have kidney disease and most don't know it, according to the National Kidney Foundation. The problem? Kidney disease can be fatal, killing more people each year than breast and prostate cancer combined, and common health problems like diabetes and high blood pressure are leading causes. Race, age and a family history all can increase one's risk for developing chronic kidney disease.

There are typically no visible symptoms until kidney disease advances to a late stage or until kidneys fail. Talk to your doctor if you think you might be at risk and ask for a simple blood test screening at your next physical.

Myth 2. Kidney failure can be cured.

If kidney disease progresses to kidney failure, the only treatment options to stay alive are dialysis for life or a kidney transplant.

Myth 3. Dialysis requires traveling to a clinic for treatment three times a week.

Because only one out of five dialysis centers offer portable hemodialysis, most patients visit a clinic without knowing they can be treated at home, while traveling or even while sleeping. Portable home hemodialysis (HHD) with the NxStage System One is associated with lifestyle benefits. Only two percent of patients are on HHD despite the fact that nine out of 10 doctors would choose home dialysis for themselves.

Myth 4. Not many people are waiting for kidney transplants.

Twelve people die each day while waiting for a life-saving kidney transplant and every 14 minutes someone is added to the kidney transplant list, according to government statistics found on optn.transplant.hrsa.gov. Currently there are more than 100,000 recipients waiting for a kidney transplant yet only approximately 18,000 recipients receive a transplant annually.

Myth 5. There haven't been any major developments in dialysis technology in the last 10 years.

Groundbreaking portable at-home hemodialysis has been available for over 10 years giving patients a treatment option that can be tailored to fit both their clinical and lifestyle needs. Patients can also perform hemodialysis overnight while they are sleeping; this is known as home nocturnal hemodialysis.

The Importance of Saving for College

According to College Board, 2014-2015 tuition and fees for an in-state, public, 4-year college costs on average \$9,139 per year.

In addition to tuition, room and board will cost another \$9,804 per year.

These expenses - tuition, room and board - make up the majority of college costs but there are additional expenses such as books/supplies, personal, and transportation which total approximately \$4,388.

In total, a 4-year education will run about \$23,410. Costs are higher if the student attends an out-of-state, private, or for-profit institution.

Many families don't realize that federal financial aid will not cover all of their child's college education. Even families with a low Expected Family Contribution (EFC) need to be prepared to pay some expenses out-of-pocket or take out additional student loans at higher interest rates.

Below is an example of a possible federal financial aid package for a family (dependent student) of a first-year student with a zero EFC (2015-2016 amounts):

Pell Grant: \$5,775

Subsidized Direct Loan: \$3,500
Unsubsidized Direct Loan: \$2,000
TOTAL: \$11,275

As you can see, the first year alone, the student will be short \$12,135.

Some of the financial package already includes loans, so having them take an additional \$12,000 in loans each year for four years will seriously impact their future financial lives.

Direct Loan limits for dependent students do increase every year the student is in school lowering the amount of non-federal funding needed:

* First-Year: \$5,500 (no more than \$3,500 in Subsidized);
* Second-Year: \$6,500 (no more than \$4,500 in Subsidized);
* Third-Year and Beyond: \$7,500 (no more than \$5,500 in Subsidized).

What are our options?

So, what are the options to fund the difference between federal aid and college sticker price?

College Savings: A 529 prepaid tuition plan, 529 savings plan, Coverdell Education Savings Account or Roth IRA are great places to put money aside for future students. Most even provide some tax benefits to the saver.

Each plan has different benefits and risks, it's important for you to do your homework to see which one is best for your situation.

Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS): PLUS Loans are federal loans for parents. These loans offer fixed interest rates (2015-2016 rates: 6.84 percent) and offer deferments while your student is in school at least half-time.

A few things to remember is that these loans are your loans (not in the student's name) and cannot be transferred to them upon graduation.

These loans also carry an origination fee when the loan is disbursed (As of 10/1/2015: 4.272 percent). I have worked with families in the past who were able to take out a home equity line of credit at about half the interest rate.

One parent said that if she was going to take out a loan anyway, she might as well get the best rate she could even if that meant using her home as collateral.

Private/Non-Federal Student Loans:

■ COLLEGE,
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