



NEW Calf Equipment Makes North American Debut

The newest automatic calf feeder from Germany's Förster-Technik makes its North American debut at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show (COFS) thanks to Grober Nutrition.

In September, the farming public can see the new VARIO PLUS automatic calf feeders from Förster-Technik during COFS in the Grober Young Animal Development Centre (GYADC). Installed in May, the feeders are used all summer in the Centre for feeding research and training on calves leading up to the commercial launch at COFS.

"Canada's Outdoor Farm Show is the perfect place to showcase the new VARIO PLUS," says Heather Copland, Marketing and Communications Manager with Grober. "The GYADC is a working facility that encourages attendees to see the VARIO PLUS in action and the results it achieves. There will be daily ongoing demonstrations during the Show."

The new VARIO PLUS feeders feature automatic calibration and more user-friendly animal information storage. The information is also easier to access among multiple machines using SD cards which connect information among all units and are simple to update with feeding schedules.

The VARIO PLUS feeders were unveiled internationally at EuroTier, the world's largest livestock trade show, held in Hanover Germany this past November.

Two of the units were shipped to Grober's Centre in Woodstock in April. There is a technical partnership between Grober and Förster-Technik where Grober trains and supports dealers of Förster-Technik technologies. Since 2009, Grober has conducted research using Förster-Technik automatic feeders at COFS.

Attendees will see these machines in a live setting for the first time at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show. Two milk stations and two grain feeders are used in the Centre as part of the group housing studies. The VARIO PLUS will be attached to screens during COFS for Grober staff to show attendees the animal database and live features.

Jan Ziemerink, the Manager of Automation Services for Grober, works on Förster-Technik's behalf to train farmers and dealer technicians alike. Jan also collects feedback from farmers which is brought back to Förster-Technik and integrated into new products like the features added to VARIO PLUS.

"A lot of information comes directly from the farmers," says Ziemerink during a recent technician training held at the Grober Young Animal Development Centre, "and that feedback is both practical and rewarding for us."

Thirty-six staff from three dealer companies attended training sessions held in June and led by Jan and Förster's own Volker Bölle. In Germany, European technicians train at Förster-Technik's impressive two storey school near Stuttgart. However, in Canada, Grober hosts interactive hands-on training at the Woodstock location so that technicians can really understand the in's and out's of the machines in a live setting in the GYADC.

"Whether it involves crops, farm equipment or young animals, we always enjoy helping exhibitors host dealer training sessions throughout the summer months at the Woodstock site," says Stefanie Nagelschmitz, COFS Livestock Co-ordinator. "So it was great to see technicians from Minnesota, Alberta, Quebec and many places in between learning about new technologies from Grober staff right here at Canada's Outdoor Park."

This summer, the Grober Young Animal Development Centre is also studying kid-goats and will launch Förster-Technik's new lamb/kid automatic feeder. This lamb/kid feeder will be the first in North American and only the second machine worldwide. The first unit is currently being used for research in Germany with the hope of bringing it to market later this year.

Whether it is equipment for calves or kid-goats, farmers will want to be the very first to see the latest innovations in the care of young animals in action at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show this September.

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show will be held September 13, 14 & 15, 2011 at Canada's Outdoor Park in Woodstock, Ontario. For more information, visit www.OutdoorFarmShow.com