

MI Pork Sampler

April 2013



2013 Pork Forum Brings Producers Together

Pork Producers from across the nation gathered for the 2013 National Pork Industry Forum. Accompanied by Michigan Pork Producers Association's (MPPA) Executive Vice President, Sam Hines, Michigan sent three delegates to the annual meetings of National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and the National Pork Board (NPB). Attending as delegates for both NPPC and NPB were MPPA's President, Ed Reed from Marcellus and MPPA board member, Fred Walcott from Allendale. Attending as a NPB delegate was MPPA board member, Brian Pridgeon from Montgomery.

Each year delegates, composed of producers, vote on drafted resolutions to help determine priorities for both NPB and NPPC. Each organization has differing purposes, but both seek to have a positive impact on the pork industry so many of the resolutions that were passed were concerning similar issues and passed in both meetings. Addressing these issues is vital to the health and viability of the U.S. pork industry.

Among resolutions passed by both NPB and NPPC delegates was one asking both organizations to work with the USDA to develop and research an animal handling action plan to avoid plant shut downs. Also, that by January 1, 2015, NPPC and NPB resolve to have packers require the PIN tags for better sow and boar traceability. Finally, NPPC and NPB work with processing companies in order to avoid multiple audits for producers and hopefully, allow all audits to be fulfilled through PQA Plus and TQA Plus.

Delegate Fred Walcott, "The Pork Forum in Orlando was another shining example of the best in grass roots policy. Producers from across the country using their vote to better our industry for the productive of the animals, safety of the employees and untold benefits to the rural economy of the American pork producers."

The MI Pork Sampler is MPPA's new publication that will help you fill up on state and national pork news in between Michigan Pork helpings!

Communities and Livestock Conference

Livestock are an important sector of Michigan's food production system and opportunities for continued growth of the industry in the state's rural areas is promising. But there are instances across the state where strained relations between rural community members and livestock farms may be impeding this growth. Finding solutions to the challenges of modern livestock farms and rural residents coexisting within the same community is vital to Michigan's future.

On April 23, 2013 Michigan State University Extension will sponsor Communities and Livestock, where presenters will discuss the recent science on issues impacting the relations between rural communities and livestock farms. Issues discussed will include the cumulative effect of livestock odors on a community, the influence of modern livestock production on rural community health, watershed best management practices and a discussion of how farmers are participating in programs to reduce nutrient runoff.

Communities and Livestock will be held at the MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health, 4125 Beaumont Road, E. Lansing, MI. The conference will convene at 9:00 am. Preregistration is required. Online registration is at: <http://events.anr.msu.edu/communitiesandlivestock> or a mail in registration form may be found at the same site. All conference materials, refreshments and lunch are included in the \$85.00 registration fee. For more information contact Jerry May at mayg@msu.edu.

NPPC Update...

Congress Approves Funds for Meat Inspectors:

Furloughs of FSIS Personnel Prevented; Disruptions at Packing Plants Avoided

The National Pork Producers Council expressed strong support – and relief – for funding approved by Congress to prevent furloughs of federal meat inspectors, a move that would have had negative effects on pork producers, meat packers and consumers.

The House of Representatives today passed a continuing resolution, which funds all federal programs through Sept. 30, that includes \$55 million for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS). The Senate approved the funding bill yesterday, with an amendment sponsored by Sens. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., and Mark Pryor, D-Ark., that added the money for FSIS inspectors, who are required in packing plants that process meat, poultry and eggs.

“This is very good news for pork producers and other livestock and poultry producers,” said NPPC President Randy Spronk, a hog farmer from Edgerton, Minn. “Federal meat inspection is a function that should



be maintained to protect the public health by ensuring the safety of the U.S. meat supply. We’re pleased meat inspections will continue, and we are very grateful to Sens. Blunt and Pryor for their efforts to protect food-animal producers and meat packers from costly losses and consumers from higher prices.”

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack last month said federal budget sequestration – automatic across-the-board cuts – could force furloughs of up to 15 days for FSIS inspectors. More recently, USDA was considering furloughs of one day a week for 11 weeks between July and Sept. 30 – the end of the 2013 fiscal year.

Without inspectors, packing plants cannot process meat. USDA estimated the furloughs would have resulted in lost production of more than 2 billion pounds of meat, 2.8 billion to 3.3 billion pounds of poultry and more than 200 million pounds of egg products at a cost of as much as \$11 billion.

NPPC had asked the secretary to recognize meat inspectors as “essential” workers – as they had been in similar situations, such as a government shutdown – and forego furloughing them.

The money for FSIS is offset by not increasing funds for USDA’s building and facilities account and its School Breakfast Grant Program as much as was requested in the original continuing resolution. (Both, however, receive more funding in fiscal 2013 than they did in fiscal 2012.)



USDA Publishes Proposed Rule on MCOOL

USDA proposed a new rule for country-of-origin meat labeling in an effort to comply with a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling that the U.S. Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (MCOOL) law discriminates against Canadian and Mexican exports. Under the new rule, details on birth, production and slaughter would be provided on the label, such as “born, raised and slaughtered in the United States” or “born and raised in Canada and slaughtered in the United States.” In contrast, MCOOL allows meat to be labeled as “Product of the U.S.” or “Product of the U.S. and Canada.” NPPC is reviewing the proposed rule for its impact on U.S. pork producers. Last June, the WTO Appellate Body upheld an earlier panel ruling that MCOOL violates U.S. trade obligations under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. A WTO arbitrator determined that the United States had until May 23, 2013, to achieve compliance with the WTO panel ruling. If it does not abide by the WTO ruling, the United States risks retaliation from Canada and Mexico, both of which filed complaints with the WTO over the U.S. labeling law. NPPC believes a solution can be found that satisfies U.S. WTO obligations, provides sufficient label information to consumers and does not cause economic disruptions in the pork industry. In 2012, Mexico and Canada were the second and fourth largest export markets by value for U.S. pork, with exports totaling \$1.13 billion and \$856 million, respectively.

Checkoff News...

Pork Producers Reaffirm Industry Support for Producer Choice on Sow Housing

At the National Pork Industry Forum, pork producers approved a resolution reaffirming the industry's position that producers should be able to select a sow housing system, including gestation stalls or individual maternity pens, which best promotes employee safety and animal care while ensuring a reliable supply of pork for consumers.

"Pork producers, working with veterinarians, understand what it takes to provide the best care and welfare for their animals," said Karen Richter, a farmer from Montgomery, Minn., and National Pork Board (NPB) vice president. "The NPB builds its animal and well-being programs on the foundation of what are best for the pig. By adopting this resolution, producers are reaffirming their commitment to choose what type of housing is best for their animals."

NPB provides educational programs and materials that focus on how producers can best ensure the well-being of their pigs. The programs offer methods that help producers take an objective look at each animal's well-being, independent of the size of farm or the specific type of housing.

A survey conducted in 2012 by University of Missouri Extension economist Ron Plain found that currently 17.3 percent of sows spend a portion of gestation in open pens. Plain surveyed pork farms with 1,000 or more sows and received responses from 70 farms, which combined own about 3.6 million of the nation's 5.7 million sows.

Plain's survey also found that 20.2 percent of sows on operations with 1,000 to 9,999 sows, 18.9 percent on farms with 10,000 to 99,000 sows and 16.4 percent on farms with more than 100,000 sows are in open pens for some portion of gestation. When asked about plans to put more sows in open pens, the largest farms indicated that 23.8 percent of their sows would be in them in two years; farms with 10,000 to 99,999 sows would have 21.3 percent of their pigs in such pens; and farms with 1,000 to 9,999 sows would have 20.7 percent. By comparison, a recent NPB producer survey found that farms producing fewer than 5,000 hogs per year (approximately 200 sows or less) were more likely to use some form of open housing.



"Regardless of the system, what really matters is the individual care given to each pig," Richter said. "And we will continue to rely on science-based standards and our own long history of leadership in animal welfare to ensure that all animals are treated humanely."

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New market challenges and new opportunities inspired NPB to approve adding \$3 million in additional Pork Checkoff funds to bolster the 2013 domestic marketing budget during the crucial summer sales months.

Recent pronouncements from key international trading partners undermining U.S. pork's international market access threatens to slow pork exports from the record pace set in 2012. "With farmers still reeling from the high feed prices associated with the 2012 drought, we felt it was critically important that we are doing everything we can to keep pork moving through the marketplace," said NPB President Conley Nelson, an Algona, Iowa, farmer and pork production executive. "With 75 percent of our customers living in the United States, we believe there is a great opportunity to increase domestic demand for quality U.S. pork."

"We can already see some momentum building

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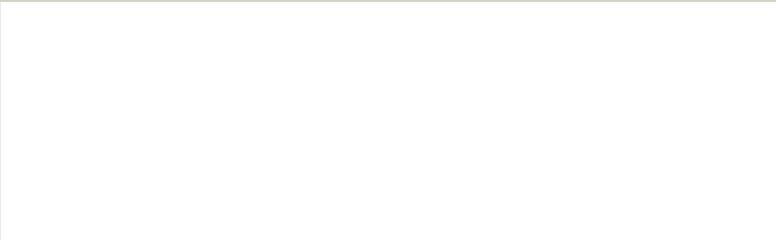
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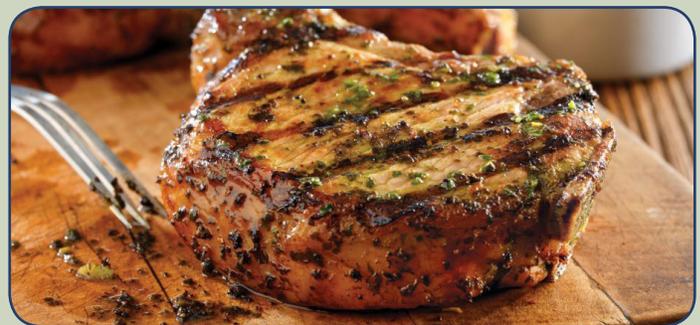
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toward the summer grilling season,” Nelson said. “Pork right now is one of the best values in the meat case. We also are getting some help from the new, 145-degree cooking temperature approved last year by the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service. We’re adding new pork lovers once they discover how good it is when cooked to the right temperature. Finally, we’ve launched a new effort to give consumers new ideas for affordable family meals. By putting some new labels on familiar pork cuts, we think it will be easier for consumers to take advantage of pork’s great taste and value.”

“So adding \$3 million of marketing muscle to our summer sales promotions makes good sense,” said Nelson.

Ceci Snyder, the Checkoff’s vice president of domestic marketing, told board members that the additional funds will make it possible to emphasize the value of pork in the meat case at a time when many consumers are feeling a financial pinch. “As we’ve listened to consumers, we know they are seeking affordable and convenient dinner ideas—and pork today offers a great combination of flavor, versatility, and value,” said Snyder. “The other thing we’ve learned from consumers is that people who like meat cooked to a medium temperature



may still overcook pork. Our pork lovers have discovered that if you cook your pork like a steak, you end up with a tender and juicy product that offers great taste and flavor.”

Nelson noted that the board took similar action in 2011 to grow demand at a critical juncture. “As pork producers, we know firsthand how high feed prices are leading to losses throughout our industry. We are excited about the opportunity to invest Checkoff dollars in a Summer campaign that we believe can grow consumer demand and create a return on investment for our producers.”

The budget addition must be approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees the NPB budget.