

NPPC Update...

House and Senate Pass Farm Bill

The House (251-166 vote) and Senate (68-32 vote) passed the Agricultural Act of 2014, commonly referred to as the Farm Bill. National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) proved to be instrumental in securing many U.S. pork industry priorities in the Farm Bill, including: trichinae surveillance program, funding for feral swine control program, establishing an Undersecretary for Trade, funding for a catastrophic disease event insurance study, and reauthorization export promotion programs. Equally as important is what was not included in the Farm Bill.

After one of many long battles with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), NPPC was victorious in keeping the “Egg Products Inspection Act” out of the Farm Bill. The so-called Egg Bill sought to codify an agreement HSUS came to with the egg industry regarding cage sizes for egg-laying hens. NPPC feared, if passed, this legislation would set a dangerous, slippery slope precedent that could translate into livestock sectors. Also excluded from the Farm Bill is the repeal of the required Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) inspection of imported catfish. Catfish inspection will stay at USDA rather than returning to FDA, where all other imported seafood inspection authority resides. The United States would be vulnerable to a challenge of the dual inspection of catfish at the World Trade Organization, and NPPC fears that some exporting nations may be inclined to retaliate against U.S. pork and other agricultural goods, because of an unfair trade restraint.

Though crafting and passing the Farm Bill is a huge accomplishment, NPPC believes Congress picked foreign competitors over U.S. livestock farmers. The country of origin labeling (COOL) law is broken, but Congress chose not to fix it. Instead, it passed a bill that subjects U.S. farmers to significant international trade retaliation tariffs from Mexico and Canada which represent the #2 and #3 export markets with combined exports of nearly \$2 billion annually. The economic impact of this decision on hard-working American farming families will be significant, and NPPC calls on Congress to resolve the COOL issue. A bipartisan group of Congressmen on the House floor spoke in favor of pork industry priorities: Mike McIntyre, D-N.C., Adrian Smith, R-Neb., Steve Womack, R-Ark., and John Shimkus, R-Ill. Reps. Tom Latham, R-Iowa, and Richard Hudson, R-N.C., submitted comments. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., also spoke on the Senate floor. The current farm bill is expired, and the bill now heads to the President’s desk where it is expected to be signed.



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NPPC Seeks Solutions to Propane Shortage

A nationwide shortage of propane – and record-high prices for it – has NPPC concerned for U.S. pork producers. In some regions of the country, particularly those caught in the recent extreme cold temperatures, distributors are rationing supplies. The National Propane Gas Association indicated that Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin have been particularly hard hit, but spot shortages have occurred throughout the Midwest and in the Northeast and Southeast. Because most customers receive their propane by truck, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued emergency orders for 10 Midwestern and 12 Northeastern states, suspending the limits on the amount of time truck drivers can spend on the road.

In addition to concerns related to heating homes, NPPC is concerned with the impact on producers regarding short-term spot market availability and costs associated in providing heat for their operations. NPPC is working with Congress, the Obama administration and the energy industry to address the immediate supply situation and with Congress regarding investigation/oversight on the issue. While U.S. propane production has increased in recent years, the higher supplies pushed prices down and made exports more lucrative. The rise in propane exports, which decreased domestic supplies, coupled with weather-related supply disruptions, long periods of unusually low temperatures in numerous parts of the country and even lower supplies in the upper Midwest that resulted from drying a large, relatively late 2013 corn harvest helped lead to the current situation, say analysts. Even if producers can get propane, they’ll be paying a premium for it. The price per gallon has jumped up to nearly \$5 from less than \$2 in mid-January.

Checkoff News...

NPB Statement Regarding Tyson Foods Announcement

Tyson Foods announced it will urge its suppliers to implement a series of production practices that it deems representative of responsible food production. Those recommendations include the use of video monitoring in sow farms, discontinuation of manual blunt force trauma as a primary method of euthanasia, use of pain mitigation for tail docking and castration, and the recommendation for sow housing built or renovated in 2014 and beyond to provide adequate quality and quantity of space for gestating sows.

On behalf of America's pork producers, NPB continues to recognize and promote the opportunity for producers, working with their veterinarians, to make the best decisions for their farms, their families, their employees and their animals. Producers need workable, credible and affordable solutions for improving animal care. From a broad industry perspective, there are a number of important issues raised by today's announcement:

- Currently there are no approved drugs for the use of pain mitigation in pig farming. We strongly encourage pig farmers to work with their herd veterinarian to explore options to comply with Tyson's recommendation and to ensure all federal drug-use regulations are met appropriately under the Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act.
- NPB maintains the position, supported by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, that there are numerous ways to provide proper housing and care for sows. Each housing system, including individual and group housing, free-access stalls and pastures, has welfare advantages and disadvantages that must be considered by a farmer. Regardless of the type of system used, what really matters is the individual care given to each pig - a mainstay of our industry's Pork Quality Assurance[®] Plus program.
- Video monitoring can be a useful tool in auditing animal welfare on U.S. pig farms. However, video monitoring, like in-person auditing, is only one component of providing and ensuring good animal care and can add significant cost to the farmer. Auditing and monitoring should be balanced with a comprehensive approach to animal welfare that includes caretaker training to positively affect human-animal interaction.

As an organization that represents America's pork producers, NPB will continue to work on behalf of the industry for sound policies that recognize the importance of veterinary and animal science, recognize the interests of consumers in enhanced animal welfare and recognize the importance of producers as independent business people charged with providing the best daily care possible for the animals they raise.



Managing PED: What would you do over?

-Dr. Madonna Benjamin-

While consulting with colleagues on managing PED, I asked them if they had a "do over", what would it be? The general consensus was helping producers pay more attention to biosecurity. I know you are likely tired of hearing about biosecurity, but hear me out, please.

Biosecurity simply means protecting the area where your pigs reside from carriers of disease. Knowing the history of vehicles on your farm is imperative. If you learn that a truck that has been to a sale yard has backed up to your dock to receive pigs, don't panic. Remove any manure and shavings from the contaminated dock and place it in a garbage bag. Spray a mixture of 10% propylene glycol (which prevents freezing) and disinfectant (Synergize), and designate a "dirty" pair of boots for that area until the weather breaks and you can wash the area completely.

It is very important to designate "clean" and "dirty" areas, with a line of separation. Allowing you to wash your hands, and change your clothes and boots without having those items cross the line. I prefer when a bench is placed on the line as it gives employees a place to sit and go through the above steps.

If you don't have a plan in place it's time for a kitchen table discussion with staff, children and spouses with a simple question. "How can we stop this virus from entering our pig barns?" After you've made a plan, it's time to call your suppliers, buyers, and service providers and share your plan.

If you have questions, the MSUE Pork Team and MPPA are here to help. For more information on the PED virus visit pork.org/pedv.



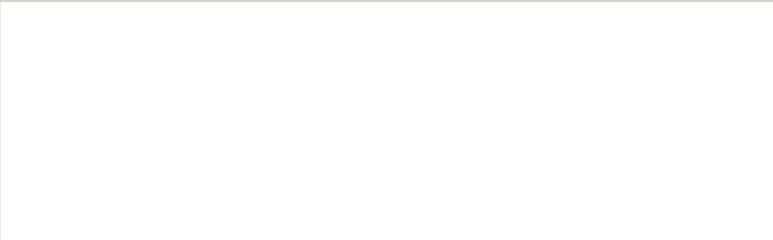
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In this issue...

- *2014 Statewide Meetings*
- *House Passes Farm Bill*
- *NPB Statement on Tyson Announcement*

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2014 Statewide Meetings

Pre-registration is required so that an adequate number of meals can be provided.

Please check the meeting you will be attending:

- Dowagiac**
 Grand Rapids
 Marshall
 Bridgeport
 March 24
 March 25
 March 26
 March 27

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please Return to:

**Michigan Pork Producers Association, 3515 West Road, Suite B East Lansing, MI 48823
 or email the information to Megan Sprague at sprague@mipork.org.**