



MI PORK SAMPLER

USDA Funds to Assist Farmers with Environmental Assurance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is making financial assistance available to Michigan farmers seeking to have their operations environmentally verified through the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).

MAEAP is a voluntary program created in Michigan that allows producers to have their operations environmentally verified through any of four systems including farmstead, cropping, livestock and forest. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is targeting financial assistance to producers for implementing conservation practices needed to complete their MAEAP verification. Farmers and private forest owners must submit an application by May 20, 2016, to be eligible for current year funding.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide financial assistance to implement practices such as fueling facilities and agrichemical handling facilities that may be required for MAEAP verification. The assistance is intended for producers who have started the MAEAP



verification process but must implement one or two conservation practices to qualify. MAEAP verification demonstrates that a farm or private forest operation utilizes sound environmental practices. More information about MAEAP verification is available online at www.maeap.org.

Producers interested in applying for financial assistance to complete their MAEAP verification should contact their local USDA Service Center. A listing of local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offices is available online at www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov.

Public Notice by Michigan Pork Producers Association and the National Pork Board

The election of pork producer delegate candidates for the 2017 National Pork Producers (Pork Act) Delegate Body will take place at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, June 15, 2016 in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of Michigan Pork Producers Association in the GreenStone Farm Credit Services Building at 3515 West Road, East Lansing, MI 48823. All Michigan pork producers are invited to attend.

Any producer, age 18 or older, who is a resident of the state and has paid all assessments due may be considered as a delegate candidate and/or participate in the election. All eligible producers are encouraged to bring with them a sales receipt proving that hogs were sold in their name and the checkoff deducted. For more information, contact Michigan Pork Producers Association, 3515 West Road, Suite B, East Lansing, MI 48823, 517-853-3782.



Capital Update

USDA to Continue Approving ‘Pork. The Other White Meat’ Payments

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) recently decided that, based on its review of the value of four “Pork. The Other White Meat” trademarks the National Pork Board purchased from National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), it would continue to approve the Pork Board’s annual payments for the trademarks. NPPC sold the trademarks to the Pork Board in 2006 for about \$35 million. NPPC financed the purchase over 20 years, making the Pork Board’s annual payment \$3 million. The sale was an arms-length transaction with a lengthy negotiation in which both parties were represented by legal counsel, and USDA, which oversees the federal Pork Checkoff program administered by the Pork Board, approved the purchase. In 2012, the Humane Society of the United States, a lone Iowa farmer and the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement filed a lawsuit against USDA, seeking to have the sale rescinded. A U.S. District Court dismissed the suit for lack of standing, but a federal appeals court in August 2015 reinstated it. Subsequently, USDA agreed to review the purchase, including conducting a valuation of the trademarks. In a frequently-asked-questions document on its website, AMS set the value of the four trademarks at between \$113 million and \$132 million. It is unclear whether HSUS will continue to press its lawsuit.

Amendment to Block WOTUS Fails in Senate

The Senate recently voted against an amendment that would have blocked the controversial “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) rule. Introduced by Sen. Jon Hoeven, R-N.D., the amendment to the fiscal 2017 energy and water development appropriations bill failed on a 56-42 vote. The WOTUS regulation was proposed in April 2014 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to clarify the agencies’ authority under the Clean Water Act (CWA) over various waters. That jurisdiction – based on several U.S. Supreme Court decisions – included “navigable” waters and waters with

a significant hydrologic connection to navigable waters. The rule broadened that to include, among other water bodies, upstream waters and intermittent and ephemeral streams such as the kind farmers use for drainage and irrigation. It also encompassed lands adjacent to such waters. Also Thursday, a federal appeals court denied a request from states, industry groups and property rights activists to rehear arguments on which federal courts should consider challenges to the WOTUS rule. The groups argued that, under the CWA, such challenges must be heard initially in U.S. district court. The Cincinnati-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit decided that challenges could be heard at the appellate level.

Report Finds U.S. Livestock Production Small Contributor to Air Emissions

The Groups opposed to modern livestock production, including the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), like to blame cows, pigs, sheep and chickens for contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). But a report issued recently from professor Frank Mitloehner, an air-quality specialist at the University of California, Davis, finds that livestock production in the United States accounts for just 4.2 percent of GHG emissions; pork production contributes just 0.47 percent. Animal rights and environmental groups, citing a since-revised-down 2006 U.N. report on worldwide livestock production, claim animal agriculture contributes 18 percent of GHGs. (Some groups even cite a Worldwatch Institute figure of 51 percent, which includes carbon dioxide emissions from animal breathing!) Of course, much of the 14 percent (the actual global figure) of GHGs from livestock production comes from unsustainable production systems outside the United States. Still, peddling the false claims on livestock GHGs and their effects on (debatable) global warming, groups such as HSUS try to cajole consumers into cutting meat consumption to save the planet. But, says Mitloehner, if all Americans were to eliminate animal protein from their diets one day a week, it would result in a negligible reduction in GHG emissions. In his white paper, he points out that the United States has the relatively lowest carbon footprint per unit of meat, milk and eggs produced.



Pork Checkoff

Pork Checkoff Announces 2016 Pork Industry Scholarship Recipients

The Pork Checkoff has awarded 22 scholarships to college students around the United States as part of its strategy to develop the pork industry's future leaders. Successful applicants were selected from a pool of 35 applicants based on scholastic merit, leadership activities, involvement in the pork production industry and future plans for a career in pork production.

"The 2016 scholarship winners will positively impact the swine industry in the future," said the National Pork Board President Derek Sleezer, a pork producer from Cherokee, Iowa. "We have an ongoing obligation to producers to help develop the next generation of pork producers. The goal is to ensure a sustainable source of leaders who will be ready to produce safe, wholesome food in a socially responsible way."

The 22 student recipients hail from 10 states and 15 universities and represent five different majors in swine-related fields. The 2016 Pork Industry Scholarship recipients can be found at www.pork.org.

This year's top candidates were Taylor Homann and Kyle Anderson, who will receive \$5,000 and \$3,500 scholarships respectively. Homann, a senior at the University of Minnesota, is majoring in animal science. Anderson, a junior at Kansas State University, has worked at the university's feed mill and would like to pursue a career as a mill manager after graduation. The remaining award recipients will receive \$2,000 each.

"The next generation of industry leaders will face new challenges, so we definitely need a skilled workforce and strong leadership," Sleezer said. "We are excited that this group of young people look at pork not just as a food choice, but also as a career path. On behalf of the Pork Checkoff, the National Pork Board and the pork industry, I congratulate this year's Pork Industry Scholarship recipients and look forward to welcoming them into our industry in the future."

Swine Health Information Center commits \$3.3 million to fight swine diseases

Pork producers across the United States have dealt with the devastating blows of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDV) in some manner. In response to the overwhelming devastation PEDV has caused the U.S. pork industry, the Swine Health Information Center has allocated \$3.3 million to fight swine diseases this year.

The Center's Board of Directors designated \$1.6 million for research and \$1.7 million for program and support projects focusing on disease preparedness, response, analysis and monitoring. These four areas comprise the Center's Plan of Work for 2016.

Dr. Paul Sundberg, executive director of the Center, says efforts will include the tracking of diseases that are already present or that may find their way into the United States, working with the veterinary diagnostic labs to standardize the manner in which disease test results are reported and supporting supplemental diagnostics in cases where a veterinarian has been unable to identify the cause of the swine health problem.

The newly formed Center was founded in 2015 through a \$15 million investment from the National Pork Board with the investment funding the Center for five years. The Center is governed by a board consisting of representatives from the National Pork Board (NPB), the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), the American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV) and at-large pork producers.

The goal of the Center is to help the U.S. pork industry become better prepared to respond to emerging disease threats. Based in Iowa, the Center's mission is to protect and enhance the health of the U.S. swine herd through global disease monitoring and targeted research that minimizes the impact of future disease threats.

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USDA Approves
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Meat Processing
Implementation Training
Available

Implementation Training for Specialized Retail Meat Processing Variance

Assistance is available for meat processors and their employees in Michigan that have a Specialized Meat Processing Variance (Variance) and are implementing it. The variance is required through the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) for retail operations that conduct specialized meat processing such as curing.

Michigan State University Extension will conduct two in-person implementation trainings as part of a project funded by the Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture. The first training will be May 17 at the Michigan State University Meat Laboratory, East Lansing, Michigan. An additional training will be held at a second location on May 24 at the University Center Gaylord, Gaylord, Michigan. Register for either of these locations online.

The training and resources will focus on assisting processors and inspectors with implementing the variance. This training is appropriate for employees that have responsibilities related to carrying out a variance in your processing facility as well as owners/management of specialized meat processing establishments. Topics will include: allergens; cure limits, calculations and inventory; regulated additives;

cooking; cooling; thermometer calibration; calculating percent added solutions; methods to prevent raw and cooked product cross-contamination (traffic patterns, product storage, post-lethality topical seasoning addition) especially in small and existing establishments and spaces; guidance with data loggers and temperature recording devices; and required and recommended record keeping.

At the in-person trainings, equipment will be available for processors to try that have the potential to save time and in some instances labor. Examples of equipment that will be showcased include:

- Single- and multi-channel data loggers with interchangeable probes for various applications that allow for monitoring of smokehouse conditions, cooking and cooling cycles.
- Thermometer calibration techniques including automated check units
- Water activity and pH meters

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