

MICHIGAN PORK

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“Doing the Right Thing,” Focus of Well-Attended 2013 Michigan Pork Symposium



2103 symposium attendees (from left) MSU Student Tyler Ferrier, Swine Farm Manager Kevin Turner, and MSU Students Shai Lyn Donaldson and Jarred Lorenz.



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Michigan Pork

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SPOTLIGHT

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“Doing the Right Thing,” Focus of

Michigan Pork Producers Association (MPPA) in conjunction with Michigan State University Extension and with the help of many sponsors (page 35) held yet another informative and well-attended Pork Conference on February 21.

The program focused on the theme “Doing the Right Thing” and producers came away with new ways to manage their operations and with more information on topics such as group housing and alternative feed ingredients. During one of the sessions, Dr. Patrick Webb, Director of Swine Health Programs at the National Pork Board (NPB), spoke about bio-security and what the NPB is doing to create a safe pork supply. According to Dr. Webb, a readily traceable swine identification program is a major part of providing consumers with safe pork. It was evident from Dr. Webb’s presentation that every producer needs to register their premise and obtain a Premise Identification Number (PIN). Dr. Webb discussed the PIN Tag Pilot Program that was explained in detail in the January Issue of the “MI Pork Sampler.” He said widespread use of the PIN Tag Program would benefit the pork industry immensely by better targeting surveillance efforts for



Distinguished Service Award winner Ken Guens with his wife Deb.

pseudorabies, swine brucellosis and other diseases threatening the industry. According to Dr. Webb, the pork industry has urged adoption of the tags to improve pre-harvest traceability and to benefit national swine disease surveillance programming. Dale Norton, a hog producer from Bronson, Michigan, said that, “Listening to Dr. Webb’s talk about bio-security and premise ID drove home the food safety advantages of having my animals identified when they go to slaughter. We plan on looking into and utilizing the Premise ID tags on our farm.” Many of the topics discussed at the symposium gave producers practical ways to improve their farms by applying new methods of management on their operations.

One of the ten speakers at the symposium was Audrey Adamson, Vice President of Domestic Policy Issues at

the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) in Washington, D.C. Adamson, who spoke during the awards luncheon, focused on the different legislative and regulatory issues with which NPPC is engaged on behalf of producers in Washington. She summarized many of the issues upcoming in Congress, including the Farm Bill, and gave a brief legislative history of each issue. Adamson said NPPC’s Farm Bill priorities included: support for a new comprehensive surveillance system pilot identification program for pork, support for a study of a new catastrophic event insurance program, support for beginning farmer (pork producer) and rancher programs, support for reductions in CRP acres to address the feed availability situation, support for an increase in swine research funding, support for foreign market development and market



Audrey Adamson giving her “Washington Update” at the awards luncheon.

Well-Attended 2013 Michigan Pork Symposium

access programs, and support for feral swine eradication efforts. Adamson said all of these priorities were included in Chairwoman Stabenow's Senate-passed version of the Farm Bill last year, but were not enacted because the House never took-up the bill. She added that the Senate Bill did not include any items that NPPC opposed and that NPPC would continue to oppose several provisions including: a livestock title in the Farm Bill and amendments to the Egg Inspection Act that would mandate federal farm production standards. Adamson said NPPC would also oppose "GIPSA" (Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration) Rule-Like Provisions, e.g., no ban on packer ownership of livestock, no limit to 40 hogs per contract and no spot market mandate. She said the organization additionally would oppose a ban on the use of antibiotics, federal purchasing restrictions to mandate production practices and the expansion of the advance bio-fuels definition to include corn-based ethanol.

Adamson explained that the Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (MCOOL) Act, that pork producers



Master Pork Producer Award recipient Pat Albright and his wife Colleen.



Jay Klingenberg receiving his award from Brandon Hill at the awards luncheon.

opposed from the outset as being unworkable and not beneficial to consumers, has been found to be in violation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations. She said if the U.S. does not fix the law to bring it in compliance with WTO rules the U.S. pork industry risks retaliation from two of our largest trading partners; Canada and Mexico.

After Adamson's presentation, four outstanding individuals were awarded honors for their work in the pork industry. MPPA's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, went to Ken Geuns, Bath, Mich., for his praiseworthy contributions to youth livestock programs in Michigan and his involvement with students at Michigan State University. Another top honor went to Pat Albright from Albright Swine Farm in Coldwater, Mich. He received the Master Pork Producer Award for his production ingenuity, tireless efforts to teach others about how pork is raised in Michigan and his contributions to the pork industry as a member of the MPPA Board of Directors.

Jay Klingenberg, Holland, Mich., a contract grower with Dykhuis Farms,

was awarded the Contract Grower Award for exemplary management of his facilities. Mr. Klingenberg was nominated for the award by Brandon Hill from Dykhuis Farms, who impressed the crowd with Klingenberg's accomplishments. MPPA President Ed Reed presented Matt Sibley, Marcellus, Mich., a herd manager with McKenzie-Reed Farms in Marcellus, with the Swine Herd Manager Award.

The 2013 Pork Conference gave producers an opportunity to learn, network, and talk with other producers and industry professionals. Attendees were able to cap-off the day enjoying a multitude of delicious pork products and restaurant offerings at MPPA's 23rd Annual Taste of Elegance Restaurant Competition. Michigan Pork Producers Association is grateful to all those who made the event a success; especially the sponsors and Extension Swine Specialist, Dr. Dale Rozeboom, and his colleagues on the MSU Swine Team, who were responsible for developing the educational program.



Swine Herd Manager Award recipient Matt Sibley with President Ed Reed.




By: Ed Reed
MPPA President

“...excreted pathogens can live up to 42 days in a truck if left undisturbed.”

“Bio-Security and Crisis Management at Reed Farms”

Bio-Security is one of the top issues that we face as an industry and, unfortunately, most of us don't think about its importance until it's too late! Sure, we all have large; “Do Not Enter” signs above the doors to our barns along with information about how visitors should prepare to enter pig barns, however, quite often these reminders are ignored! More often than not, visitors are truck drivers coming to deliver pigs and/or transport pigs to another site. These truckers are exposed to multiple pathogens throughout the week and, if not properly controlled, a pathogen can quickly spread from their boots to a caretaker's boots and ultimately proliferate into the herd. According to Iowa State research, excreted pathogens can live up to 42 days in a truck if left undisturbed. This alone warrants the need to have clean trucks entering production sites and drivers that are aware of the need to keep sanitation in mind at all times. We don't allow any dirty trucks to enter anywhere on our farms and it is mandatory that every entrance be coated in Disrupt® so it keeps the areas most prone to contamination dry and, hopefully, contamination free. These measures are outlined in two new tools recently introduced by the Pork Checkoff that were developed to help pork producers in the event of a crisis or emergency on their farms. The Farm-Level Crisis Response Plan template and Emergency Action Plan, provide customizable, step-by-step guides to help producers be prepared and stay on track in their commitment to providing a safe, quality product. The tools

contain information that includes: a check-sheet that details how often the disinfectant placed in the doorway should be changed to maximize its effectiveness, information on what to do if a potential contamination occurs, and charts that can be utilized to provide emergency contact information for everyone involved with the farm. This includes the veterinarian, fuel suppliers, manure handlers, as well as the appropriate public authorities that should be contacted in the event of an emergency. We recently revamped our Farm Crisis Plan to include some of these tools and included them within the framework of our plan. Producers can access the Farm-Level Crisis Plan and Emergency Action Plan by going to the Pork Checkoff Website at www.pork.org, clicking on the Resources header at the top of the page and then accessing the plans by clicking on their respective titles at the lower left column of the Resources page.

As with everything, these plans can only go so far in the practical realm. What really matters is the communication you have with your employees to make certain they have an understanding of the significance of a disease outbreak, as well as the appropriate measures that need to be taken in case of an emergency. Constant vigilance and the diligence to keep your preventative measures intact throughout the year are the only way you can keep your farm safe, profitable, and disease free! 



By: Sam Hines
MPPA Executive Vice President
Hines@mipork.org

“...I don’t believe the 113th Congress and the Washington Bureaucrats have proven anymore capable of governing effectually than the 112th...”

“Full of sound and fury signifying nothing”

On February 20, NPPC informed the state executives during a conference call that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had released raw data it had been collecting on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) to a number of activist groups. According to NPPC, the raw data from farms in 30 states, including, in some instances farmers’ home addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and information on employees of operations, had been given to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Earth Justice, and the Pew Charitable Trusts under Freedom of Information Act requests the groups filed.

Rightfully, NPPC indicated it was very concerned about release of potentially confidential business data to anti-modern farming environmental activist groups by EPA; especially since the agency had not even given any prior notice to the individual farmers whose privacy was breached.

NPPC outlined to state executives the chronology of events leading to release of the data. NPPC said EPA first proposed a reporting rule that would have required farmers to provide information on their operations that was to be put in a searchable national database. Following EPA proposing the reporting rule, NPPC sued EPA in federal court over concerns about the confidentiality of this information and the fact that it could pinpoint operations for retaliation from environmental activists as well as from terrorist groups wanting to disrupt the food supply. The Department of Homeland Security also raised concerns and agreed with producers that release of this information was a potential threat

to national security. NPPC reported that EPA withdrew the rule when a federal judge made it clear that this approach to implementing the federal CAFO permitting rule was unacceptable.

NPPC went on to explain that after EPA withdrew the proposed reporting rule, the agency contacted state authorities to collect the very same data, claiming a “need to better understand” water quality conditions. “It is our understanding that EPA never told states or pork farmers of its intention to collect and create any database and to share it as a response to several environmental activist groups’ Freedom of Information Act requests,” NPPC said.

At the time I am writing this, NPPC staff and legal consultants were reviewing the data that EPA released to better understand the scope and content of the information and the extent to which confidential or other personal information may have been compromised. The national organization also said it was reviewing numerous options to protect against the misuse of this information and to prevent EPA from repeating such a release.

In reviewing the information that was provided from Michigan, it doesn’t appear anything was made available that couldn’t already be accessed publicly. However, that doesn’t excuse the fact that, even in Michigan’s case, EPA provided a ready-made road map for our antagonists, or for that matter a terrorist, to use to target and harass producers.

Since I am writing this the last week of February, it is unclear what

(continued on page 10)

The 23rd Annual Taste of Elegance

On February 21st, the 23rd annual Michigan Pork Producers Association (MPPA) Taste of Elegance chef's competition did not lack delicious aromas, creative food displays and talented chefs. Master of Ceremonies, Pat Driscoll from 8 Point Promotions, kept the night going as the judges went around the room savoring and evaluating each chef's creation.

The judges, who included 2012 Taste of Elegance Winner Ian Ramirez from Creative Dining Services in Grand Rapids; Dave Coker from Dine Michigan; and Chef Julia Bowkar from the Marriot in East Lansing, certainly had some tough decisions to make.

The winner, taking home the honor of Chef Par Excellence was Josef Huber from the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, who impressed the judges with his perfectly cooked Braised Pork Belly Stuffed with Black Summer Truffles and Sweet Peas. In addition to a \$1000 monetary award from MPPA, Chef Huber will attend the National Taste of Elegance Educational Summit at the Culinary Institute of America's Greystone Campus in St. Helena, California, compliments of the National Pork Board.

Receiving the title of Superior Chef and 2nd place, Todd Van Wieren, CEC, from Boatwerks Waterfront Restaurant in Holland cooked up a dish titled Global Pork Barbecue.

And in 3rd place, with the title of Premium Chef was Eric Batten, C.E.C., from The Gallery at Michigan State University in East Lansing who didn't scare the judges away with his tasty creation Pork -n- "Stein".

Besides the opportunity to be a



Chef Josef Huber, winner of Taste of Elegance, with President Ed Reed and Executive Director Mary Kelpinski.

"guest judge" at a chef's table; one of the highlights of attending Taste of Elegance is the chance to pick your favorite dish based on its aesthetics for the People's Choice Award. The onlookers were impressed by Jon Bastianelli's, from The English Inn in Lansing, spring inspired Scotch Ale Braised Pork Shank dish, and chose him to take home the People's Choice Award.



The Food Bank Council of Michigan receiving their donation and a bag of groceries from President Ed Reed and Executive Director Mary Kelpinski.

As a part of the evening the Food Bank Council of Michigan, represented by Kareemah El-Ammin, Executive Director, not only had a booth at Taste of Elegance to increase people's awareness of food insecurity in Michigan, but was presented with a \$2,000

check from MPPA and a grocery bag full of pork themed items. The donations will enable the Food Bank to purchase pork and further their cause to "alleviate and prevent hunger among Michigan people."

Other participating Chefs (pictured below) included Paul Adams from Hawkshead Restaurant in South Haven; Dena Carey from D-Lish Dish L.L.C. in DeWitt; Sarah Davis, CCC, from Country House Catering in Mason; Chef Isaac from Cuisines By Isaac L.L.C. in Lansing David Payne, C.C.C., from Edgewood Country Club in Commerce Township; Justin Straube from Seasonal Grille in Hastings; and Gayle Trudell from the Lansing Center in Lansing; Jessica Vladar from Bravo Cucina in Lansing.



Chef Isaac from Cuisines By Isaac L.L.C. in Lansing preparing his dish for the judges.



U.S. Pork Export Update:

U.S. Pork Exports Boost Producers' Profitability

The U.S. pork industry in 2012 exported a record amount of product, according to data released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and this impressive performance in 2012 couldn't have come at a better time.

"International marketing efforts by the Pork Checkoff and the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) are helping producers get what they need from the international market at a critical time," said Chris Novak, chief executive officer of the National Pork Board. "With the drought that producers faced in 2012, along with record-high feed prices, we're seeing international markets respond to the value of U.S. Pork."

Last year, the U.S. pork industry exported more than \$6.3 billion – about 2.3 million metric tons – of pork, topping the previous record of \$6.1 billion exported in 2011. Exports increased by 4 percent in value compared with 2011 pork exports, and exports represented 27 percent of total U.S. pork production and added nearly \$56 to the price producers received for each hog marketed in 2012. Japan



again was the No. 1 export market for U.S. pork, worth \$1.99 billion. Other top export markets included Mexico, Canada and China.

"The export market is a bright star right now for U.S. Pork," said Channing Gooden, a pork producer from Elizabethtown, N.C., who traveled to California recently with the Pork Leadership Institute (PLI) to learn more about pork export markets. "I've always respected the importance of trade, but seeing the mechanics of how it works is amazing."

Exports Add Significant Value

Year-to-date, U.S. Pork exports account for 27 percent of total production (including 23.5 percent for muscle cuts) and the per-head export value is \$56.12, up 3 percent from last year.

"The export market is an important key to growing the pork industry in the United States," said Nathan Horton, a Murphy Brown feed mill team leader and PLI member from Milford, Utah. "I'm impressed by the pork industry's leadership in trade issues."

Along with Mexico and Japan, markets driving increased volume for U.S. Pork in November of 2012 included Canada (up 15 percent from November of 2011), South Korea (up 26 percent), Russia (up 100 percent) and Central/South America (up 21.1 percent), according to statistics released by U.S. Department of Agriculture

(USDA) and compiled by the USMEF.

The quality and leanness of U.S. Pork keep international buyers coming back, Novak said. "Through the years, U.S. pork producers have done a good job through the Pork Quality Assurance® Plus program to provide customers worldwide with safe, high-quality pork."

Variety Meats Create Opportunities

These exports put more money in U.S. producers' pockets, said Dr. Dermot Hayes, a professor of economics at Iowa State University. "Every \$1 million increase in the value of U.S. Pork exports adds six cents per hundredweight to live hog prices."

The United States has many advantages compared to other countries, from efficient pork production systems to good disease management programs, he noted. As U.S. Pork continues to gain access to new markets, some of the biggest opportunities may come from variety meats.

"Many Asian buyers would like it if pigs had six ears and eight feet," said Hayes, who noted that variety meats factor prominently in many cuisines around the world, from soups to sausages. "While we currently render a lot of variety meats domestically at 12 to 15 cents per pound, we could add to the overall value of the carcass by growing our exports of variety meats."




As I See It

(continued from page 7)

effect the across the board budget cuts known as "Sequestration" will have, or if it will even occur. One of the most talked-about issues with agriculture and sequestration is the suggestion by Secretary Vilsack that he would need to furlough all Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) employees, including meat inspectors, for up to 15 days. Such an action would, obviously, be of great concern to pork producers as it would require the immediate shut-down of pork processing plants. By the Administration's own estimates, a two-week furlough would likely result in \$10 billion in lost production if inspectors were laid off indiscriminately. Following the announcement, NPPC and a number of additional groups sent a letter to secretary Vilsack asking him to make cuts to other programs that wouldn't have the effect of shutting-down meat production in this country. The groups pointed out that inspection is mandated by law for meat to enter commerce and, consequently, during budget cutting efforts in the past the Office of Management and Budget deemed FSIS meat inspectors to be "essential employees" and protected against furlough. One would have to be pretty naïve to believe there wasn't a fair amount of politics at play with the Secretary's announcement and I find it interesting in recent days that he has toned down the rhetoric and said it might be possible to implement a rolling furlough that would be less disruptive than a two-week shutdown. Further, USDA indicated that even if

sequestration occurs it would be more than a month before the meat industry would be directly affected.

At least to this point, I don't believe the 113th Congress and the Washington Bureaucrats have proven anymore capable of governing effectually than the 112th and it appears there is plenty of blame to go around on both sides of the aisle; although I am certainly not pointing the finger at everyone because there are some very dedicated public servants who are every bit as frustrated by what is happening as their constituents. I have been enamored with Shakespeare's writings from the time I was introduced to them in high school and later more extensively in college. It seems he was a master at crafting phrases that have stood the test of time and are as apropos today as they were 400 years ago. The current shenanigans in Washington remind me of one of Macbeth's soliloquies in which he said, *"It is a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing."* I would say that pretty well sums it up! 

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Governor Makes Appointment to Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development

Gov. Rick Snyder has appointed Fred Walcott, a hog farmer from Allendale, and a Michigan Pork Producers Association Board Member, to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development.

A lifelong farmer, Walcott is a partner and manager at Valley View Pork LLC. The 4,000-acre family farm produces hogs, corn, wheat and soybeans, and houses a weather station which monitors crop conditions.

"Fred brings years of experience to the commission, and I am confident he will do great work on behalf of the people of Michigan in this role," said Snyder.

Walcott, a Republican, replaces Velmar Green and will serve a four-year term that expires Dec. 31, 2016.

The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development is a five-member board that provides executive direction for Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development programs. 

Watch out for
"Drought Tips"
throughout this
issue thanks to Pork
Checkoff resources
at <http://bit.ly/npbddrought>

 **2012 Drought
resources**

Meimann and Wegner to Retire from National Pork Board

Jim Meimann, senior vice president for governance and operations for the National Pork Board, and Mike Wegner, vice president of communications for the National Pork Board, will retire April 1.

Meimann began his 27 years of service to the pork industry with the



Jim Meimann (above)

National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) in 1986 at the start of the Checkoff and joined the Pork Board in 2001. Over the years, he has made many contributions to the industry. One of his notable contributions included organizing the Checkoff and in ensuring a smooth transition during the separation of NPPC and the National Pork Board.

“Few individuals have done so much for the pork industry, with so little fanfare,” National Pork Board CEO Chris Novak said. “Jim’s farm background, passion for producers and the pork industry, institutional knowledge and attention to detail have always made him the person that producers and staff turn to for help in solving problems. He has been a cornerstone for work done for, with and on behalf of producers.”

This has included guiding legal counsel during a five-year trademark infringement challenge of the use of Pork. The Other White Meat®. He helped secure a resounding and precedent-setting victory. He also has

been the chief advisor and counselor to five different Pork Board and NPPC CEOs, who have all counted on him for his wisdom, experience and professionalism.

Prior to his service to the pork industry, Meimann was an Iowa assistant secretary of agriculture in charge of marketing, administration, commodity promotion and commodity referendums.

Wegner, with the Pork Board for 11 years, has been instrumental in



Mike Wegner (above)

branding the Pork Checkoff and helping producers understand how their Checkoff is invested on their behalf. When he came on board in 2001, just over half of producers supported the

work of the Checkoff compared with 85 percent today.

“Through Mike’s vision, his energy for telling the pork story and his dedication, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that pork producers understood how their Checkoff dollars were creating a return for the industry,” Novak said. “He has brought a unique perspective to our team that has challenged us to go farther than convention would dictate.”

During his time with the National Pork Board, Wegner led a team of industry leaders in developing the pork industry’s ethical principles that serve as the foundation for the We Careism initiative. He helped create the Operation Main Street speakers program and has overseen the development of a social media program, an industry-leading issues management program and has been a major contributor to the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance’s consumer outreach efforts.

In addition to the National Pork Board, Wegner spent nearly 20 years in a variety of reporting and editing positions at The Des Moines Register, where in 1991 he was project editor for a series of stories that won the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service.



Drought Tip #1

Use crystalline amino acids to replace protein ingredients:

The cost of many crystalline amino acids such as lysine, methionine, tryptophan and threonine have decreased to the extent that replacement of soybean meal in the diet can result in a very palatable, semi-synthetic diet for the pigs with real cost savings. Producers should aggressively monitor ingredient prices and reformulate rations accordingly. An extension publication titled, “Role of crystalline amino acids in reducing grow-finish feed costs” can be found at <http://porkcentral.unl.edu/amino.pdf>. For more information go to <http://www.pork.org/filelibrary/FeedWeb1210.pdf> or contact your local extension educator for assistance.

Checkoff Shares Pork's Nutritional Profile with Nutrition Experts

What made pork stand out in a smorgasbord of food and nutrition trade show booths? Delectable samples of pork loin crostinis, a colorful pig sticker and some surprising health information. "Dietitians are interested in learning about lean pork," said Adria Sheil-Brown, a registered dietitian and manager of nutrition communications and research for the Pork Checkoff. "It's a message that caught people's attention during the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' annual meeting this fall in Philadelphia." More than 10,000 people attended the meeting, which was hosted by the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The event provided the perfect setting to showcase all that pork brings to the table, said Wathina Luthi, an Oklahoma pork producer and member of the National Pork Board. "The trade show offered an easy way to reach a wide range of people, and they were very receptive to our message." To highlight pork's healthy profile, Luthi and the Pork Checkoff team:

- Handed out food samples and meat thermometers. Meeting attendees enjoyed a taste of lean, protein-rich pork tenderloin in the popular Philly "Cheeseloin." In addition to the recipe, the Pork Checkoff distributed 2,400 meat thermometers to remind people of pork's proper end-point cooking temperature of 145 degrees Fahrenheit, with a three-minute rest.
- Hosted a culinary celebrity. Nutrition expert and long-time pork promoter Michelle Dudash stopped by the Pork Checkoff's booth to visit with meeting attendees and sign copies of her new cookbook, "Clean Eating for Busy Families".
- Offered a wealth of educational

resources. "Many dietitians and nutrition professionals were surprised to learn that pork tenderloin is just as lean as a skinless chicken breast," said Sheil-Brown, adding that seven of the most common cuts of pork are, on average, 16 percent leaner and 27 percent lower in saturated fat today than two decades ago, according to USDA.

"The recipes and pork nutrition information we handed out were a hit," said Luthi, co-owner of Luthi Farms, LLC, a farrow-to-wean operation. "I'm glad the Pork Checkoff was part of this worthwhile event."

Checkoff Cuts Through "Nutrition Noise" to Connect with Retail Dietitians

Pork is inspiring dietitians to help their clients rediscover the pleasures of healthy eating in the New Year, thanks to a unique Pork Checkoff conference held in late 2012 at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA). "There's a lot of 'nutrition noise' out there, and consumers don't know what to believe," said Adria Sheil-Brown, a registered dietitian and manager of nutrition communications and research for the Pork Checkoff. "When we share the facts about pork with retail dietitians, there are many 'aha' moments where you can see the wheels turning in their heads."

The Pork Checkoff showcased all things pork to dietitians from its top 20 retail partners, including Meijer, H-E-B, Marsh, Hy-Vee, Nash Finch and others, during a two-day meeting at the Culinary Institute of America's Greystone location in California's Napa Valley. Speakers presented the latest pork nutrition research, harvested a pork carcass, highlighted the


versatility of today's lean pork cuts, answered questions about modern pork production and shared ideas for in-store cooking and sampling demonstrations.

Anne Cundiff, a registered dietitian with Hy-Vee in Des Moines, appreciated the variety of topics covered at the conference. She is excited to share this information with consumers who are seeking information on healthy, cost-effective, convenient meals for their families.

"Having a veterinarian provide information on the farm-to-fork production of pork was excellent. I also enjoyed seeing where the 'Slim 7' cuts of pork come from on the pig and learning how to prepare them," Cundiff said. "This really changed my views on the proper way to keep pork flavorful and moist during meal preparation."

She added, "This conference has given me the confidence to provide accurate nutrition information regarding all aspects of pork and show how pork can be a lean protein leader in people's daily meals."

Shari Steinbach, a registered dietitian and healthy living manager with Meijer, appreciated the opportunity to network with food and nutrition professionals and participate in hands-on cooking seminars at the conference.

"The knowledge I gained is helping my team of dietitians put together solutions for consumers in the form of recipes and easy ways to incorporate pork into a weekly menu plan," said Steinbach, who added that her team is also using the Checkoff information and recipes in cooking demonstrations, media interviews and educational materials for Meijer. "I really appreciate the Pork Checkoff investing time and money to educate supermarket dietitians, who serve as a liaison between farmers and consumers." 

Less Is More with Winter Bedding, Study Shows

You'd think more bedding is always warmer and more comfortable for hogs, but new Pork Checkoff-funded research has shown that this isn't true in any season - including winter.

"In cold weather, there's no added benefit to using more than six bales of bedding per trailer," said John McGlone, a swine researcher at Texas Tech University and principal researcher for the study.

McGlone and Anna Butters-Johnson, an Iowa State University researcher, looked at various rates of bedding in semi-trailers at different times of year and in different locations throughout the Midwest. Their research shows that it's possible for producers to reduce the amount of bedding used during transport year-round. With that comes the added bonus of significant cost savings to the industry - an estimated \$10.1 million annually.

"The bedding research is a win-win, because it shows that we can continue to improve animal well-being practices and actually save money at the same time," said Karen Richter, a pork producer from Montgomery, Minn., and National Pork Board vice president.

Minimal Problems

"Overall, the pork industry is doing

a good job of transporting roughly two million pigs per week in a safe, humane way," said Sherrie Niekamp, swine welfare director for the Checkoff. "Statistics back this up, with fewer than 0.7 percent of pigs sent to market having a negative well-being experience, which could be anything from temporary fatigue to mortality."

Pigs are sensitive to temperature extremes, however, and this leads to stress that can quickly elevate to a negative well-being experience if steps to alleviate the condition aren't taken immediately, McGlone said. Too much bedding can be more of a hindrance than a help as the mercury drops, he added. Cold temperatures cause wet bedding to freeze, making pigs more likely to slip on the ice, thereby causing more downed pigs.

"Obviously, the ice can lead to more injuries, but the real problem with the ice is that it makes the pigs cold, which increases their risk of then going down," said McGlone, who encourages producers to evaluate their bedding practices and determine if they can implement the study's protocols. "There is no advantage in using more bedding than necessary."



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Pork Checkoff Offers Sow-Housing Webinar Series Starting March 26

To get the latest information and insight about today's sow-housing options, plan to register at pork.org for the 2013 Pork Checkoff Sow Housing Webinar series, set to begin on March 26 at 1 p.m. Central Time. The free, 45-minute webinars will feature top experts discussing:

- **March 26: Group Housing Systems - Choices and Designs**
- **March 28: Forming Sow Groups**
- **April 2: Floor-Space Allocation and Group Size**
- **April 4: Genetic Considerations**
- **April 6: Feeding Practices**
- **April 11: Production Flow and Management**
- **April 16: New and Conversion Construction**
- **April 18: Economics of Sow-Housing Conversion**

After each presentation, participants can ask the experts questions. For those who miss any of the Tuesday and Thursday sessions, they will be archived on pork.org to view later. To register, go to pork.org/sowhousing.

For more information, contact Sherrie Niekamp at SNiekamp@pork.org, (515) 223-3533.



Congratulations to our 2013 Scholarship Recipients



The 2013 Michigan Pork Industry Scholarships were awarded to (from left) Kathleen O'Brien, Coloma; Bryant Chapman, South Rockwood; and Jill Gulick, Byron.

Pork Farmers Named 'Faces of Farming'

The U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) announced that Chris Chinn, Missouri; and Bo Stone, North Carolina, both pork producers; along with Katie Pratt, Illinois; and Will Gilmer, Alabama; were selected as the winners of its Faces of Farming & Ranching program. USFRA, made up of more than 80 farmers and ranchers organizations, conducted the nationwide search the summer of 2012 to help put real faces on American agriculture.

Chinn is a fifth-generation family farmer who with her husband, his parents and brother raises hogs, cattle, hay and row crops. Stone is a sixth-generation family farmer who with his wife and his parents raises hogs, cattle, row crops, strawberries and sweet corn.


The other winners represent crop and dairy sectors. Katie Pratt is a fam-

ily farmer from Dixon, Ill., who raises corn, soybeans and seed corn with her husband Andy, a seventh-generation farmer. Will Gilmer is a family dairy farmer from Lamar County, Ala., who owns and operates a dairy farm with his father and also manages land used for pasture and forage production.

The four winners will serve as national spokespeople, telling their agriculture story and answering consumers' questions about how food reaches their plate.

"We are very proud that two family pork farmers will represent the pork industry on a national level," said R.C. Hunt, NPPC president and a family pork farmer from Wilson, N.C. "This will allow American agriculture to be more transparent and address consumer questions in a more personal manner."

Winners were calculated by the

number of online votes received from Nov. 15-Dec. 15, 2012, and by a panel of judges from the food and agriculture sectors. To learn more about the winners, visit www.fooddialogues.com. 



Hiring Top-Notch Farm Labor Means Digging Deep

Recruiting, Hiring and Keeping the Best Farm Workers Requires Careful Planning

Successful businesses depend on good employees. And finding good employees can be a tough task for farmers looking to maintain or expand their businesses. That was the message that Bernie Erven, Ohio State University professor emeritus, shared during the Growing Michigan Agriculture Conference on Jan. 24th at the Lansing Center.

"Employee relations is one key to the growth of Michigan agriculture," said Dale Rozeboom, Michigan State University Extension specialist and one of the conference organizers. "We invited Dr. Erven because we know that farmers often struggle when trying to hire and keep the best possible talent."

Erven kicked off the conference by challenging attendees to think of a business that was thriving while its people were failing. He wasn't surprised when none of the 75 people

in attendance could come up with an example.

"No one single thing is more important than the people you hire," he said, adding that far too many farmers try to keep everything in the family, even when it's not in their best interest. "In agriculture, the hardest thing many people have to do is decide which family members to invite into the business."

He suggested that business leaders develop a job description before making assumptions about family members' fit in the organization.

"Before you even think about whom to hire, do a job analysis. Outline the job qualifications and put together a job description," he said. "Too often the rule is 'Anybody who needs a job in this family gets hired.' But businesses that succeed hire only if they have a need in the business and the person fits."

Next, he said, it's important to build a pool of applicants. That means taking a long, hard look at how you spread the word about open positions.

"Talk to existing employees and find out why they like working for you," he said. "If you want to hire seniors, for example, find out what they want and focus on that in your

communication."


As a final step, Erven said that interviewing is key to hiring success, even when hiring family members.

"Who else gets a job without an interview?" he asked the crowd. "An interview with family members can uncover a lot of information, both good and bad."

And with outside candidates, he said that being a good interviewer is critical.

"There is no worse place to lose outstanding applicants than in a poor interview," he pointed out. "It's up to you to come across as a person they want to work for."

Erven was one of six professionals chosen by Michigan State University Extension to discuss important concepts necessary to keep Michigan agriculture on a growth curve. You can see his suggestions for being a great interviewer, as well as other presentations by experts from across the country, on the Michigan State University Extension website, www.msue.msu.edu. Click on "Agriculture" and look for "Growing Michigan Agriculture Proceedings" in the Resource channel in the lower right section of the site.

Article courtesy of Michigan State University Extension. 

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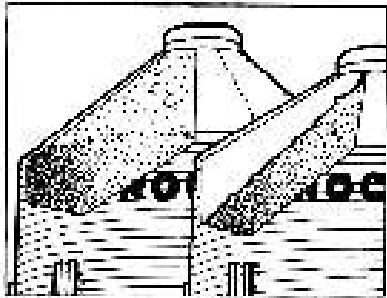
Drought Tip #2

Check water flow and quality often:

Water is an often-overlooked essential nutrient of pigs. Inadequate flow or availability of water or poor water quality can seriously impact performance or even cause death. Waterers should be easily accessible and checked regularly. Be sure waterers are delivering the designed volume at the proper rate. Check waterers furthest from the well head as this is the point at which pressure is likely to be the poorest. Excessive water use is also inefficient because it has to be hauled or pumped as manure. For more information go to <http://www.pork.org/filelibrary/FeedWeb1210.pdf> or contact your local extension educator for assistance.

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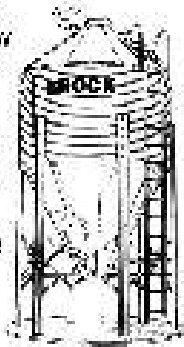


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Michigan Online Large Volume Water Use Reports Due April 1st

Agricultural water use withdrawals in Michigan of 70 gallons per minute or more need to be reported via the new online system by April 1.

Michigan Agricultural Large Volume Water Use reports are due to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), by April 1. Without permission from MDARD, the only legitimate method of reporting is the new online system. An online tutorial on the use of the new reporting system is available, as well as a video tutorial is all available at <http://www.deq.state.mi.us/wur/>.

This first year of using the online Water Use Reporting system will be very important, allowing producers to build their database within the reporting system. None of your previous year's reports are directly loaded into the new system, making it very important for water users to review their records back to 2004 and load all registered water withdrawals into the online system.

Large volume water use is defined as the capacity to withdraw 100,000 gallons per day (70 gallons per minute). The combined capacity of more than one well at a site – which is 100,000 gallons or greater capacity per day (70 gallons per minute) – also meets the volume water use definition. Large volume water use reporting is required for all agricultural water uses (irrigation, cooling, animal, watering, etc.) from both surface and ground water withdrawals. All non-agriculture related water use reports are sent to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Generic forms were sent from MDARD in late December. Keeping each year of your report for your files is very important.


The baseline capacity is the reported system capacity used or developed to make a withdrawal on Feb. 28, 2006 or as registered with withdrawal established after Feb. 28, 2006.

Reporting a baseline capacity greater than 70 gallons per minute from the original reported or registered baseline capacity constitutes a new water withdrawal. The once required static water level is no longer required but may be reported if available.

Large volume water users need to provide the latitude/longitude for the well location; surface water withdrawals are not required but very helpful to the process. Estimating water use can be accomplished by several methods:

- water application multiplied by number of applications, plus estimate of additional water use,
- pump capacity multiplied by run time or fuel/power use per hour,
- flow meter meters actual flow, note maintenance and calibration concerns,
- Industry average numbers (Midwest Plan Service or ASAE) with appropriate adjustments (not appropriate for high variable water uses such as irrigation).

Information is available through Michigan State University Extension on estimating water use for irrigation, livestock, farms or other large volume water use requirements at http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/default.cfm?pageset_id=28706, follow the irrigation link on the left hand side of the screen. Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) technicians located at many of the county NRCS offices have been trained to assist producers in completing the large volume water use reporting requirement. To find a list of technicians in your area visit <http://www.maeap.org/>.

If you have no way of using the new online system contact Abigail Eaton at eatona@michigan.gov, or 517-241-3933 for assistance or other options. *Article courtesy of Michigan State University Extension.* 

Michigan Pork Producers Association Membership Application

Name: _____

Farm/Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Please check one:

☐ \$40.00 Producer/Owner Member: Individuals or firm (one vote per firm) with over \$30,000.00 gross annual sales from hogs.

☐ \$40.00 Producer/Grower Member: Contract grower and/or person or firm (one vote per firm) with less than \$30,000.00 gross annual sales from hogs.

☐ \$40.00 Associate Member: Person or companies associated with the pork industry. Associate members do not have voting privileges.

☐ \$5.00 Student Member: Individuals under 21 years of age. Student members do not have voting privileges.

☐ \$100.00 Gold Contributor: A Gold Contributor provides additional support for MPPA programs requiring the use of unrestricted (non-checkoff) funds. Producer Gold Members are eligible to hold office and vote.

☐ \$250.00 Gold Industry Member Contributor: A Gold Industry Contributor provides additional support for MPPA programs requiring the use of unrestricted (non-checkoff) funds. Gold Industry Contributors do not have voting privileges.

Payment Options:

Credit Card: Type: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard Card Number: _____

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108 Quiz Bowl Participants

40 Pee Wee Showman

75 Powerpoint Contest Entries

45 Essay Entries



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It's about the PEOPLE you meet...



...the FRIENDS you make...



...and the LESSONS you learn along the way.



Thank you to everyone who made this event possible!

OBAMA ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF TRANSATLANTIC FREE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

In his Tuesday State of the Union address, President Obama announced that the United States will begin talks with the European Union (EU) on a comprehensive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. NPPC supports the negotiation of a comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU, which represents a tremendous market opportunity for U.S. pork exports, with consumption totaling 20 million metric tons annually – the second largest market in the world for pork consumption. However, numer-

ous barriers prevent the U.S. pork industry from exporting significant amounts of pork to the EU. Current U.S. pork exports to the EU amount to less than a quarter of 1 percent of total EU pork consumption. In addition to multiple quotas with high in-quota duties, the EU maintains numerous non-science-based sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to the importation of U.S. pork. These barriers include a ban on the use of ractopamine, mandatory trichinae mitigation, prohibition on pathogen-reduction treatments that

improve food safety and a costly plant approval system. Through NPPC's leadership, pork producers rallied other agriculture groups and succeeded in making sure that agriculture would be part of the negotiations. The United States and the EU are expected to begin negotiations later this year.



EU APPROVES IMPORTATION OF LIVE PIGS

The European Commission adopted a measure last week authorizing the importation of live U.S. pigs into the European Union (EU) for breeding and production. The measure also permits live pigs to be transported through the EU to a non-EU country destination. The EU import ban on live pigs, as well as a ban on beef washed in lactic acid, will be lifted Feb. 25. The removal of the bans follows years of efforts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Office of the Trade Representative. The EU's actions are meant to show European commitment to deepening the trade relationship between the United States and the EU, with the goal of beginning negotiations on a free trade agreement this year. NPPC supports the removal of the EU ban on live pigs as a positive step toward resolving the EU's other non-science-based sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) barriers, such as trichinae mitigation requirements, which limit U.S. pork exports to the EU. The U.S. pork industry also uses lactic acid and other approved and safe pathogen reduction treatments (PRTs) to enhance food safety. NPPC wants the EU to remove barriers for all PRTs and other SPS barriers as part of U.S.-EU FTA negotiations.



RUSSIA BANS U.S. PORK

Russia implemented a complete ban on imports of U.S. pork, beef and turkey, following its rejection of the U.S. pork industry's proposal to only ship ractopamine-free pork to Russia. In December Russia announced it would require pork imports from the United States to show documentation that the pork does not contain ractopamine residues. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, however, does not have a testing and certification program to detect ractopamine residues in pork because the feed additive has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a safe product. In addition to FDA approval, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international organization established to promote food safety and harmonize

trade, adopted an international safe standard for ractopamine in July 2012. NPPC is disturbed that Russia has closed its market to U.S. pork exports. Russia's ractopamine ban is only one of many non-science-based barriers maintained by Russia, all of which violate World Trade Organization rules. U.S. pork exports, which constitute one of the biggest U.S. exports to Russia, have fallen by 54 percent since 2008 because of those barriers, including a zero-tolerance standard on pathogens in raw products, a standard no country in the world can meet. NPPC is working closely with other industry partners and the U.S. government to ensure Russia abides by WTO rules and reopens its market to U.S. pork.





Agricultural Leaders Praise Governor Snyder's Budget for Agriculture and Rural Development

The Agricultural Leaders of Michigan praised Governor Rick Snyder for drafting a budget that supports Michigan's agriculture industry and rural development.

One highlight of Gov. Snyder's budget, released February 7, was funding for a new Food and Agriculture Industry Growth Initiative that would research barriers facing Michigan's agriculture industry, and allow Michigan's agri-businesses, producers and processors to seize new opportunities for growth.

"Agriculture is one of the fastest growing sectors of Michigan's economy, and it is poised to continue growing," said Dave Armstrong, president and CEO of GreenStone Farm Credit Services. "Governor

Snyder has put forth a budget that addresses some of the major barriers to the expansion of food production and processing in Michigan. These initiatives are an opportunity to create jobs for Michiganders and ensure that the industry can continue to be a major driver of Michigan's economy."

"Michigan's pork producers are disadvantaged by the lack of a major pork processor in this state," said Sam Hines, executive vice president of Michigan Pork Producers Association. "One of the areas the Governor wants to focus-on with Growth Initiative funding is food processing expansion and this is certainly a topic of great interest to pork producers."

The budget recommendations also include funding for critical

infrastructure, including repairing Michigan's roads and bridges and programs to support passenger and freight rail.

"Worldwide demand for food and agricultural products is skyrocketing, and that means new opportunities for Michigan's agriculture industry," said Gail Frahm, executive director of the Michigan Soybean Association. "To take advantage of those opportunities, Michigan needs a comprehensive transportation infrastructure strategy that will allow us to reach national and global markets. Governor Snyder deserves praise for drafting a budget that prioritizes funding Michigan's transportation infrastructure."



Michigan Corn Growers Association



All activities reported under this heading are financed by non-check-off funds.

NPPC FOCUSED ON COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The United States anticipates it will begin renegotiation of the U.S. pork export certificate with South Africa. Currently the export certificate has very strict and unscientific-based time/temperature requirements for concerns about trichinae and pseudorabies. South Africa also recently notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it would impose New Zealand-like restrictions on pork from countries with porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS). PRRS is not a food-safety issue, and there is negligible risk of PRRS transmission from the legal importation of pork from countries with the disease. With the help of Dr. Bob Rowland, Kansas State University researcher and internationally recognized PRRS expert, NPPC developed and submitted comments on the WTO notification and is providing technical support to the forthcoming negotiations. Because of strong international pressure, South Africa has not yet implemented any additional PRRS-related restrictions. There is unmet commercial opportunity for the U.S. pork industry in South Africa. NPPC is working toward removing barriers so that this commercial potential can be tapped.

WTO DETERMINES REASONABLE TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MCOOL RULING

A World Trade Organization (WTO) arbitrator determined that the “reasonable period of time” for U.S. implementation of WTO rulings in the dispute over the U.S. Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (MCOOL) law is 10 months from the adoption of reports issued by a WTO Dispute Settlement Panel, or by May 23, 2013. Canada and Mexico in September asked for WTO binding arbitration to determine a timeframe for the United States to implement the panel ruling against the U.S. law requiring pork and beef to be labeled with the country of origin. In June, the WTO Appellate Body upheld the panel ruling that the MCOOL law violates U.S. trade obligations under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. 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. In 2011, Mexico and Canada were the second and fourth largest export markets by value for U.S. pork, with exports totaling \$1.04 billion and \$736 million, respectively.

FAO PROPOSES GUIDELINES ON ANIMAL WELFARE

In its draft Global Agenda of Action in support of Sustainable Livestock Sector Development, the U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is proposing animal welfare guidelines that are not consistent with the World

Organization for Animal Health (OIE) animal welfare guidelines. The OIE is recognized by the World Trade Organization as the international authority on animal health, including welfare. The U.S. government and livestock industries are supportive of the OIE’s development of science-based and outcomes-based guidelines. NPPC is submitting comments expressing concern that the FAO has proposed more prescriptive and unscientific standards that could actually undermine animal care and overall sustainability of global pork production and safe food availability by advocating for practices that create a larger carbon footprint. NPPC strongly recommends that FAO reference the OIE guidelines for animal welfare in this and any future documents without further elaboration.

TPP TALKS CONTINUE; U.S., AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND QUESTION CANADIAN SUBSIDIES

The 15th round of talks on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement continued through Dec. 12 in Auckland, New Zealand, with Mexico and Canada formally joining negotiations. TPP is a regional trade pact of 11 countries, including the United States, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. Prior to the 15th round, Australia’s and New Zealand’s pork associations joined NPPC in again urging Canada to end its federal and provincial hog subsidy programs, which are distorting the North American and world pork markets. Australian, New Zealand and U.S. pork producers pointed out that the Canadian government’s subsidy programs are counterproductive to the goals of TPP. According

to Iowa State University economist, Dermot Hayes, the elimination of Canada's most trade-distortive provincial subsidy program, Quebec's Farm Income Stabilization and Insurance Program (ASRA), would add \$576 million to the U.S. pork sector and add 4,611 U.S. jobs within 10 years

NPPC WANTS SCIENCE-BASED PATHOGEN TESTING STANDARDS

A coalition representing the U.S. meat and poultry industries, led by NPPC, submitted comments to the Chinese government in support of that country's proposed pathogen testing on cooked meat and poultry but strongly recommending that China rescind a proposal to establish a zero-tolerance policy for pathogens on raw meat and poultry. Such a standard cannot realistically be achieved by any country in the world. Although good hygiene practices and microbial interventions can reduce the incidence of pathogens to extremely low levels, it is well-recognized that bacteria of public health concern, including *Salmonella* and *Listeria*, are unavoidable contaminants in the meat production process. The establishment of pathogen guidelines for all countries must be based on a scientific risk assessment or on international standards such as those set by the International Commission of Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF), which states that "the occurrence of salmonellae and other pathogens in raw meat cannot be entirely prevented." China is one of the most valuable markets for U.S. pork exports. In 2011, the U.S. exported 375,195 metric tons of pork and pork products to China, valued at \$713 million.

VIETNAM TO ADOPT CODEX MRLS FOR RACTOPAMINE

Vietnam notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it will adopt the Codex Alimentarius Commission maximum residue levels (MRLs) for several veterinary drugs, including ractopamine, a feed ingredient used to promote leanness in pork and beef. The Codex adopted an international standard for ractopamine last summer. NPPC strongly supported the action by Codex, which is the WTO's reference body for food safety. Ractopamine was evaluated and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1999 and has been approved for use in 26 countries. NPPC views Codex's adoption of an MRL for ractopamine as a path forward to engage with trading partners, including China, Taiwan, Russia, Thailand and the European Union, that have restrictions on pork from hogs fed ractopamine. NPPC is working with Vietnam to encourage the adoption of other science-based food regulations, including the removal of its ban on white offals, as part of the ongoing Trans-Pacific Partnership trade negotiations.

IMMIGRATION REFORM INTRODUCED IN SENATE

A bipartisan group of senators introduced an immigration proposal that gives special treatment to farm workers, citing the need for sufficient domestic food supply. President Obama endorsed the proposal. NPPC supports comprehensive immigration reform that secures national borders fairly and justly, provides a pathway to citizen-

ship for the millions of immigrants already in the United States, creates new temporary work visas, requires employees to check the legal status of all employees against a strengthened E-verify database and gives employers access to a legal work force without placing undue burdens on businesses. NPPC will continue to work with Congress to make sure the U.S. pork industry has access to a viable workforce.

SINGAPORE REMOVES BAN ON PATHOGEN REDUCTION TREATMENTS

Singapore updated its import requirements for pork to permit certain pathogen reduction treatments (PRTs) used by the U.S. pork industry. Currently, the U.S. pork industry employs a number of post mortem pathogen reduction treatments as an effective way of reducing the prevalence of food-borne pathogens in pork. NPPC has been pushing for the removal of Singapore's ban on PRTs as part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations. The TPP is an Asia-Pacific regional trade pact and represents the best opportunity for the U.S. pork industry to remove sanitary-phytosanitary (SPS) barriers to trade and to eliminate import duties in the countries involved in the negotiations. Singapore has potential for growth as an export destination for U.S. pork products. However, U.S. exports are still limited because of non-science-based trichinae mitigation requirements and overly restrictive production-date and shelf-life restrictions on processed, fresh and chilled U.S. pork products.

NPPC PARTICIPATES IN PANEL ON SETTING INTERNATIONAL FOOD-SAFETY STANDARDS

Laurie Hueneker, NPPC Director of International Trade Policy, Sanitary and Technical Issues, at the International Production and Processing Expo (IPPE) in Atlanta, Ga., participated in a panel on the role of the Codex Alimentarius in establishing international food safety standards. The Codex Alimentarius Commission, established by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and its World Health Organization to promote food safety and coordinate international food standards, last summer, for example, adopted an international standard for ractopamine, a feed ingredient used to promote leanness in pork and beef. NPPC strongly supported the action by Codex, which is the World Trade Organization's reference body for food safety, noting that the U.N. body upheld its mandate to adhere to process and adopt science-based standards. The adoption of the ractopamine standard had been stalled for four years because of unscientific concerns by several countries. Ractopamine was evaluated and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1999 and has been approved for use in 26 countries. A Codex panel of independent international scientists has confirmed the safety of ractopamine three times. NPPC views the adoption of maximum residue levels for ractopamine as a path forward to engage with trading partners that have food-safety

concerns related to science, and the organization is actively involved in developing new standards based on science and consensus. Many countries adopt Codex standards as national standards, increasing the influence that Codex standards play in how U.S. pork producers raise their animals and ensure a safe supply of pork to more than 100 countries every year. The IPPE brought together processors, packers and producers to discuss issues of interest for the meat and poultry industries.

NPPC PREPARES TO HELP FINALIZE INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY STANDARD

The U.S. Department of Agriculture held a public meeting to discuss a draft document on Principles and Guidelines of National Food Control Systems for the upcoming meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). CCFICS is a committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, established by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and its World Health Organization to promote food safety and coordinate international food standards. As a member of the U.S. CCFICS delegation, NPPC has provided significant input to the draft standard over the past several years and will travel to Chiang Mai, Thailand, for a meeting in February where the standard will likely be finalized. The draft Principles and Guidelines of National Food Control Systems will further support the concept of equivalence – a fundamental discipline in the WTO Sanitary-phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement – and provide guidelines for how competent authorities should establish

food safety systems, as well as the role of the food industry to ensure safe food for both domestic and international consumers.

NPPC MEETS WITH OFFICIALS IN MEXICO

In Mexico, a new administration under President Enrique Peña Nieto assumed office in December. NPPC Vice President and Counsel for International Affairs Nick Giordano traveled to Mexico recently to meet a number of new government officials and to discuss issues of mutual interest to the U.S.-Mexico bilateral trade relationship. Meetings with private-sector representatives were also held. Mexico is the largest export market for U.S. pork by volume and second largest by value. From January to November 2012, U.S. pork exports to Mexico totaled 550,409 metric tons valued at more than \$1 billion, an increase of 15 percent by volume over the same time period in 2011. Maintaining access to the Mexican market is a top priority for the U.S. pork industry as exports add approximately \$14 to the price of each hog.

NPPC SUPPORTS TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

NPPC submitted comments in support of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), also known as Fast Track, to the President's Export Council. TPA allows the president to negotiate trade deals based on strategic goals and objectives outlined in the legislation with ongoing congressional oversight.

Congress may approve or disapprove resulting trade agreements but may not amend them. It gives trading partners confidence that the agreements negotiated with the United States will not be changed by lawmakers. The most recent TPA expired in 2007. NPPC strongly supports TPA legislation that will encompass a Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, a possible U.S.-EU FTA and all other trade agreements that might be negotiated over the life of the bill. Exports are increasingly important to the U.S. pork industry and add significantly to the bottom line of U.S. pork producers. In 2011, U.S. pork exports were valued at \$6.2 billion, almost \$1.5 billion more than the year before

DRAFT AGREEMENT ON MEXICAN TOMATOES REACHED

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced a draft agreement that would modify a 1996 trade pact on imports of Mexican tomatoes and avert a possible trade war between the United States and Mexico. Commerce officials worked with Mexican tomato growers and importers to draft the agreement, which resolves issues stemming from the Commerce Department's 1996 anti-dumping investigation on fresh tomatoes from Mexico. That year, the Commerce Department negotiated a suspension agreement with Mexican producers of fresh tomatoes that has since set a reference price for tomato imports from Mexico. The agreement had been renewed many times, but in June 2012, U.S. tomato producers requested a withdrawal of the underlying

anti-dumping petition to terminate the suspension agreement and possibly to file a new anti-dumping case. Following this request, the Mexican government stated that if the suspension agreement were terminated, it was prepared to take retaliatory actions. Other pending trade disputes between the United States and Mexico also could have been negatively affected. NPPC urged Commerce officials to proceed with caution since termination of the agreement could have led to retaliation against U.S. pork exports, putting at risk the 9,000 U.S. jobs supported by current U.S. pork exports to Mexico. If the U.S. pork industry were to lose the Mexican market, U.S. live hog prices would fall by \$14 within the first year, according to Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes.

United Producers Scholarship Program


United Producers Inc. (UPI) is excited to support the future generation of agriculture through its scholarship program.

UPI is offering two \$1000 scholarships in each of its 16 districts to deserving high school and post high school students pursuing agriculture degrees.

"The future of agriculture depends on those who are currently considering and pursuing a career in this critical industry," said Dennis Bolling, President and CEO, United Producers Inc. "We want to do all we can to encourage students who have an interest in agribusiness, farming, veterinary medicine or other agriculture-based industries to pursue their careers, and



this is our way of helping them do so."

Applicants must be a Preferred Member of UPI or a child or grandchild of a Preferred Member, and a 2013 graduation high school senior, or a student currently attending, a college or technical school studying an agriculture-related field. Completed applications and essays must be postmarked by April 1, 2013. Contact Abra Dunn at 614-433-3176 for questions or visit www.uproducers.com for more information and to download an application form. 

Drought Tip #3

Purchase heavier weaned pigs:

Heavier weight pigs at weaning can get off to a more rapid start and are less fragile, increasing performance and lowering risk. Search for sources that can consistently supply these pigs. For more information go to <http://www.pork.org/filelibrary/Feed-Web1210.pdf> or contact your local extension educator for assistance.

Reports on checkoff-funded promotion, research and consumer information programs.

Checkoff Highlights Producer Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Pork producers have a long record of working steadily to improve the industry. From the way they treat their animals to the products they provide consumers, pork producers are doing the right thing. The industry's new booklet - 2012 Pork Industry Progress Report, Responsible Farming. Our Heritage. Our Future - highlights this history of continuous improvement and responsible practices.

"Principles guide pork producers' actions on a daily basis, and the six We CareSM ethical principles emphasize what producers have been doing for years," said National Pork Board CEO Chris Novak. "Implementing the Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus®), Transport Quality Assurance® (TQASM) and Environmental Stewards programs over the years display pork producers' commitment to providing safe, high-quality products for consumers."

The report explains how pig farming has evolved over generations and tracks advancements that have been made in vital areas such as food safety, animal well-being, environmental stewardship and worker safety. Highlights include research showing reductions in

environmental impacts, an assessment of animal housing options, responsible antibiotic use, participation in farm worker certification programs, perspectives of leading industry experts and much more.

Promotions Put Spotlight on Pulled Pork

According to Google Insights, pulled pork recipe searches have more than doubled in the past four years. To help highlight its versatility, the Pork Checkoff showcased pulled pork in its integrated third-quarter marketing promotions.

"While we used several different tools to connect with consumers, they all focused on the overarching message of 'cook once, serve many different ways' to showcase the versatility of pulled pork," said Traci Rodemeyer, director of pork information for the Checkoff.

Highlights included:

- Unbeatable deals through retail kiosks - Major East Coast retailers, including Food Lion and Harveys Supermarkets, used a kiosk program to promote pulled pork. When consumers scanned their frequent-shopper card, the kiosk printed pulled pork recipes and a coupon ranging from \$1.50 to \$3 off fresh pork. Sales volumes of fresh pork rose nearly 40 percent during the promotion, said Bob Gabage, national retail marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff.
- Appealing advertising - Creative ideas for cooking with pork, including pulled pork, were featured in third-quarter television advertisements. Pulled pork also

starred in an eight-page recipe insert in the September issue of Food Network Magazine, while an ad featuring pulled pork tostadas appeared in Better Homes & Gardens, Kraft Food & Family, Midwest Living, Reader's Digest, Redbook and Southern Living. New for 2012, QR (quick-response) codes were added to magazine ads. The Pork Checkoff tracks how many consumers scan the codes with their smart phones to view pulled pork videos at www.PorkBeInspired.com.

"We strive to measure and maximize the Checkoff investment with every ad placement we run," said Laurie Bever, director of consumer advertising for the Pork Checkoff.

- The popular "1,001 Plates of Pulled Pork" contest - The Checkoff's Facebook contest encouraged consumers to share their favorite plate of pulled pork for a chance to win \$3,000.

"The quality and creativity of the entries were exceptional," Rodemeyer said. "The winning recipe featured eggs benedict with pulled pork."

- An inspiring blogger event - The Checkoff invited top bloggers and food editors to a luncheon at the Cue Art Foundation in New York City to build buzz for pulled pork. Sara Kate Gillingham-Ryan, author of Good Food to Share and founding editor of www.TheKitchn.com, served up fast, easy tips for cooking with pulled pork.

"We now have new influential advocates for pork, and we'll continue to reach out to them with Pork Checkoff resources," Rodemeyer said.

- Ongoing foodservice successes - Quick-service restaurants, such

as Subway, Quiznos and Burger King have added BBQ pulled pork sandwiches to their menus in the last year.

Pork Quality Assurance® Plus Update to Integrate “Take Care”

Pork producers are naturally good animal caregivers, and part of this success is due to long-standing partnerships with herd veterinarians who help guide their decisions on judicious antibiotic use to best protect animal and public health. In the upcoming update of the Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus®) program, slated for release at World Pork Expo, the historical Take Care Use Antibiotics Responsibly program will be fully integrated into the section on responsible antibiotic use.

Antibiotics are one tool that producers and their veterinarians can use at the farm level to help ensure herd health, said Jennifer Koeman, director of producer and public health for the Pork Checkoff.

“The newly updated section on antibiotics is designed to provide producers with a more integrated and comprehensive approach to responsible antibiotic use in the familiar context of PQA Plus,” she said.

New for 2013

In addition to the changes in antibiotic information in the PQA Plus program, you can expect a few other changes, while some things will remain the same.

- Good Production Practices: Changes - reflecting the inclusion of the We CareSM initiative - will

expand on practices related to the public health ethical principle and help establish environmental stewardship. Worker safety practices and other tools for continuous improvement also will be included.

- Testing: The addition of a testing component will add credibility to the pork industry by displaying a commitment to continuous improvement and education. The open-book test will consist of no more than 25 questions related to animal well-being and pork safety. Participants will be able to miss three questions.
- Online Certification: While first-time certifications must be obtained through face-to-face training with a PQA Plus advisor or trainer, individuals who wish to renew their PQA Plus certification will be able to do so online. Individuals will have to contact their PQA Plus advisor to set up and verify the online certification process. PQA Plus certifications will remain valid for a three-year time period.
- Site Assessment: Site assessments are a crucial part of the PQA Plus certification program. Site certification shows a producer’s commitment and interest in producing a safe, high-quality product while promoting animal well-being and a safe environment. Upon completion of a site assessment, a producer must submit a corrective action plan for all non-compliances and follow-up with the PQA Plus advisor in order to receive site assessment status. The frequency of site assessments will remain at the three-year renewal time frame.
- Trainers/Advisors Certifications:

Trainer/advisor certifications will continue to be conducted face-to-face. This group of individuals is receiving extensive instructions and information needed to effectively instruct producers.

Join the Pork Social Community

This year Pork Checkoff is making it even easier for consumers and creative cooks to access all of pork’s social media resources through the new Pork Social Community at <http://www.porkbeinspired.com/PorkSocial.aspx>.

“We want to create a place where people can share their love of pork,” said Johnson, who noted that members of the community can upload recipes and photos. “Social media has become an effective way to celebrate pork, and we’re excited about the possibilities.”

Pork Harnesses Power of Pinterest to Provide “Pinspiration”

The Pork Checkoff is inspiring pork’s biggest proponents, one little pin at a time, thanks to the astounding power of Pinterest, which is an online pinboard that allows people to “pin,” organize and share images, photos and videos that appeal to them. Launched in 2009, Pinterest has grown to more than 20 million users, according to

Pork Checkoff

Forbes.com, and it's now the third most popular social networking site, behind Facebook and Twitter.

"The popularity of Pinterest has really taken off in the last year, and this social media tool is opening up a whole new audience to us," said Pam Johnson, consumer communications director for the Pork Checkoff.

The vast majority of Pinterest users are women, and many share food photos and recipes, said Johnson, who noted that the Pork Checkoff was one of the first brands to tap into the power of Pinterest via <http://pinterest.com/porkbeinspired/>.

"Pinterest offers a powerful way to connect the Pork Checkoff's messages with consumers. It has also excelled at driving traffic to our websites since we joined Pinterest in January of 2012," Johnson said.

To build even more social media momentum, the Pork Checkoff has added a Pinterest Tab on the upper right hand corner of the Checkoff's Facebook page.

"When fans click on this Pinterest tab, they can see the boards and pins we have curated on our Pinterest channel," Johnson said. "This makes our social content more visible to fans who may not know about our other social media channels."

To catch consumers' attention, the Pork Checkoff recently hosted a month-long Pinterest Party on the "Pork Makes the Party!" board. The Checkoff encouraged pork Pinterest fans to share their holiday inspiration and ideas. Members of the online community were also

granted permission to personally pin to the boards to allow easy, immediate engagement.

To cross-promote this opportunity, the Checkoff posted a piece of a recipe image from its Pinterest boards to the Pork Checkoff's popular PorkKnife-andSpoon.com blog. The blog's followers were encouraged to search the Pork® Be inspired® Pinterest boards to find the full image match and either like, comment or re-pin the image on their own boards for a chance to win a prize.

"These social media efforts involve a small Checkoff investment, but they generate a lot of interest in pork," Johnson said.

You can also find Michigan Pork Producers Association on Pinterest at pinterest.com/miporkproducers.

Trade Team Visits Inspire Confidence in U.S. Pork

The old adage that seeing is believing is played out several times a year when the U.S. pork industry welcomes international trade teams. The visits help develop and strengthen partnerships that put more U.S. Pork on the world's table.

The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), partially funded by the Pork Checkoff, often works with groups, such as the Iowa Pork Producers Association, to coordinate the visits.

"Building relationships is critical, because it helps drive demand for U.S. Pork," said Rich Degner, executive director of the Iowa Pork Producers Association.

Trade teams typically: • Meet with U.S. exporters from whom they may potentially purchase pork. • Tour universities to learn about current pork research. • Visit farms, where they can meet pork producers and learn about the We Care ethical principles that they adhere to when raising the animals in their care. "I saw that U.S. producers were highly aware of animal welfare," noted a member of a Japanese trade team that traveled to Iowa in 2012. • Visit U.S. packing facilities, observing their cleanliness firsthand.

"International visitors appreciate sitting down with packers and processors to define their specific product needs," said Becca Hendricks, assistant vice president of international marketing for the Pork Checkoff.

A Japanese trade team member agreed, saying, "It was good to know that U.S. producers were more flexible to specifications and processing than I expected. Since each packer has different strong points, we can choose from a wide range of products, according to our needs."

Jose Humberto Rodriguez, El Salvador, is glad he had the opportunity to travel to Iowa this year with a trade team. "Since we import a great deal of pork, I could see all of the technology and advancements made in the U.S. industry," Rodriguez said. "It makes me confident that I am importing quality pork from responsible producers."

Humberto Sanchez Ali, a trade team member representing Mexico's Carnes Selectas Ali,

Pork Checkoff

echoed his sentiments. "We distribute (pork) all over Mexico, and I value the relationship we have with the United States," Ali said. "By visiting processing plants and farms and talking with producers, I had the opportunity to discuss new product opportunities and be

assured that the U.S. pork industry is willing to meet my needs as a processor."

Hendricks added, "The Checkoff looks forward to working with US-MEF and state pork associations to host more trade teams. The visitors become influential ambassadors for

Drought Tip #4

Explore possible alternative sources of fat:

The advantages to added fat in the diet are well established. However, there may be lower cost alternative sources with similar performance or functional values. Examples include choice white grease, tallow, poultry fat, vegetable oils, restaurant grease, etc. Diets based on metabolizable energy added fat may be more expensive than those featuring lower fat inclusion levels or alternatives to typical fat sources. For more information go to <http://www.pork.org/filelibrary/FeedWeb1210.pdf> or contact your local extension educator for assistance.



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Pork Recipe Corner:

Fiesta Pork Soup

Recipe from
www.PorkBeInspired.com

Times:

5 minutes prep,
25 minutes cook

Ingredients:

1 pound lean ground pork
1 14-1/2 oz can
chicken broth
1 8-oz jar picante sauce
1/8 teaspoon
ground cumin
1/8 teaspoon
ground pepper
1 11-oz can condensed
fiesta nacho cheese soup
1 cup small round
tortilla chips
1/4 cup sour cream

Cooking Directions:

In medium saucepan, cook and stir pork until browned. Drain. Add chicken broth, picante sauce, cumin and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in cheese soup; simmer until heated through. Do not boil. Pour into serving bowls; garnish with tortillas chips and sour cream.

Serves 5.



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Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee

Gail Frahm, Executive Director
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www.michigansoybean.org

The Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee is in place to manage soybean checkoff resources to increase return on investment for Michigan soybean farmers while enhancing sustainable soybean production. We are organized into seven districts across the soybean producing areas of the state and are led by the Governor-appointed farmer director in each district. As livestock, and hogs in particular, are soybean's largest customers, we will continue to support this industry.



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Avg. number of pigs/litter	9.5 (gilt litters)
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Age weaned	24 days
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Nursery/Finish Performance

Number of days in nursery	53
Avg. daily gain in nursery	1.018 lbs.
Avg. on-test weight finish	68 lbs.
Avg. off-test weight	238 lbs.
Avg. daily gain on-test	2.048 lbs.
Feed intake per day on test	4.98 lbs.
Feed efficiency test finish period	2,549 lbs.



A-1200 terminal-line sire

Nursery/Finish Performance

Number of days in nursery	48
Avg. daily gain in nursery	1.025 lbs.
Avg. on-test weight finish	71.3 lbs.
Avg. off-test weight	328 lbs.
Avg. daily gain on-test	2.07 lbs.
Feed/day on test	5.80 lbs.
Feed efficiency	2.805 lbs.
Lean gain/day	1.057 lbs.
Age at slaughter	198 days
Days in finisher	124
Total gain/day of age from birth	1.657 lbs.

Carcass Cut-Out

Avg. backfat (Rough Pack)	0.56 in
Avg. yield	76.13%
No Paylean® used	

Meat-Quality Evaluation

Loineye avg	6.35 sq. in.
Visual color avg.	2.92
Visual marbling avg.	2.32
Percent of intramuscular fat	2.32
Visual firmness avg.	2.035
Wetness avg.	1.857
Minolta score avg.	54.01
pH avg.	5.82

Carcass Cut-Out

Avg. backfat (Tyson)	0.95 in.
Avg. loin depth	2.82 in.
Avg. live weight	328 lbs.
Avg. carcass weight	242 lbs.
Carcass Premium	\$6.52
Yield	76.21%
Fat-free lean gain/day	1.05 lbs.

Meat-quality analysis by
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