

MICHIGAN PORK

The source for information affecting Michigan's Pork Producers

3515 West Road, Suite B, East Lansing, Michigan 48823

2013, VOL. 38, NO. 2

Food Bloggers, Chef and Local Media Experience Animal Agriculture in West Michigan



Rachel Dykhuis shows the bloggers on the tour how sow cards are used on the farm.



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Food Bloggers, Chef and Local Media Experience

Michigan Ag Council leads bus tour of state's

*By: Becky Cunningham, Program Coordinator
Michigan Ag Council, becky@miagcouncil.org*

The Michigan Ag Council (MAC) hosted a group of local food bloggers, a chef, reporter and other agriculture stakeholders, on May 3rd, for a tour of Dykhuis Farms, the state's largest hog farm, and Zeeland Farm Services Inc. (ZFS), the state's only soybean processing facility.

The tour, the second sponsored by the United Soybean Board and hosted by MAC, aimed to offer local food bloggers a firsthand look at crop and livestock farming in Michigan today.

At Dykhuis Farms, guests learned about biosecurity by suiting up in coveralls and boots before entering the family's barns. Sow production supervisor, Erin Ehinger, her sister Rachel Dykhuis and a handful of other farm staff led the group through both a sow and finishing barn where they answered questions about animal care

and safety. The bloggers were shown advantages of both gestation stall and pen housing and were able to hold week-old piglets. They also observed ultrasounds on pregnant sows and witnessed breeding through artificial insemination.

"This was a privilege for our farm," said Ehinger. "So often we focus all our energy on caring for the pigs that we forget to tell the story of what we do to raise safe, nutritious food for the world. We are proud of what we do, and this was a great opportunity for us to show people that we care."

After the tour of Dykhuis Farms, the group gathered for lunch and a presentation at ZFS, the state's leader in soybean processing.

"We wanted to show how soybean production and processing is advantageous to raising safe, healthy pork,"

said Gail Frahm, Executive Director of the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and Vice President of MAC. "More than 98 percent of soybeans are grown for use in animal feed, providing the right amount of protein and nutrients to pigs and other livestock."

Brothers and owners of ZFS, Cliff and Robb Meeuwsen welcomed the tour group and shared the history of their family business, which was started by their father in 1950 as Meeuwsen Produce and Grain. They spoke about their soybean processing division, which sees 30,000 bushels of soybeans each day to process soybean meal, hulls and oil. The bloggers learned that the meal and hulls provide pigs and other livestock with a great source of protein and fiber.

The oil refined from these soybeans, ZFS' line of Zoye premium non-hydrogenated soybean oil, is a healthy alternative to everyday vegetable oils. Each guest left the tour with a bottle of Omega 3-packed Zoye oil, produced in the family's energy-efficient soybean oil refinery. The operation is powered by a six-mile pipeline from a nearby landfill that captures methane gas that would have otherwise been burned into the air.

"We actually create more energy than we consume," said ZFS Marketing Manager Beth Westemeyer, who led the group on a driving tour of the company's Zeeland, Michigan campus. "We sell our energy to Consumers Energy as part of their Green Generation Program."

At the conclusion of the tour, par-



Tour goes through one of the finishing barns at Dykhuis Farms.

Animal Agriculture in West Michigan

largest hog farm and soybean processing plant.



The tour group in front of Dykhuis' MAEAP sign.

ticipants offered their impressions of today's food production and agricultural practices and shared takeaways

that they found most valuable.

"It's critical to see an animal's complete life cycle and its importance

in our food chain," said Ian Ramirez, Executive Chef at Calvin College and 2012 Taste of Elegance. "Food is personal, so this was a great opportunity to be hands on about the food I serve. Chefs, and anyone else for that matter, need to build a relationship with their food in order to respect it."

This and other MAC bus tours provide consumers with an opportunity to experience crop and animal agriculture firsthand.

The Michigan Ag Council is a coalition of commodity groups and ag businesses working together to raise awareness among Michigan consumers about today's food and agriculture. *Photos courtesy of MAC.*



PURE MICHIGAN
Agriculture



Trucks pick up loads at Zealand Farm Services Inc.

President's Page



By: Ed Reed
MPPA President

*“...As I pass the torch,
I can't help but wonder,
“What's next?” What
I know for sure is the
harder I work the
luckier I am. ”*

“What's Next?”

Finally, a spring that goes along with the old rhyme, “April showers bring May flowers.” It's been a beautiful spring in Southwest Michigan with planting starting on time and progressing very nicely. At the time I am writing this, my farm still has about 400 acres to go but we should be done planting in the next couple of days! This spring is also a transitional one for me in many ways as my oldest son is about to graduate from college with an engineering degree, my middle son is heading off to Michigan State and I'm preparing to step down as the President of the Michigan Pork Producers Association (MPPA).

I feel that we've accomplished a lot in the past two years, most notably focusing on efforts to uphold the Department of Natural Resources' declaration naming feral swine an invasive species. Dealing with the feral swine problem remained a top priority throughout my tenure as president because of the many diseases wild hogs carry and the risk these animals pose to Michigan's swine herds.

Since the pseudorabies virus has been eradicated in domestic swine herds nationally, had Michigan herds contracted pseudorabies from wild hogs, and we know many wild hogs carry the virus; it could have caused the state's borders to be closed. Many pigs are currently sent out of the state to be finished on contract and, if Michigan were quarantined due to a disease outbreak and movement prevented, it would be economically devastating to producers in this state. Potentially, further compounding the problem of restricted pig movement

is the fact that we don't have a major pork processor in this state, an issue with which I am sure future leadership of MPPA will be dealing.

Another thing I'm proud to have participated in was the formation of the Agricultural Leaders of Michigan (ALM). This group has helped bring a stronger voice to Michigan agriculture both nationally and at the state level. ALM has worked effectively with legislators on issues of mutual interest and has been able to identify some areas of concern for agriculture in Michigan. Two key areas identified were the need to address the state's deteriorating and outdated infrastructure and the lack of talent available to agricultural employers.

Unfortunately, most of us pork producers aren't exactly young anymore (I turned 50 last year!) and it is vital that we mentor and help young people become interested in agriculture and more specifically pork production. There are many capable young people that are interested in agriculture, but only with existing producers' support and guidance will they have a chance to be successful. One of the most gratifying things for me has been to watch my sons grow up around the farm and now that they are getting older, it is rewarding to see their desire to stay on the farm and work in pork production. Young people are the lifeblood of this industry and with their enthusiasm and their participation; it is my hope Michigan pork production will continue to be a thriving sector of Michigan agriculture!

(continued on page 8)



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

“...Survey after survey confirms that the vast majority of the public really doesn't give a rip so long as the food they want is available and affordable....”

“Glass Walls Project Addresses Packing Industry Transparency”

On May 8, the American Meat Institute (AMI) released a video tour of a pork slaughter plant hosted by leading animal welfare expert Temple Grandin, Ph.D., professor of animal science at Colorado State University.

According to AMI's news release, “The pork plant video tour and brochure augment the beef plant video tour, also hosted by Grandin, which was released in August 2012.” AMI says that since its release, the beef plant video has been viewed nearly 50,000 times and has been used in numerous classrooms and other settings. The videos were developed as part of what AMI calls its *Glass Walls Project*. Janet Riley, AMI Senior Vice President of Public Affairs, said, “Our *Glass Walls Project* is an effort to increase transparency. We recognize that many consumers want more information about how livestock are handled and processed in U.S. meat and poultry plants and we were fortunate that Dr. Grandin, a leading expert on animal handling and welfare in meat plants, agreed to host the video tours and played such a pivotal role in their production. We are proud to offer an honest look inside our plants and to show the public our long-standing commitment to ensuring optimal livestock welfare.”

I was particularly interested in these videos because, early in my career, I was employed by Swift and Company. I probably should clarify that this was long enough ago that the company that existed at that time was the original Swift and Company founded by Gustavus Franklin Swift in 1855 and not the Con-Agra-owned Swift or the JBS Swift that exists today. For those who might be wondering, yes, I

am old but I'm not old enough that I worked for Gustavus Swift. Interestingly, however, Edward F. Swift, who was either a great-grandson or great-great-grandson of Gustavus, was one of the individuals that interviewed me, so the family was still involved in the business at the time I was employed. Regardless, the point is that while I was with Swift I spent a lot of time inside a number of Swift's large multi-species processing facilities; although large multi-species facilities are rather rare today the basic process of disassembling animals for food hasn't changed an awful lot, although I would agree some aspects of the process have improved dramatically. Since that time, I have toured several modern pork processing plants and, consequently, I was anxious to see the pork video as I was curious to see how something that a huge segment of the population has no familiarity with and with which many might be uncomfortable would be conveyed. I saw the beef video after it came out last summer and thought it was well done. Similarly, I thought the pork video was also well done and, unlike the beef video, it begins by showing hogs being loaded from a finishing facility on a farm.

AMI's Riley believes the demand for transparency with food production and processing will continue to increase and she thinks that packers need to show the public how their businesses work, rather than letting anti-meat organizations monopolize the conversation. Riley says feedback on the beef video from consumers, teachers and the media has by and

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As I See It

(continued from page 7)

large been positive.


To some extent, AMI's success with its *Glass Walls Project* should be of comfort to pork producers as it reaffirms that efforts being made by pork industry organizations, the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, the Michigan Agriculture Council and others to increase transparency and educate the public can achieve positive results. A recent example is the Food Bloggers' Tour to Dykhuis Farms that is reported elsewhere in this issue. At this point, one can only speculate, but a comparable effort early-on to inform the public about gestation stalls might have taken some of the thunder away from the activists on this issue and prevented them from controlling the debate.

With all that said, I still sometimes wonder if all these seemingly well-intentioned efforts have been generated more in response to the activists' actions rather than the public's concern. Survey after survey confirms that the vast majority of the public really doesn't give a rip so long as

the food they want is available and affordable. At the same time, I can understand that if we don't engage, the activist message is the only one out there being heard and accepted as truth whether it is factual or not. And, believe me, a lot of the garbage out there, particularly on social media, would in no way pass a test for being factual. When Megan joined us as Program Director, one of her responsibilities was to increase our presence in social media and over the past year she has done an exemplary job accomplishing that mission. So, although I may sound a little cynical about it, I understand it is the new reality and I also understand why it is important that we have a presence. However, one of the problems of being "experienced" (gee, that sounds better than being old-wish I had used that word earlier in this article) is you like to relate back to what now seems to have been a simpler time and in some ways it probably was. However, I know times have changed since I worked for Swift and Company and for the most

part for the better. Not every facility where I worked allowed tours, but some did and I don't remember anyone ever complaining about what they saw, or being concerned about the food products being produced or the way the animals were handled. And, if there is one thing that has changed dramatically since then it is the way the animals are penned and handled at a processing facility. No question, that is a far cry better today than it was when I worked in the industry.

At any rate, if you haven't seen the videos, I would encourage you to check them out. In the meantime, rest assured we will continue doing what we can to educate the public and be transparent about the production segment of the pork industry.

To view the videos or download the brochures, visit <http://www.animal-handling.org/>. You can also request a hard copy of the brochure by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to AMI Glass Walls Project, 1150 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC, 20036. 


President's Page

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As I look back on my involvement with the MPPA Board, I am reminded of when I was in engineering school. I often wondered why none of the professors I had in class had ever graduated from Western Michigan which was the school I was attending. However, I soon found out that this was because they wanted to prevent "knowledge inbreeding," where the same thought process is handed down from one professor to a student who would eventually become the professor. No innovation or new ideas would ever be presented and the university would become stagnant.

In a sense, this is one of the reasons why I like being a part of MPPA. We have the best and brightest producers in the state gathered in one place to share ideas about how to make production more efficient and talk about the new ideas they have been trying on their farms. Innovation is evident around a modern pork production facility and many of these ideas have come from fellow producers at meetings similar to ours. Innovation is crucial for the survival and expansion of our industry and through the MPPA we have been able to share innovations that have helped us increase or

stabilize production. No innovation leads to stagnation!

Finally, it has been an honor to have served as your President for the last two years. I've had the privilege of honoring two great producers, Dennis DeYoung and Pat Albright with the Master Pork Producer Award and recognizing my own manager, Matt Sibley, with the outstanding manager award. As I pass the torch, I can't help but wonder, "What's next?" What I know for sure is the harder I work the luckier I am. 

Pure Michigan Adds Agriculture Apparel to Online Store

Pure Michigan Agriculture and Pure Michigan Farmer merchandise now available at puremichiganstore.org.

The Michigan Ag Council, in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), has developed a new line of apparel as part of their *Pure Michigan Agriculture* and *Pure Michigan Farmer* agricultural awareness campaign.

"The goal of this merchandise is to offer apparel to Michigan consumers, agriculturalists and farmers who are proud of one of our state's leading sectors," said Laura Moser, communications manager of the Michigan Milk Producers Association and president of the Michigan Ag Council. "It's a personal way to share the Michigan agriculture message and raise aware-


ness of our state's food and farm sector."

The merchandise is available at the *Pure Michigan* online store and includes t-shirts, sweatshirts, ball caps, beanies and Carhartt jackets sporting either the *Pure Michigan Agriculture* or *Pure Michigan Farmer* logo.

"This partnership brings some great new products to the *Pure Michigan* store," said George Zimmermann, Vice President of Travel Michigan, part of the MEDC. "Michigan is continuing to grow as a culinary destination and working with our state's agricultural industry on projects like this is a great way to spread that word."

To find the *Pure Michigan Agriculture* and *Pure Michigan Farmer* products, visit www.puremichiganstore.org and click on the Agriculture/Apple tab at the top of the page.

Products in the *Pure Michigan* online store are made in the USA, and in many cases in Michigan. A portion of every sale supports the *Pure Michigan* advertising campaign.

Pure Michigan Agriculture is a project of the Michigan Ag Council and MEDC that aims to raise awareness of food and agriculture in Michigan today. 



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

The election of pork producer delegate candidates for the 2014 National Pork Producers (Pork Act) Delegate Body will take place at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, June 19, 2013 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.

Producers can Utilize Oral Fluid Collection for Diagnostic Work

Implementing a disease surveillance plan is a major component of a high health swine herd

By: Beth Ferry, Michigan State University Extension

The health status of the swine herd should be one of the top priorities for people in the pork industry. One method for improving the animal health status on swine farms is to start a disease surveillance program, including routine disease testing of the herd. Michigan State University Extension educators recommend developing a herd health plan for your swine herds, with one of the core components in your health plan being a method to complete disease surveillance.

Producers looking for methods to easily increase the disease surveillance of their herds now have a lower cost option by collecting oral fluids for diagnostic testing. Oral fluids collection is done by the producer or farm employee and consists of simply hanging cotton ropes in the pen with the pigs. The pigs will explore the rope and chew on it, making it wet with saliva.

This method also allows the producers to submit pooled samples from their herd, as numerous pigs will chew on the rope. Once the rope has been significantly chewed it can be removed and the saliva squeezed out of it and collected into a test tube or sterile container. Once all of the samples have been collected they can be shipped to the diagnostic lab for testing purposes. (See article below for in depth details on sample collection.)

Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory can process these types of samples. Currently they are able to complete various different tests including:


PCR (polymerase chain reaction):

- PRRS (porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome)
- SIV (swine influenza virus A)
- Mycoplasma pneumonia PCV2

(porcine circovirus type 2)
ELISA (X3 enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay):

- PRRS (porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome)

Test results are received by the producer or submitting veterinarian in a time frame similar to testing serum samples.

The practice of oral fluid collection, as a diagnostic tool, is one that producers will be able to implement on their farms to get prompt accurate results for their disease surveillance program. Having current knowledge of the health status of your swine herd will help you be better prepared when an outbreak occurs and assist you in tracing back the source of the infection. Maintaining a high health status will also allow your herd to meet and continue the production goals that you have in place for your facilities. 

Basic Steps for Oral Fluid Collection on Swine Farms

Oral fluid collection is a simple way to gather samples for diagnostic testing.

By: Beth Ferry, Michigan State University Extension

One method that can help producers complete disease surveillance quickly on their farms is to collect oral fluids for diagnostic testing. This method is an acceptable way to sample your herd for various common

swine diseases and can be done by yourself or employees in your facility. Supplies needed for collection, the collection process and submission of oral fluid samples are discussed below.

If you plan to submit oral fluid

samples for diagnostic testing you will need a minimal amount of supplies to get these process started. You will need:

- Approximately 3 feet of cotton rope
- Gallon size plastic bags to collect the saliva in, single use plastic boots will also work well
- Knife or scissors to cut the bag
- Sterile snap cap or screw top collection tubes
- Permanent marker
- Gloves

The rope should be 100 percent cotton because of its absorption ability, 3 strand and not dyed. If you are sampling in the nursery you can unwind the rope and use one stand per pen of sampling.

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Youth PQA Plus Program offered online for 2013

Young pork producers can learn about Good Production Practices through an online tutorial.

By: Beth Ferry, Michigan State University Extension

The Youth Pork Quality Assurance Plus (PQA Plus) program is an educational tool to help young pork producers, 4-H and FFA members learn Good Production Practices (GPP) when raising pigs. The PQA Plus program highlights areas of animal care and well-being and focuses on teaching youth how to raise a safe, healthy and wholesome product for the consumer. As a Michigan State University Extension educator, I have offered numerous programs to youth involved in livestock exhibition. The Youth PQA Plus program is a premier educational opportunity for youth involved in the pork industry, providing them with resources and information that will help them understand how to provide proper care for their animal.

Having pigs with a high health status not only benefits the animal but also the producer. A pig that is free of parasites and disease issues will ultimately be more productive and grow better. In order to have a high health status on your farm you need to be able to work with a veterinarian and have a biosecurity plan in place. These are two of the good production practices that the Youth PQA Plus program covers.


In total the Youth PQA Plus program covers 10 Good Production Practices, including the above principles. It is an educational program for youth ages 8 to 19. This year, Michigan youth have an opportunity to access the program via an online tutorial thru the National Pork Board. If you are interested in the online program option please contact the Pork Checkoff Center at 1-800-456-7675, state that you are a youth from Michigan and request access to the online Youth PQA Plus program. Representatives from the Pork Checkoff Center will enter you into the program's database



and give you access to the online tutorial.

This educational program is beneficial for all youth raising pigs and will help them learn about the pork industry, while teaching them the proper good production practices to use when

raising their own animals.

For more information on the Youth PQA Plus program please contact Megan Sprague, Program Director for Michigan Pork Producers Association at Sprague@mipork.org or (517) 853-3782. 



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Grants Available for Energy-efficiency Systems and Improvements

Rural small businesses and farms in Michigan can apply for grants ranging from \$1,500 to \$500,000.

By: Andy Hayes, Michigan State University Extension

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released a funding source for agriculture producers and rural small businesses that encourages them to adapt their facilities to conserve and produce renewable energy through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). This is an ongoing effort to help small rural communities become more energy-conscious and contribute to renewable energy sources.

The grants and low-interest loans are available to these businesses for the purchase and installations of renewable energy systems and for making energy efficiency improvements. The competitive grants can be up to 25 percent of total eligible project costs. Grants range from \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements up to \$500,000 for renewable energy sys-

tems. Grant funds are also available to conduct feasibility studies and energy audits in rural communities.


The types of projects that are eligible include retro-fitting lighting or insulation, purchasing or replacing equipment with more efficient units, producing energy from wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydro power and hydrogen-based sources.

Through these grant funds, farms throughout Michigan are encouraged to install systems that would create renewable energy, such as wind turbines, windmills, anaerobic digesters and solar panels. Small businesses would be able to install new, energy-efficient lighting throughout their facilities, cutting down energy bills and usage.

These REAP grants are available



Committed to the future of rural communities.

to rural communities throughout Michigan. For more information on the types of funds, qualifications, and other guidelines, download the fact sheet located on the USDA's website, www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html. The Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, a partner of Michigan State University Extension, can assist in identifying those rural communities located in northern Michigan, as well help with the application process. You can contact the NLEA at www.northernlakes.net or by calling (231) 582-6482. 

Bell Farms Ag LLC

Continuing to grow to the next generation with the help of United Producers' Advanced Hog Marketing.



Front Row (L-R): Delaney, Melissa, Matt, Brady, Reily, Jean, and Irv Bell

Through PGI, a hog marketing organization, Bell Farms Ag LLC has utilized United Producers Inc.'s (UPI) Advanced Hog Marketing and risk management services to market their hogs.

"Being able to market our hogs the way we have, has been a good thing for us," said Matt Bell.

UPI has a team of people negotiating contracts with packers and monitoring the livestock and grain markets for the Bells.

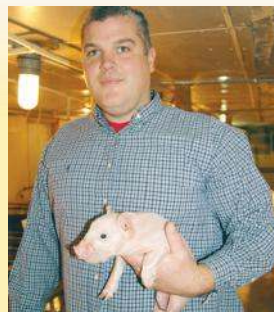
"It's helpful to have someone who calls and tells you what you should do," said Matt. *"The markets can change so quickly, so the stakes are so great,"* said Irv Bell.

"When we have United Producers watching out for us, it allows us to concentrate on production," said Matt.

With the help of UPI and PGI, Bell Farms Ag LLC has grown and expanded to a sixth-generation farm.

"Without PGI and UPI, we would not have the numbers or leverage to negotiate with packers by ourselves," said Matt.

"Other members of PGI are similar in size, so you don't feel so alone," Irv said. *"People can do more together than you can by yourself."*



Location:
Zanesville, Ohio (Muskingum County)

Type of operation:
Corn, soybeans and hogs

Farm Size:
Farrow to finish with about 900 sows

Years/generations as a producer:
The 6th generation is working on the farm.

UPI member since:
The mid-1970s

UPI services used:
Livestock marketing and risk management

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United Producers is a market-leading provider of livestock marketing, financial services and risk management.

Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea found in the United States

Biosecurity alert for pork producers – swine herds have no immunity to new virus from Europe.

By: Beth Ferry, Michigan State University Extension

The USDA has confirmed that porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) has been identified in the United States for the first time through testing at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory. It has been recently reported in several states including Minnesota, Iowa, Colorado and Indiana. This is a new virus to the United States so it is expected that there is no immunity to any swine herd. PEDV has been found in swine herds in Europe and Asia starting in the early 1980s.

This disease is similar to TGE (Transmissible Gastroenteritis) and causes severe watery diarrhea in pigs. Morbidity in sows and piglets is high. Mortality, especially in piglets is also frequent due to dehydration. Swine herds typically experience an outbreak in 4 to 5 days once exposed to the virus. Clinically, there is very little difference between TGE and PEDV, and laboratory testing is the only way to diagnose PEDV.

There is no treatment for PEDV. An emphasis should be made on prevention and control. If your herd is exposed to the virus, suckling pigs should have free access to water to help decrease dehydration and gestating sows can be exposed to the virus to help build immunity in piglets, similar to methods used with a TGE outbreak. Introduction of new stock should be suspended during an outbreak, along with increased internal



biosecurity practices to help decrease the spread of disease within your herd.

PEDV is transmitted via the fecal-oral route, it is suspected to be transmitted via infected pigs, transportation vessels and contaminated fomites. In order to help protect your herd from possible infections, efforts should be made to increase biosecurity protocols, with special emphasis on transportation biosecurity. Proper washing and disinfection protocols for all trucks returning from market should

be followed. It is important to note that this disease is not transmissible to humans and does not affect the meat or meat products.

If you suspect clinical signs or have questions please contact your herd veterinarian. For more information on PEDV and biosecurity practices for swine farms please contact Beth Ferry, Michigan State University Extension Pork educator at franzeli@msu.edu or 269-445-4438. 🐷

MSUE Welcomes new Livestock Educator to the Children and Youth Institute

By: Michelle Lavra, Michigan State University, College of Ag and Natural Resources.

The Michigan State University Extension Children and Youth Institute has announced that Julie Thelen will be the new Extension educator for the 4-H Livestock and Veterinary Science Youth Program.

Starting June 10, Thelen will be working with various faculty and staff members, 4-H volunteers and stakeholders to implement and evaluate programs that provide opportunities for youth to develop content knowledge and life skills.

Thelen brings a strong background in animal science and teaching and years of experience to this position including 4-H leadership and a plethora of animal science based activities, awards and membership. A Michigan State University graduate with degrees in agriscience education and animal science and a teaching certificate, Thelen will also receive a master's degree in agricultural education this May from Iowa State University. She is a former member of the State 4-H Livestock Programming Committee and continues her involvement with 4-H as a leader and volunteer. 🐷



Can combining mortality composting from two separate farms constitute a CAFO?

Under current rules and regulations, the animal capacity and land base of both farms may together constitute a large CAFO.

By: Dale Rozeboom, Michigan State University Extension

During a recent Michigan State University Extension program, a Michigan farmer shared that he owns a swine operation with animals on two different farms, located several miles apart. The farmer hauls his dead animals from one farm to the other where he recently installed a rotary drum composter for mortality handling. Individually, neither farm is considered a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) nor are they currently permitted by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Each has its own land base for spreading manure and its own nutrient management plan.

The farmer knew that his mortality management plan, which includes combining mortality, was in compliance with the Bodies of Dead Animals Act in Michigan. However, the MDEQ informed the farmer that since he was moving the dead animals from one farm to the other farm, his mortality management plan resulted in the commingling of production area waste. Because nutrients of one farm are being transferred to another, the two farms are considered 'one' CAFO. He was advised that he needed to apply for a NPDES permit, but the farmer wondered if he was given correct information and asked me "Is this correct?"

"Yes" is the answer to the farmer's question. Under current rules and regulations, when dead animals are composted together at one farm, the

animal capacity and land base of both farms may together constitute a CAFO. This swine operation, on two farms, would need to apply for a CAFO NPDES permit if the combined capacity was greater than 2,500 swine each weighing 55 pounds or more.

The Bodies of Dead Animals Act 239 of 1982 (BODA) reads that "composting methods shall be used to compost only the normal natural daily mortality associated with an animal production unit under common ownership or management." Historically, this has allowed mortality from different farms under common production management and ownership to be composted at a shared facility located at one farm. The law is intended to allow for the economical, effective and safe management of a farm's mortality.

The Natural Resources & Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) states that "two or more Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) under common ownership are considered to be a single AFO for the purposes of determining the number of animals at an operation, if they adjoin each other or if they use a common area or system for the disposal of wastes." In the NREPA rules, "production area waste" means manure and any waste from the production area. "Production area" includes "any area used in the storage, handling, treatment, or disposal of mortalities." Therefore, mortalities are considered production area waste.

Representatives from MDEQ, MSU Extension, Michigan Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development have discussed why BODA and NREPA place a multiple-site operation under common ownership and sharing a common composting facility into a permitted CAFO situation. The outcome of that discussion is available in a "BODA-NREPA Mortality Composting Briefing" at <https://www.msu.edu/~rozeboom/catr.html> 

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Extension

Antibiotic Use in Livestock Continues to be a Priority for Legislators

Antibiotics Bill Introduced, Animal Health Experts Brief Capitol Hill Staff

Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., and Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., introduced the “Delivering Antimicrobial Transparency in Animals (DATA) Act,” a bill that would require feed-mills to submit detailed annual reports to FDA on medicated feed mixed for livestock. The bill would require FDA to report percentages of antimicrobials sold for growth promotion and feed efficiency, disease prevention, disease control and disease treatment. FDA would also be required to breakdown drugs sold or distributed in each state and the quantity of drugs sold for each class of animal. NPPC is opposed to the bill, pointing out that it would burden food producers and FDA without any scientific rationalization or public health benefits. Increased attention has been given to the issue of antibiotics in agriculture recently, particularly with Congress considering ADUFA. NPPC, as part of the Coalition for Animal Health, recently helped educate

lawmakers about antibiotics use in agriculture, hosting several briefings on Capitol Hill on the subject of “Meat Production, Public Health and the Importance of Antibiotics.” Taking part in these briefings were animal health industry experts Dr. Rich Carnevale, VMD, representing the Animal Health Institute; Dr. Christine Hoang, DVM, MPH, CPH, representing the American Veterinary Medical Association; and Dr. Scott Hurd, DVM, PhD, from Iowa State University, representing the livestock production sector. The intent of the briefing was to address the many misconceptions that exist about antibiotic use in agriculture and the role that agriculture may play in contributing to antibiotic resistance risks.

Slaughter Re-Introduces Antibiotics Bill

Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., introduced the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA) for the fourth time since 2007. This year, the bill explicitly names Cephalosporins as an eighth class of



antibiotics that would be outlawed from non-therapeutic use in animals (previous PAMTA bills named only seven classes). The bill also clarifies what is considered non-therapeutic. Under PAMTA, farmers only would be allowed to use animal health products to treat diseases. NPPC strongly opposes the PAMTA bill, and numerous risk assessments, including one conducted by FDA, have shown risk levels associated with antibiotic use in agriculture that are extremely low, and nationally recognized scientific studies have shown that the removal of important animal health products could actually increase food-safety risks.



NPPC Weighs in on Meat Labeling Regulations, Fears Trade Retaliation

In comments filed April 11th, NPPC expressed concern that Canada and Mexico could retaliate against the United States because proposed regulations by the U.S. Department of Agriculture may not make a meat labeling law compliant with U.S. international trade obligations. The World Trade Organization last year ruled that the U.S. Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) law violates U.S. trade obligations under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. Canada and Mexico brought cases on COOL to the WTO in 2011. The international trade body gave the United States until May 23, 2013, to make its meat

labeling law compliant with WTO rules. USDA recently issued proposed regulations changing the labeling law, but Canadian officials this week threatened retaliation against U.S. products because they maintain the regulations won't make COOL comply with WTO rules. NPPC supports an approach to labeling that provides important information to consumers, complies with U.S. international trade obligations and does not undermine U.S. meat supply chains and unnecessarily raise costs. Specifically, NPPC supports an approach that will treat as “U.S. origin” hogs, pork and other meat products that have value added

at federally inspected facilities. The requirement that producers gather and maintain information on where livestock was born and raised should be eliminated. At a minimum, said NPPC in its comments, if USDA moves forward with the proposed regulations, it should establish an effective date that is 180 days after the latter of issuance of final regulations, or of a determination by the WTO that the final regulations are consistent with U.S. international trade obligations. There were no further updates at time of publishing.




Senate, House Mark up 2013 Farm Bill

The Senate Agriculture Committee on May 14th – in a short three-hour session – marked up and approved its version of the 2013 Farm Bill by a 15-5 vote. The bill had several amendments but did not make any substantial changes to the draft bill. Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., offered an amendment to create an undersecretary for trade, which passed. Johanns also offered and then withdrew an amendment to repeal the Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (MCOOL) law. Sen. Michael F. Bennet, D-Colo., offered an amendment to establish an


organic checkoff, which passed.

The House Agriculture Committee the following day – in a much longer 10-hour session – marked up and approved its version of the 2013 Farm Bill by a 36-10 vote. An amendment offered by Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, that prohibits states from imposing laws that place production conditions on agricultural goods sold within its own borders but produced in other states, passed after an hour of heated discussion. Rep. Austin Scott, R-Ga., offered and then withdrew an amendment to repeal MCOOL for meat. Also

approved was an amendment offered by Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, to prevent the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) from doing any further work on the so-called GIPSA Rule that resulted from the 2008 Farm Bill. Ranking Member Collin Peterson, D-Minn., supported the amendment, saying USDA overreached its authority in writing rule. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham, D-N.M., offered and withdrew an amendment to prohibit the processing of horses. Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., offered an amendment to provide authority for an organic checkoff under the Commodity Checkoff Generic Act, which passed. The so-called “Egg Bill” was not brought up as an amendment in either bill. 

Senate Passes ADUFA Reauthorization Measure

The House Energy and Commerce Committee passed a bill to reauthorize the Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA). No amendments were offered. NPPC strongly supported the “clean” reauthorization of ADUFA, which benefits pork producers and animal drug companies. It allows the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to collect from animal health companies user fees for conducting drug reviews and approvals. The user fees supplement FDA’s funding, allowing pork producers to gain access to important animal health products in a timely manner.


The Senate passed ADUFA reauthorization – without amendments – by unanimous consent. Opponents of modern livestock production had threatened to add to ADUFA reauthorization legislation an amendment to require data collection of on-farm uses of animal health products, a costly and burdensome mandate. 

NPPC Urges Standards for Trichinae that Include Surveillance

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has established a working group to revise the current OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code Chapter on Trichinellosis. The working group has developed a final draft standard that will be up for adoption at the OIE General Session. The current draft chapter lacks specificity and flexibility, and only several European countries will be able to take advantage of the standard. Ironically, the draft chapter is so vague that it actually encourages countries to continue to impose additional trichinae-related restrictions on pork. This is not a global standard. The U.S. supports guidance provided by the International Commission on Trichinellosis that a population of pigs may be considered to pose negligible risk for *Trichinella*

(continued on page 17)

Pork Producers Fly into Washington

NPPC held its spring Legislative Action Conference in Washington, D.C. The biannual “fly-in” drew from around the country approximately 100 pork producers, including those from Michigan. At the conference, they lobbied their congressional lawmakers on issues of importance to the U.S. pork industry, including EPA’s release of confidential CAFO data, feral swine eradication, the Animal Drug User Fee Act, the 2013 Farm Bill and Japan’s inclusion in the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade talks. NPPC staff presented pork producers with updates on legislative issues. Speakers at the conference included Acting U.S. Trade Representative Demetrios Marantis and USDA Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services Michael Scuse. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Deputy Administrator Dr. Craig Morris was presented with NPPC’s “Golden Tractor Award for Meritorious Federal Service” for his strong support of the U.S. pork industry. Producers and Capitol Hill staff and lawmakers also attended NPPC’s Capitol Hill-famous “Rack of Pork” congressional reception. 

Groups Want ‘Comprehensive’ FTA With EU

A coalition of U.S. food and agricultural organizations led by the National Pork Producers Council is urging the Obama administration to press the European Union to negotiate a “comprehensive” free trade agreement, including addressing sanitary-phytosanitary (SPS) barriers to trade.

In a letter signed by 47 organizations sent to U.S. Trade Representative nominee Mike Froman, the coalition expressed concern with a resolution approved by the European Parliament that in negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States the EU should maintain the “precautionary principle” for SPS issues. Precautionary measures are implemented based on the mere identification of potential risk or, worse, on public perception and political considerations rather than on science-based risk assessments. The World Trade Organization requires member countries’ SPS measures to be based on scientific risk assessments.

“Precaution in the EU has become

a pretext for import protectionism under the pretense of consumer safety,” wrote the coalition in its letter. “Such non-science-based measures have become the most challenging barrier to U.S. food and agricultural exports to the EU.”

Examples include certain restrictions on production methods that negatively affect exports of U.S. meat, poultry and dairy products; discriminatory and trade-restricting product labeling requirements; and regulatory barriers to biotechnology that restrict U.S. corn, soy and processed corn and soy product exports.

The coalition said SPS issues must be addressed as part of the negotiations, not simply left to some future consultative mechanism as some EU parliamentarians have suggested. Additionally, SPS provisions negotiated under the TTIP must be enforceable.

If certain sectors or measures are excluded from the TTIP, said the coalition, or placed into a “future negotiation” category, the agreement likely will fail to win the support of

the food and agricultural sector.

The coalition reiterated its call for the administration to use the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations and other recent U.S. free trade agreements as models for talks on the TTIP.

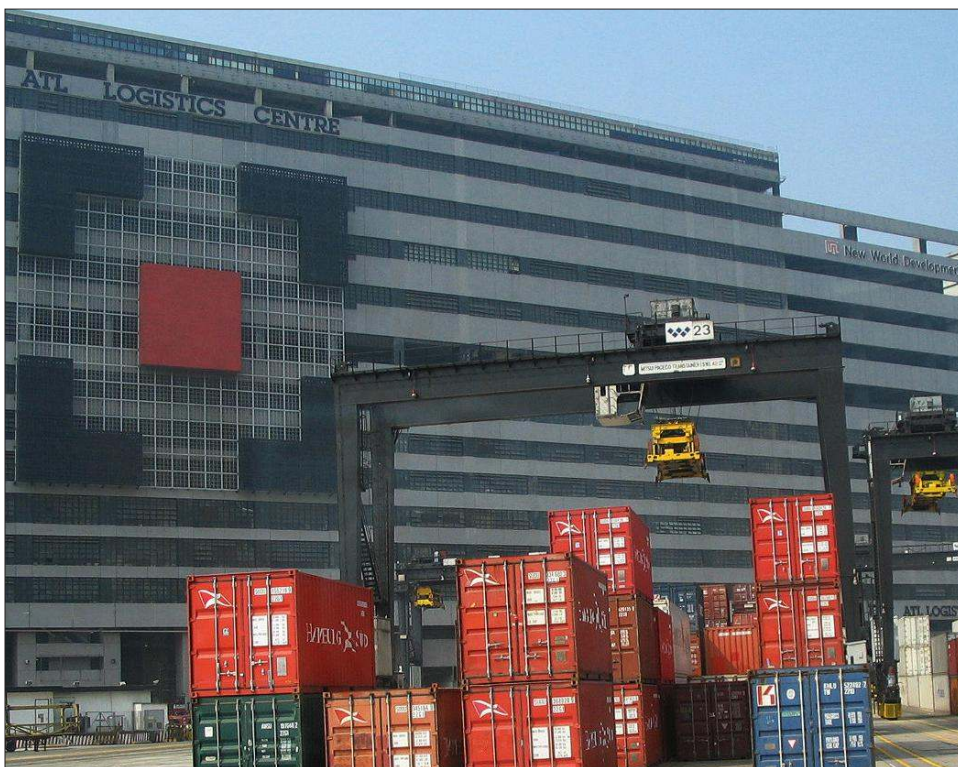
The EU represents a tremendous market opportunity for U.S. pork exports, with consumption totaling 20 million metric tons annually – the second largest market in the world for pork consumption. However, numerous barriers prevent the U.S. pork industry from exporting significant amounts of pork to the EU, with current U.S. pork exports to the EU amounting to less than a quarter of 1 percent of total EU pork consumption. According to Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes, the increased U.S. pork exports that will be generated by TTIP will create over 17,000 new jobs in the United States. The United States and the EU are aiming to begin negotiations mid-summer.



Standards for Trichinae

(continued from page 16)

based on a statistically valid surveillance program and further proved through reported human health data. According to USDA’s Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service, there is a negligible risk of trichinae in U.S. commercial pork, and it does not present a risk to public health. Dr. Ray Gamble, president ex officio of the International Commission on Trichinellosis, found that the odds of trichinae in the U.S. commercial pork supply are 1-in-300 million. As a result of the OIE general session, NPPC is urging OIE officials to make appropriate changes to the chapter on Trichinellosis to ensure flexibility and specificity that allow countries such as the United States to document and defend its negligible risk status.



National Pork Producers Council Elects New Officers, Board Members

National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) at its annual business meeting – the National Pork Industry Forum – held March 8-9 in Orlando, Fla., elected new officers and members to its board of directors.

Minnesota's Spronk, Elected NPPC President

Randy Spronk, a pork producer from Edgerton, Minn., was elevated to the post of president for NPPC. Spronk is the managing partner for two family farm enterprises: Spronk Brothers III LLP is involved in pork production, and Ranger Farms LLP is involved in crop production. The pork production enterprise markets 120,000 head annually. Spronk and his partners also raise corn and soybeans on 2,000 acres.

Spronk has served on the NPPC board of directors for the past five years; he is chairman of the organization's Environmental Policy Committee. He has been involved with the Minnesota Pork Producers Association, serving as president in 1999, and with the Minnesota Soybean Association. He holds a degree in animal science from South Dakota State University.

"Randy has been a strong leader in the U.S. pork industry and brings that leadership and knowledge of pork industry issues, particularly environmental ones, to his new position as president of NPPC," said NPPC CEO Neil Dierks. "He is a valuable asset to U.S. pork producers."

Hill Elected NPPC President-Elect

Dr. Howard Hill, a pork producer and veterinarian from Cambridge, Iowa, was elected to the post of president-elect for the NPPC. Hill is the director of animal well-being for Iowa Select Farms, an Iowa-based pork production company. He has been with Iowa Select since 2000, when he joined the company as director of production. In 2001, he was promoted to chief operating officer, continuing in that role until 2009.

His pork production business, H&K Enterprises, includes hogs and cattle. Hill and his son farm 2,600 acres of corn, soybeans and alfalfa.


A native of southern California, Hill earned his bachelor's and doctorate of veterinary medicine (DVM) degrees from the University of California-Davis. After graduation, he was a mixed animal practitioner in south-

ern California for a year and a half. Hill received his Master's degree and PhD. in veterinary microbiology from Iowa State University.

"Howard has been a strong leader in the U.S. pork industry and brings that leadership and knowledge of pork industry issues, particularly ones related to animal health and well-being, to his new position as president-elect of NPPC," said NPPC CEO Neil Dierks.

Prestage Elected NPPC Vice President

Dr. Ron Prestage, DVM, a pork producer from Camden, S.C., was elected to the post of vice president for the NPPC. Prestage, who has served on the NPPC board of directors for the past three years, is part of the family-owned Prestage Farms, which includes hogs, turkeys, cattle and cropland for hay. He's primarily responsible for the sows and turkeys on the farms in South Carolina and the swine operation in Mississippi.

A graduate of North Carolina State University who received his doctorate in veterinary medicine from Auburn University. Prestage has served in leadership positions with a number of organizations. 



Randy Spronk, a pork producer from Edgerton, Minn.



Dr. Howard Hill, a pork producer and veterinarian from Cambridge, Iowa.



Dr. Ron Prestage, DVM, a pork producer from Camden, S.C.

EPA Issues Second Letter to Environmental Activists Over CAFO Info

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a second letter to the environmental activist groups that the Agency unlawfully sent concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) information to in February. The first letter sought to retrieve the previously issued data and re-send in a redacted form. The latest letter seeks to retrieve the redacted information and replace it with new, further redacted information as EPA recognized that their release still contained significant amounts of private data. The data was released to the Natural Resources Defense Council, Earth Justice and the Pew Charitable Trusts under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests the groups filed. NPPC, along with a number of other agricultural organizations, in March



requested that EPA take steps to prevent such a release in the future, to retrieve the data released, and to agree that the information will not be posted to its website or distributed in any form. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association is calling for an investiga-

tion by the Office of Inspector General into the matter. Nebraska Republican Sens. Mike Johanns and Deb Fischer said that with this release, EPA has shown that the agency continues to act as if it is above the law. 🐷

Food Manufacturers Immigration Coalition Applauds Introduction of Agricultural Worker Bill

The Food Manufacturers Immigration Coalition praised the introduction of legislation that would assist in establishing a stable workforce that can help sustain the rural communities where farmers, ranchers and food manufacturers grow and process the nation's and world's food supply.

"The introduction of this legislation, and the bill introduced in the Senate, are important first steps in the immigration reform process, which will be a dynamic debate featuring many proposals to reform our flawed immigration process," the coalition said. "We commend Chairman Goodlatte, and we look forward to working on a comprehensive approach to immigration reform."

The "Agricultural Guestworker Act," introduced by House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., replaces the impractical H-2A program with a sensible guestworker program. The new program, known as

H-2C, modernizes and streamlines the agricultural guestworker program and would be administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the federal agency that understands the unique needs of America's food manufacturers and farm and ranch operations.

The existing temporary programs for general labor skilled workers are for seasonal labor only. Under the "Agricultural Guestworker Act," the H-2C program would offer workers and employers more choices in their employment arrangements, creating more flexibility and making it easier for workers to move freely throughout the marketplace to meet demands. This new program will support food manufacturers, cattle operations, dairies, hog and poultry farms and other year-round agricultural employers.

"An effective occupational visa system may be the most important barrier to illegal immigration," the

coalition said. "The right visa system with the right screening tools will in effect be a 'virtual border.' The 'Agricultural Guestworker Act' and the creation of the H-2C program would serve the diverse interests of the agriculture and food manufacturing industries and will boost the modern agriculture labor market."

Since not all agriculture jobs are the same or require the same level of skill and experience, the H-2C program would give employers the opportunity to invest their time in training workers for jobs by allowing them an initial stay of 36 months. Workers would then be required to leave for up to three months. After the period of leave, each H-2C visa holder would only be required to leave once every 18 months. This would provide farm labor stability and would encourage illegal farm workers to identify themselves and participate in the H-2C program. 🐷



Agricultural Leaders OF MICHIGAN

Agricultural Leaders Discuss Transportation Infrastructure and Economic Growth at Educational Forum

In March, Michigan Pork Producers Association cosponsored the first in a series of educational forums for legislative staff in Lansing. The forum featured a presentation by Jim Byrum, president of the Michigan Agri-Business Association who discussed transportation infrastructure as it relates to Michigan's agricultural sector.

The event was the first in a series of monthly lunchtime sessions that will be hosted by the Agricultural Leaders of Michigan, a coalition of agricultural, commodity and agri-business leaders committed to promoting Michigan agriculture, participating in the ongoing dialogue about issues affecting our state, and harnessing agriculture's power and potential to further grow Michigan's economy.

At the forum, Byrum discussed the current transportation needs of the industry, and explained why a successful transportation infrastructure plan must go beyond roads and bridges to also address rail and water transportation issues.

"Michigan's agricultural industry has been growing rapidly over the past decade, and we're

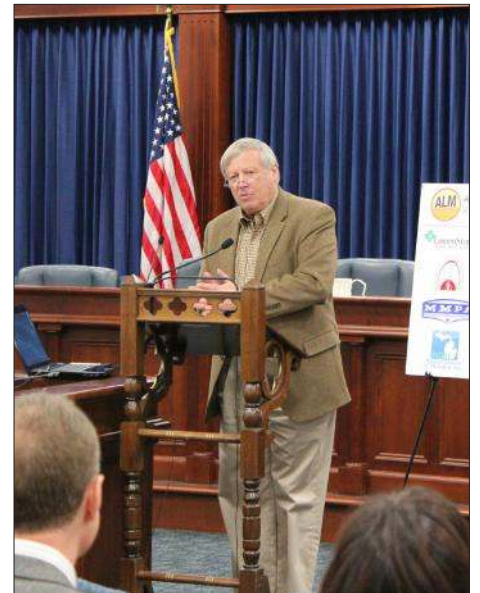
positioned to continue expanding, creating jobs and growing Michigan's economy," Byrum said. "The agriculture sector depends on reliable transportation to ship food and agricultural commodities around the state and the world. Without a comprehensive infrastructure plan that includes roads, bridges, rail and ports, the growth potential of Michigan's agriculture industry will be limited."

Byrum used the example of Michigan's annual corn crop to illustrate the efficiency of transporting goods by rail. Moving that crop by truck would take about 81,255 truckloads; meanwhile, moving that same amount of corn by rail would require just 30,000 railroad cars.

"Funding Michigan's roads and bridges is an important priority, but we can't lose sight of our broader transportation needs," Byrum said. "Transporting food and agricultural commodities by rail or water is more efficient and less expensive than using trucks. Investing in ports and rail also takes some of the pressure off of Michigan's roads while making Michigan companies more economically competitive."

According to the Michigan Depart-

ment of Agriculture and Rural Development, there have been no outbound agricultural shipments by water, and very limited inbound freight in recent years. Byrum said that revamping outdated Coast Guard regulations on the use of barges, dredging commercial ports and focusing on the safe and sustainable use of ports are critical steps that will allow agriculture and industry to better utilize water transportation.



Jim Byrum, president of the Michigan Agri-Business Association speaks at the March educational forum.



Recap: Agricultural Leaders Discuss Opportunities and Challenges for 2013

In April, a second educational forum for legislative staff was put on by ALM. This forum focused on Michigan's robust and growing agriculture industry in which there are substantial opportunities for growth. At the forum, each presenter talked about the outlook for their sector and identified some key challenges that need to be overcome to embrace those opportunities.

Sam Hines, Executive Vice President of the Michigan Pork Producers Association, laid out several issues affecting the profitability of the pork industry in Michigan. One of the big issues is the threat of wild hogs, which have the potential to spread disease and wipe out livestock. The lack of a major pork processor in Michigan is also a challenge for Michigan's pork producers.

Agricultural Leaders of Michigan Host Bio-technology Forum

In May, Michigan Pork Producers Association co-sponsored another educational forum for legislative staff in Lansing. The forum featured a presentation by Dave Tierney, director of government affairs at Monsanto, who discussed the ways that bio-technology is helping farmers grow more food with fewer resources.

Tierney discussed the advances that have been made in crop technology which allow today's farmers to produce more food with a smaller environmental impact.

"Our industry has a track record to be proud of," said Tierney. "Thanks to technological advances, farmers today grow twice as much food as their parents did – using less land, energy, and water and creating fewer emissions."

He also pointed out that a growing global population will put increased demands on food production in the future, noting that in order to keep up with population growth, more food will have to be produced in the next 50 years than was produced in the past 10,000 years combined.

Tierney went on to discuss food safety and labeling for foods containing biotech ingredients, pointing out

that biotech foods are more strictly regulated than any other agricultural or food product in history.

"In the United States, the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration all have to approve new biotech traits," said Tierney. "The U.S. system is really the gold standard for regulation."

The international scientific community, including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the National Research Council, and the American Medical Association, has determined foods that contain biotech ingredients are as safe as any other food. Additionally, the FDA has determined that there is no significant difference between foods produced using biotechnology and their conventional counterparts.

According to Tierney, requiring mandatory labeling for products containing ingredients derived from biotechnology would provide no health or safety benefit, but would alarm consumers by implying that the food may not be safe and could have a substantial negative impact on agricultural growth and productivity.

The event was the third in a series of monthly lunchtime sessions hosted by the Agricultural Leaders of Michigan, a coalition of agricultural, commodity and agri-business leaders committed to promoting Michigan agriculture, participating in the ongoing dialogue about issues affecting our state, and harnessing agriculture's power and potential to further grow Michigan's economy.

MONSANTO



Michigan Corn Growers Association



Capital Update

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

AMS TO BEGIN REPORTING OF THE MANDATORY, VOLUNTARY WHOLESALE PORK REPORTS

USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) announced April 1 as the beginning of simultaneous reporting of the mandatory and voluntary wholesale pork reports under Mandatory Price Reporting (MPR). The mandatory report, which AMS began publishing in January, was being published one week after the voluntary report. AMS has transitioned from a one-week delay to a one-day delay which started the week of March 25-29. At the urging of National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), mandatory reporting of wholesale pork was added to the Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting, during that law's 2010 reauthorization. A negotiated rulemaking committee, on which an NPPC representative served, created the framework for the reporting system. NPPC advocated for making reporting of wholesale pork cuts mandatory under the price reporting law as a way to provide producers more options in pricing their hogs and more accurate price discovery in the marketplace.

USDA PUBLISHES FIRST U.S. PORK EXPORT REPORT

USDA's Foreign Agriculture

Service (FAS) published its first report on U.S. pork exports. Within two weeks of export, FAS now will publish weekly reports detailing the destination of U.S. pork products. Under the previous system, reports were issued two months after the export date. Pork producers and those interested in pork trade now will be able to see accurate, timely data on the volume of pork being sent to export markets. During the reauthorization of the Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting law in 2010, NPPC urged that pork export sales be added to the Foreign Agriculture Service export reports to bolster market transparency and better monitor activity on pork exports.

NPPC ASSISTS IN FINALIZING INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY STANDARD

As a member of the U.S. delegation, Laurie Hueneker, NPPC Director of International Trade Policy, Sanitary and Technical Issues, attended a meeting in Thailand to finalize a draft document on Principles and Guidelines of National Food Control Systems for 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. NPPC has provided significant input to the draft standard over the past several years. The draft Principles and Guidelines of National Food Control Systems further support the concept of equivalence – a fundamental discipline in the WTO Sanitary-Phytosanitary (SPS) Agree-

ment – and provide guidelines for how competent authorities should establish food safety systems, as well as the role of the food industry in ensuring safe food for domestic and international consumers.

SENATE HOLDS HEARING ON CFTC PROGRESS

The Senate Agriculture Committee held a hearing, "Oversight of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC)," to examine the CFTC's progress in implementing the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., announced that the committee is considering the reauthorization of the CFTC with the purpose of increasing oversight of the agency's financial regulations and laying the foundation for a budget increase. The reauthorization process will give lawmakers an opportunity to consider changes to the statutory authorities and oversight of the CFTC.

FINAL AGREEMENT ON MEXICAN TOMATOES REACHED

The U.S. Department of Commerce signed a final agreement with Mexican tomato growers and exporters to 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 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 multiple 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. 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.

AMERICA'S HOG FARMERS URGE CHRISTIE TO VETO BILL

America's hog farmers and NPPC urged New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie to veto legislation that would dictate how his state's hog farmers raise and care for their animals.

The request comes after the New Jersey Senate recently concurred with the state Assembly in approving a bill that bans the use of gestation stalls for sows. The vast majority of the country's hog farmer use gestation stalls for pregnant sows, which allow for individualized care and eliminate aggression from other sows.

The American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians recognize gestation stalls and group housing as

appropriate for providing for the well-being of sows during pregnancy. They point out that there is no scientific consensus on the best way to house gestating sows because each type of housing system has inherent advantages and disadvantages.

The legislation was pushed by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and other animal-rights groups despite the fact that few, if any, of New Jersey's small number of hog farmers use gestation stalls.

"The bill is a solution in search of a problem," said NPPC President-elect Dr. Howard Hill, a hog farmer from Iowa. "This is about HSUS using New Jersey to advance its national animal-rights agenda, and we hope Gov. Christie won't go along with it."

Over the past 12 years, HSUS has been lobbying other states to pass gestation stall bans. If approved, the New Jersey legislation would undermine animal-care standards adopted in 2004 by the state's Department of Agriculture and upheld by the New Jersey Supreme Court in 2008.

"Decisions about animal well-being and housing should be determined by those who understand the animals and work with them every day," Hill said. "We urge Gov. Christie to veto this legislation and allow farmers and veterinarians to decide the best way to care for their animals."

NEW ZEALAND COURT DECISION CLEARS WAY FOR GREATER MARKET ACCESS FOR U.S. PORK

New Zealand's Court of Appeal rejected the New Zealand pork industry's (NZPork) appeal of a decision issued by the country's High Court last May that further liberalized market access for U.S. pork. The

High Court found in favor of the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries and its Import Health Standard (IHS) for pork, pork products and by-products from countries with Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS), including the United States. The IHS would allow the importation of consumer-ready cuts of uncooked pork less than three kilograms. Thanks to the work of experts nominated by NPPC to the New Zealand Independent Working Group and the New Zealand PRRS Expert Working Group, scientific evidence was used to illustrate the minimal risk of spreading the virus. In fact, based on a conservative risk assessment model, New Zealand's chances of getting PRRS from legally imported uncooked pork product are such that it would realize one case every 1,227 years. The country's draft IHS originally was issued in November 2007, but because of the New Zealand pork industry's strong political opposition, the process was stalled for several years while the expert groups convened. NPPC is urging U.S. trade negotiators to ask New Zealand and Australia, which also imposes unscientific restrictions on U.S. pork because of PRRS, to remove all PRRS-related restrictions and allow full and open access for U.S. pork and pork products as a part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations.

NPPC JOINS COALITION TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE RESEARCH FUNDING

NPPC joined the Friends of the Agriculture Research Service (FARS) Coalition in sending a letter asking the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies to support at least \$1.103 billion for USDA's Agriculture Research Service – the same amount in President Obama's fiscal 2013 budget request. The group said funding will advance competitiveness and sustainability of U.S. agriculture.

EPA BUDGET HEARING ADDRESSES AERIAL SURVEILLANCE

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies recently held hearing to review the proposed EPA budget for fiscal 2014. Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., voiced concern with EPA's ability to conduct aerial surveillance of agriculture operations. Acting EPA Administrator Bob Perciasepe said EPA is not currently conducting aerial surveillance but is in the process of looking at the notification it would be required to give farmers and feedlot owners before conducting flights. Perciasepe said taking photographs of livestock farms from an airplane is a legal and cost-effective way to identify water runoff contamination. Johanns said

EPA "sounds like it's a federal agency that's out of control."

NPPC PARTICIPATES IN TPP NEGOTIATIONS

NPPC Vice President and Counsel for International Affairs Nick Giordano traveled to Lima, Peru, for the 17th round of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, meeting with government and private sector officials from TPP member countries. In April, the Obama administration formally notified Congress of its intention to include Japan in the ongoing TPP negotiations. Japan's inclusion in TPP makes it the single most important trade negotiation ever for the U.S. pork industry and many other U.S. agriculture sectors. After Japan, Vietnam – with domestic pork consumption of 2.0 million metric tons per year – offers the greatest potential for expanded U.S. pork exports. According to Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes, increased pork exports resulting from a TPP agreement would create more than 20,000 direct and indirect U.S. pork-related jobs.

NPPC SUBMITS RFS ANSWERS TO HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

NPPC answered questions posed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee regarding their development of a Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) white paper. In addition to NPPC's answers, NPPC signed on to a broad set of responses prepared by a coalition of livestock and meat organizations who initially petitioned EPA for a waiver of the RFS mandate last

July. NPPC's specific answers supplement the views of the larger livestock coalition and provide additional detail to further inform the committee of the views of the U.S. pork industry and producers' experience engaging EPA in its decision last fall on a short term waiver of the RFS and in competing in tight markets for corn where growth in demand far outstripped growth in supply.

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON SMALL BUSINESS TAX REFORM

The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures held a hearing on the Ways and Means Small Business Tax Reform Discussion Draft released March 12. The subcommittee heard comments and analysis relating to the basic architecture of the draft proposals, which would among other changes require farmers to use the accrual rather than the cash method of accounting. Rep. Aaron Schock, R-Ill., questioned witnesses about how pork producers in his district who currently are exempt from accrual accounting requirements might be able to adequately manage their business if this proposal became law. He raised concerns that the proposal would force them to make poor business decisions. NPPC signed onto a joint agriculture letter expressing concerns about the proposal's elimination of "special exceptions" for farming businesses. The proposal would require operations that currently have gross receipts of \$10 million or more to switch from using cash accounting to accrual accounting systems; current law requires this of operations of \$25 million or more. This proposal pres-

ents problematic situations where cost of inventory (pigs in progress) would be immediately taxable. In addition, this required switch would subject pork producers to new compliance regulations – which are hundreds of pages – on inventory capitalization rules under Section 263. NPPC will continue to monitor developments and keep producers updated on this issue.

NPPC ENGAGED IN RE-OPENING THE RUSSIAN MARKET

The U.S. government, with industry input, is developing a commercial option for U.S. exporters to ensure beta-agonist free pork and beef for Russia. Russia implemented a complete ban on imports of U.S. pork, beef and turkey in February. 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. 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. However, until Russia and the U.S. come to an agreement on how to meet Russia's unscientific requirement, no U.S. pork is being exported to Russia.

UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE NOMINATED

President Obama announced the

nomination of Michael Froman, current Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economic Affairs, as U.S. Trade Representative. If confirmed, Froman would replace former trade ambassador Ron Kirk. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is responsible for developing U.S. international trade policy, overseeing free trade negotiations, and enforcing existing agreements. The head of USTR is a member of the President's cabinet and serves as the president's chief trade advisor, spokesperson on trade issues, and negotiator. NPPC works closely with USTR to expand and preserve market access opportunities for U.S. pork. NPPC has worked closely with Froman in his role as deputy national security advisor. Mr. Froman is familiar with the trade challenges of the U.S. pork industry and we will work with him, as we have his predecessors, to increase and maintain market access for U.S. pork.

NPPC FOCUSED ON COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The current export certificate for the South African market, which expired May 31, contains very strict and unscientific-based time/temperature requirements for concerns about trichinae, pseudorabies, and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS). These restrictions have severely limited U.S. pork exports to that market, amounting to only 725 tons in 2012. This bad situation is getting worse with South Africa retreating on their agreement to prioritize renegotiation of the U.S. pork export certificate in an effort to lift barriers to trade. Instead, they are imposing

additional requirements that will create a de facto ban on U.S. pork. South Africa, in the past year, notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it would impose New Zealand-like restrictions on pork from countries with PRRS. Ironically, New Zealand is actually in the process of lifting some of their unscientific PRRS-related barriers to trade, as mentioned in a previous article. 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. NPPC will continue to work toward removing all barriers to trade in South Africa but it appears that things may get worse before they get better. NPPC is sending a number of porcine disease experts to South Africa next month to engage with their South African counterparts.

USDA ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY RULE IN EFFECT

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Veterinary Services final rule on animal traceability took effect March 11. The rule is vital to the U.S. pork industry's ability to more quickly control and eradicate foreign animal diseases and keep export markets open. Most meat-importing countries require such a system as a condition for importing meat, and the rule is an important tool in helping the United States meet its international obligations under the World Organization for Animal Health.

U.S. Pork Producers Demonstrate Earth Day Principles

The world celebrated another Earth Day on April 22nd. Research shows that America's pork producers have made huge improvements in environmental management over the last 50 years.

The research, titled "A 50-Year Comparison of the Carbon Footprint and Resource Use of the U.S. Swine Herd: 1959 - 2009," found that modern pork production methods have led to a 35 percent decrease in the carbon footprint, a 41 percent reduction in water usage and a 78 percent drop in land needed to produce a pound of pork compared with a 1959 baseline. "As a pork producer, I'm proud of the accomplishments we've made as an industry," said Conley Nelson, National Pork Board president and producer from Algona, Iowa. "But today's competitive market demands that we do even more to improve how we produce pork. That's why pork producers are working together to fund new environmental research that will help us build on the progress we've made over the past 50 years."

"The study underscores just how much improvement farmers have made over the past half century," said Garth Boyd, Ph.D. The environmental researcher and former university professor led a team of university and industry scientists in conducting the Checkoff-funded study. "The pork industry has been very successful in significantly reducing its environmental impact and its use of natural resources by nearly 50 percent across the board per pound of pork produced, which is quite an accomplishment." Several on-farm practices have helped improve U.S. pork's overall environmental sustainability. Boyd said these were primarily related to the continuous

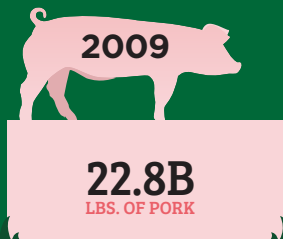
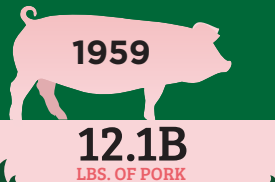
(continued on page 27)

TODAY'S PORK

50 YEARS of Improvements Make Today's Pork More Sustainable Than Ever.

To meet a growing consumer demand, U.S. farmers have nearly doubled pork production in the last 50 years...

Total pounds of pork raised by farmers



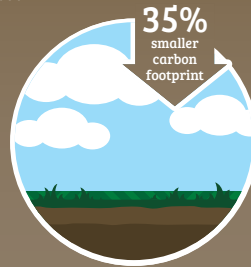
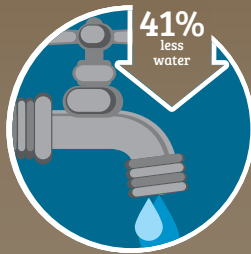
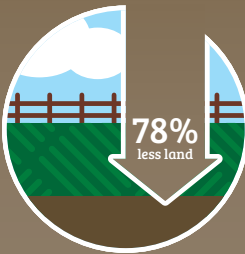
U.S. PIG FARMERS are feeding more people than ever before.



Today's on-farm efficiency means that pound for pound of pork, farmers are now using far fewer of our earth's precious resources than they were in 1959.

Compared with 50 years ago, farmers are using less land and water to produce pork. And, they are doing it with a smaller carbon footprint.*

Per unit basis, such as a pound of pork produced



Over the decades, America's pig farmers have made dramatic improvements in how they raise pigs:



Enhanced protection from harsh weather and predators



Better genetics and animal care



Improved diets to better match animals' needs

Effective measures:

All combine to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and U.S. pork's carbon footprint by 35% per pound of pork.



How crops are raised



How pigs are fed



How nutrients are recycled



Earth-Friendly Choice...

A 2007 U.S. government report found that U.S. pork contributed to only one-third of one percent of greenhouse gas emissions, making U.S. pork a very responsible choice when choosing your next meal.



50 years of innovation demonstrates the commitment America's pig farmers have to sustainable environmental principles as part of their We CareSM initiative. It's another example of how today's farmers are ensuring a greener earth today and for generations to come.




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Earth Day Principles

(continued from page 26)

improvements made over the years in how farmers care for their animals through better nutrition, health and overall management, as well as through improvements in crop production. One example in the report shows that feed efficiency of pigs has improved 33 percent, which means that animals consume less feed for every pound of meat produced. This is a major factor that reduces both the amount of land required for growing grain and the amount of manure produced by pigs. While the recent data on the sustainability metrics offer a positive reflection on past performance, Nelson said today's pork producers are not standing still in terms of environmental progress. "To us, Earth Day is much more than a single day or week of heightened environmental awareness - it's an ingrained part of how we care for our animals, the environment and our communities as we provide healthy pork products for our consumers." The National Pork Board has defined four pillars of environmen-

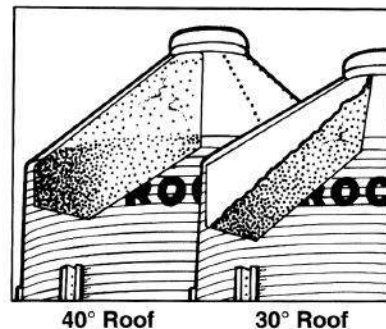
tal sustainability - carbon footprint, water footprint, air footprint and land footprint. According to Nelson, the Pork Checkoff is making inroads into all of these areas with farmer-directed research and the creation of on-farm tools. Most notably, producers can now use the Live Swine Carbon Footprint Calculator to calculate the impact and improvements on their own farms. As each of the four pillars of environmental sustainability are completed they will be integrated with the others to provide a tool that pork producers can use to further their ongoing efforts to protect the natural environment in all of their farming activities.

A new infographic poster from the Pork Checkoff which depicts this significant progress over the past 50 years is pictured on the left side of page 26. Free copies of the posters, designed to share with all audiences, are available at the Pork Store or by contacting Megan Sprague at Sprague@mipork.org. 



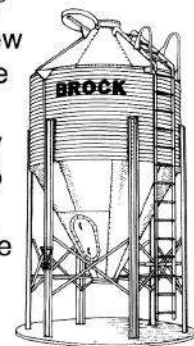
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Producers Focus on Export Efforts as New Opportunities Emerge

New opportunities and issues are emerging for U.S. Pork exports, and producers have prioritized key tactics to put more U.S. Pork on the world's table. "In challenging economic times, pork producers have had to become more efficient and find creative solutions," says Tim Bierman, a wean-to-finish pork producer from Larrabee, Iowa, who chairs the National Pork Board's International Trade Committee. "This is especially important in our international marketing."

The stakes are high, with exports accounting for 27 percent of total U.S. pork production in 2012. The 24 member International Trade Committee, as well as staff from the U.S. Meat Export Federation and the National Pork Producers Council and other expert advisors, met earlier this spring to assess market opportunities, discuss market access challenges and review current U.S. Pork promotions around the world.

"Each year the committee goes through a prioritization process to divide resources among marketing and promotion, research, new product development, market access and international standard issues, says Becca Hendricks, assistant vice president of international marketing for the Pork Checkoff. "A lot of strategic thinking goes into allocating Pork Checkoff dollars to protect market access, reduce tariffs and promote U.S. Pork."

All Eyes Are on Asia

One of the top priorities is the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an Asia-Pacific trade negotiation that includes 11 countries and is designed to reduce tariffs and spur economic growth. Elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers through this agreement could increase U.S. Pork sales by hundreds of millions of dollars.

Another urgent issue is the elimination of unjustified, non-science-based




trichinae mitigation restrictions, such as freezing and testing of U.S. Pork. The odds of trichinae in the U.S. commercial pork supply are one in 300 million, according to Dr. Ray Gamble, president ex-officio of the International Commission on Trichinellosis. Pork Checkoff funding has supported the research and analysis on the negligible risk of trichinae in the U.S. commercial food supply and will now work with foreign markets to change standards based on this data.

Exports Boost Producers'

Profits

Ensuring market access helps build momentum for U.S. Pork exports, which have a direct impact on producers' bottom lines. Key markets, such as Japan and Mexico, as well as expanding markets in Central and South America, helped U.S. Pork exports set a new value record in 2012, at \$6.3 billion, according to statistics released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"We need to continue putting ourselves in these buyers' shoes so we can understand their needs, increase export demand and focus on long-term, sustained growth," Bierman says.

"Increased demand for U.S. Pork will put more money in producers' pockets," says Dr. Dermot Hayes, a professor of economics at Iowa State University. "Every \$1 million increase in the value of U.S. Pork exports adds 6 cents per hundredweight to live hog prices." 

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Pork Checkoff Creates Research Synergy

America's pork producers invest millions of dollars through their Pork Checkoff each year to help find solutions to challenges they face in the 21st century. A good return on this investment is expected - and rightly so. However, what isn't necessarily realized is the fact that their dollars don't work alone.

In fact, a recent survey of researchers found that for every dollar of Checkoff investment, nearly two additional dollars are drawn from outside sources to help find solutions to mutual challenges that are facing the pork industry. In 2012, the National Pork Board awarded more than \$7 million in research grants to fund 88 projects in areas such as swine health, food safety, public health, animal welfare, swine nutrition, swine genetics, environment and human nutrition. This level of investment has been fairly typical in recent years, making the Pork Checkoff one of the largest sources of farmer-supported research in the nation.

"It's fortunate that we can make this kind of investment in research as producers to help us find solutions to industry issues based on sound science," said National Pork Board President Conley Nelson of Algona, Iowa. "This long-term investment helps attract additional funding from government agencies, third-party organizations and private industry, which producers often don't know about," Nelson said. "Yet, the outside investments help us move the research needle more quickly." "To better determine the return on investment in research made by America's pork producers over a multi-year period, the Checkoff reviewed projects funded from 2005 to 2009.

As part of this effort, the Checkoff contacted researchers who worked on the projects. Nearly 80 percent of the 227 who were reached offered

feedback on 320 of the 403 total Checkoff-funded projects. The results showed that the \$24.5 million invested in research from 2005 to 2009 directly resulted in over \$45 million of additional research. This is an increase of 185 percent in additional research value that benefitted the industry.

A sometimes overlooked benefit of Checkoff-funded research is its ability to serve as seed money for a research program that then leads to additional funding.


Great examples include:

- \$750,000 commitment of Checkoff funding for the swine genome project that cost over \$30 million
- Combined \$6.8 million in Checkoff funding for PRRS projects that helped leverage funds from groups, such as the PRRS Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP), to get more and bigger research projects accomplished more quickly than possible without Checkoff funding

Often, it's likely that Checkoff has a funding role in research projects even when it's not readily apparent.

This is especially true when research is applicable, scientifically sound and serves to build the foundation for research that will result in production efficiencies.

Results from Checkoff research give vital information to veterinarians, nutritionists, production managers and other specialists that help them provide services to producers every day. "America's pork producers invest millions of dollars through their Pork Checkoff each year to help address the challenges that we face every day," Nelson said. "The ongoing flow of information and science-based data from Checkoff researchers helps meet the demand for practical on-farm solutions," Nelson said. "Maximizing producers' investment is always a top concern. Whether it's a small tactic or a major investment in Checkoff research, projects are selected based on the criteria determined by the Pork Board."

Visit pork.org/research to review findings from specific Checkoff-funded research projects. 



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

Promoting teamwork within the pork industry Checkoff Collaborates on Foreign Animal Disease Research

When it comes to foreign animal diseases (FADs), it's all about communication, collaboration and preparation -exactly what the Pork Checkoff has been doing for years with various groups across the industry. The strategy was recently demonstrated in Washington, D.C., where the Checkoff collaborated with the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense to organize a meeting with government research agencies, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians and the National Pork Producers Council. "The meeting updated participants on where the industry stands on vaccines, diagnostics and biotherapeutics related to FADs that affect swine," said Patrick Webb, Checkoff's director of swine health. "It's crucial that we continue to work with our government research partners to maximize the impact with Checkoff research funds."

Participants included representatives of the Foreign Animal Disease Research Unit from the USDA/Agricultural Research Service's Plum Island Animal Disease Center, the Department of Homeland Security's Science and

Technology Directorate, the Office of University Programs, the Chemical and Biological Division, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Center of Excellence for Emerging and Zoonotic Animal Diseases. The meeting centered on the three key FADs of consequence to the U.S. pork industry -African swine fever, classical swine fever and foot-and-mouth disease. All three continue to crop up in parts of the world and could be as close to occurring domestically as the next international flight.

"There are research dollars available for work on all of these threats, but they are from multiple sources," said Dr. Tammy Beckham, director of the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense.

"So, a meeting like this is essential to better coordinate funding and activities that foster cooperation, maximize outcomes and remove duplication." Webb said, "The most important part of the meeting was identifying gaps, such as the need for better diagnostics for an African swine fever vaccine and for major FADs. Together, academia, government, and the industry can prepare against the threat these diseases pose."

New Pork Checkoff YouTube Videos Help Educate Consumers

Pork producers are taking visitors on a virtual tour to show how farmers are using technology to protect their pigs and the environment, thanks to new videos on the Pork Checkoff's YouTube channel. The new two- to three-minute videos at the Pork Checkoff's YouTube channel include:

- *Meet a Family Farmer.* Scott

Phillips, owner of Phillips Family Farms in Missouri, returned to the family farm after serving in the U.S. Air Force. He and his employees share a passion for farming. "We love raising pigs," Phillips tells consumers in the video. "Our goal is to raise hogs that provide you with the best pork."

- *Animal Care a Top Priority.* In this video, Phillips takes viewers on a virtual tour inside his swine barns as he details why animal care is important to him. "We want these pigs to be as stress free and comfortable as possible," Phillips says.
 - *Sustainable Pig Farmers Embrace Technology.* At the Sandy River Farm in Arkansas, employees are embracing technology to protect the environment. This video shares how the farm uses an anaerobic manure digester, or methane digester, to collect manure and convert energy stored in its organic matter into methane, which is used to produce energy. Richard Gray, environmental health and safety manager, explains what happens at each stage of the process.
 - *Baby Pigs: The Gift of Life.* Randy Ayers talks about working with sows at the Sandy River Farm as they give birth to piglets. Randy shows how he cares for the pigs on a daily basis and explains how he works closely with a veterinarian to ensure pigs' well-being.
- The new videos enhance the Pork Checkoff's YouTube channel, which includes more than 70 titles, including videos of the pork industry's Environmental Steward Award winners (such as Future View Farm in Penn-

sylvania). The Pork Checkoff will be developing additional YouTube videos this year

Pork Checkoff Reaches Out to Hispanic Consumers

Online The Pork Checkoff continues to reach out to Hispanic consumers, who represent the fastest-growing U.S. population segment. Hispanics make up 16 percent of the total U.S. population, with that number expected to reach 30 percent by 2050. The Pork Checkoff's 2013 Hispanic marketing is utilizing social media and other online tools to inspire bicultural consumers who love pork.

"Checkoff research shows that our messages are resonating with Hispanic consumers," said Traci Rodemeyer, director of pork information for the Pork Checkoff. "Marketing to this group is much different today than when the Checkoff launched its Hispanic marketing program in 2002. Initially, marketing efforts focused on first-generation Latinos who were closely tied to their home countries' traditions, and we educated them about the safety of U.S. pork."

Today, the Checkoff focuses on bicultural Hispanics whose families have lived in America for generations and have adapted to American culture.

"While these consumers love to be creative with pork, they seek inspiration to help incorporate pork into everyday meals," Rodemeyer said. "The Pork Checkoff's Hispanic-focused social media platforms are evolving to meet this need."

The Checkoff launched a Spanish-language Facebook page and Pinter-

est board to provide Latin cooking inspiration. And this year, the Checkoff's Spanish-language website, found at porkelsabordemilplatillos.com, will be revamped to provide relevant, fresh content. "The Latino culture loves to share, and we're catering to them by providing a mix of recipes, appealing food photography and engaging content via the social media channels," Rodemeyer said. "We want to provide plenty of inspiration to help keep pork top of mind."

MPPA Partners with Costco on In-store Promotion

There's an art to getting the most out of your food budget with meat purchases, and Costco made it easier this year with an unbeatable \$4 coupon on boneless pork loin chops and roasts.

"We start with the highest quality pork that's fresh, never frozen," said Scott Alleger, the pork buyer for Costco, the second largest retailer in the United States, based on worldwide sales, and the largest warehouse membership club in the United States. "Then we partner with the Pork Checkoff to provide our members with samples, savings and cooking information, so it's a great combination."

In January, Costco featured boneless pork loin chops, boneless pork loin roasts and pork recipes in the Costco Connection, which is mailed monthly and also is available for members to pick up at their local Costco warehouse. The Costco Connection, which boasts a circulation of more than 8.6 million, reaches an even broader audience since it's available

online at Costco.com.

The eye-catching magazine feature was supported by weekly in-store pork sampling opportunities, and the results were impressive.

"Our January sales of boneless pork loin chops and roasts were four times our monthly average," said Alleger, who noted that Costco has 622 total warehouses (including 449 in the United States) and 69.1 million cardholders. "We were also able to work with several of the state pork boards to further drive sales."

In April Michigan partnered with Costco to do in-store promotions and samplings at all 12 Michigan Costcos, resulting in a 411 percent increase in sales in Michigan.

This year marked the fourth time that Costco has offered a pork coupon during this time frame, noted Melissa Laesch, national retail marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff.

"This is one of the largest meat promotions in Costco's history, and it came at a time when demand for pork typically slows down," said Laesch, who added that Costco's coupon redemption rates run well above the average retailer's coupon redemption rates.

Costco looks forward to partnering with the Pork Checkoff on future pork promotions, Alleger said.

"The professionals at the Pork Checkoff are great to work with. They listen to our ideas and they help us continue to offer exceptional value to our members," Alleger said. "Together, we've been able to drive sales on pork at times where it's not normally a feature item."

We are Listening

Dear MPPA:

On behalf of the Corunna FFA Chapter, we would like to thank you for your donations to the Michigan FFA Foundation. Your support is greatly appreciated. It is because of sponsors like you that our members can participate in state level activities and learn about agricultural practice through real world experiences. We want to make sure you know how helpful your donations are and how much we appreciate it. We look forward to another great year and hope you continue to be a part of the Michigan FFA in 2013/14.

Kimberly Forbush
Corunna FFA

Dear MPPA,

AutumnFest 2012 was a wonderful event, celebrating Michigan agriculture and natural resources. Over 800 alumni and friends from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) joined us for an exciting and successful event.

On behalf of the ANR Alumni Association and the CANR, I want to offer our most sincere thanks for your donation of the "Pork Picnic Basket" for the 2012 AutumnFest auction and raffle. We had a wonderful response to both the auction and raffle and couldn't have raised the money without your support.

Since 1989 the ANR Alumni Association has awarded more than \$618,000 in scholarship monies and student club grants, something we could not do without you.

Kathryn Reed
ANR Alumni Association



Corunna FFA

Dear MPPA:

The Genesee County 4-H Endowment Association would like to "Thank You" for your continued support of our 4-H Youth Programs!

Kris Johnston
Genesee County 4-H Endowment Association

Dear MPPA,

It is important that I express my most sincere gratitude to the leadership, membership, and staff of the Michigan Pork Producers Association for the 2013 Distinguished Service Award. This is a very high honor and I am truly humbled. This comes as a surprise to me because I am being recognized for what I felt that I was expected and paid to do during my career at Michigan State. I question whether that in itself is worthy of this prestigious award. However, I remain very appreciative.

Serving as the Livestock Youth Specialist in the Michigan State University Dept. of Animal Science for many years, I had the distinct

pleasure of interacting with many great people. If I have achieved any degree of success, it is largely because of the unending level of support from faculty colleagues in the department as well as other departments around the MSU campus, our departmental support staff, farm unit managers, undergraduate and graduate students, youth from throughout the state along with their parents, 4-H leaders, FFA and Agri-Science educators, county extension staff, the leadership and support of many commodity organizations and producers, and a countless host of dedicated volunteers. Although I am being recognized, I dedicate this recognition to them for their role in providing an incredible support network.

Please express my appreciation to all that were involved. I sincerely thank you for this prestigious recognition. I am indeed honored.

Kenneth Geuns
2013 Distinguished Service Award Recipient

Dear MPPA,

On behalf of the National Pork Board and staff, I would like to thank you for your support in assisting the victims of Hurricane Sandy. Your simple act of generosity had a significant impact on families in need.

As a state association, I know you are dedicated to improving the quality of life in your state and your communities on a daily basis. However your support for the East Coast relief effort exemplified the *We Care*® initiative and displayed your compassion for communities across the country.

On behalf of our producer leaders and staff, I would like to say what an honor it is to work in collaboration with state associations like yours. Thanks again for your support to show the many ways *We Care*®!

Chris Novak, CEO
National Pork Board

Dear MPPA:

Thank you for the \$50 towards the MAEAP sign. Our entire farm is now verified in the Livestock and Cropping Systems. Also two of our farmsteads are verified. Your commitment to the program is appreciated, and it is encouraging to receive the money to help offset some of the cost of the details. MAEAP certification is a good way to show the public we as farmers are serious about protecting our environment.

Also thank you for the *We Care*® sign. We have it mounted by the entrance, which gives us an opportunity to answer questions when we have visitors on our farm. Thank you for providing a proactive program for us as producers to help sharpen our care taking skills.

Carl Sparks
Sparks Cedarlee Farm LLC

Dear MPPA,

On behalf of the third graders at Beaverton Primary School, we would like to thank you for the materials provided by your company to our third graders at the 2013 Gladwin County Farm and Garden Show. The students enjoyed them, had fun learning about your industry, and were thrilled to be able to take the materials home to share with their families.

We appreciate your support to our students. Thank you again.

Third Grade Teachers
Beaverton Primary School



Michigan FFA Foundation Assistant Director of Development, Ramey Lunceford, presents Michigan Pork Producers Association (MPPA) Executive Vice President, Sam Hines, with a banner of appreciation to MPPA for being long time supporters of the Michigan FFA Foundation.

Oral Fluid Collection

(continued from page 10)

Once you have assembled your supplies you are ready to begin the collection process. Start by hanging the rope in a pen away from feed or water. Remember that organic matter can contaminate the sample and care should be taken to avoid dropping the rope on the barn floor or hanging the rope so that it reaches the floor. Hang the rope by looping it around the fence or tie it in a knot. Once the rope is secure, unravel the ends to give the pigs more chewing room. When you are sampling pens of 25 pigs or more two ropes may be used to samples from the same pen. The pigs should have time to interact and explore the rope, chewing on it allowing for saliva to collect in the cotton material. Once the rope is saturated, approximately 30 minutes of hang time, remove the rope while wearing rubber gloves to prevent contamination.

Next, you will need to remove the oral fluid from the cotton rope. Place the rope into your plastic bag or boot and proceed to squeeze the saliva out of the rope, removing the rope as you sufficiently strip the fluid. In order to get a good sample you will need to



Photo courtesy of Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine

collect approximately 2.5 ml. of fluid. Once oral fluid has been collected from the rope, place it into a test tube by snipping or cutting the corner of your plastic bag and draining it into the tube. Insert the cap on the tube and identify the sample with the marker. Samples should be kept chilled once they are collected.

When shipping oral fluids they should be sent the same day as they were collected and kept cold using a

Styrofoam cooler and ice packs. If you are asking for PCR tests at the lab, samples can be frozen and sent at a later time. When shipping the samples, you need to follow the federal guidelines for sending serum samples, which include; properly labeling your container, using an insulated, leak proof container that is lined with a plastic bag and packing the samples with ice packs and absorbent materials. Before sealing your package, the proper paperwork for the diagnostic lab should be included.


Once the diagnostic lab receives your samples, they will run the requested tests and the results will be sent back to you. The time frame is similar to serum sampling and you should not experience a delay when submitting oral fluids. This collection method is easily done by a properly trained employee and can be an efficient method to complete disease surveillance on your herd. Michigan State University Extension recommends that all farms implement a disease surveillance protocol on their farm, using cotton ropes to complete collection of oral fluids for diagnostic testing is a great tool for disease surveillance for producers in the pork industry. 



Photo courtesy of Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine

Summit Showcased Ag's Need to Build Relationships and How Words Have Consequences

Speakers Challenged Attendees to Communicate Better, Find the "Middle Ground," and Empower Ag's Youth

"The era of 'don't ask, don't tell' in agriculture is over," remarked Dallas Hockman, to attendees at the Animal Agriculture Alliance's 12th annual Stakeholders Summit. Hockman, Vice President of Industry Relations for the National Pork Producers Council adamantly told Summit attendees that the ag industry can no longer afford to stay quiet; we must communicate.

More crucially, however, Hockman emphasized that the industry doesn't just need to "communicate" but instead, must form relationships with consumers and recognize their concerns.

"This is about transparency, and transparency means that it's our job to go and inform our customers, it's not our customer's job to come and ask us about something," said Hockman. "We all know what we're against, but the challenge is: what are you for? It's not what you say, it's what people hear."




Numerous speakers throughout the day put the responsibility on the industry to communicate to consumers, instead of the other way around.

Earlier in the day, David Wescott, Director of Digital Strategy for APCO Worldwide, told attendees that they must identify their true stakeholders, ask those stakeholders what they want, and then give it to them.

"The consumer has a right to know anything he wants to know about where he's spending his wholly earned, almighty dollar. That's a reality," said Andy Vance, Editor of Feedstuffs and one of the afternoon's speakers. "Consumers increasingly want to know more about their food

and they increasingly are more and more skeptical about companies and industries that don't give them what they want to know."

The Summit closed with a half-day "workshop" focused on crisis communications, employee hiring strategies and the intersection of the environmental and animal rights movements and how those partnerships affect agriculture. To view presentations from May 1st, please visit the Alliance website. Presentations from May 2nd are available to Alliance members and registered attendees only.

The 12th annual Stakeholders Summit, themed "Activists at the Door: Protecting Animals, Farms, Food and Consumer Confidence," was held May 1-2, 2013 in Arlington, Virginia. It included about 200 leaders from across the food chain. 



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Market Flexible

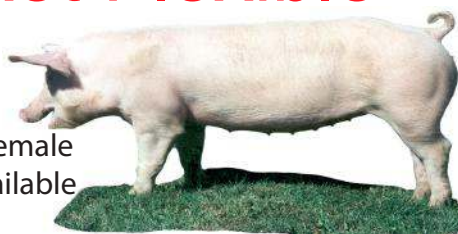
238#

DLY female

x

A-1200 boar

Parent-line female
DLY Now Available



328#

DLL female

x

A-1200 boar

Sow Productivity

Avg. number of pigs/litter	9.5 (gilt litters)
Avg. litter weight	134.25 lbs.
Age weaned	17 days
Avg. pig weight	14.13 lbs.

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.

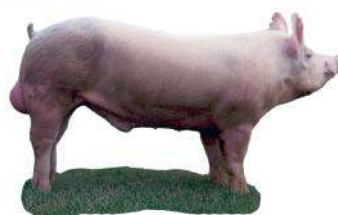
Carcass Cut-Out

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

Meat-quality analysis by
Dr. Steve Moeller at
The Ohio State University Meat Lab.



A-1200 terminal-
line sire

Sow Productivity

Avg. born/litter	11
Avg. live born/litter	10.3
Avg. weaned/litter	9.5
Age weaned	24 days
Avg. pig weight	22.1 lbs.

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 (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.



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