

MICHIGAN PORK

The source for information affecting Michigan's Pork Producers

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A Legacy of Learning



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**On cover, Swine Farm employees, left to right:
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A Legacy of Learning

By: Megan Sprague, MPPA Program Director, sprague@mipork.org

Kevin Turner believes that to be successful in the swine industry, you have to be a special type of person. Someone who is genuine in their intentions and passionate about raising pigs; someone who is alright with staying up late and okay with never quite getting that smell off of you when you go home.

He might even say it takes a somewhat crazy person, but as the current Michigan State University (MSU) Swine Farm Manager he considers one of the farm's main purposes to be a place to help students develop those attributes. His goal is for the Swine Farm to be a place where a passion for the industry can flourish and be nurtured, which in turn may result in quality people looking to pursue careers in the swine industry.

In the fall of 2001, Kevin was one of those students. Growing up in Prescott, Michigan, he was very active in 4-H and FFA, but had very little exposure to what most would consider "commercial agriculture." As a no preference major and an aspiring veterinarian, the opportunity to work on a campus farm was appealing, but what he didn't know was that opportunity would completely alter his career path.

Kevin immediately fell in love with the farm, biking eight miles a day during his first semester and working nights and weekends throughout his undergraduate years at MSU.

After graduating with an Agribusiness degree with a Food Industry Management specialization in 2004, Kevin was offered a job with Iowa Select farms at a 5200 sow unit in Clarion, Iowa, as a breeding techni-



MSU Swine Farm

cian. During his time at Iowa Select, he worked in different units and varying roles, but most often he worked as a Breeding Department Manager and even now he still has a passion for the breeding side of the operation.

In 2005, Kevin received a call from MSU asking him to interview for the Assistant Farm Manager position at the Swine Farm and in April of 2006 he was hired. Al Snedegar, the Farm Manager at the time, welcomed him aboard, as he had been working without an assistant, and had Kevin as an employee during Kevin's undergraduate years.

Transitioning from a commercial operation to a research facility was a shift in thinking for Kevin and a big adjustment. He was grateful to have Al, who had been there for over 15 years, to mentor and guide him.

Kevin spoke about some of the major differences between the two types of operations.

"Everything is very task oriented at a commercial operation," he said.

"When you walk into the barn, you know what you are going to do every day. It's very efficient, everyone has specialized jobs and your employees and co-workers are adults who are there to raise pigs and make a living. At the Swine Farm, there is never a normal day. You wear so many hats and your employees are young adults who are here for their own reasons. When you work on a commercial operation, your employees want to learn everything about their specific job, but at the Swine Farm your employees are students that have their eye on the future. They want to know everything that you know, they want to learn and

it's always important to take the time to teach them. Every day I am a pig farmer, a researcher, a teacher and an extension worker—fielding people's questions about how they raise pigs. Sometimes it keeps the job interesting and sometimes it makes you want to pull your hair out."

Coming out of the commercial industry Kevin had a lot of ideas that he felt could improve how the Swine Farm ran, but he found that things did not always translate as smoothly as he would hope.

"I had to learn, with Al's help, what would work and could be applied from my commercial experiences to the Swine Farm. At a teaching and research facility, there are built in inefficiencies, such as student turnover. Al taught me how to slow down and really look at a problem within the context of my available resources. Some of the ideas that I brought with me worked really well and were welcomed; and other ideas just weren't practical for our operation," he said.

It wasn't until Kevin started working on his Master's Degree at MSU that he truly understood why it was important for certain processes on the farm to work in particular ways in order to produce quality research.

After the initial adjustment, he fell into a routine at the farm which, on a daily basis, allows him to run a farm and engage with students, faculty, and international graduate students.

In 2012, Al retired from his position at the Swine Farm and Kevin was offered the position of Swine Farm Manager. He has continued to work on his Master's Degree, but has found it challenging with the added responsibility of being the farm manager since Al had always taken care of the majority of calls, emails, and paperwork. Kevin likened his current reality

to that of an actual farm owner. He is always on the clock and even as the interview for this story was being conducted his phone was constantly ringing. In Kevin's words,

"Al's retirement was a shock to my routine and how I do things and I am still adjusting to the loss of him as a filter and support system."

Aside from the obstacles that he's tackled, there is no denying how much Kevin enjoys his work at the Swine Farm. Because the farm's purpose is to teach students, one of his current endeavors is to expose students from

all types of backgrounds to the commercial swine industry and teach them about the work at the farm by providing tours.

The classes that have toured range from traditional animal science classes to psychology and anthropology classes. At the end of the tour, he always asks for honest opinions and has consistently heard positive reflections. Many comment that their perceptions of intensive farms have changed and things are not how they have been portrayed to them by the media.

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Kevin Turner marking market hogs in the finisher portion of the Swine Farm.



By: Fred Walcott
MPPA President

Involvement in Political Process is Important

In the pork industry, the summer of 2014 has brought us phenomenally high hog values. And with the inch of rain received over Labor Day weekend, we should have enough moisture to finish-up both the corn and the soy fields. We are looking forward to reaping the rewards of our spring plantings. This time of year always seems both peaceful and anticipatory; we spend our time fixing equipment and take a deep breath before diving into harvest.

As pig farmers, we know that there is no such thing as “down time,” but in an effort to get this article out, I had to do some contemplation about a subject that traditionally has been considered taboo to discuss, politics.

I’m not talking about Right vs. Left or anything like that; I’m talking about political involvement. Nowadays regulations have never been more pervasive on the farm. There are controls on herbicides, animal welfare and workmen’s compensation. Laws on taxation, how federal funds are used and what drugs are acceptable for use are all closely linked to our elected officials and, now more than ever, it’s important they understand the consequences of their decisions to our farms and families.

We live in a country that does not demand our involvement, but allows us to choose how much we connect to politics. With the primary elections coming up in November, I think it’s important that as pig farmers we are active at the local, state and national

levels and become vested in the political process by voting.

One of the ways that I have connected with my elected officials is by inviting them to my farm. I have had Representative Geoff Hansen, State Senator for the 34th District, on my farm in a pair of coveralls. It was a great way to open the lines of communication and give him first-hand experience with modern agriculture. Now, when he is in Lansing and making decisions that affect my farm, he has a face to associate with Michigan pig farming and he won’t have to rely on other people’s opinions about what I do.

On the flip side, through Michigan Pork Producers Association (MPPA) and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), I have been able to visit Washington, D.C. to meet with the members of Michigan’s Congressional Delegation on their “home turf.” They are always surprised that a farmer would take time away from their work to talk to them and it means a lot to them. It has allowed me to talk with our Senators and Representatives face to face and explain why issues they are working on are important to me and farmers like me.

Just like an elected official might find it interesting to visit your farm, I find it interesting to visit their offices in Washington. I enjoy seeing how the government works and visiting gives you a truer understanding of policy making firsthand.

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“I believe every pork producer has an obligation to support their industry’s efforts in the legislative arena...”



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“We Need to Start Focusing on Pork Quality Again”

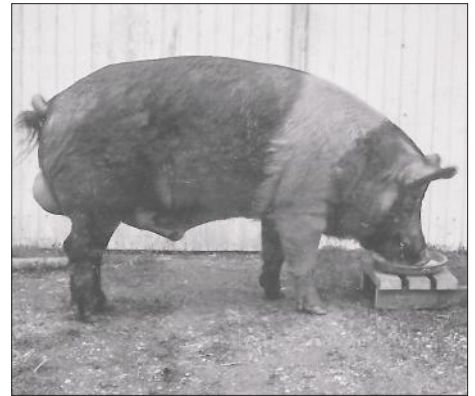


By: Sam Hines
MPPA Executive Vice President
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“On more than one occasion this summer, I picked-up beef steaks at a much higher price than pork loins that were on sale in the same case, because I couldn’t find any that I thought warranted taking home.”

Linden Olson, a Worthington, Minn. pork producer who has held numerous leadership roles in the pork industry, has written several articles in PorkNetwork Online reflecting on the pork industry in years past and commenting on how the industry has changed during his lifetime. I have known Linden for decades and, since we are close to the same “vintage,” his reminiscences often get me to thinking about my early experiences raising hogs also.

I grew-up on a livestock farm near Wooster, Ohio, that my great-grandfather purchased after the Civil War and, incidentally, is still in the family. The farm house (*pictured below*) was built in the 1830s and was known as Kollar’s Tavern; a hotel and tavern on the mid-point of the stagecoach line between Canton and Mansfield, Ohio. Although my father was primarily a dairy farmer, he also fed-out cattle and hogs and, as was typical on farms in the ‘40s and ‘50s, we also had a few hundred laying hens and even a small flock of sheep that was acquired to utilize the pasture land on a rented farm on which my dad raised crops on the tillable acres.



My interest in hogs began when my brother and I purchased two gilts out of a feedlot of pigs our dad was finishing. Interestingly, although this would have been sometime around 1950, I remember that we paid \$12.50 each for the gilts. Mine was a crossbred that was probably mainly Chester White and my brother’s looked almost like a purebred Spot, but it was a crossbred also. Somehow we managed to get them bred and they each raised several nice litters for us; despite having to farrow in some rather crude, makeshift accommodations.

We fed out the litters and, when it was time to cash-in, I felt like I had come into a small fortune. What I didn’t consider at the time was that dad had provided the feed free-of-charge but, that aside, the fact I had made money for the first time from my own hard work was pretty gratifying and, looking back, probably was instrumental in laying the groundwork for my interest in pigs and the industry in which I have spent my entire working life.

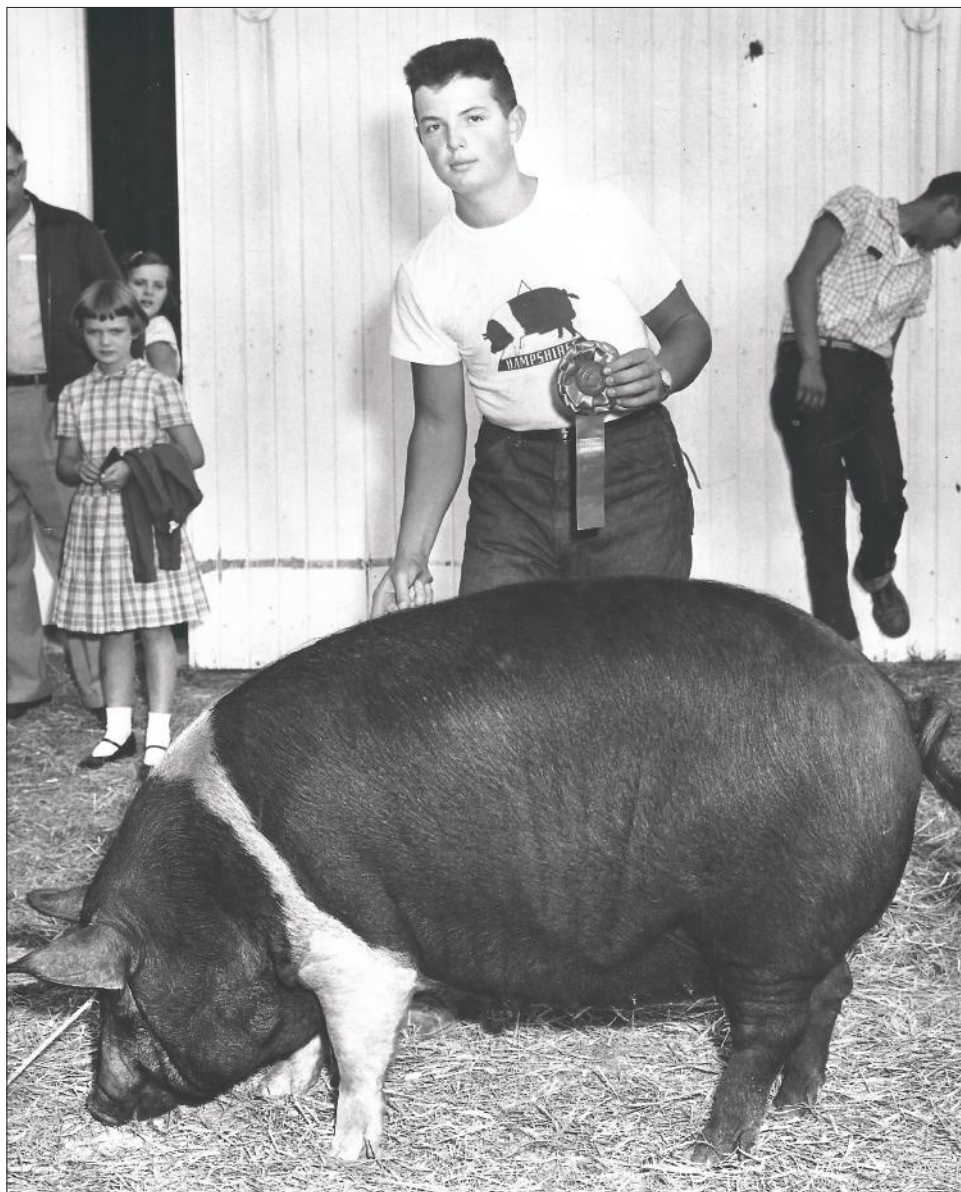
In later years, my dad said he had no qualms about providing the feed

because, even at that young age my brother and I were doing quite a bit to help out on the farm. However, as a learning experience, he said he wanted us to actually pay for the pigs so we would feel like they were truly ours since we purchased them with our own meager savings.

We raised a few litters from these sows and I remember taking nearly \$80.00 to the bank when I eventually culled and sold my sow. With profits from this original sow and the litters she produced, I purchased a couple registered Hampshire gilts and by the time I started college my Hampshire herd included 20-plus sows and two boars. I grabbed a couple pictures from my old photo albums to convey how much hogs have changed since the '50s; not to mention yours truly.

At this point, you are probably wondering where I'm headed with all this, but Linden's recent article titled, "Market hogs are heavier, but leaner than ever," also got me to thinking about the efforts that were initiated in the 1950s to make hogs leaner. As Linden mentioned, following World War II fat was no longer in demand and programs were put in place to reduce the large amount of fat on pigs going to market at that time. My prize winning gilt, and boar, from the '50s (*pictured top left and right*) certainly wouldn't win awards for leanness today!

Linden also mentioned how much heavier hogs are marketed today than in the 1950s when 230 pounds was probably the average as compared with nearly 290 pounds now. In fact, when I was with Swift and Company in the 1960s, we wanted to buy hogs averaging between 190 and 220 pounds and hogs weighing more than



220 pounds were severely discounted under Swift's live merit buying program. The gold standard under the Swift program was a hog that yielded 37 or 38 percent lean cuts of live weight with the majority of the hogs we bought back then yielding only between 32 to 34 percent lean cuts on a live weight basis.

In Linden's commentary, he mentioned the Certified Meat Sire

program that many of the breed associations started in the '50s and that reminded me of my experiences with that program also. Under the Certified Meat Sire (CMS) program, sires could acquire a CMS designation if 2 pigs from 5 different litters had carcass measurements (adjusted for 230 pounds) of 3.5 square inches of loin eye, were at least 29.5 inches
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A Legacy of Learning

(continued from page 5)

He has also given tours to students that are a part of MSU's Student Organic Farm. The Swine Farm breeds sows for the Organic Farm every year, so that students at the Organic Farm can learn more about animal agriculture and product marketing. Kevin has fostered relationships at the Organic Farm based on discussion and appreciation for all types of pig farming, allowing both farms to learn and gain from the other's experiences.

The Swine Farm has always focused on continuous improvement, not only for its employees and pigs, but also for the environment. In keeping with that premise, the Swine Farm recently achieved Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) certification. Kevin was very excited about the opportunity to become MAEAP certified because he felt that the Swine Farm already was complying with many of the MAEAP requirements and it fit into the environmental and production goals at the farm.

Like many of the managers that have come before him, Kevin views

students as the true legacy of the Swine Farm. He believes in continuing to educate students through the tours, but more importantly through their work on the farm. Like many farm owners, he hopes to give his employees a sense of pride and ownership in their tasks. Self-admittedly he asks a lot of students, but he knows that he is interacting with young people who will hopefully go out and become the next generation of the swine industry. Young people like former student employees Jessica Lowell and Julie Feldpausch:

Jessica received her Master's Degree in Swine Nutrition and is currently working on her PhD in Meat Science at the University of Illinois.

"Working at the Swine Farm was, by far, one of the best educational experiences I had during my time at MSU," Jessica said.

"After working at the Swine Farm, I have come to appreciate how important a hands-on experience is in one's education. I was also fortunate to have mentors (Al and Kevin) who understood the importance of those

experiences and did their best to provide as many learning opportunities, for students, as possible. I feel like working at the Swine Farm helped me develop my leadership skills and taught me how to find teaching/learning opportunities in everyday activities, it gave me the opportunity to find my true passion and I was able to discover my career interest in the swine industry and swine production. I really appreciate the level of commitment and dedication Kevin has to the swine program as well as the success of past and present student employees."

Julie is currently at Kansas State University working on her Masters Degree in Swine Nutrition.

"I didn't have much pig production experience when I first started, but the lessons I learned working with Kevin and Al gave me the skills, confidence, and encouragement to come to K-state and work with the swine nutrition team, become an Operation Main Street speaker and seek out ways to contribute to the swine industry," said Julie.

Stories like Jessica's and Julie's are what drives Kevin on a daily basis to reach out and teach and is also why he finds his job to be so rewarding. At Swine Farm, quality education and research are top priority. He believes it can't always be about production numbers and he wouldn't have it any other way.

As a personal aside from the author of this article, I will always be thankful for Kevin's enthusiasm for teaching students. As a former dairy farmer's daughter, the swine farm provided me with an irreplaceable experience, one that has enabled me to hopefully contribute positively to the Michigan swine industry. 🐷



Piglets in a MSU Swine Farm farrowing room.



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President's Page

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long, and had less than 1.6 inches of backfat. Believe it or not, I recall it wasn't that easy to find hogs meeting those standards back then.

I remember eventually getting one of my boars qualified as a CMS, but it took awhile and required some effort to match him up with females that would produce hogs meeting the qualifications; especially with the minimal number of females I had in my herd.

Today, hogs are being marketed weighing more than 280 pounds and typically have more than 8 square inches of loin eye and less than .70 inches of backfat.

We have come a long way in making hogs leaner, but I'm beginning to wonder (and I don't think I'm alone) that we may have gone too far. I find it really difficult anymore to find what I consider quality loins in the meat case. Most of them are lacking in acceptable color and water holding capacity as evidenced by the amount of purge in many packages and, when cooked, don't provide the type of eating experience we should be providing consumers.

And, truth be told, I may not be the best cook in the world, but I do know how to cook pork and, despite this, too often wind-up with a finished product that isn't all that good. When this is happening to me, I shudder to think what 95 percent of the consuming public, who are probably over-cooking it, are left thinking about our product.

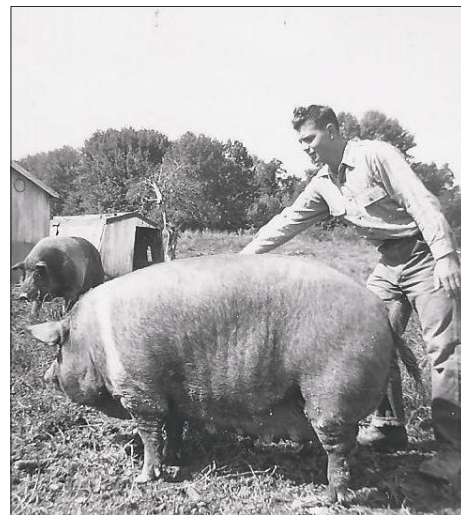
On top of this, I have literally quit ordering pork, unless it's cured ham, ribs or barbecue, in high-end restaurants because I have gotten stung too many times. The entrée, generally a loin chop, either comes slathered in some type of exotic sauce that masks the true flavor of good pork or it's a hockey puck that is better suited for


use in a Red Wings' game than on my plate.

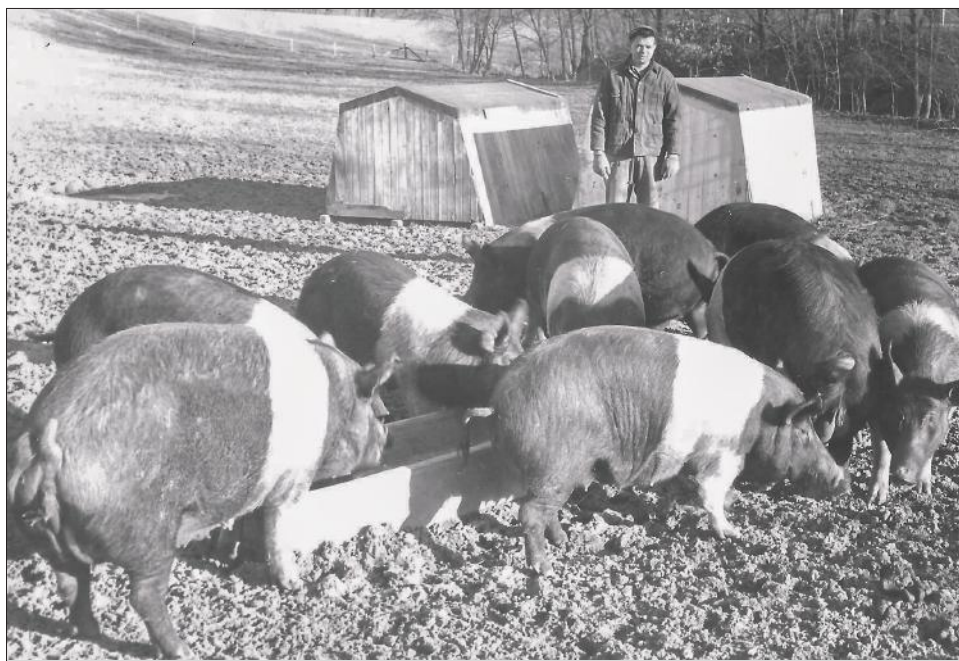
I know I'm being a little harsh, but I really do believe we need to start focusing on quality again if we expect pork to ever attain its full-potential in the market place. For example, I'll make an honest confession. On more than one occasion this summer, I picked-up beef steaks at a much higher price than pork loins that were on sale in the same case, because I couldn't find any that I thought warranted taking home.

I'm only confessing this here within the family, so to speak, but I'm probably not the only one that has done such a dastardly deed recently. Admittedly, I'm at a point in life where price isn't the sole determinant on which food items I buy, but I don't think we can always rely on sales to be driven by being the lower-priced alternative.

Taste and availability of a product that will more readily adapt to an



array of preparation skills are both factors we need to start focusing on again. I would guess consumers define quality in many ways but, at least in my opinion, a lot of fresh pork in the meat case today doesn't make top billing, at least under my definition of quality. If you disagree, make your case, but I think this is a discussion we need to start having. 



National Pork Board CEO Stepping Down

The National Pork Board (NPB) announced that Chief Executive Officer Chris Novak (*pictured right*) will step down after six years of service to the pork industry and the Pork Checkoff. Novak is leaving Oct. 3, 2014, to assume leadership of the National Corn Growers Association.

"We're grateful to Chris for his leadership these past several years," said Dale Norton, board president and a pork producer from Bronson, Mich.

"With Chris' guidance, our Pork Checkoff team built stronger relationships with pork producers across the country, with our state pork associations and with our partners in the food chain. Chris brought a spirit of collaboration that served our organization and our industry well."

During his six-year tenure with NPB, Novak worked tirelessly to advance the strategic goals of the Pork Checkoff. For example, a commitment to refresh the image of pork with consumers led to the creation of the new Pork Be inspired® campaign. Since the campaign launch in 2011, pork has led all proteins in growth within foodservice, and consumer demand for U.S. pork is at an all-time high. NPB also has implemented innovative new programs in animal welfare, disease research, food chain communication and environmental sustainability.

"The pork industry is truly leading the way in responding to consumers with new programs that provide greater assurance of quality, animal welfare and sustainability. I have been honored to be a part of a team that is committed to meeting the needs of our farmers and consumers," Novak said in looking back over his time at the Checkoff.

"I'm grateful to the farmers who invest in the Pork Checkoff, the Pork Checkoff's board of directors and the


Pork Checkoff state and national staff members for the opportunity to serve this great industry. I look forward to continuing to work with the livestock industry from my new position."

NPB will immediately engage an executive search firm to assist in a national search for Novak's replacement. To ensure a seamless transition, the board has named John Johnson, chief operating officer, as interim CEO. Johnson will oversee the many initiatives currently underway, including finalization of a new strategic plan and development of the 2015 budget.

"Our Strategic Planning Task Force just completed work on a new five-year strategic plan that will be presented to our board this week," Johnson said. "We have been working on the development of this plan throughout 2014, and we are well-positioned to continue pork's growth and innovation."

Additionally, the Pork Checkoff will continue to facilitate the work of the Industry On-farm Audit Task



Force, grow relationships with food-service and retail leadership and finalize the metrics required for implementation of the pork industry's new sustainability framework. 

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MSU: Food and Ag Leaders Hopeful about Industry, State Economy

By: Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Leaders in Michigan's food and agriculture industry remain optimistic about their businesses, and their confidence in Michigan's overall economy continues to climb. Those were the results of the Michigan Agriculture and Food Index (MAFI), shared during the annual Ag Expo VIP breakfast in July.

The most recent MAFI is the third of its kind. It gauges the current business climate of the state's food and agriculture system by surveying 100 influential players in food and agriculture businesses. A rating of 100 on the index is considered neutral; ratings above 100 signal an overall positive outlook, and below 100, an overall negative outlook.

The MAFI for the overall state of food and agriculture has remained steady at 145 or higher since the initial survey was conducted in April 2013. The index rating for the overall state of Michigan's economy continues to grow—from 115 in April 2013 to 120 in January 2014 all the way up to 133 in the most recent survey.

Chris Peterson, director of the MSU Product Center, is the lead investigator on the project. He sat down with a select group of members of the food and ag system in June to discuss the findings.

"It boils down to this: the general

economy is catching up to agriculture," Peterson said. "One representative of the ag lending industry told us that bankers are very bullish on agriculture, and competition is keen across the country. He pointed out that even banks that have typically not lent to agriculture businesses are starting to enter that realm. They see food and ag as a good place to invest their money."

In addition to the two overall scores, the MAFI rates three aspects of the food and ag system in Michigan. The current sales outlook is up slightly to 133, the job outlook hung steady at 126, and the investment outlook rebounded to 116 after dropping to 107 in January 2013.

A representative of the dairy industry pointed out that the growth of the middle class globally has a positive impact on demand and prices.

"Globally, when people have more discretionary money, the first thing they do is improve their diet, especially for their children," he said. "Dairy products fit in well to the increasing demands of the growing middle class in places such as China, where they are looking for higher protein, more nutrient-rich foods. We believe demand for dairy products will continue to grow in new areas around the world as incomes increase, and that will

have positive impacts on dairy producers around the country and here in Michigan."

In an open-ended portion of the survey, researchers ask respondents what keeps them up at night. The top three issues remain the same as in previous surveys: government regulation and policy; various risk management concerns; and labor. However, concerns about infrastructure made their debut in the most recent survey.

Bill Knudson, an MSU Product Center marketing economist, said it's the first time that multiple respondents have mentioned roads and Internet connectivity as major worries.


"Certainly, finding good seasonal labor and full-time labor remains on the top of their list," he explained.

"But several said that rural Internet is important to them and a topic that should be discussed broadly."

That didn't surprise the panel representative from the grain industry.

"We keep encouraging young people to get involved in agriculture because it is a high-tech career," he said.

"But for them to be interested, they have to know that all technology is available to them. When they want information, they want it NOW. We need to make sure we have it available in a way they can access it quickly. High-speed Internet access is a must for them."

The MSU Product Center has been conducting the survey every six months since April 2013. Results are compiled, and released semi-annually in March and July. 

This article was originally published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>

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IN THIS ISSUE

MPPA is in the process of evaluating it's communications, and in this issue is a survey to help provide feedback. We value your thoughts and opinions and would like so serve you better!

When you return a completed survey online or by mail you will be entered for a chance to win a visa cash card!

MPPA COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

Michigan Pork Producers Association would like to know what you think about how we communicate with you!

This survey will take about ten minutes to fill out and a summary of the results will be published in an upcoming issue of Michigan Pork.

Find the survey online at:
<http://bit.ly/mppasurvey>

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Please re-fold brochure, tape the long edge and return via mail.


President's Page

(continued from page 6)

Another way to be politically active is to contribute financially. By donating to MPPA's Michigan Pork PAC, you are helping the organization support officials that are working to protect and improve agriculture and specifically pig farming in Michigan. Also, if you are not participating currently, you should consider supporting NPPC's Strategic Investment Program (SIP). By signing up for SIP, you agree to voluntarily check-off .10/\$100 of market value. Contract growers pay .10/\$100 of gross contract value and employees can pay \$100 per year to support SIP. This money is used to support NPPC's efforts in Washington to represent

the political interests of pig farmers. A portion of the SIP funds are also returned to state associations to help support legislative activities at the state level. I believe every pork producer has an obligation to support their industry's efforts in the legislative arena, because many times decisions made by legislators and regulators can have a huge impact on our businesses.

When you build relationships with elected officials on any level, whether it's a road commissioner, a state representative or Member of Congress, you are helping to create understanding that is good for agricultural growth in our communities, state and nation.

And let's face it, with deep-pocketed enemies like the Humane Society of the United States, those of us in agriculture need to do all we can to make certain our views are heard and understood. 

If you would like to contribute to the Michigan Pork Pac, obtain more information on SIP, or become more involved in legislative work please contact MPPA at their office. You can reach MPPA by phone at 517-853-3782 or email Megan Sprague at sprague@mipork.org.



HEALTH

Champions

Protecting Michigan's Show Pigs

Program Details:

This program will provide information on raising, selling and buying healthy swine for shows and exhibitions.

Keynote speaker: Dr. Madonna Benjamin,
MSU Extension Swine Veterinarian

Topics:

- Swine Immunity
- Eliminating Disease vs. Reducing Risk
- Official ID
- And much more!

Materials, including biosecurity kits for your farm will be provided free of charge.

No Cost for attending. Food will be provided at each meeting. RSVP to Tina Moreno at morenot@michigan.gov.

Boar Semen gift certificate door prizes at each meeting!

Locations:

Mt. Pleasant
October 22, 6-8 p.m.
Isabella County Building
Room 320
200 N. Main St., Mt.
Pleasant, MI 48858

Allegan
October 23, 6-8 p.m.
Human Services Building
Zimmerman Room
3255 I22nd Ave.
Allegan, MI 49010

East Lansing
November 1, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Greenstone Farm Credit
Room 112
3515 West Rd.
East Lansing, MI 48823

MSU Research Aims to Curtail Pig Fighting on Swine Farms

By: Michigan State University AgBioResearch.

Fighting, a common behavior seen in groups of pigs, poses serious risks such as injury, infection, stunted growth and failed pregnancies on pork farms. A Michigan State University (MSU) AgBioResearch scientist is leading a multidisciplinary effort to find ways to curb fighting and enhance swine productivity and quality of life with a nearly \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Janice Siegford, an assistant professor of animal science, said pigs raised in agriculture are grouped together by age, weight and sex, which often leads to conflict when pigs try to establish social hierarchies. In wild pigs, which live in small, matrilineal family groups, fighting typically occurs only to settle disputes between rival dominant animals in the group.

"What we're essentially trying to do is figure out whether these aggressive social behaviors in pigs on farms are heritable and if we can select genes through breeding that show improved behavior and less fighting," Siegford said.

Pigs are most likely to fight when first put into groups, but the study will examine if the aggressive behavior changes over time. The research team



will observe eight groups of 140 pigs each from birth to the time they would either be sent to market or separated for breeding.


"During the first 72 hours after meeting, the pigs can literally beat the snot out of one another," Siegford said.

"There's a lot of biting and smacking heads together, and the bigger the pig, the harder it bites and the more serious the injuries."


The researchers will collect 24

hours of video when the pigs are introduced and another 24 hours three weeks later. The team will analyze the behavior that each pig displays and count the incidence of injuries. They will also compare the behaviors of each pig with genetic samples to determine whether heredity plays a role in aggressive tendencies.

As concern over the health and animal care mounts, the World Trade Organization and animal health organizations are developing animal welfare standards for farms. Siegford said her ultimate goal is to give pork producers in the United States the tools they need to meet these new standards while remaining economically viable. She plans to host workshops with farmers to discuss the results.

In addition to the USDA three-year grant, Siegford's work is supported by funding from the MSU Rackham Foundation and the National Pork Board. 

This article was originally published by Michigan State University AgBioResearch. For more information, visit <http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/>



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2015 Breakfast on the Farm Host Farm Applications Due Soon

By: Nancy Thelen, Michigan State University Extension

Since the inaugural Michigan State University Extension Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) program was held in 2009 at Dutch Meadows Dairy in St. Johns, more than 58,800 visitors and volunteers have participated in the 28 programs held throughout Michigan. While the majority of the BOTF's have been held on dairy farms, there have also been a variety of farms represented including row crop, beef and apple.


BOTF is a MSU Extension program that is guided by a statewide advisory council and the events are made possible through local partners, generous statewide and local sponsors and many local volunteers. Host farms are selected by the advisory council through an application process. In an effort to reach consumers throughout Michigan, the council strives to have events in diverse geographic areas. Extension staff will offer guidance from the early planning stages through the event.

BOTF showcases a selection of Michigan farms and introduces the

non-farm public to the life and business of modern agriculture through a fun and educational event that emphasizes the importance of environmental stewardship, food safety and good animal care practices. The educational farm tours provide the public an opportunity to see modern, non-commercial farm operations first-hand. With only 1.8 percent of the population providing food for the other 98 percent, there is a large information gap about how today's modern farms operate. Host families realize the importance of opening their farm to teach consumers about modern farming and building trust in agriculture production. As programs are completed, host families are very glad that they provided an opportunity for consumers to learn about farm life and educate them about agriculture. Many of the attendees write thank you notes or leave comments such as, "Amazing and educational" or "I was amazed at how uninformed I was until I came today" or "Great experience – I will go home and have a large

glass of milk and not be concerned at all" or "This was the best farm visit I have ever taken part in – it was hands on, level appropriate, and very well presented in all respects."

The BOTF connection increases consumer confidence in Michigan food products, increases the consumers understanding of agriculture as a whole, and increases the amount of food products they purchase. Data from past surveys show that approximately 45 percent of the attendees have not visited a modern farm in twenty years or more. Another 33 percent of the visitors have only been on a farm one to five times in the last twenty years. The data is also showing that BOTF is connecting to the consumers by increasing their confidence in Michigan food products by 78 percent. Follow-up surveys of attendees have also shown that 20 percent of the households attending a BOTF program at dairy farms have increased their consumption of dairy products. This educational program has helped to provide information and experiences for thousands of participants who have changed their attitudes about modern food production as a result of attending a BOTF.

For information about the program and becoming a host farm visit www.breakfastonthefarm.com. The 2015 host farm application and checklist can be found in the "Contact Us" portion. If you have specific questions or would like additional information or a visit to discuss the program and tour your farm, contact the program organizers Ashley Kuschel at kuschela@anr.msu.edu or 586-469-7616 or Nancy Thelen at 734-222-3825 or thelenn@anr.msu.edu. 

This article was originally published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>



Producer and board member, Lee Carte (center) and Micah Wallis (left) volunteer with MPPA at recent BOTF event.

Addressing the Effect of Agriculture on Global Health

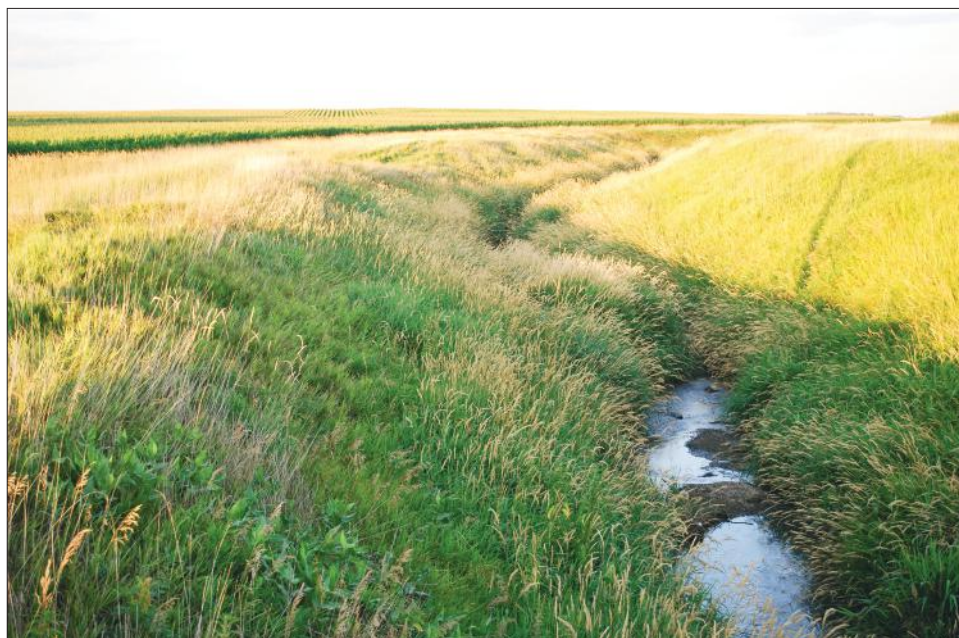
By: Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

MSU has launched the first-of-its-kind center to research and address the growing global effects of agriculture on human and animal health.

The Center for Health Impacts of Agriculture will link MSU's renowned agriculture and food security research with its three colleges of medicine – the College of Human Medicine, College of Osteopathic Medicine and College of Veterinary Medicine – to address growing global health concerns with agriculture, including:

- Antimicrobial resistance in humans, animals and plants, and the implications on human health
- Agricultural development and economic effects related to increased cases of malaria in Malawi, Africa
- Health risk assessment and nutrient regulation policies, including assessment of carcinogen levels in current health policy

Leading the new center is Felicia Wu, John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor. Wu's research, at the crossroads of human health and agricultural practices and policies, inspired her to



develop the interdisciplinary research center.


"The world's population is expected to reach 9 billion by the year 2050, creating drastically increased demands on agriculture and food production around the world," Wu said.

"It is not enough to just produce more food for the growing population. We need an integrated approach that will feed the population while maintaining health."

In addition to the colleges of medicine, CHIA will involve several other university units, including: College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, College of Natural Science, Center for University Toxicology, Center for Gender in Global Context, Food Security Policy Innovation Lab, Legume Innovation Lab, AgBioResearch, Kellogg Biological Station and BEACON (Center for the study of Evolution in Action).

"MSU is already a leader in food security research, but there is a global need for projects that examine the public health impacts of agriculture," said Wu.

"With agricultural practices changing worldwide, the nature and epidemiology of disease also is changing."

CHIA will be funded in part by the National Institutes of Health, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development and the USDA. 

This article was originally published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>

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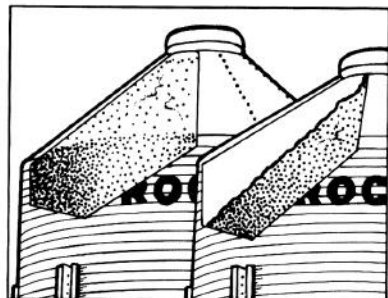
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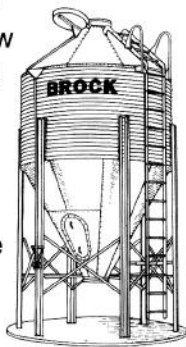


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New Technology Turns Manure into Clean Water

By: Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Imagine something that can turn cow manure into clean water, extract nutrients from that water to serve as fertilizer and help solve the ever-present agricultural problem of manure management.

Technology that has its roots firmly planted at Michigan State University (MSU) is under development and near commercialization that can do all of that. And then some.

Known as the McLanahan Nutrient Separation System, it takes an anaerobic digester – a contraption that takes waste, such as manure, and produces energy as a byproduct – and couples it with an ultrafiltration, air stripping and a reverse osmosis system.

The result, or at least one of the results, is water clean enough for livestock to drink, or, at the very least, to dispose of in an environmentally friendly manner.

"If you have 1,000 cows on your operation, they produce about 10 million gallons of manure a year," said Steve Safferman, an associate professor of biosystems and agricultural engineering who is involved in the project. "About 90 percent of the manure is water but it contains large amounts of nutrients, carbon and pathogens that can have an environmental impact if not properly managed."

While turning the manure into clean water makes environmental sense, the team also is conducting research on how it can make good financial sense for farmers. And in some cases it could have a significant impact on the long-term viability of the farm.

"Here in Michigan we have a tendency to take water for granted," Safferman said. "But out west, for example, where drought remains an issue, the accessibility of clean water could make the difference between a farm remaining viable or going out of business."

The process "goes beyond a typical digester," said Jim Wallace, a former MSU student who earned his doctorate under the direction of Safferman and William Bickert, former professor of agricultural engineering. And it does this by extracting nutrients from the manure that can be harmful to the environment and can be re-used as fertilizer.

"For example, we're able to capture a large percentage of the ammonia that would otherwise be lost in the atmosphere," said Wallace, who now works for the McLanahan Corp., which is working to develop the technology. "Ammonia is a negative from an air-quality standpoint."

Currently the system produces about 50 gallons of water from 100 gallons of manure. Wallace said the goal is to increase that number to about 65 gallons.

Work on the project began about 10 years ago at MSU, under the direction of Bickert, who saw the potential of anaerobic digesting.

"It's a success story of a university project starting with a concept and moving all the way, hopefully, to commercial fruition," Safferman said.

It's hoped the Nutrient Separation System will be ready for commercialization by the end of this year.

This article was originally published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

Attention!

Do you know someone that does an outstanding job in the pork industry? MPPA is looking for nominations for the 2015 Master Pork Producer, Distinguished Service, Contract Grower and Swine Herd Manager/Employee Awards.

The winner of each award will be recognized at the MPPA Awards Luncheon on February 19th at the Lansing Center, Lansing, Michigan

If you would like to e-mail the information without a form, please contact sprague@mipork.org. Otherwise, you can send or fax the form to:

Mich. Pork Prod. Assoc.
3515 West Road, Suite B
East Lansing, MI 48823
Fax: (517) 853-3785

All nominations must be in December 1, 2014.

Check the box next to the corresponding award for your nominee

☐

The Distinguished Service Award: given to an individual that has made significant contributions to the Michigan Pork Industry and MPPA.

☐

The Master Pork Producer Award: given to a producer who has demonstrated skills in proficient swine production and taken an active leadership role in the Michigan pork industry.

☐

The Swine Herd Manager/Employee Award: given to an outstanding employee on a pig farm in Michigan.

☐

The Contract Grower of the Year Award: given to recognize individuals for superior commitment, knowledge, leadership and skill in proficient pork production.

Nominee: _____

Affiliation/Company: _____

Address (where individual can be reached): _____

Telephone Number: _____

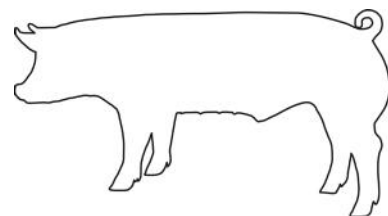
Why this person should receive this award: _____

Person filling out this form: _____

Telephone number where you can be reached: _____



MSU Pork Quarterly



Vol. 19 No.2

"Information for an Industry on the Move"

September 2014

Day-to-Day Management of Group Housed Gestating Sows

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Introduction

Pork producers in multiple states, including Michigan have legislative or regulatory mandates to house gestating sows such that they can turn around freely without impediment, lie down, stand up and fully extend their limbs. In addition many food companies have made statements that would ultimately cause their suppliers to comply with a similar mandate. The implementation of this mandate will cause producers to house sows in groups during gestation. The change from housing sows in stalls to group housing is not just simply changing the penning. There are critical sow care and welfare, productivity and financial considerations to evaluate. Pork producers that make this change must evaluate how their animal management and employee training program will

change, what productivity differences may occur and how the initial capital costs as well as any changes in cost of production will ultimately affect their farm business. Companion articles discussing different aspects of group sow housing for gestating sows can be found in previous editions of the *Pork Quarterly*. This article will discuss day to day management of sows in groups.

Within any type of pork production facility, independent of design, the development of daily routines are key to maintaining proper animal care. The primary daily care needs for sows will be the same, regardless if they are housed in stalls or in pens. However the methods used to provide daily care for group housed sows must be adjusted to provide effective care efficiently. As stockpersons transition

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Sign up for the Latest News for Agriculture	6

This newsletter is edited by:
Ronald Bates, MSU Extension Swine Specialist
(517) 432-1387 batesr@msu.edu
& Megan Sprague, Michigan Pork Producers
Association, Program Director



from stall to group housing systems, management should provide training to improve the skill and competency of farm staff.

Developing a Daily Plan

Prior to the farm staff entering the barn to start the work day, it is essential that they are prepared. The more time spent in the barns observing the animals, the more stockpersons will be able to better manage sows that may need help when housed in pens. Stockpersons should enter the barn with the needed equipment and supplies to complete routine tasks as they occur. A checklist of responsibilities and needed materials will help stockpersons organize for the day and negate the need to go back and forth from the barn to storage and supply areas.

Traditionally, swine farms hire and train stockpersons to become task-oriented people, who focus on completing singular tasks throughout the day and the succession of these singular tasks to complete the work day. When working with sows housed in groups it is important for stockpeople to focus on multiple tasks at one time and be aware of what is happening in the barn as a whole as well as in each pen. Improving observation skills is a challenging task, however, once accomplished will improve the overall efficiencies on the farm.

As stockpersons complete their daily routine, they should incorporate their observation skills into every task that takes place on the farm. Group housing systems can increase the possibility of injury or lameness for the sow. Every time stockpeople are around the sows, they should be evaluating them for soundness and health status. This should happen at every interaction with sows, including feeding, heat checking, pressure washing, etc. Also, as stockpersons are walking through the barn from one location to another they should be observing sows in pens as they pass by. It is important that the farm staff be able to identify issues that may arise and take care

of those issues, as they complete their duties. For example, in Electronic Sow Feeding (ESF) systems, during the initial training period when the training gates are in use, stockpersons should regularly check to see if sows are moving through the feed station. It is imperative that each female be trained to use the feed station. Therefore as stockpeople are walking through the barns, they need to recognize that sows may need assistance and training to enter into the feed station. Stockpeople need to take the time when they first notice this situation and complete the task so that every sow has an opportunity to consume her feed allotment within a feed cycle. Stockpersons must be able to observe and respond to issues as they arise to make group housing successful.

The daily work routine will be different based on the group housing system used. Production staff and farm management should develop a workable outline that highlights the important areas to be evaluated each day. Over time this can be updated and changed to accommodate the particular nuances experienced on the farm. For example, stockpersons working in ESF systems will have to be aware of monitoring the radio frequency identification tags used for sows in operation of the feed station. This will include daily monitoring of feed consumed and re-tagging sows as necessary, as well as managing the feed system and training animals to use the feed system. Other group housing systems will have their unique features that must be evaluated daily. Another example would be sows housed in non-gated feeding stalls, sometimes called short stalls or stanchions. If sows are hesitant to feed when the feed is dropped the sow may be becoming lame, or there may be bullying problems in the pen and management interventions may be needed.

In order to provide a complete evaluation of the animals and the facility, it is essential that the farm staff enter the pens to complete their observa-

tions. This will allow them to correctly assess the soundness of each animal and examine the area for equipment problems or failures. Pass through gating (Figure 1) is very convenient for people to move in and out of pens, thus reducing the hesitation of stockpeople to enter pens and evaluate sows.



Figure 1. An example of a pass through gate for sow pens.

Evaluating Sows

Difficulty in walking and moving around is a common culling reason for sows. These issues are often associated with lameness. This can take the form of short stridedness, inability to put equal weight on all feet or limping, stiffness, etc. These conditions can ultimately lead to a sow's unwillingness or inability to stand or walk. There are many reasons this will occur and can include injury; poor nutritional status; poor environmental conditions; infectious and non-infectious disease; and poor conformation. Lameness is especially a concern among group housed sows. Research suggests that lameness is consistently associated with an increased risk of removal among group housed sows (Jensen et al., 2010).

Farm staff training should include understanding what situations can lead to lameness and to determine what is considered "normal" when animals are standing and moving. In addition staff should be challenged to identify sows that are in the early

stages of changes in stance and movement. For example, sows that may have a wound which could lead to a joint infection should be identified early and treated. Animals that may be just beginning to change the distribution in their weight on their feet (i.e. beginning to carry a foot, limp or "paw" the floor with one foot, etc) should be identified, examined and treated. In addition sows that may begin to lay away from the group when they had previously been lying with the group may be starting to suffer a health condition that should be examined.

Conclusion

The expected outcomes for the daily routine when managing gestating sows is the same regardless of if they are housed individually in stalls or group pens. Sows should be evaluated daily and care and changes in feed allocation should occur as needed. However, the daily routine will change when gestating sows are housed in groups compared to stalls. More attention must be paid to changes in health status that would include lameness, injury, condition and disease status. In addition, sow-to-sow interactions such as bullying and fighting could be more of an issue than in the past. Stockpersons will have to evaluate sows more closely, and be ready to remedy problems that occur either through changes in management or medical treatment.

Literature Cited

Jensen TB, Bonde MK, Kongsted AG, Toft, N, Sorensen, JT. The interrelationships between clinical signs and their effect on involuntary culling among pregnant sows in group-housing systems. *Animal*. 2010; 4:1922-1928.

Measuring Manure Depth in the PED Era^a

The Porcine Endemic Diarrhea virus stays viable in stored manure for extended periods of time. In barns that have experienced a PED outbreak producers should avoid bringing stored manure back up to surface where it could infect PED susceptible pigs.

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Madonna Benjamin
Extension Swine Veterinarian
Michigan State University
gemus@cvm.msu.edu

The Porcine Endemic Diarrhea (PED) virus continues to impact the US pork industry. Farms that have avoided the virus continue to implement intensive precautions to keep PED out of their herd. Farms that have already experienced the ravages of the virus are taking steps to prevent reinfection. PED is spread through oral fecal contact and requires exposure to only a small amount of fecal material to cause infection. Adding to the complications of preventing PED reinfections is the virus's ability to stay viable in stored manure. Research conducted by Goyal at the University of Minnesota and reported by the National Pork Board has confirmed that the PED virus may stay viable in manure stored at 40° F (4° C) greater than 28 days. Therefore, stored manure with viable virus, if brought to the floor surface could re-infect susceptible pigs with PED.

In Michigan, large livestock farms (CAFOs), who are covered under the MI Department of Environmental Quality (M-DEQ) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, are required to monitor and weekly record manure depth in each of the farm's manure storage structures. In addition all livestock farms, regardless of size, should record the amount of manure removed when spreading manure. Prior to PED, using a stick to measure manure depth in deep pitted barns, was of small risk to infect pigs with a virus or bacteria. Currently, in this era of PED, there is a risk the small amount of manure brought up on the measuring stick may re-infect the pigs.

One option to avoid re-contamination in a barn

previously infected with PED, is to "stick and measure" manure depth outside of the barn using the manure pump out ports. However, there remains the risk of contaminating the periphery of the site and vectors such as personnel or rodents tracking manure virus particles back into the barn and exposing the pigs.

As any 8 year old boy will attest, a better alternative to the stick is a "laser" (Figure 1).



Figure 1. An example of a electronic laser to measure free-board in a hog barn pit.

By aiming the laser's beam down through the slat opening, a laser measure will determine the freeboard between the manure surface and the top of the slats. Dependable laser measures can be purchased for \$80.00 to \$125.00 either online or at local hardware stores. A quick field trial using the

laser method demonstrated it was easier than the stick and accurate despite the presence of dust and cobwebs.

A laser measure is an excellent device for all sizes of swine farms to use when calculating the manure application rate needed as part of the record keeping requirements when hauling manure. Simply measure the depth of the manure before starting to haul then measure again when done. Once the depth of manure removed is known it is easy to determine the number of gallons removed and the manure application rate per acre. To calculate gallons per acre convert all dimension to feet (pit length, pit width and depth of manure removed) then multiply length x width x depth which equals cubic feet of manure removed; cubic feet of manure removed x gallons per cubic foot (7.48) = total gallons removed; total gallons removed ÷ number of acres spread = gallons per acre.

Many farms that have experienced PED outbreaks are continuously implementing intensified biosecurity measures to help protect their herd from infection. Until more is understood concerning the virus's extended viability, these sites may find it advisable to use precaution and assume viable virus remains in the manure. On these sites it is best to avoid exposing pigs to stored manure as a step to prevent reinfection. In the PED era the "stick and measure" method may be obsolete.

^aThis was originally published in the August 18, 2014 MSUE News http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/measuring_manure_depth_in_the_pedv_era

Literature Cited

Goyal, S., Updated 1/21/2014, Environmental Stability of PEDv, Available: <http://www.pork.org/filelibrary/Goyal%2013-215%201-21-14.pdf>

Mark your calendars!

Health Champions Meetings

(See page 16)

October 22nd in Mt. Pleasant

October 23rd in Allegan

November 1st in East Lansing

MSUE Winter Meetings

January -Details Coming Soon!

Green and White Swine Show

January 30th - 31st

2015 Michigan Pork Producers Symposium

February 19th

2015 MPPA State-Wide Informational Meetings

March

All comments and suggestions should be directed to:

1. Jerry May, Educator

Site selection, Environment
(989) 875-5233, mayg@anr.msu.edu

2. Ron Bates, State Swine Specialist

Michigan State University
(517) 432-1387, batesr@msu.edu

3. Dale Rozeboom, Extension Specialist

Michigan State University
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4. Roger Betz, Southwest District Farm Mgt.

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(269) 781-0784, betz@msu.edu

5. Tom Guthrie, South Central Pork Educator

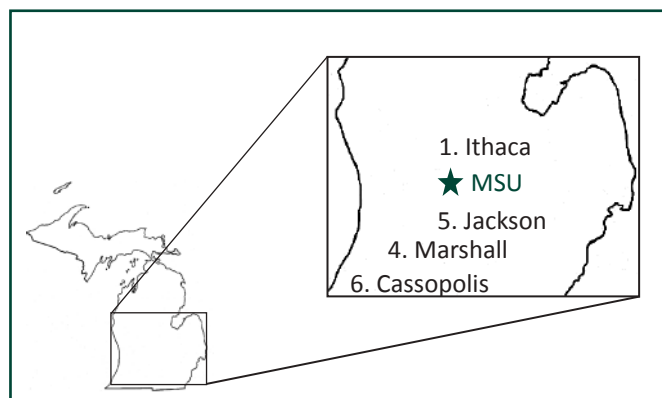
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NPPC CALLS ON JAPAN TO NIX ‘GATE PRICE’ ON PORK

In a letter sent to top Obama administration trade officials, the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) detailed the reasons U.S. negotiators on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) should insist that Japan eliminate its so-called Gate Price on U.S. pork.

The TPP is a regional negotiation that includes the United States, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, which account for nearly 40 percent of global GDP.

NPPC told Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman that the Gate Price has associated with it a long history of fraud and criminal activity, and it discriminates against Japanese consumers by putting upward pressure on food prices and has prompted Japanese meat processing companies to move their factories to other Asian nations, costing the country much-needed jobs.

The byzantine system also may violate Japan's constitution, which requires that obligations contained in treaties be given legal precedence over domestic laws. Japan considers the World Trade

Organization's (WTO) "Marrakesh Agreement," which established existing WTO rules, as a treaty. Several plaintiffs, including a former Japanese government official, are arguing that the Gate Price violates provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, which prohibit the use of variable import levies, and, therefore, is in violation of the country's constitution.

Pork producers' support for a final TPP Agreement is conditioned on the elimination of all tariff and non-tariff barriers to U.S. pork exports in each of the TPP nations, including the elimination of the Gate Price in Japan," said NPPC President Howard Hill, a veterinarian and pork producer from Cambridge, Iowa.

In the TPP negotiations, Japan is demanding special treatment for its agricultural sector, including exempting pork and other "sensitive" products from tariff elimination and maintaining the Gate Price on pork.

"While Japan's current TPP offer on pork, if implemented, might allow a modest increase in U.S. pork exports to that country," Hill said, "it would rob the U.S. pork industry of hundreds of millions of dollars in annual pork exports to Japan and would stymie the creation of thousands of U.S. jobs that the industry would realize if the Gate Price and tariffs on pork were eliminated. Further, the disposition of this issue will impact our producers for the next 25 years, setting a precedent for future U.S. free trade agreements."

Japan is the No. 1 export market for U.S. pork, which shipped nearly \$2 billion of products to the island nation in 2013.

LIVESTOCK HAULERS GET EXEMPTION FROM DOT RULE

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently granted to truck drivers hauling livestock and poultry a one-year exemption from an hours-of-service rule that took effect last July 1. NPPC, on behalf of a coalition of livestock and poultry organizations, requested the exemption.

The regulation requires truck drivers to take a 30-minute rest break after eight hours of service. For drivers transporting livestock and poultry, the hours of service included loading and unloading animals.

"This is an important development for the food-animal industry, particularly the pork industry" said NPPC President Howard Hill, a veterinarian and pork producer from Cambridge, Iowa.

"Pigs don't sweat, so we can't have them sitting on a truck for 30 minutes in the height of summer.

"We recognize the need for our drivers to be safe on the road, and we're pleased that DOT recognized that the rule presented an animal welfare issue for us," said Hill, who thanked Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx for recognizing the importance of the issue for livestock farmers and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for his efforts to secure the exemption.

COURT RULES FDA NOT COMPELLED TO HOLD HEARINGS ON ANIMAL ANTIBIOTICS

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit in New York reversed a 2012 U.S. district court ruling that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had to hold hearings on the safety of two antibiotics used in food-animal production. FDA had been sued by several advocacy organizations for not responding promptly to a citizen's petition that asked that the drugs be withdrawn.

The appeals court found that FDA isn't required to hold the hearings because it made no official finding that the antibiotics pose a public health risk. The antibiotics in question, penicillin and tetracycline, under FDA's Guidance 213 by December 2016 will no longer be used as for growth promotion in food animals.

HOUSE PASSES VETERINARY MEDICINE MOBILITY ACT

The House passed the Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act (H.R. 1528), which amends the Controlled Substance Act of 1970 to permit veterinarians to transport and use controlled substances beyond their primary place(s) of practice.

Reps. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., and Ted Yoho, R-Fla., the only veterinarians in Congress, were strong supporters of the bill, which NPPC also supported by signing onto a letter of support sent to Congress last year. The

bill was passed by the Senate in January and now goes to the White House to be signed into law.

HOUSE PASSES PERMANENT BONUS DEPRECIATION

The House passed on a 258-160 vote H.R. 4718, making bonus depreciation (created in the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012) permanent for tax years after Dec. 31, 2013. Bonus depreciation allows businesses to write off half the cost of their investments in equipment in the same year they make the investments.

According to the Associated Equipment Distributors, the bill would allow companies that purchase new equipment after 2013 to depreciate 50 percent of the cost in the first year, plus the percentage of the remaining capital cost (basis) that ordinarily would be depreciable over the specified life of the equipment under the Modified Accelerated Cost Recovery System.

NPPC supports the legislation and has pushed for its passage. It is unclear when or if the Senate will take up the House-passed bill or its own broader tax measure (S.2260), which would extend the bonus depreciation provision through 2015

SMALL BUSINESS EXPENSING LEGISLATION APPROVED

The House approved on a 277-144 vote H.R. 4457, the "America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2014," which would permanently extend the tax code's small business expensing provision – Section 179 – at a level of \$500,000.

It also would index the expensing amount to inflation. Small business expensing allows business owners, farmers and ranchers to deduct the cost of a qualified investment in the year that it is made rather than to depreciate the cost over time.

Since 2003, Congress increased the amount of investment that small businesses can expense from \$25,000 to \$500,000. Legislation expanding and/or extending the provision was enacted eight times, but the expensing limits were temporary, and, beginning in 2014, the amount reverted to \$25,000.

NPPC joined dozens of other agricultural and business organizations in urging House lawmakers to approve the tax legislation. In a June 9 letter to bill sponsors Reps. Pat Tiberi, R-Ohio, and Ron Kind, D-Wis., the groups said permanent extension of Section 179 would increase investment and jobs, reduce tax complexity and paperwork and alleviate uncertainty for business owners, farmers and ranchers.

Threats Beyond PED: African Swine Fever and More

Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED) virus is on the minds of pork producers, but the U.S. pork industry needs to be vigilant about other disease threats on the horizon.

“A key threat is African Swine Fever (ASF), which continues to spread in Russia. It has moved into Poland and Lithuania, where it was recently found in wild boars,” said Dr. Patrick Webb, director of swine health for the Pork Checkoff.

Russia placed an embargo on European pork when ASF was introduced to the European Union (EU). The European Food Safety Authority’s Panel on Animal Health and Welfare recently assessed the risk of ASF becoming endemic in the EU’s eastern neighboring countries and its spread to unaffected areas. The panel found that the movement of contaminated pork being fed to backyard swine to offset high feed costs was a major challenge in controlling the outbreak of ASF.

Other challenges include disease spread by contaminated vehicles and infected pigs, as well as delays in the detection and reporting of ASF by farmers.



Is the U.S. at Risk?

The threat of ASF spreading further into the EU has European animal health authorities on edge, but could ASF make it to our shores?

“We don’t share a common border with countries that have ASF, but the international movement of people and animal products puts the U.S. pork industry at risk for disease introduction,” Webb said.

This requires constant vigilance,


such as during this year’s Sochi Olympics, when USDA warned U.S. residents not to bring home products containing meat. This was done to reduce the risk of introducing foreign animal diseases that exist in Russia, such as ASF, Classical Swine Fever and Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), into the United States through contaminated food products.

Visitors from countries with these diseases also present risks, especially if they’ve had contact with infected livestock or farms, Webb said. “Clothing or shoes that are contaminated can pose a risk, if not properly cleaned and disinfected before coming across our borders.”


Not Human Health Issues

It’s important to note that these diseases are not human health issues. However, meat products, clothing or shoes contaminated with viruses can result in a foreign animal disease outbreak. “This would threaten the health and welfare of pigs and have a severe economic impact on pork producers and animal agriculture,” Webb said.


The World Organization for Animal Health maintains a list of foreign animal diseases (FADs) that would
(continued on page 39)



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Pork Checkoff Announces New Common Industry Audit Platform

After more than a year of industry collaboration, the National Pork Board (NPB) shared plans for a new common industry audit platform for pork producers, packers and processors. The program will use the existing-Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus®) program as its foundation and expand on it to serve as a common audit platform for the pork industry.

The overarching goal of the common audit process is to provide consumers greater assurance of the care taken by farmers and pork processors to improve animal care and food safety. The concept of a common audit was first introduced more than one year ago at the 2013 National Pork Industry Forum. The resolution emerging from that conference directed NPB to convene a coalition of packers and pork producers to explore a credible and affordable solution for assuring animal well-being.

“As an industry, we know that our consumers are demanding a higher level of integrity from the pork industry’s quality assurance processes and procedures,” said Chris Novak, chief executive officer of NPB

“We are encouraged by the broad support we have received from all our industry’s partners to develop the framework for this process.”

In 2011, the Pork Checkoff’s Board of Directors met with European counterparts who complained about audit programs in their countries that were duplicative, costly and inefficient. Utilizing that experience, the common platform announced today seeks to create and standardize a common process that will:

- Meet individual company and customer needs,
- Focus on outcome-based criteria that measure animal welfare,
- Provide clarity to producers with regard to audit standards and expectations,

- Minimize duplication and prevent over-sampling and
- Ensure greater integrity of the audit process through consistent application.

The new common audit framework has several key components, including a new audit tool, requirements for auditor training and biosecurity and a platform that will allow audit results to be shared to prevent duplicative audits. The audit tool is currently being beta-tested on farms across the country.

“What’s exciting about this common audit framework is that it has truly been the industry coming together to better serve the needs of farmers, customers and consumers,” Novak said.

“This is not a new Pork Checkoff program, but rather an initiative that will be led by producers and packers working together to enhance animal care. We’re grateful to the packers who have been members of this task force for their leadership with this effort.”

The Industry Audit Task Force, who is reviewing the beta-test, includes producers and veterinarians representing the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, as well as packer representatives from Cargill, Farmland/Smithfield, Hatfield, Hormel, JBS, Seaboard, Triumph and Tyson.

“As packers, we operate between our suppliers - the pork producers - and our customers - those who are selling pork to consumers,” said Chris Hodges, chairman of the Packer Processer Industry Council and senior vice president of fresh pork at Smithfield-Farmland.


“The eye of the public is on where their food comes from and how it is raised. Meeting the demands of our customers while still appreciating the challenges of our producers is tough.

That’s why this new common audit platform is needed now.”

Hodges added that NPB cannot fully deploy the standards of the program without the direct involvement of packers and processors. Many packers have agreed to support the new common industry audit, which will mean that they will utilize the common audit standard when conducting third-party audits.

“This approach has never been more critical,” said Emily Erickson, a member of the Industry Audit Task Force and a pig farmer from Jackson, Minn.

“As pork producers, we know that we must do more to reassure consumers about our commitment to improving animal care. At the same time, we need a clear and consistent approach that can ensure that we’re doing the right thing every day for our animals, our farmers and our customers. This new framework delivers on that promise.”

NPB President Dale Norton agreed. “As a pork producer, I am excited about this new, innovative direction,” he said. “This common audit platform will set a clear vision that challenges the status quo and meets domestic and international consumer needs. It’s the right tool at the right time to ensure that we provide high-quality pork from well-cared-for pigs.” 

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2014 World Pork Expo A Success

The 2014 World Pork Expo brought producers and other professionals from 32 countries together to total nearly 20,000 attendees and the world's largest pork-specific trade show, with some 375 commercial exhibits.

The event also had nearly 20 free business and PORK Academy seminars about animal handling, marketing and production management, PED updates and infection rates, research efforts and prevention strategies.

This year set a record for the World Pork Expo Junior National with more than 1,600 head exhibited by nearly 750 youth from 25 states. The National Junior Swine Association and Team Purebred host the show for young swine exhibitors that includes showmanship, judging contests and educational sessions.

At the sale on Saturday, June 7, a crossbred gilt sold for \$50,000 setting a world record for the top-selling gilt. The reserve champion Duroc boar was sold for \$90,000; the highest-selling boar of the sale.

Thanks to Hog Slat, NPPC and Vinny's BBQ, the world's largest pork burger was assembled this year at Expo. The burger and bun combined weighed a whopping 348 pounds and broke the record set at the 2012 Expo. After Music Fest attendees sampled the burger, the remaining food was donated to Des Moines' Youth Emergency Services & Shelter.

NPPC announced the dates for the 2015 World Pork Expo as June 3-5, at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines.

National Pork Board Examines International Marketing Opportunities

NPB recently announced a study that will explore alternatives for promoting pork's quality and sustainability benefits with international consumers. The study, to be conducted by SIAM Professionals, LLC, will evaluate existing marketing strategies and partners to identify methods for improving pork's position as the global meat of choice.

Funded through America's Pork Checkoff, this project will evaluate the effectiveness of current global marketing efforts and identify potential partnerships and marketing tools for promoting U.S. pork. SIAM specializes in evaluating and developing international market opportunities for the food and agribusiness industry.

"Throughout the world, pork is the single most consumed meat. The popularity of U.S. pork is driven by its taste, versatility as a recipe and menu item, and affordable cost," said Chris Novak, chief executive officer of the NPB.

"For many years, pork has been marketed globally with all other meats, and it's our intention to determine the ideal way to market U.S. pork on an international basis. It is part of our ongoing commitment to examine all of our Pork Checkoff programs to ensure continuous improvement."

According to Euromonitor Inter-

national's latest estimates, global pork sales are expected to grow by 12 percent in the 2013-2018 forecast period, adding 10.6 million metric tons in sales volume by 2018. Most of this increase will be seen in emerging markets, such as Eastern Europe, Asia Pacific and Latin America where populations and incomes continue to grow. In the first six months of 2014, exports increased 9 percent from the same time period a year ago, according to current data from the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service. Most of the gains are due to growth in Mexico and continued demand in Asia.

NPB is committed to addressing the international trade barriers facing the pork industry. Currently, the United States exports approximately 28 percent of the pork raised here, delivering around \$70 per animal raised back to America's pig farmers.

"In 2013, the U.S. sold pork in more than 100 countries. International markets represent a significant sales channel and, grown properly, will be critical to the success of pig farmers across the country," Novak said.

"As an industry, we must remain keenly focused on developing global markets and effectively promoting pork worldwide."

The Pork Checkoff's International Trade activities are overseen by the Checkoff's Board of Directors and a 23-member International Trade Committee from throughout the United States. The committee's mission is focused on:

- Research: conducting technical and economic research and market analysis to prove or dispute non-scientific barriers to international trade.
- Market Access: seeking and pursuing all legitimate avenues to

market U.S. pork worldwide.

- Market Development: defining key target markets and creating promotion and education outreach opportunities with importers and consumers.

NPB has funded international market development activities through the U.S. Meat Export Federation for more than 25 years and is interested in further expanding how U.S. pork is marketed on a worldwide basis. SIAM will investigate the potential for a revised or complementary approach, developing systems with a focus on identifying new and emerging markets, incorporating new messages, and more effectively measuring results.

“Our farmers, staff, contractors and others involved in U.S. pork production look forward to using insights gleaned from SIAM’s analysis in shaping and sharing pork’s story with our international consumers,” Novak said.

“We plan to engage our entire industry in this process of global market review.”

Results of SIAM’s evaluation will be presented to Pork Checkoff’s full board of directors in spring 2015.

Taste the Revolution

Top restaurateurs know that pork is the perfect way to create menu excitement. From pulled pork and crave-worthy bacon, pork is a standout in new dishes that highlight its flavor and versatility.

“The pork buzz is strong in food-service, and pork has become a menu must-have at restaurants around the country,” said Stephen Gerike, director of foodservice marketing for the Pork Checkoff.

National sandwich restaurants that have recently been making the most of pork include:


- Subway. The chain tested a Kung Pao Pulled Pork sandwiches in select Midwest markets. The sandwich featured pulled pork in a Kung Pao sauce, a savory blend of garlic and ginger for a sweet-and-spicy flavor.
- Wendy’s. Select restaurants in Rhode Island and southeast Massachusetts tested a BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich. There were three BBQ sauce choices: spicy, smoky, or sweet. The sandwich was topped with slaw and comes on a brioche bun. Customers could also get the pulled pork on cheese fries, or a burger.
- Firehouse Subs. For a limited time, Firehouse Subs featured its new Sweet Thai Chili Pork Sub. The sandwich showcased premium 12-hour smoked pulled pork, Wisconsin pepper Jack cheese, sweet Thai chili sauce, and mayonnaise.
- Cousins Subs. This Wisconsin-based chain brought back its popular Cubano and Pulled Pork & Slaw subs for a limited time only. The Cubano featured ham, genoa salami, pulled pork, Swiss cheese, mayo, brown mustard, sliced dill pickles, onions, and tomatoes on Italian bread. The Pulled Pork & Slaw offered pulled pork, barbecue sauce, and coleslaw piled high on Italian bread.
- Quiznos. The chain rolled out a line of Toasty Pastas at participating locations. Options included Bacon Mac & Cheese, featuring cavatappi macaroni with Romano, Parmesan, provolone and fontina cheeses, topped with bacon and

breadcrumbs. Customers could also enjoy Spicy Sausage Marinara Pasta, cavatappi topped with light basil-marinara sauce, mozzarella and spicy pork sausage. A third option included Meatballs Marinara Pasta, with cavatappi topped with mozzarella, marinara sauce and pork-and-beef meatballs filled with grated Romano and ricotta cheeses and a blend of Italian seasonings.

- Togo’s Eateries Inc. This California-based chain introduced the #16 Primo Italian, a flavor-packed Italian sandwich with four premium hand-sliced Italian meats – Fiorucci hot capicola, Margherita pepperoni, Fiorucci dry salami, and Hormel ham. The meat was topped with provolone cheese and Togo’s Italian vinaigrette and served on artisan bread with shredded lettuce, tomato, red onions, pickles and pepperoncinis.
- Taco John’s. Pork is hot at hundreds of Taco John’s restaurants thanks to the Flamin’ Hot Cheetos Burrito. Packed with spicy chorizo, melted nacho cheese, sliced jalapeños and chile de arbol salsa, these burritos also included a generous layer of Flamin’ Hot Cheetos.
- Whataburger. Customers could try a new spin on an old favorite with the brand’s new Jalapeño Cheddar Biscuit, available for a limited time. The biscuit sandwich was served with sausage or bacon, egg and cheese.

New Social Media Project Launched

The Pork Checkoff launched a new social media outreach program to share real stories from real farmers with consumers. This new initiative is a social movement to create and own the conversation around modern pig farming. Our goal is to empower pig farmers to have meaningful and impactful conversations on social media with consumers about what happens on their farms. Choosing to tell the story of #RealPigFarming via social networks helps bring consumers and pig farmers together in a way that was not possible just a few years ago. In networks that are powered by images and videos, producers can tell their story in multiple different ways. An elite team of social media “advocates” called Social Forces has been selected for this mission. This team includes not only producers from more than 10 states, but animal science and Ag university students from across the U.S. Our Social Forces team is being asked to go above and beyond when telling their farming stories on social media.

The Pork Checkoff is encouraging everyone who has a passion for agriculture or a positive story to share about real pig farming to please use the #RealPigFarming in status updates, tweets, Instagram photos, blogs, vlogs and any other social media update. Check us out today by following us on Twitter and liking us on Facebook. For more information, please visit www.facebook.com/RealPigFarming or follow @RealPigFarming on Twitter. If you have any questions, please contact Claire Masker, cmasker@pork.org. 

Why an Online Presence Matters for Pork

When you’re unsure of a company name you’ve heard, do you still go to the phone book for clarity? For most of America, the answer is no longer the yellow pages; we go online to search for a company’s presence.

“If we don’t find a presence for a company, brand or product online, we are likely to quickly move on,” said Amy Busch, digital marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff.

Here are a few reasons why pork is online:

- Pork is being Googled. Whether people are looking for recipes, pork brands, production issues or training and certification requirements, pork is being typed into a search engine. In fact, 48 percent of consumers begin any online research on a search engine, Busch said.
- Pork is building trust. People like to feel known, important and heard. “The same applies when consumers are able to follow us or be our friend online,” Busch said. “When we find opportunities to personally engage with our fans, they appreciate the effort and are more likely to become or remain pork-loyal and spread the word.”
- Pork’s reach is expanding. On the Internet, information trav-

els quickly. One example is the Checkoff’s bacon rose how-to photo, which was posted on Facebook Feb. 10. “We allow people near and far to engage with our brand by simply giving them online access,” Busch said. “By having a branded website and social network communities, pork producers gain an opportunity to educate America about pork.”

- Pork consumers can be found online. Looking at two million social conversations about meat between October of 2012 and September of 2013, nearly a quarter of the conversations centered on pork. From that slice, 58 percent of the conversations were among consumers in the Pork Checkoff’s target. These consumers are most often discussing recipes and cooking tips on Facebook, Busch said. “Knowing that this platform is where consumers are most engaged, the Checkoff develops specific content to reach these pork consumers.”


Pork is taking action online based on how consumers use the Internet. It’s projected that this year, mobile Internet usage will overtake that of desktop computers. “We need to be where the action is,” Busch said. “We’re

making sure people can find us on their mobile phones or tablets, too.” Earlier this year, an updated mobile website for PorkBeInspired.com was released so people could more easily find current promotions and pork recipes on the go.

Building Influence That Matters

To make it even easier for people to find the information they’re seeking, the Pork Checkoff will launch the responsively designed PorkBeInspired.com website this fall. Responsive design means that the best version of the site’s content is displayed no matter what device is used to view it, including mobile phones, tablets or desktop computers.

One benefit of responsively designed websites is that they are “rewarded” by Google search results, Busch said. “The site scores higher in search engine optimization rankings, allowing more people to find us when searching for recipes, pork production information, pork brands and more.”

Enhancing pork’s online presence is important, Busch added. “By implementing online marketing efforts designed to align with the Checkoff’s goals, we’re building influence that matters, and ultimately growing our consumer reach.” 

Hashtag

Have you ever heard someone use the word “hashtag” in a conversation? Or do you ever see the pound sign in Facebook posts or tweets followed by a word or phrase? Maybe something like #Ilovelearningaboutsocialmedia or my favorite, #bacon. Hashtags, also formerly know as the number sign or the pound symbol, are currently used across many social media platforms to help organize common thoughts. By clicking on a #word on social media it will take you directly to other posts, tweets or pins with the same hashtag. This can be especially useful when you are trying to get your messages into specific conversations or you are trying to create a new conversation.

- Megan Sprague, sprague@mipork.org

Five Simple Rules for Using Hashtags:

1. Place the “#” before the word or phrase that you are trying to hashtag, not after.
2. Using punctuation in a hashtag is not supported, it will end your hashtag.
3. Capitalization does change the hashtag.
4. You can hashtag any word or phrase, but it’s helpful if it is a word or phrase that other people are hashtagging also.
5. Incorporate “non-ag” hashtags into ag-related posts-see example below.

Example:

Enjoying my #coffee while I check on the #pigs. #goodmorning #realpigfarming

#connect

We are Listening

Dear MPPA:

Thank you for your Tee Sponsorship, chairs and umbrella in support of the 23rd Annual College of Ag and Natural Resources (CANR) Golfing for Scholarships outing. We truly appreciate your wonderful support for this annual event and in turn for support of students enrolled in the MSU CANR.

This academic year 15 students received leadership scholarships and 13 student club grants have been awarded totaling more than \$52,000. These grants have helped student clubs travel to and host conventions, re-establish the tradition of producing MSU maple syrup, purchase rights to a documentary movie for viewing, develop programming to expose K-12 children to agriculture and natural resources and assist the judging teams. These important scholarships and grants are possible because of donors like you.

Kathryn Reed
ANR Alumni Association
East Lansing, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Capac FFA would like to thank you for donating materials to our Food for America Day to help our kids learn about the agriculture community that we live in.

Capac FFA
Capac, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Your contribution, along with those of 288 other area, state and national donors, help provide the majority of funds required to sustain the 4-H youth programs and activates for over 700 young people in the county. Every youth participating in Lapeer County 4-H benefits from this event. This year's auction was very successful, breaking many records. Proceeds from the auction will go to Lapeer County 4-H Council to be used for program expenses. Your help makes a positive difference in the lives of our young people and, consequently, to our entire community.

Tiffanie Osburn
Lapeer County 4-H
Lapeer, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

On behalf of the Midwest Association of State Departments of Agriculture, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your contributions in making our 2014 conference such a success. It was very evident by the comments received that participants were pleased with the venue, speakers, tours and well-rounded policy making agenda. This certainly could not have been done without the support of your organization. It's refreshing to know that the food and agriculture industry is poised for future success.

Jamie Clover Adams, Director
Michigan Department of Agriculture
and Natural Resources
Lansing, Mich.

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 practices through 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 2014-15.

Courtney Fronek
Corunna FFA
Corunna, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Hillsdale Farm Bureau and Hillsdale Ag Council thank you for your donation of the booklets for our Project Red student packages. Your continued support for this annual event reaching over 500 4th graders is appreciated so much.

Jan Sober
Hillsdale Co. Agricultural Council
Hillsdale, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Montcalm Community College would like to thank you once again for supporting our Animal Science students. Agriculture is the cornerstone of the American economy and supporting agribusiness jobs is important to the success of local community, state and nation.

One of the goals of the class is to attract students to the field and supply them with introductory information as well as give the students an economical stepping stone to transfer to MSU for a degree in Animal Science. We are pleased to offer them a chance to visit with industry professionals as well as MSU this semester, supported in part by your generous donation.

A second goal of this class is to inform and broaden general knowledge about animal production. You have given them so much more than just how an animal is raised. Thanks to you, the students have really gained a new understanding and perspective about farming and animal production. The students overwhelmingly agreed they enjoyed the professional visits and trips.

Michell Gibson, Ph.D
Montcalm Community College
Sidney, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Mary Willcome, Promotion and Education Chair and the Ottawa Farm Bureau would like to sincerely thank you for your donations for the Berlin Fair event. Your continued support is truly appreciated!

Mary Willcome
Ottawa County Farm Bureau
Allendale, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Thank you greatly for your generous donation of coloring books for the baby animals tent at fair this year. It was a great success for me! Once again, thanks for everything!

Will Selleck
Clinton County 4-H Fair Board
Charlotte, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Thank you for investing in the Michigan FFA Foundation and the FFA Masters Golf Outing! This year we had great success thanks to your support.

The FFA Masters Golf Outing has generated significant funding; which the FFA Foundation will continue to use to support FFA Association's needs through 2014-15. Because of the golf outing's success, FFA members will continue to take advantage of the opportunities provided through this organization.

This success is thanks to you. Thank you for your support. Your efforts will help us reach our 2014 fundraising goals. Your donation to

this worthwhile event allows us, as FFA supporters, to provide leadership training to build future industry leaders. Again, thank you for your generosity.

Ramey Lunceford
Michigan FFA Foundation
East Lansing, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Thank you for your gift to the MSU CANR. Your contribution, designated to the Animal Science Spartan Livestock Open Fund, is greatly appreciated. Gifts like yours are critical to the success of our programs and our students. These dollars make it possible for scholarships, fellowships, research opportunities, technology needs and community outreach to happen - your gifts have a direct and immediate impact. On behalf of the faculty, the staff and the students of the CANR, thank you for your continued support.

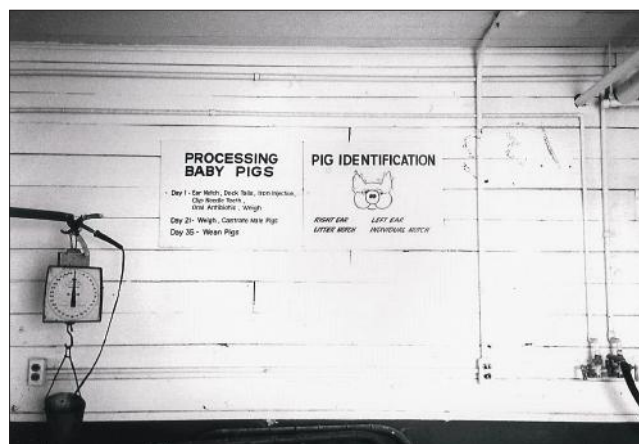
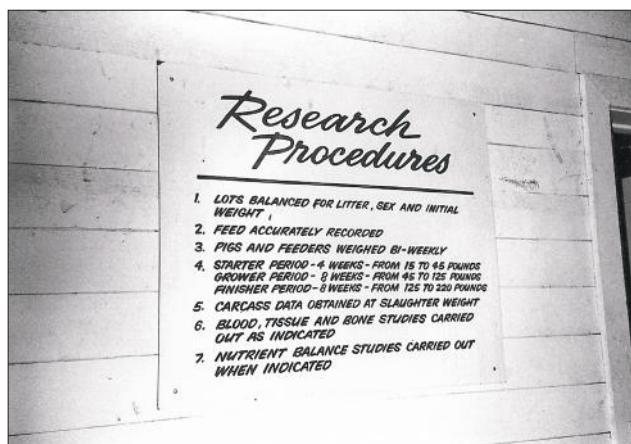
Fred L. Poston
Dean of MSU CANR
East Lansing, Mich.

Dear MPPA:

Thank you. You have helped to make the Family Fun at the Farm event a success, and we thank you for your partnership!

Pamela Fabus
Clinton County Farm Bureau
St. Johns, Mich.

The MSU Swine Farm was originally located on Forest Rd. This site is now called the North Farm, and often called the old farm. Many of the older building still stand, and some are still in use. The old farm was originally the location of a Boar Test Station. Twice a year purebred breeders from around the state would bring boars in to score and auction. Also located at the old farm is the “hog shack,” where past and current student employees of the swine farm, like Kevin Turner, have lived in order to be close to the farm and work odd hours. The MSU Swine Farm has always been host to many ground-breaking research projects and has always been known nationally for their herd of Yorkshires.



Threats Beyond PED

(continued from page 30)

limit trade and commerce. Those that can infect pigs are FMD, ASF, Swine Vesicular Disease and Classical Swine Fever, Webb said.

FADs must be reported and are considered regulatory diseases in the United States. If a FAD is detected, state and federal animal health authorities would have regulatory authority to implement response plans, including measures to quarantine farms and stop movement of susceptible livestock in affected areas to limit the spread of the disease.

Nationally coordinated disease surveillance would help determine the extent of a FAD outbreak, Webb said. To reduce the risk of disease spread, new rules would be implemented regarding the movement and biosecurity of healthy susceptible livestock.

Secure Pork Supply

State and federal response plans also provide insight into what information is needed after a FAD outbreak to allow producers in the affected area to move pigs. "This information has been valuable as the Pork Board has helped develop a secure pork supply plan to help maintain business continuity in the event of an outbreak," Webb said.

The secure pork supply plan is currently under development, he added. The Pork Checkoff provided the initial funding to begin the planning process, with development costs being paid for by USDA's APHIS Veterinary Services. The plan development is being coordinated through Iowa State University's Center for Food Security and Public Health.

The producer components of the proposed plan focus on:

- a valid preharvest traceability system based on the industry-developed swine ID program standards
- nationally standardized biosecurity
- disease surveillance

Producers Play Key Role

Producers who voluntarily enroll in the plan would agree to implement program standards and allow access by state animal health authorities to the movement, biosecurity and surveillance information necessary to demonstrate the absence of a FAD infection on production sites.

"Instead of doing this after an outbreak, producers would develop this capacity as a preventive measure," said Webb, who noted that enrollment


in the plan will not guarantee movement of pigs after an outbreak.

However, enrolled producers will provide information in advance that state veterinarian would need to determine if movement will be allowed, which should shorten the time frame for a decision in the event of a FAD outbreak.

"As we move forward in developing a secure pork supply plan, pork producers play a critical role in early disease detection and overall preparedness for a FAD outbreak," Webb said. "It's important that we all remain vigilant, even while PED continues to dominate the headlines."

Tools to Help You Be Prepared

Visit the Pork Store at pork.org to order FAD Push Packs, including information about biosecurity, FAD surveillance, fact sheets and information on what you should do in the event of a FAD outbreak.

Currently MPPA is working with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, MSU and USDA in exploring the development and implementation of continuity planning for Michigan's swine industry. 



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