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of Elegance

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On the cover: Chef Josef Huber's dish, *Three Flavors of Pork Belly; Stuffed, Skin and Koran BBQ.*

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25th Annual Taste of Elegance

By: Megan Sprague

MPPA PROGRAM DIRECTOR

sprague@mipork.org

Michigan Pork Producers Association recently held the 25th Annual Taste of Elegance in Lansing, Mich. The cooking competition was held in conjunction with the 2015 Michigan Pork and Poultry Symposium (*page 10*) and featured original pork entrées from some of Michigan's top chefs!

This year's entries made for a competitive night with a bevy of creative and delectable dishes being placed before the esteemed judges. Those judges included Executive Chef Jim Morse from the Boathouse Restaurant in Traverse City; Amanda Smith, Executive Director of the Michigan Restaurant Association; and Gordon Wenk, Deputy Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The winning dish, *Adobo Smoked Pork Belly* was prepared by Chef Eric Batten from The Gallery at Michigan State University. His dish was lauded by judges as being tender, with well executed balance of classic Latin flavors, acidity and heat. He is a first time winner of the title of Chef Par Excellence, but has participated for a number of years. Along with the title he received \$1000 dollars and a trip to the National Taste of Elegance Educational Summit at the Culinary Institute of America's Greystone Campus in St. Helena, California, compliments of National Pork Board.

In second place as Superior Chef was Chef Paul Adams of Hawkshead Restaurant in South Haven. Adams was the 2014 Premium Chef, and came back determined to raise the stakes. His dish, "*Pure Michigan Pork Trio*" from "*Cheek to Cheeks*," was colorful and well-presented and received accolades for originality and variety of flavors.

Chef Josef Huber from the Amway Hotel in Grand Rapids took Premium Chef, third place, with his dish *Three Flavors of Pork Belly; Stuffed, Skin and Koran BBQ*. His dish included the use of noodles, which were highly complimented by the judges as being fun and unique.

Audience involvement has always been a key component of the Taste of Elegance competition with the People's Choice award. During the competition, the chef's dishes are displayed and the spectators are asked to vote on the most aesthetically pleasing dish. This year's award went to Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski from MSU Culinary Services in East Lansing. His dish, *Mangalitsa Dynasty*, was a micro three-course meal, including a cake with a pig fat frosting (*pictured left*).

Another component of audience involvement was the opportunity to participate as a guest judge, one was assigned to each chef. The guest judges ranged from legislators like



Representative Charles Brunner to pork producers like MPPA Board of Directors member Brian Pridgeon. This engagement, along with the opportunity for spectators to sample the chef's dishes after judging, made for a delicious and palate-enticing event!

This year was a first for the sponsorship and involvement of the Michigan Allied Poultry Association and the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council. As a part of the collaboration, the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council selected

Below, seated left to right, Jim Morse, Amanda Smith, Charles Brunner, and Gordon Wenk. Standing, Chef Eric Batten.



Council also sponsored a wine sampling of a variety of award-winning Michigan Wines for the evening's attendees.

Over the years, Michigan pork producers have donated funds to the Food Bank Council of Michigan to help feed those in need. This year MPPA continued their support by giving \$2500 to purchase pork products along with a

Michigan wines that the chefs could choose to pair with their meal. The Pork and Wine Pairing award was given to Chef Jaydon Allen from Burcham Hills Retirement Community in East Lansing with his dish *Porchette Steak* paired with Chateau Grand Traverse Gamay Noir wine. As winner, he received a selection of Michigan wines. The Michigan Grape and Wine Industry

bag of pork-themed grocery items. The donations were accepted by the Food Bank Council of Michigan's Executive Director, Phillip Knight, who gave a short speech thanking Michigan's pig farmers for their continued generosity.

Other participating chefs included Ian Ramirez from Creative Dining Services in Grand Rapids; Joe Coudron from Bravo Restaurant in Kalamazoo; Jimmy Hill from Saffron Café in Coldwater; Jodan Cox from the Muskegon Country Club in Muskegon; and Robert Shipman from The English Inn in Lansing. 🐷



By: Fred Walcott
MPPA PRESIDENT

It could be worse!

Recent sinking market prices have accounted for some grim pig farmers of late. Even though I'm not really thrilled about the current market, there is always a part of me that thinks – it could be worse. America's pig farmers export over 25 percent of their product, which has boosted the value of pork and opportunities for niche product sales. Unfortunately, exporting a large amount of product also leaves us vulnerable to being devastated by trade shutdowns.

Events like the recent port shutdown on the West coast and the nationwide spread of PED have served as great reminders about the potential cost of a foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreak like Foot and Mouth Disease or Classical Swine Fever.

While FAD events may not be top of mind for farmers, we need to make sure that we are doing everything we can to keep the door to trade and product movement open. There are many things that we can do now to prepare for a future FAD crisis.

I recently went through an “exercise audit” developed by Dr. Dale Rozeboom, Michigan State University, and a team currently working on the Michigan Secure Pork Supply (MSPS) plan using research funding from MPPA. As a part of the exercise, I was asked a series of questions about my farm detailing my biosecurity practices, employee training, pig movement patterns, among other things. During the audit, a lot of things were brought to my attention that I was going to have to address in order to participate in a program like MSPS, whose goal is to help producers continue to move pigs during a FAD event by assuring authorities that their premises would continue to be disease free.

There are several steps we can all take as pig farmers to protect our businesses and assist our industry:

Premise Identification

Each farm site separated by more than a quarter of a mile on your operation should have its own National Premise Identification Number (PIN). PINs can be obtained by calling the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 1-800-292-3939. If your premise has been through the Pork Quality Assurance Plus' Site-Assessment component, it should already have a National PIN. Another component of PINs is making sure they are included on all your paperwork; you can even obtain a bar code on pork.org to include with your lab samples. If you receive pigs from another operation, they should be including their PIN on the paperwork you receive as well. PINs will help authorities identify farms and associate lab results faster in a disease outbreak. PINs are required to participate in secure pork plans like MSPS.

Electronic Records

Another component of preparation is the electronic filing of records. Records like health certificates, pig movement and inventories help officials verify that your premise is not harboring disease in a FAD event. It is of utmost importance to keep all types of records, even records of when employees were trained on biosecurity and health monitoring, but some records will need to be converted to an electronic format for ease of access in an emergency.

Biosecurity

As I've said in past articles, biosecurity is a process of continuous improvement- like many things in pork production. There are always ways to tighten up biosecurity, but there are some things we can work on now to make sure we are prepared in the future.

Excluding rats and other animals from our barns is one. Developing a protocol for baiting (where, what type, how often), following guidelines encouraged by PQA Plus and making sure that your protocol is effective.

Another way to improve biosecurity is by creating and maintaining your Line of Separation (LOS), also known as a Restricted Access Zone (RAZ). This sometimes

physical line denotes the boundary of where non-biosecure people, tools and vehicles need to work outside. To cross the line, you would need to go through a biosecurity procedure, like showering in. Once inside, those people, tools or vehicles don't leave the LOS/RAZ and come back inside without repeating the biosecurity procedure.

There is also another area you can work on developing called the Perimeter Buffer Area (PBS), also known as the Controlled Access Zone (CAZ). The PBA/CAZ just makes yet another boundary, which restricts movement of potential disease vectors and is usually a large area outside of the LOS/RAZ marked by driveways or fences.

While FAD events may not be top of mind for farmers, we need to make sure that we are doing everything we can to keep the door to trade and product movement open.

These are just a few steps that can increase your preparedness for possible FAD events in the future. There are many other procedures that producers will need to implement in order to move pigs within a reasonable timeframe during a FAD.

Sometimes it can be overwhelming, but that's what farmers excel at, taking a huge, demanding task, like providing the world with quality foodstuffs, and problem-solving at every turn. Farmers also have the assistance of organizations like the National Pork Board (NPB) and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) that are always in the process of working on our behalf to help us problem-solve future crises.

NPB has been collaborating to develop a Secure Pork Supply plan and continues to do extensive research on how diseases are spread from farm to farm. The Checkoff money contributed by U.S. pig farmers directly supports the industry finding ways to deal with issues that challenge producers on a daily basis.

NPPC, whose efforts are supported by voluntary contributions by producers has done, and continues to do, significant trade relations and

lobbying work on behalf of all U.S. pig farmers. It is important that we continue to invest in NPPC so that it can continue to work on negotiations, like the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and prevent U.S. pork products from being unfairly targeted by future trade partners.

We have a long road ahead of us, but I think the path is very clear. We have to work together as an industry to prepare for future disasters. So while I may be unhappy with the current prices that my hogs are receiving, it really could be worse. 🐷

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By: Sam Hines

MPPA EXECUTIVE
VICE PRESIDENT

“Good things often come to those that wait.”

The announcement in December that a fresh pork processing facility would be built in Coldwater (*see article on page 12*) was, without question, the most exciting news I have heard for awhile. It's exciting for Michigan, but it's also exciting for the entire pork industry and especially for Eastern Corn Belt producers. For the past couple years, economists have cautioned that the industry could, similar to 1998, find itself in a situation where there would not be enough slaughter capacity to handle the number of hogs being produced if some additional capacity didn't come online in the future. This, coupled with the fact that some of the older pork packing facilities need to either be upgraded or replaced, was starting to be cause for concern.

December's announcement will ease this concern a bit, but it is likely that another facility, and possibly even two, may yet be constructed sometime in the future. If all of this construction would have occurred farther west in closer proximity to the more concentrated production areas, it certainly would not have bode well for producers in this part of the country. Prior to Thorn Apple Valley closing in 1998, the Eastern Corn Belt hog market was typically higher than the Western Corn Belt. In reality, this made sense since processors in the Eastern Corn Belt were closer to the major east coast population centers where a large portion of the product was distributed. With the closure of Thorn Apple Valley and other processors in this part of the country, the Eastern Corn Belt market eventually transitioned to being lower than in the west. This was primarily a result of more processors competing for the supply of hogs farther west.

After Thorn Apple closed, a number of efforts were initiated over the years to attract another major processor to locate in Michigan. None were successful and I had pretty much resigned myself to the fact that Michigan producers would have to continue operating at a competitive disadvantage by having to ship all of their hogs out of the state to be processed. In fact, when Clemens Food Group announced it would be coming to Michigan to build a facility, I commented that I had begun to think I would never live long enough to see something of this magnitude happen here. However, much of the credit for bringing this about needs to go to the producers from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana who came together and had the vision, foresight, business acumen and persistence to make this happen. Five of the producers are from Michigan and, although the producer investors will be

providing around 80 percent of the hogs needed at the facility initially, Clemens has announced it will still need to purchase 20 percent of the hogs necessary for the plant's 10,000-plus daily requirement from the open market. And, producers need to understand that even if they never sell a single hog to this new facility, it will still benefit them. Another processor competing for the supply of hogs in this part of the country will be an asset to all

producers regardless whether they ever sell this plant a single pig directly. And, for those that don't remember 1998, I hope we never again experience a time in this industry where not enough shackle space to handle the supply of hogs produced exists. That was truly a train wreck that I hope producers will in no way ever again have to endure as it bankrupted some and forced countless others to go out of the business entirely. The other positive from this announcement is that Clemens Food Group is a family-owned business that has a track record of success going back to the 1890s. They have been a stable player in the industry and are currently the 9th largest pork processing company in the country. When the new plant, which is expected to open sometime in 2017, becomes operational, it will

move Clemens up to about the same daily slaughter capacity as Triumph Foods which currently ranks 6th among the list of pork processors in the U.S. Clemens has indicated that it may possibly move to a second shift at the Michigan plant somewhere down the road and, if that happens, it would move them up to daily slaughter capacity just below Hormel Foods which currently ranks 5th.

and a host of other businesses that will gain from the \$255.7 million capital investment in this facility; not to mention the 800 to 900 new jobs the plant will create.

As many of you know, I began my career with Swift and Company and maybe that experience is what makes me so excited about this new chapter for the Michigan pork industry. I know there has often been a love-hate relationship with packers, but I think we have started to move beyond that and realize how much we need each other to be successful. My initial exposure to the Clemens family and management personnel has certainly reinforced my conclusion that they understand the importance of this relationship and want to foster it. As the saying goes, "good things often come to those that wait" and Michigan producers have waited a long time for this 'good thing' to come. 🐷

“ Any way you view it, getting a major pork processor in Michigan is a big deal. ”

Any way you view it, getting a major pork processor in Michigan is a big deal. It will also benefit the state's corn and soybean farmers

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2015 Michigan Pork and Poultry Symposium a Success!



In February 19, 2015, the Michigan Pork Producers Association and the Michigan Allied Poultry Industries joined efforts with Michigan State University Extension to host the first ever Michigan Pork and Poultry Symposium. “Pleasing our Customer” was the theme for this event. The goal of the symposium was to provide producers with knowledge that will help them provide a growing human population an environmentally-safe, socially-acceptable, low-cost source of meat.

The symposium began with welcomes from Dr. James Averill, MDARD State Veterinarian and Dr. George Smith, Associate Director of MSU AgBioResearch. Following, nearly 180 attendees heard from the first featured speaker, Dr. Henry Turlington, Director, Quality & Manufacturing Regulatory Affairs for the American Feed Ingredient Association. Dr. Turlington explained the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). This law was signed in January of 2011 and hazard analysis and preventive control regulation for animal food will be finalized by August 30, 2015. He described how this law will provide the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with sweeping new authorities and requirements for feed manufactures, and ultimately possible greater responsibilities and costs for farmers.

In the second presentation of the day, Dr. Bernie Erven (*pictured left*), Professor Emeritus from The Ohio State University, talked about how a “farm’s success depends to a great extent on getting things done through people.” He subsequently shared with attendees that “Your farm’s culture (how you act and what you value) helps positively direct employees and family. Teamwork, self-motivation, self-discipline and trust can be improved.”



He subsequently shared with attendees that “Your farm’s culture (how you act and what you value) helps positively direct employees and family. Teamwork, self-motivation, self-discipline and trust can be improved.”

The morning session ended with Mr. Mark McCully, Vice-President, Certified Angus Beef LLC, talking about the success in developing the Certified Angus Beef brand and in doing so encouraged pork and poultry producers to think about how to build trust with different target audiences such as wholesalers, retailers, chefs and the culinary community, food media, academia, and government.

At noon, attendees were treated to a delicious, pork and poultry lunch prepared by the Lansing Center’s culinary staff, and a challenge by Carla Wardin of the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers

Alliance, the luncheon speaker, to “break the stereotype” and reach out to consumers to show them what farming really looks like.

During the Awards Luncheon, five individuals were recognized for their excellence in pork production and contributions to the pork industry. MPPA’s highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award went to Pete Blauwiel (*pictured page 11, top right, left to right: Chad and Beth (Blauwiel) Gruden; wife Brenda; Pete; and Joe and Elizabeth Blauwiel*), of Fowler. Blauwiel was a member of the MPPA Board of Directors and has made significant contributions to the industry through his work with youth, on NPPC committees and involvement with the preservation of the Pork Checkoff through litigation against the USDA.

Another honor went to current MPPA President, Fred Walcott (*pictured page 11 top left with wife Patti*), of Valley View Pork, Allendale. Walcott was given the Master Pork Producer Award, and was applauded for his excellent work with his contract growers and employees.

MPPA also awarded Jake Vance (*pictured page 11 bottom left with Kris Dufflo*) of Circle K Family Farms LLC the Swine Herd Manager Award and the Contract Grower Award went to Jordan Haynes (*pictured page 11 bottom right with Lee Carte*), of High Lean Pork/Huron Pork.

In the afternoon, the findings of recent, applied research projects at MSU were shared in specie-specific (turkey, laying hens, and swine) breakout sessions. Mixed into these presentations, were talks by a few other invited guest



speakers. Notably, both pork and turkey producers heard from Dr. Susan Watkins, Extension Specialist from the University of Arkansas, “that good water quality is essential for good animal performance. Unfortunately it is rarely given consideration on the farm. Water quality is impacted by many factors such as products used and natural contaminants. Water system sanitation is essential for health.”

In another ‘timely’ presentation for pork producers, Robert M. “Bob” Ruth, President Country View Family Farms was present to talk and answer questions about the plans for the new Coldwater pork processing plant in Michigan.

The 2015 Michigan Pork and Poultry Symposium successfully provided pork and poultry farmers from around the state information about their ever-changing industries. Valuable impact is anticipated in the future as farmers take back information from the symposium to continue to create positive company culture, judicious animal health care decisions and take time to engage with their consumers. This event was also made in part by many industry sponsors (see page 36). 🐷

Fresh Pork Processing Facility to

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation announced on December 16th that the Michigan Strategic Fund had approved actions to support construction of a new fresh pork processing facility in Coldwater. The project is expected to generate \$255.7 million in total capital investment and create more than 800 new jobs in Michigan.

The Clemens Food Group, based in Hatfield, Penn., has partnered with a group of family-owned pork producers, five of whom are from Michigan, to build a 550,000 square-foot facility that will be capable of processing 10,000 hogs daily when the plant opens in late 2017 or early 2018.

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“This is exciting news for not only the pork industry, but all of agriculture and the state’s economy,” said Sam Hines, Executive Vice President of the Michigan Pork Producers Association, the East Lansing-based trade group representing the state’s 2,100 pig farmers.

“When Thorn Apple Valley in Detroit closed in 1998, it was the seventh largest pork processing facility in the country. Since that time, Michigan producers have operated at a competitive disadvantage by having to ship all of their hogs out of the state to be processed.”

Despite this, Hines says Michigan producers have maintained a steady level of production consistently producing around 2 million hogs annually. “A new state of the art processing plant is great news for the pork industry, but it’s also great news for

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be Built in Coldwater

the state's corn and soybean farmers and a host of other businesses that will benefit from the economic activity created by this new investment.”

The initiative to locate a pork processing facility in Michigan has been ongoing for several years. The project was led by a group of Michigan pork producers who joined with the state to conduct a feasibility study on the viability of locating a facility in Michigan. The study confirmed opportunities such as increased demand in the global pork market, the lack of similar resources currently available in the state, accessibility to a large portion of U.S. consumers and transportation benefits.

Michigan currently ranks 13th among the states in pork production. The state's 2 million market hogs generated \$356 million in cash receipts in 2012 and \$600 million in total economic activity. Michigan pork production businesses employ 8,800 people directly and total employment from hog production is estimated at 10,800.

The pork industry plays an important role in Michigan's overall food and agriculture economy. Pork production in the state requires 836,000 tons of feed – representing approximately 6.8 percent of the corn raised and 8.8 percent of the soybeans grown in Michigan. “Livestock production is the largest single market for Michigan corn and soybean growers and the pork industry makes-up a large portion of that market,” Hines says.



of the protein market divided among beef, lamb, poultry and seafood.

Currently, nearly one of every three hogs produced in the United States is exported and worldwide demand for pork is expected to continue escalating as incomes improve in developing countries. China is the world's largest producer and consumer of pork representing nearly half of worldwide pork production in 2014. 🇺🇸



Pictured above are many of the people responsible for bringing the fresh pork processing plant to Coldwater, Mich.

According to Hines, pork is the most consumed meat in the world representing 42 percent of global meat consumption with the remainder

MSUE AABI Director Announced

By: Ray Hammerschmidt,
Interim Director, MSU Extension



*Ron Bates, recently named Director
of the MSU Extension Agriculture
and Agribusiness Institute*

The Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) is pleased to announce that Ron Bates has been named Director of the MSU Extension Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute. He will assume the role on April 1, 2015.

Dr. Bates began his career as an Assistant Professor with the Animal Science Department at the University of Missouri in 1986 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1992. He worked for Osborne Industries as Technical Director for 18 months before arriving at MSU's Animal Science Department as an Assistant Professor in 1996. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 2003 and Professor in 2011. In every academic position, he has had Extension as his primary appointment. He received a Bachelor's degree in Animal Husbandry from Delaware Valley College, a Master's (Animal Science) and a Ph.D. (Animal Breeding) both from Oklahoma State University.

Since joining the MSU team, Dr. Bates has received numerous awards, including the Michigan Association of Extension Agent's Outstanding Extension Specialist Award in 2011.

Upon accepting this appointment, Dr. Bates said, "It is my privilege to serve in this capacity continuing the important and excellent work done statewide by Extension Educators, who provide a trusted source of research and need-based, unbiased educational programs, tools and information to our important and varied partners, stakeholders and clientele."

We are pleased to have Dr. Bates join the administrative team for MSU Extension. Special thanks to the search committee of Julie Chapin, Chris Difonzo, Tom Guthrie, Michael Krauch, Dennis Pennington and chaired by Jim Kells for helping us through the selection process. 🌿



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New Michigan Youth Zoonotic Education Resources

By: Julie Thelen, MSU Extension

Nearly every animal and human becomes sick at some point. When an illness is caused by a pathogen, it can spread quickly through a herd or flock, or from animal to human or human to animal. So, how do we teach youth about the concerns involving both human and animal health? The new zoonotic curriculum developed for Michigan 4-H youth is one answer.

Michigan 4-H and Michigan State University Extension are currently distributing the *Be A "Zoonotic" Disease Detective* bulletin to over 50,000 Michigan 4-H members enrolled in clubs. Michigan FFA members recently received their electronic copy.

This educational piece is being provided to youth as part of the \$20,000 grant received from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The grant has provided an educational program that will implement two strategies with the intent to increase awareness of zoonotic diseases and the possible health risks. Strategy one is the distribution and use of the *Be A "Zoonotic" Disease Detective* in both print and electronic forms. This 8-page bulletin is also available as a downloadable PDF with an answer sheet from the MSU Extension website and the Michigan 4-H website.

The second strategy is the creation of the Zoonotic Disease Educational Tool Kits. More than 1,900 kits will be delivered to 4-H volunteers, FFA advisors and Michigan Association of Fairs & Exhibitions members. The objective is for the kits to be utilized during classes, workshops, 4-H club meetings and other agricultural literacy events. These kits reinforce the content from the bulletins and include three complete Animal Science Anywhere lesson plans with supplies to complete each of the lessons. These lesson plans will discuss the basic, practical application of good biosecurity principles and practices; definitions and differences of common pathogens; and important vocabulary for understanding human and animal health. The lessons are flexible, providing adaptations for various locations, ages and audiences.

If you would like to use a kit, simply download the *Animal Science Anywhere*


4H1671


Be A "Zoonotic" Disease Detective

Name _____

Age _____ County _____

4-H Club or Group _____

 Michigan 4-H Youth Development


 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

lessons located on the Michigan 4-H webpage and purchase your needed supplies! Teach the lessons as is, or try something different as each lesson features an *Adaptations and Extension* portion to provide you with additional ideas.

The goal of this grant funded project is to improve youth awareness and understanding of zoonotic disease transmission and motivate them to take precautions, and encourage development in the life skills of personal safety and disease prevention. Youth will be actively engaged in the learning and discovery process in both strategies; learning by doing. The goal is for these new resources to increase conversations and understanding related to human and animal health, while also increasing prevention methods used by youth and adults.

For additional information about the Michigan youth zoonotic disease resources, visit the Michigan 4-H Zoonotic Disease page or the MSU Extension website for animal science content at http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/resource/zoonotic_disease.

The grant is in cooperation with MSU Extension, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Michigan Department of Community Health and the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine.

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



2015 MSU GREEN AND WHITE

On January 30-31 a total of 206 participants, with 251 pigs, took part in the 2015 Green and White Education Fair and Show. The show kicked off Friday evening with an educational program taught by MSU Veterinarian student Scott Kramer. The program taught the 107 attendees, how necropsy's are used by veterinarians. After the program, there was a showmanship clinic taught by this year's Green and White judge, Matt Asmus from Lafayette, Indiana.

Saturday featured a variety of classes and competitions including, new to this year, a breeds division for registered hogs. Other classes included futurity, showmanship and market classes. Participants of all ages participated in educational competitions like Quizbowl, Skillathon and Essay. This allows kids to not only showcase their animal expertise, but also all of their accumulated swine knowledge.

MPPA would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped make the day a success and look forward to seeing you all next year!

Breakfast on the Farm Visits Lead to Better Understanding and Confidence in Modern Crop Production

By: Ted Ferris, MSU Extension, Department of Animal Science; and Nancy Thelen and Ashley Kuschel, MSU Extension



What do consumers think once they have been on a modern crop farm? A Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) event held in 2013 on the Humm family crop farm in Michigan's Gratiot County hosted 2,400 participants. Over 400 farmers, family members, organization representatives and agribusiness professionals volunteered to staff the large event coordinated by Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Exit surveys and online follow up surveys show this educational tour impacted the impression and knowledge of those who attended.

For 76 percent of the participants surveyed, this was their first BOTF event, while 43 percent indicated this was their first time on a modern crop farm in 20 years. Individuals responding to our exit survey as they left the event (n=206) indicated they have a better understanding of crop production, are more knowledgeable about technology used to produce crops and are more confident in modern food production.

When it comes to knowledge about crop production, 57 percent strongly agreed and 21 percent agreed they are more knowledgeable about the use of technology in crop production. Also, 35 percent strongly agreed and 24 percent agreed they

have a better understanding of genetically modified seeds while 4 percent disagreed and 6 percent strongly disagreed (*Fig. 1, page 19*). Seventeen percent indicated they already understood genetically modified seeds. These are individuals who work in agriculture or are more familiar with this technology.

Better impressions

Although 33 percent strongly agreed or agreed they hear negative comments about how food is produced on modern farms, 52 percent strongly agreed and 26 percent agreed their visit increased their confidence in modern food production. While 12 percent indicated they were already confident, 6 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed the tour increased their confidence. While a greater percentage (45 percent) of online survey respondents indicated they heard negative comments about modern food production, 31 percent strongly agreed and 48 percent agreed as a result of their farm tour, their general impression about modern crop farming has improved.

The online survey conducted a few months after the tour included a much smaller sample of respondents with 29 of 100 participants providing emails responding to the survey.

Thirty-nine percent of the online survey respondents indicated their level of trust in food production on modern farms was high or very high before their tour, which shifted to 67 percent after their tour.

Tours continues to build trust

To the online survey question, “My level of trust that crop farmers will do the right thing with regard to safe guarding grains used in food production was,” the mean response before was 3.2 and 3.7 after the tour. This significant difference translates into 32 percent with a high or very high level of trust before and 59 percent with a high or very high level of trust after.

When asked, “As a result of my farm tour, my trust in grains (corn, soybeans, wheat, oats) as a safe food has increased,” 35 percent of respondents to the online surveys neither agreed or disagreed, meaning their trust did not change, while 45 percent agreed and 21 percent strongly agreed with this statement. For 56 percent, their trust in farmers as a source of information about food production also increased.

The level of trust participants had regarding crop farmers doing the right things to care for the environment shifted from 37 percent with high trust before to 58 percent after in the online survey. This translated to a mean response of 3.1 before and 3.7 after. Fifty percent strongly agreed and 25 percent agreed to a similar statement on the exit survey, “As a result of today’s tour, my trust in farmers caring for the land and environment has increased.” Only 5 percent did not agree to this statement.

A change in behavior

Since consumers hear mixed messages in the media and from other sources about modern food production, we asked respondents to the online survey if, as a result of their farm tour, they were more likely to disregard negative comments they hear regarding how food is produced on modern farms. Only 3 percent disagreed while 35 percent agreed and 31 percent strongly agreed. When asked, “Are you more or less likely to buy grain products such as those produced with corn, soybeans, oats or wheat?” 44 percent responded they were more

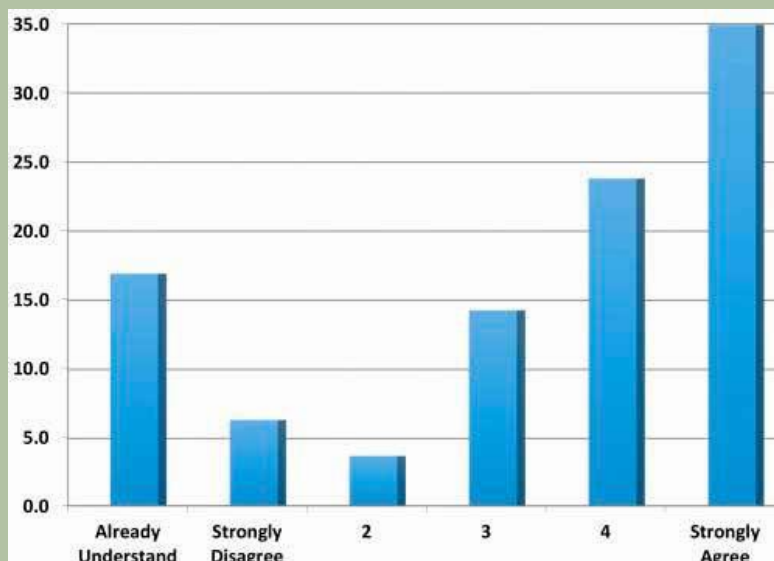



Figure 1. Participants’ level of agreement, on a five-point scale, that they have a better understanding of genetically modified seeds as a result of their educational tour.

likely and 12 percent much more likely to purchase grain products. In another question, 16 percent indicated they had increased their purchases of products with grains since their tour, 76 percent had no change, 8 percent did not know and none indicated they decreased purchases as a result of their tour.

Summary

Educational farm tours are providing the consumer an opportunity to see how modern farms work and to interact with producers and agribusiness professionals. Those visiting crop farms learn about technologies used, even gain a better understanding of controversial technology such as genetically modified seeds and come away with a great sense of trust in modern food production and the farmers who produce their food.

For the past three years MPPA has joined BOTF in their mission to engage with consumers by bringing the “little pig barn” to BOTF events. The barn not only sparks conversations with attendees, but also gives pig farmers a chance to talk with consumers in their community. To find a BOTF near you, see page 31, the “Calendar of Events” for upcoming events.

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

M-AAA Awards More Than \$600K in Grants for MSU Animal Agriculture Research

By: **Tonia DuMont, MSU AgbioResearch**

Seventeen Michigan State University (MSU) researchers and Extension outreach and education specialists have received more than \$600,000 in funding from the Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture (M-AAA).

The M-AAA (formerly the Animal Agriculture Initiative) is a partnership between Michigan's animal agriculture industries, the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU AgBioResearch and MSU Extension. It focuses on advancing the state's animal agriculture economy by supporting applied research and outreach efforts that address key issues identified by the industry.

The Michigan food and agriculture system contributes roughly \$100 billion annually to the state's economy and provides nearly 1 million jobs. About 37 percent of the agricultural products sold are attributed to the animal

agriculture sector, so it is a critical component of Michigan's economy.

Thirty-six proposals, requesting approximately \$1.4 million, were submitted to M-AAA for consideration in three categories: applied research, Extension efforts and seed grants. All proposals were required to identify anticipated benefits to Michigan animal agriculture and to align with the annual priorities of one or more of the following animal agriculture stakeholder organizations: Michigan Allied Poultry Industry, Michigan Cattlemen's Association, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Horse Industry, Michigan Milk Producers Association, Michigan Pork Producers, or Michigan Sheep Breeders Association.

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Evaluation criteria included:

- Relevance to the Michigan animal agriculture industry and annual priorities.
- Potential long-term impact.
- Technical merit and feasibility.
- Investigator qualifications.
- Mechanisms to deliver information generated to relevant commodity groups.
- Leverage of external and other funding sources and extent of partnering with Michigan animal agriculture industries.

Seventeen projects, totaling \$630,780, were selected for funding. The proposals address issues related to workforce education, nutrient management, health and welfare, sustainability and profitability across beef, dairy, horse, poultry, sheep and or swine industries.

George Smith, MSU AgBioResearch acting associate director, is in charge of administering the M-AAA grants program.

“These M-AAA research and Extension projects continue to exemplify the strong history of successful partnerships between

the Michigan animal agriculture commodity groups and MSU to help grow the animal agriculture economy, enhance employment opportunities, and build economic vitality and sustainability for the entire state,” Smith said. “Michigan’s relatively stable climate, the availability of water and locally produced feedstuffs, and the progressive nature of its animal agriculture producers are foundational to the strength of this partnership and our collective goals.”

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

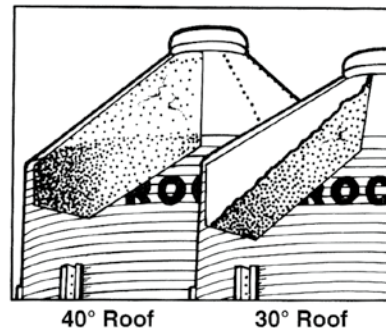
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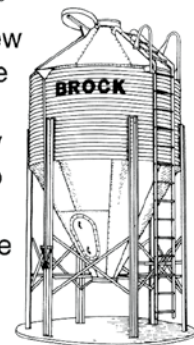
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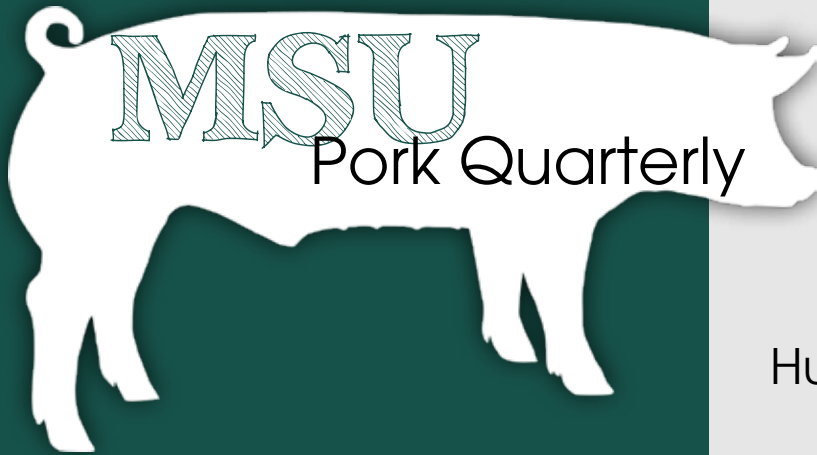


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Information for an Industry on the Move

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A Perspective of Stockpersons and the Humane Euthanasia of Swine

By: Madonna Gemus-Benjamin and Scott Kramer, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences MSU College of Veterinary Medicine; Alastair Bratton, Verus Health Alliance; and Tina Conklin, MSU Extension

Introduction

As farmers, you are one percent of our population who knows what it means to care for a living animal meant for food. You are able to extend compassion and respect to the animals in your care while making life and death decisions on a daily basis. A farmer's desire to see their animals prosper and doing what is right for the animal's quality of life can create a "caring-killing" paradox.

In this article, our intention is to provide our current perspective on humane euthanasia for swine. Which includes the role of the stockperson; the present choices available; research on human characteristics and coping strategies for the stockperson; and methods available toward evolving the perceptions swine euthanasia, so they are seen more as humane endings.

The Stockperson

A farm owner or employee, who works with livestock such as pigs, is considered a "stockperson." Notably, high quality stockpeople working in pig production raise the standard of animal performance and make the business more successful (1). Studies have shown that the successful stockpersons are conscientious, caring, eager to learn, humble, careful observers, empathetic, and have a positive attitude. All of these attributes correlate to both improved productivity and animal welfare.

Understandably, stockpersons whose work involves euthanasia of an animal, may experience significant levels of grief and/or distress. A considerable amount of research has been conducted among animal shelter workers, veterinarians, and other animal caretakers on their reactions to euthanasia. These studies have revealed reactions of anger, sadness, fear, guilt, depression and helplessness.

Surprisingly, there is limited scientific research on how the pig stockperson feels about the euthanasia process. One survey study (2) found that employees prefer a method of euthanasia that is perceived as less painful and stressful and were more accepting of the task as long as the animal appeared sick. Women and Spanish-speaking stockpersons were less positive on the task of euthanizing pigs. It is interesting that while most respondents of an employee survey did not have a problem performing euthanasia, the longer an employee's job duties included euthanizing pigs, the less willing he/she was to euthanize.

Experience would strongly suggest that people who enjoy working on farms and are respectful toward animals often have a difficult time making the timely decision to euthanize. Terry Whiting in an article for Livestockwelfare.com believes there are six human barriers to euthanasia: holding onto the faint hope of the animal recovering; ignorance; lack of training and equipment; lack of empowerment; shirking or repugnance of killing; and moral food conviction – an abhorrence of wasting an animal for use as food (3).

We wonder if the way that a stockperson is required to perform euthanasia might instill an inner psychological conflict. In psychology terms, this is known as cognitive dissonance, which is the mental discomfort experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values at the same time (3). When this is experienced, individuals tend to become uncomfortable and they are motivated to reduce this dissonance, as well as actively avoiding situations and information, which might increase it. In euthanasia, one of the outcomes of this dissonance is that euthanasia, especially methods like Manual Blunt Force Trauma (MBFT) are performed incorrectly. With MBFT, frequently not enough force is used, or employees did not stay to monitor the pig afterward.

Because other employees are experiencing the same dissonance and are dealing with it in similar ways, these incorrect practices can become generally accepted in a farm's culture. This causes a deterioration in euthanasia practices that can go unnoticed because the change may not be easily recognized within the group of employees all sharing in the dissonance. Eventually, these practices can deteriorate to a point that we might be surprised or shocked to see "normal" industry practices on undercover expose.

Coping with euthanasia related stress

When dealing with this difficult but necessary task, it is very important, that managers create a barn culture where the stockpersons feel comfortable voicing their attitudes and those who are unwilling to perform euthanasia procedures on pigs should not be forced to do so. The stockperson may find it difficult to find others who can listen, without judgment. Often in barns, there is an expectation of "toughness" and stockpersons who struggle with euthanasia can fear being seen in a negative way or not successful in their work. Farm managers should observe their stockpeople for signs of this aversion or reluctant exposure to euthanasia, especially signs of dissatisfaction with the work or careless handling of pigs.

Individually, we all find ways of coping with the stress of euthanasia. A number of studies (5-8) have indicated the possible ways that employees and stockpersons managed that stress included:

- separation or avoiding euthanasia tasks
- wry humor
- recognition that euthanasia is humane, necessary and important
- gained competence and confidence through training that the euthanasia was done well
- a calling to a moral obligation to "do it correctly"

Stockpersons

Advances in science and technology continually provide new opportunities as well as new products, equipment and techniques for the swine industry. While the recognition of a sick animal may seem like

Appendix 1 ²⁹

METHOD	SUCKLING	NURSERY	GROWER/FINISHER	MATURE	INITIAL COST	ONGOING COST	SKILL	CONSTRAINTS
Controlled Blunt Force Trauma	X				N	N	M	Optimal for small pigs only
Carbon Dioxide	X	X			L	L	M	Optimal for small pigs only
Non-Penetrating Captive Bolt	X	X			M	N	L	Most Likely a 2 step process*
Veterinary Anesthetic Overdose	X	X	X	X	H	H	H	Requires Veterinary Oversight and Proper Carcass Disposal
Penetrating Captive Bolt		X	X	X	M	L	M	Most Likely a 2 step process*
Gun Shot		X	X	X	M	M	M/H	Firearm Usage
Electrocution-Head Only or Head to Heart		X	X	X	L	L	M	Adequate Equipment and Proper Power Supply Most Likely a 2 step process*

Appendix 1 ²⁹

The table illustrates suggested and accepted methods for humane euthanasia of swine. (N=none, L=low, M=medium, H=high).

Regardless of the procedure, staff must be properly trained on the use of equipment, proper restraint, maintenance, safety, and confirmation of insensibility and death.

(*) – In some instances, the initial method may only stun the animal and second step such as exsanguination (bleeding out), or pithing (physical destruction of the spinal cord by a rod or cane) may be required to fully euthanize the animal.

Appendix 2 ²⁹

Some proposed methods of euthanasia are unacceptable and include strangulation, drowning and using an air embolism. These methods do not comply with AVMA and AASV standards for humane euthanasia.

PROPOSED METHOD	USE	REASON
Strangulation	NEVER	UNACCEPTABLE
Drowning	NEVER	UNACCEPTABLE
Air Embolism	NEVER	UNACCEPTABLE
Non-Anesthetic Drugs	NEVER	ANIMAL MUST BE RENDERED INSENSIBLE FIRST
Anesthetic Drugs	NEVER	TOO COSTLY

“second nature” to some, it is not to others. Through proper training we can help the stockperson to establish on-farm protocols, decision trees, and “rules of thumb” on making the best decisions around euthanasia when the pig has little or no chance of recovery.

Training:

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), timely humane euthanasia is recommended for pigs when “death is a welcome event and continued existence is not an attractive option for the animal.” Some veterinarians have suggested that employees are not always properly trained to recognize when an animal is losing weight or getting sick. The following are “rule of thumb” characteristics may help stockpersons recognize when euthanasia should be considered:

- Inadequate or minimal improvement after 2 days of intensive care.
- Pigs may exhibit extreme weakness or inability to eat or drink.
- Severely injured or non-ambulatory pigs with the inability to recover.
- Suffering from any infection or disease which fails to respond to treatment.
- A 20-25% loss in total body weight resulting in a body condition score of 1.

The National Pork Board (NPB) and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV) have provided a very thorough publication entitled, “On-farm Euthanasia of Swine – Recommendations for the Producer” (written materials are available through NPB’s “pork store” or by contacting the Michigan Pork Producers Association office) which provides a description of 8 acceptable methods of swine euthanasia for pigs of different weights summarized in Appendix 1 (9). It should also be noted that there are proposed methods that should never be used as means of euthanasia. These unacceptable or unwise methods are presented in Appendix 2.

According to swine stockperson survey, employees viewed euthanasia training as beneficial especially when completed on-farm and by a company trainer. An effective preparation for training stockpersons on humane euthanasia requires a Euthanasia Action Plan on each farm to improve timeliness of euthanasia and reduce uncertainty in the method and skilled required for euthanasia. All individuals conducting euthanasia must be trained to be aware of the methods available, perform the techniques with care, efficiency and personal safety while avoiding additional fear or stress on the animal. If you are uncertain of your current practices and/or skills as a trainer or would appreciate an on-farm evaluation, contact your local veterinarian or extension agent for more information.

Demonstrate:

When choosing a tool, it must be kept in mind that each method of euthanasia has limitations and some have a degree of visual aesthetics that are unpleasant to operators/observers. It is important to choose the appropriate tool for these reasons when deciding on an individual on-farm method. For example, the practice of Manually Blunt Force Trauma (MBFT) is becoming less tolerated by consumers, customers and stockpeople of the pork industry. Sadler, Johnson and Millman have recently published an excellent overview of alternative methods to MBFT for piglets weighing up to 12 pounds (10).

Alternatives to MBFT include captive bolt methods. Based on recent studies, euthanasia of piglets during the farrowing and nursery phase can be conducted using a non-penetrating captive bolt method (NPCB) developed in conjunction with the University of Guelph

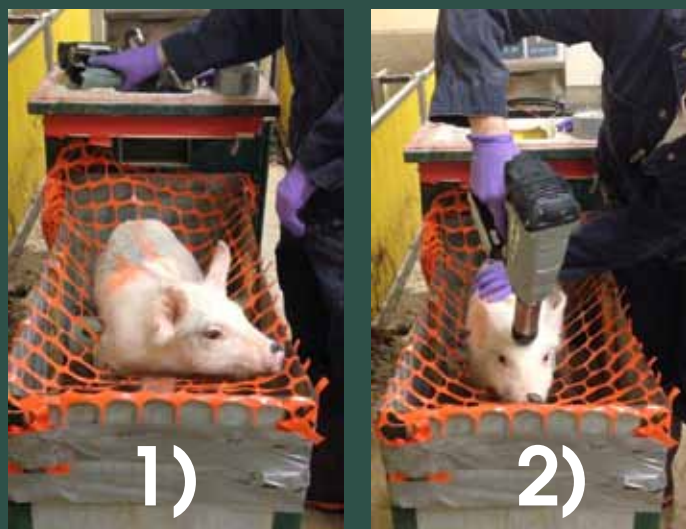
and Bock Industries. The barrel of the gun is placed flush on the frontal bone, between the eyes, in the direction of the tail. The conical shaped head of the bolt impacts the skull, without breaking the skin, causing concussion and brain damage, then retracts back to the original position. The tool, the Zephyr – EXL has been shown to be highly effective for euthanasia of both neonatal and older piglets up to approximately 20 lbs (11-13). This is an advantage of this technology as MBFT is not recommended for use on pigs that weigh more than 11 lbs. A penetrating captive bolt, such as the Blitz gun, is less preferable for use in young pigs due to concerns for operator safety and the unsightly open wound left by the penetrating captive bolt. The Zephyr-EXL allows for euthanasia of piglets in farrowing barns as well as those transitioning into the nursery (that weigh less than 20 lbs). Piglets classified as weak, lame, or having hernias at the time within the first 4 weeks of movement into the nursery are likely candidates for euthanasia.

Another advantage to the usage of Zephyr-EXL is that the stockperson can use a 2 shot approach until they are comfortable with the new technique, achieving rapid insensibility and brain death while minimizing pain and distress of the pigs. In one of the studies (13), 2 older piglets required a second or repeat application of the NPCB. Since the Zephyr-EXL does not require calibrating or reloading, the 2 shots can be fired quickly, with the second shot serving as a precaution to ensure sustained insensibility until death in 99.3% of pigs (13). The average cost of the Zephyr-EXL, with air compressor, is \$1300.00.

Another concern within the studies was the ability for the stockperson to properly place the NPCB gun flush against the skull while restraining the pigs. Recognizing the need for a restraining method that would reduce operator error and increase safety while using NPCB guns, farms within Alberta introduced a prototype restraining method that appears to calm the pig while allowing safe restraint. The restraint is modeled after the concept of slings. By using mesh, netting or fencing, the pig can be placed such that the belly is supported and legs are suspended. Based on our observations, the pig is both calm and restrained within the device (Photo 1, page 5) and the handler has adequate and safe access to the pig to conduct humane euthanasia with one or even two shots (Photo 2, page 5). For more usage information on the Zephyr: bit.ly/ZephyrTool

**Please note that the NPCB device in these photos are with a product similar to the Zephyr-EXL.*

Photo 1: Calm pig in simple restraining device
Photo 2: Safety for handler during procedure



Follow-up

The goal of euthanasia is that the loss of consciousness or sensibility which should occur within seconds. A pig is considered insensible (11) when they (Photo 3 a,b,c):

- Lack a blink response when either the eyelid or cornea is touched,
- Lack a response to a nose pinch
- Lack rhythmic breathing.

Our group has found that necropsies of euthanized pigs help to tell a story of the underlying conditions and allow a psychological justification that the work of euthanasia was required.

An integral factor to reduce stress includes supportive managers, owners and peers, allowing stockpersons the opportunity to examine stressful situations in a safe and confidential environment. Safe environments can only be achieved when there is an openness based on the culture and values of the employees and an exchange of ideas to ensure that the approaches adopted by the farms are relevant and accepted. As an industry, we communicate to consumers that “pig farmers care” - as farm managers we need to make sure that stockpeople know that “we care that you care.”

We must present humane euthanasia in a manner that is factual and sensitive. We (swine people) need to work to not only share our own concerns but also listen and address those of our colleagues and consumers. Just as the concepts of good animal welfare are never static; the swine industry is constantly collaborating and investigating new dynamic solutions to improve our knowledge and ability to best care for our pigs, including improved euthanasia techniques and support.

Conclusion

Despite their best efforts, stockpersons will encounter situations in which the best option for the pig is humane euthanasia. While industry-specific guidelines for humane euthanasia of swine do exist, the difficulty that a stockperson encounters lies in not only correctly identifying the compromised

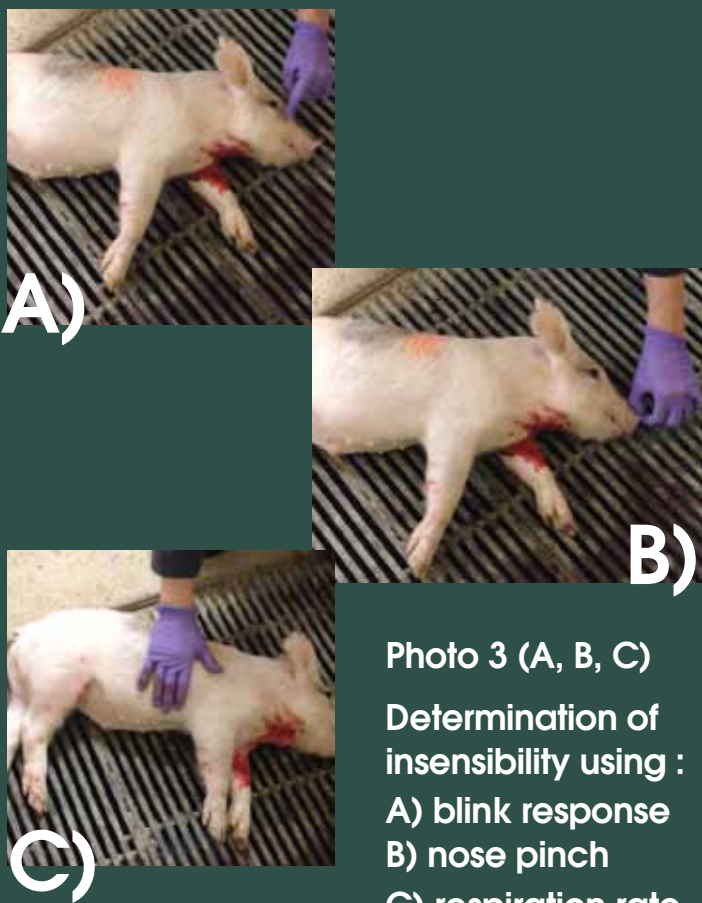


Photo 3 (A, B, C)
Determination of insensibility using :
A) blink response
B) nose pinch
C) respiration rate

animal but also in deciding when and whether to treat or euthanize. We urge farmers to work with their veterinarian and employees to establish an on-farm euthanasia protocol for each phase of production to alleviate any questions or anxiety regarding proper euthanasia expectation. Several methods of euthanasia are available and accepted by the AVMA and AASV. Each method is unique and specific for distinct ages and phases of production and ensures a humane end of life. We must also support further and continued research into hiring and keeping the best stockpeople and continuing to seek production practices that ensure their well-being as well as the pigs for which they provide care. *Prosperity for all!*

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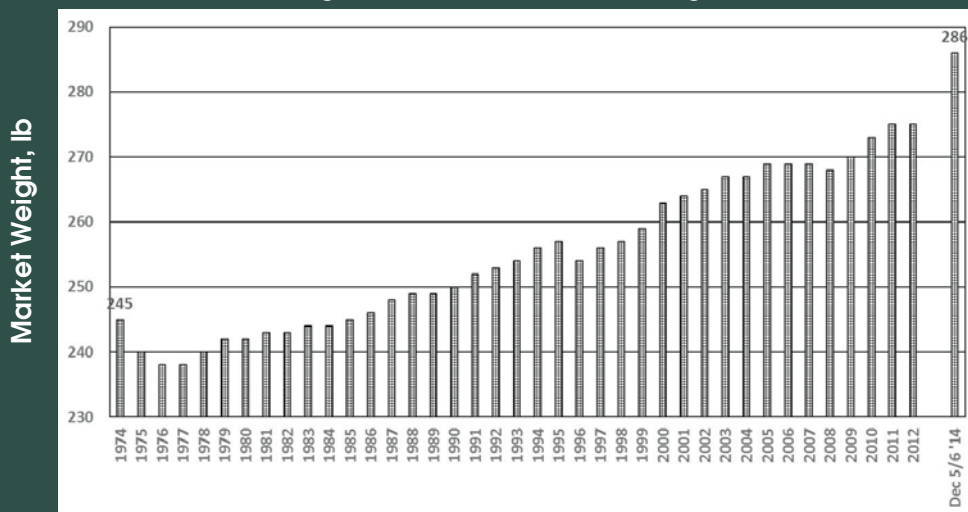
Contemporary Market Weights^a

By: Ronald O. Bates, MSU and Thomas Guthrie, MSUE

Introduction

Over the last year the pork industry has experienced and is recovering from an outbreak of a novel disease Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv). For many farms that experienced PEDv, weeks of production were lost or drastically reduced. This severely cut supply which caused price to rapidly increase. During the summer of 2014 the industry witnessed record prices received for market pigs. With extra finishing space due to a reduction in pigs produced, a relatively mild summer which caused growth rate to be better than normally experienced during summer, and high market price, market weights increased to a greater degree than many would have foreseen. As average market weights reached and sometimes surpassed 285 lb, many have questioned if average market weights will continue to push higher or drop back to recent historical averages (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Historical Market Weights



Adapted from the National Pork Board Quick Facts

push higher or drop back to recent historical averages (Figure 1).

Over the last two decades lean growth and feed efficiency have dramatically improved at heavier market weights, which has resulted in pigs remaining profitable at heavier market weights. Most contemporary terminal cross pigs are profitable at heavier weights and with continued selection for improved lean gain and feed efficiency, pigs continue to be relatively lean at heavier and heavier weights. This article evaluates a few scenarios regarding the marginal profitability of heavy market weight pigs.

Evaluation Methods

Optimum market weights were calculated for three different scenarios with differing ration costs for the final ration to be fed to finishing pigs. An existing Excel™ spreadsheet tool from Dr. John Lawrence, Iowa State University was used and is available to pork producers on the internet at <http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/software>. In addition, the marketing information for an existing packer marketing matrix was used. The buying program used was considered to be more favorable for heavy weight pigs. Lean percent premiums and discounts along with possible sort loss were included in the calculations to determine results applicable to contemporary pork production.

Assumptions

To complete these calculations, commercial prices were solicited for the last ration to be fed before marketing with an estimated ration cost of \$225/ton. A similar evaluation regarding market weight was conducted in December, 2010 (Bates et al., 2011). As a reference, the cost of the last ration that was used in that exercise for 2010 (\$215/ton), was included (Figure 2).

^aReference to commercial products does not imply endorsement by the authors or Michigan State University.

In addition, an alternative priced ration for December, 2014 was also included (\$175/ton). The cost of the alternative ration was based on known differences occurring for ration costs across Michigan pork producer farms. Pig performance used in this evaluation is listed in Table 1.

Pigs were assumed to grow 1.88 lb per day, regardless of the final weight in which they were marketed. Pigs were not considered for marketing until they reached 258 lb. Furthermore, it was assumed that the decision to market pigs would occur in weekly increments. That is, if pigs were not marketed at a given weight, they would be held for an additional seven days. In addition it was assumed that space was not limiting, such that pigs could be marketed at any weight chosen without space concerns for the rest of the production schedule. Furthermore, it was also assumed that there would be a slight increase (0.3 percent) in the percentage of dead or downer pigs observed if pigs were marketed at heavier weights.

Marginal feed efficiency as pigs increased in weight was also estimated. Typically feed efficiency is measured from pig placement, either as a weaned pig or feeder pig, until reaching market weight. However, to determine optimal market weight it is critical to know what feed efficiency is from two different ages or weights that occur later in the growth phase (Figure 3).

Feed efficiency is illustrated in two ways. The first is that feed efficiency is calculated for the entire growth phase to different end weights starting at 220 lb. For instance, with an end weight of 220 lb feed efficiency, measured as pounds of feed per pound of gain, is approximately 2.5 for the entire growth phase. For an end weight of 290 lb, feed efficiency is 2.9 for the entire growth phase. The second way that feed efficiency is represented as marginal feed efficiency. That is the feed efficiency

Figure 2. Costs for the Final Finish Ration

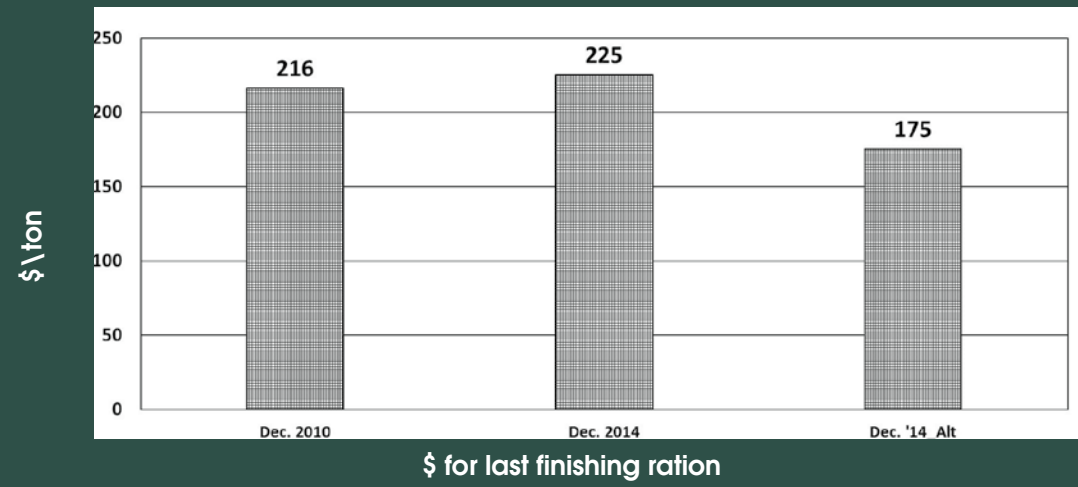
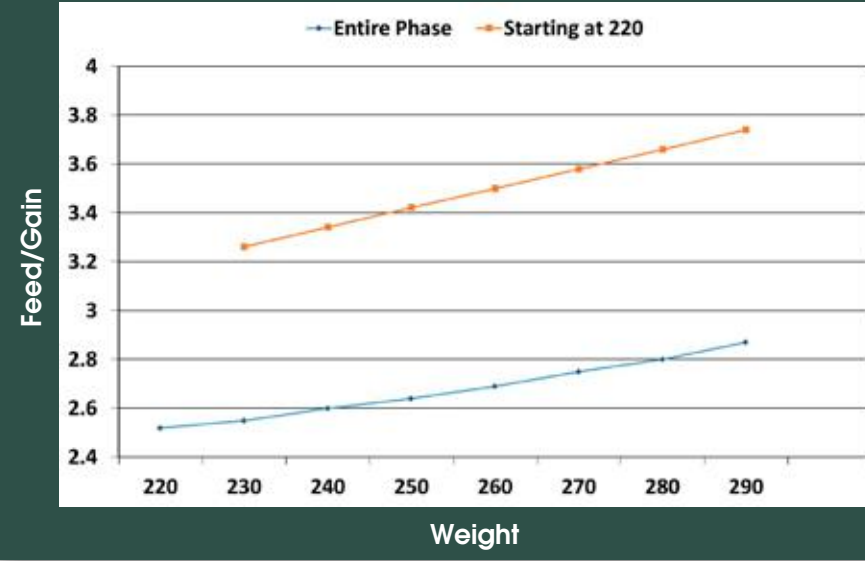


Table 1. Pig Performance Assumptions

Item	Value
Late Finishing Average Daily Gain, lb/day	1.88
Yield, %	75
Live Weight Base Price, \$	65
Base Lean Percentage @ 258 lb in 2010	55
Base Lean Percentage @ 258 lb in 2014	56
Opportunity Cost per Pig Space, \$	0.00
Downer/Dead %	0.3%

Figure 3. Feed/Gain and Marginal Feed to Gain for Finishing Pigs



between two different weights, regardless of the feed efficiency up to the initial weight. For instance the marginal feed efficiency from 220 to 230 lb is approximately 3.3 lb feed per pound of gain while from 280 to 290 lb; the marginal feed efficiency is approximately 3.7. Marginal feed efficiency was developed for each of the beginning and ending weights evaluated adapting results from previous research completed at Michigan State University (Edwards et al., 2006) and current industry averages.

Lean percentage also changed as pigs increased in weight. For example, the initial market weight evaluated was 258 lb with an estimated lean percentage of 56 percent. When pigs were held for an additional week, their subsequent end weight was 271 lb (Table 2).

Feed efficiency for the additional week, measured as feed/gain, was 3.54 and at marketing their percent lean was 56 percent. Utilizing a respective packer grid, no sort loss was in effect for 271 lb pigs. Moreover, each carcass achieved an additional \$2.54 per head in lean premium. Table 2 illustrates the information used for the evaluation completed in 2010. This was included to demonstrate that there has been favorable change over

time for percent lean and feed efficiency.

Table 2. Performance of Pigs Marketed at Increasing Weekly Market Weights

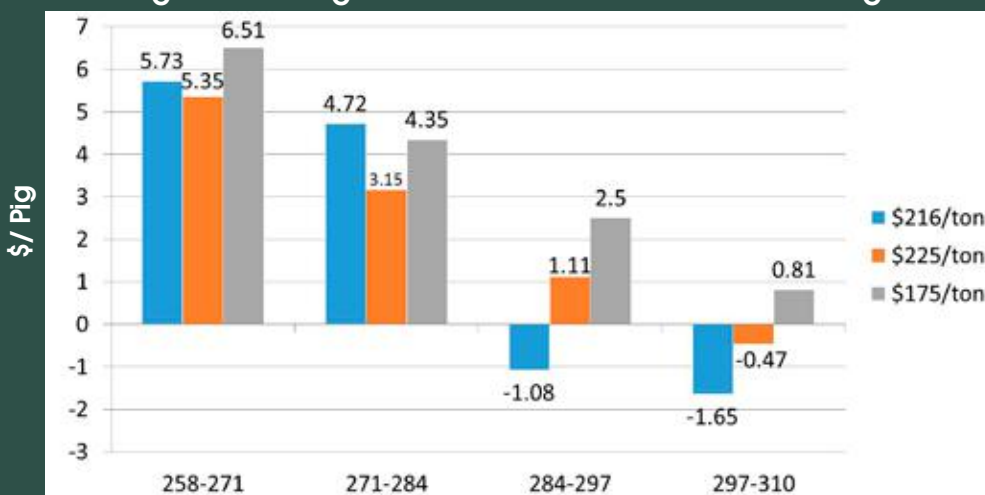
Item	Beginning Weight			
	258	271	284	297
ADG, lb/day	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88
End Weight, lb	271	284	297	310
Lean, % in 2010	54.5	54.0	53.5	53
Lean, % in 2014	56	55.5	55	54.5
Marginal Feed/Gain in 2010	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1
Marginal Feed/Gain in 2014	3.54	3.66	3.78	3.9
Yield, %	75	75	75	75
Change in Sort Loss, \$/head	0	0	-2.96	-3.25
Change in Lean Premium, \$/head in 2010	2.57	1.70	-0.99	-1.13
Change in Lean Premium, \$/head in 2014	2.54	0.54	1.67	0.58

Market Weight and Feed Price

The results of the three different feed price scenarios are shown in Figure 4.

The results are reported as the value change per head for pigs kept to the heavier weight. For example, for December, 2010 (\$216/ton), if pigs were marketed at 271 lbs. they would be worth \$5.73 more than if they were marketed at 258 lbs. For December, 2014, the pigs would be worth \$5.35 more per head at 271 lbs. than at 258 lb. For the scenario using the alternative priced ration for 2014 (\$175/ton), pigs sold at 271 lbs. would worth \$6.51 per head more than if they were sold at 258 lbs. The interpretation holds true for each category. In this analysis as long as the net variable return remains above \$0.00, then with all things being equal it is more profitable to sell pigs at the heavier weight.

Figure 4. Change in Value From Present to Future Weight



it was evident that pigs should be sold as they neared 284 lbs. However, using the 2014 assumptions pigs could be sold heavier and remain profitable. For the ration priced at \$225 per ton, pigs remained profitable until they neared 297 lbs. For the lower priced ration at \$175 per ton, pigs remained profitable at sale weights through 310

lbs. This implies that for the most part, even with relatively high priced feed and lower market price (\$65/cwt, live weight), it remains profitable to sell pigs at or above 300 lbs.

Optimum Weight when using partitioning agents

To further improve lean gain and feed efficiency, some producers use feed additives, such as Paylean™, marketed by Elanco. Paylean has been reported to improve growth, feed efficiency, lean percentage and yield. To effectively use Paylean, the ration, compared to typical finisher rations, must contain higher levels of amino acids to support the increased lean gain, which may add additional cost to the ration. To evaluate how a feed additive such as Paylean impacts the marginal profitability of selling pigs at heavier weights, a scenario was developed using both December, 2014 feed costs for the final ration. Table 3 shows the information used to complete this evaluation. Feed cost for the two final finishing rations were increased by \$25/ton to account for the inclusion of Paylean and increased levels of amino acids.

This evaluation was conducted differently than those previously discussed. Initial weight was 245 lbs. instead of 258 lbs., accounting for pig weight when Paylean was first included in the feed. In addition, average daily gain, feed efficiency, percent lean and dressing percent were adjusted to resemble what would be expected to occur when feeding Paylean over the four week scenario that was evaluated.

Figure 5 illustrates potential returns of this hypothesized Paylean scenario.

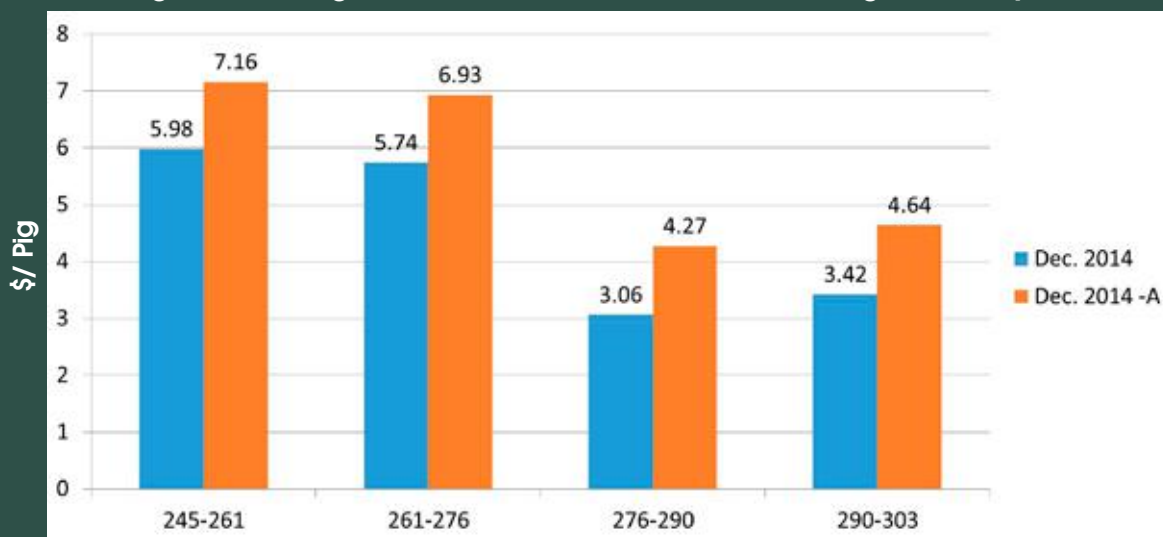
When feeding the Dec. 2014 ration at \$250/ton (\$225 +\$25), pigs at 261 lbs. were worth a net \$6 more head than at 245 lbs. The same was true for the rest of the increasing weight scenarios. Pigs marketed at 276 lbs. were worth \$5.74 more per pig than pigs at 261 lbs. Pigs weighing 290 lbs. were worth \$3.06 more per head than pigs weighing 276 lbs. and pigs weighing 303 lbs. were worth \$3.42 more per head than pigs weighing 290 lbs. When considering the alternative

Table 3. Performance of Pigs Marketed at Increasing Market Weights when fed Paylean™.

Item	Beginning Weight			
	245	261	276	290
ADG, lb/day	2.29	2.14	2.0	1.88
End Weight, lb	261	276	290	303
Lean, %	56.0	56.0	55.5	55.0
Feed/Gain	2.95	3.2	3.45	3.7
Yield, %	75.2	75.5	75.5	75.5
Change in Sort Loss, \$/head	0	0	0	-1.34
Change in Lean Premium, \$/head	1.95	2.50	0.54	2.86

Assumptions on Paylean performance from a summary of multiple studies. Cost/ton for the last finishing ration was increased by \$25/ton to cover the cost of additional nutrients and Paylean.

Figure 5. Change in Value From Present to Future Weight with Paylean



Dec. 2014 feed price of \$200/ton (\$175+25) the results showed that pigs at each increasing weight were worth more than the previous weight considered. This implies that when considering a conservative feed price and pig performance, pigs marketed at heavier weights remain profitable for pork producers.

Conclusion

Determining optimum market weight will differ from farm to farm. Marketing decisions should be based on lean growth potential, marginal feed efficiency through heavier weights, the packer grid in which market pigs are priced and space availability within the production system. With continued improvement in lean gain and feed efficiency to heavier market weights, market

weights will remain at or above current annual industry averages, unless there are extreme increases in feed prices or extreme declines in market price. Producers should carefully evaluate optimum market weights to improve profit potential and reduce risk.

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Summary of a Recent Evaluation of an AHP Disinfectant to Inactivate PEDv in Swine Feces

By: Madonna Gemus-Benjamin, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences MSU College of Veterinary Medicine

Recently the National Pork Board published a study on the use of Accel™ (Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide® (AHP®)) in cold temperature environment (-10F) with both a heavy and light fecal load and at standing times of 40 and 60 minutes. A summary of those findings are as such:

1. Both concentrations (1:16 and 1:32) of AHP disinfectant in a 10% propylene glycol solution and both contact times tested (40 minutes and 60 minutes) inactivated PEDv in the presence of light and heavy fecal contamination.
2. When washing, disinfecting, and drying the trailer are not possible; using, at minimum, a 1:32 concentration of AHP disinfectant in a 10% propylene glycol solution with 40 minutes of contact time is an effective alternative to reduce the risk of PEDv transmission between groups.

An earlier controlled study performed by a research team at Iowa State University demonstrated that under simulated field conditions (those normally seen in swine trailers) Accel was able to kill 100 percent of the PEDv in the presence of both light and high (up to 25 percent) amounts of fecal matter. Other benefits include the fact that Accel is Hydrogen Peroxide based, therefore does not require the use of PPE when being applied, and is also environmentally friendly. Accel also acts as a cleaner and does not normally require a pre-cleaning step.

Accel is patented and manufactured by Virox Technologies Inc. Farm Guard Products (<http://farmguardproducts.com>). For more information, visit bit.ly/AccelStudy.

All comments and suggestions should be directed to the:

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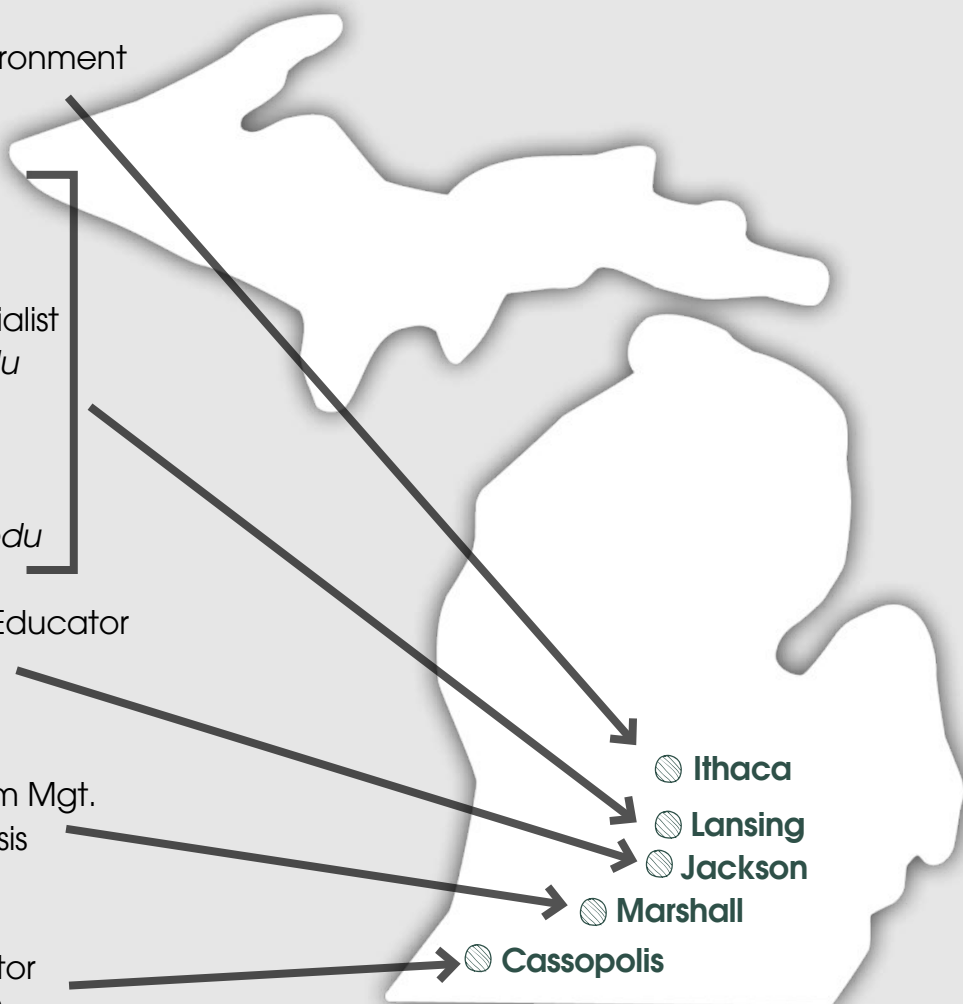
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Capital Update

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

CHILE AGREES TO ELIMINATE TRICHINAE TESTING REQUIREMENT

Chile has agreed to eliminate trichinae testing requirements on chilled U.S. pork based on a USDA certification that the pork originates from PQA Plus farms. (PQA Plus® is an education and training program run by the National Pork Board that certifies that hog operations are meeting their commitments related to animal well-being, food safety, worker safety and environmental protection.) National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) worked closely with U.S. and Chilean officials for many years to eliminate the testing, which artificially raises the cost of selling chilled pork.

The risk of getting trichinae from consuming U.S. pork is less than 1 in 300,000,000. Chile is one of the fastest growing markets in the world for U.S. pork exports since implementation of the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2004. U.S. pork sales to Chile have surged from 41 metric tons in 2003, the year before the FTA went into effect, to 19,109 metric tons valued at more than \$49 million in 2014, making it the second largest South American market after Colombia. Based on analysis conducted by Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes, NPPC expects pork exports to Chile to grow even more now that the trichinae testing requirement has been eliminated.

EXTENDING ANIMAL WELFARE LAW TO RESEARCH ANIMALS PROBLEMATIC

Legislation backed by the Humane Society of the United States could prohibit valuable research related to raising and caring for livestock. The “Animal Welfare in Agricultural Research Endeavors (AWARE) Act,” S. 388, sponsored by Sen. Corey Booker, D-N.J., and H.R. 746, sponsored by Rep. Earl Blumenauer, R-Ore., would bring farm animals at federal research facilities under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) of 1966. That law requires

animal dealers and research facilities to follow strict handling, care, treatment and transportation standards promulgated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Animals used in agricultural, production and research were exempted from the law.

The “AWARE Act,” which was prompted by a New York Times article that detailed alleged animal abuse and neglect at a federal animal research center in Nebraska, would eliminate that exemption. NPPC is concerned that bringing research animals under the AWA would limit researchers ability to conduct research in a way that mirrors the conditions in which livestock are actually raised. Strict controls on factors such as temperature, housing and handling that likely would be likely if agricultural research were brought under the AWA cannot replicate the real-world environment of farms and ranches. USDA Agricultural Research Service programs already have safeguards in place to protect animal welfare. NPPC also is urging lawmakers to put off action on research facilities until USDA completes a 60-day review of animal treatment at federal facilities in completed.

USDA INSTITUTE WANTS STUDIES ON FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY, FARM BILL AREAS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced it will provide more than \$160 million in award funding for research, education and extension projects that address challenges affecting U.S. agriculture production.

NIFA released six separate requests for applications through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) program, including for the areas of food security, water, childhood obesity prevention, food safety and climate. The AFRI program also will address six Farm Bill priority areas: plant health and production and plant products; animal health and production and animal

products; food safety, nutrition and health; bioenergy, natural resources and environment; agriculture systems and technology; and agriculture economics and rural communities.

NPPC, FARM BUREAU GET PROTECTIVE ORDER AGAINST EPA RELEASING FARM DATA

A U.S. District Court judge recently issued a protective order against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), stopping it from disclosing to radical environmental and animal-rights groups information on farmers, pending the resolution of a legal challenge brought by NPPC and the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) over the release of such data. Without undergoing review, EPA's Office of Water released in February 2013 extensive private and personal information it had collected on farmers in 30 states to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Earth Justice and the Pew Charitable Trusts under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests the groups filed. In some instances, the data contained farmers' home addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and personal medical information, as well as similar information for their employees, spouses and children.

After objections from NPPC and other agriculture groups, EPA requested that the environmental organizations return the data. In late June, NPPC learned that EPA was preparing to respond to additional FOIAs from activist groups, seeking additional personal information that the agency collected from other states. NPPC and AFBF objected to that release, and in July filed suit against EPA in the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, seeking to enjoin the release of the farmers' private and personal information. The court dismissed the suit Jan. 27, claiming that neither NPPC nor AFBF had standing to sue since some of the information could be obtained from other sources, noting that one farmer had a Facebook page and, therefore, had no expectation of privacy. NPPC and AFBF appealed the ruling and sought the protective order to prevent release of any farm information while the appeal is pending.

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION VISITS TPP COUNTRIES

House Ways and Means Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and a group of seven other lawmakers this week traveled to Singapore, Malaysia and Japan to promote the U.S. trade agenda, specifically the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, in which all three Asian nations are involved. The TPP is a regional trade agreement among 12 Pacific Rim countries, which account for nearly 40 percent of global GDP. During their travels, the U.S. congressional delegation also conveyed their expectation that Congress will soon pass legislation for Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), which will signal to U.S. trading partners that the United States is serious about completing trade negotiations. Having TPA in place also will make countries involved in the talks more willing to bring their best offers to the table, potentially making way for a swift conclusion of the TPP negotiations. After several months of stalled talks, mostly over agricultural market access issues, a number of top officials have signaled that the TPP is in the "end game."

COOL DECISION TO BE RELEASED SOON

The World Trade Organization (WTO) panel overseeing the review of U.S. Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) rules is expected to issue its appeal report by May 18. NPPC anticipates that soon after the announcement, Canada and Mexico will submit their retaliation lists for approval by the WTO. Retaliation is likely to be implemented in the second half of 2015. Agricultural products are expected to comprise the bulk of the retaliation. Canada has already issued a draft retaliation list that includes fresh pork and beef, bakery goods, rice, apples, wine, maple syrup and furniture. Mexico is threatening to suspend preferential tariffs for a variety of products, including produce items, meat and dairy products. Any retaliation against U.S. pork would have devastating financial consequences for U.S. pork producers. NPPC is urging Congress to bring the United States into compliance with WTO rules.

NPPC Weighs in on Dietary Guidelines Recommendations on Meat

NPPC criticized recommendations related to meat in the diet from an advisory committee informing the creation of federal guidelines for healthy eating. In a report for the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, an Obama administration-appointed advisory committee of health and nutrition professionals recommended that people consume less red and processed meat, and it omitted lean meat from its recommended dietary pattern. (It did maintain the Recommended Daily Allowance of 5.5 ounces of “protein foods.”)

Additionally, the advisory committee concluded that a diet higher in plant-based and lower in animal-based foods would be more environmentally sustainable. The report was sent to the secretaries of Agriculture and of Health and Human Services, who will use it to develop the 2015 guidelines. NPPC urged the USDA and HHS secretaries to reject the recommendations on meat. Due out later this year, the guidelines affect all federal food purchasing programs, including the School Lunch program. NPPC said the advisory committee took the wrong approach on meat. In earlier written comments on the 2015 guidelines, NPPC noted that animal proteins are considered complete proteins, containing all the essential amino acids, as well as a number of critical vitamins and minerals, including B12, Heme iron and potassium – often lacking in many American diets. It also pointed out that eating meat promotes satiety and preserves lean muscle mass and that including lean meat in their diets can help adults prevent or manage chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. Research even shows that, for those dealing with obesity, many cuts of meat can improve long-term weight maintenance. On the issue of sustainability, NPPC said that according to North Carolina research firm Camco, compared with 50 years ago, U.S. pork producers today are using 78 percent less land and 45 percent less water to produce a pound of pork and have a 35 percent smaller carbon footprint. NPPC will submit comments on the recommendations made by the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee and is urging pork producers to do the same by the April 8 deadline. 🐷

WEST COAST PORT LABOR CONTRACT DEAL REACHED

The Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) recently reached an agreement on a new contract, ending a months-long work slowdown at West Coast ports that had a severe negative impact on exporters, particularly those in the meat sector. The PMA, which represents terminal operators, stevedores and shipping companies, and the ILWU, the longshore workers union, had been operating without a contract since July 2014. The ILWU had agreed to continue work during contract talks but reneged on that deal in November. The resulting work slowdown at ports up and down the west coast cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars. It was very conservatively estimated that the U.S. meat and poultry sectors were losing in excess of \$40 million a week. Although a deal has been reached, it will take well over a month to clear the backlog of shipping containers at the ports. The U.S. pork industry, which in 2014 exported 27 percent of total production, a percentage that’s expected to rise, is increasingly dependent on an efficiently functioning infrastructure, including ports. 🐷

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Obama's 2016 Budget Proposal Addresses Food Safety, Antibiotics Use, Trade

President Obama's \$4 trillion fiscal 2016 budget includes several measures important to the U.S. pork industry. Contained in the funding blueprint are proposals that would:

- Consolidate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety Inspection Service and the food safety components of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to create a single agency within the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Address emerging swine diseases, such as Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus and other swine enteric coronaviruses.
- Devote \$20 million to USDA for the national control program for feral swine.
- Increase by \$57 million USDA's budget for fighting antimicrobial resistance, including: an increase of \$17 million for the Agricultural Research Service to study the relationships among microbes and livestock, the environment and human health; a \$10 million increase for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to enhance monitoring for antimicrobial-resistant bacteria among livestock; and \$2 million more for the National Agricultural Statistics Service to enhance survey work related to antimicrobial resistance. The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture will use an additional \$28 million through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative to develop, refine, and disseminate science-based knowledge about animal health management and production practices that can reduce the threat of antimicrobial resistance.
- Increase by \$14.8 million FDA's budget related to fighting antimicrobial resistance, including for assessing and measuring the impact of Guidance 213, which phases out the use in livestock production of antibiotics labeled only for growth promotion; developing a system for monitoring antimicrobial drug use in food-producing animals; and implementing a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) compliance program and providing guidance and training to support the VFD guidance implementation.
- Give the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \$282.6 million to expand the nation's ability to fight antibiotic resistance through enhanced monitoring in food-animal production of antibiotic-resistance patterns, as well as antibiotic sales, usage and management practices at multiple points in the production chain.
- Require USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) to study the economics of antibiotics use in livestock production. ERS will examine the uses of antibiotics in livestock agriculture, exploring the extent of use by livestock species, stage of production and purposes.
- Require ERS to study the efficacy of 2003 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation environmental regulations, examining how livestock and crop operations responded to the rules, including changes in the land base for manure application, in manure nutrient application rates on regulated operations and in manure application on nearby non-regulated operations.
- Look at opportunities for exports to China of U.S. livestock products. ERS will examine China's livestock modernization strategy that facilitated productivity growth and large increases in animal protein production in earlier decades with surprisingly little impact on agricultural trade.
- Increase by \$2 million the Office of the United States Trade Representative's budget. The proposed rise is complementary with Obama's aggressive trade agenda, with the administration negotiating multiple high-ambition trade agreements.
- Consolidate the numerous trade agencies within the federal government. Offices to be grouped are the U.S. Commerce Department's core trade and business functions, the U.S. Trade Representative's office, the U.S. Small Business Administration, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency.
- Increase the budgets for USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service, Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program. The programs are critical to increasing U.S. exports, and the U.S. pork industry and other agriculture sectors rely on the funding to help open and retain access to foreign markets for their products. 🐷



Pork Checkoff

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

CAMPUS CAFETERIAS REDEFINED

While colleges and universities have long been ranked for their academics and athletics, they're now competing for another title to attract students: best college food in America. Never underestimate the power of pork in this collegiate culinary quest.

As enrollment increases in U.S. colleges and universities, the Pork Checkoff's foodservice marketing team is seizing the opportunity to introduce a large number of students to pork in a contemporary way, just when they are beginning to form adult eating habits.

The time is right to help grow the number of younger consumers joining our pork target. According to the most recent census, there are almost 4,600 degree offering institutions in the United States, with roughly 21 million students. Today, colleges are attracting students not only for their academic credentials, but also for their elaborate dining halls, innovative dietary programs and appealing meal plans.

These trends are creating an array of opportunities to introduce pork in college and university dining halls. We began this effort with a strategic plan to sponsor, present and attend college and university foodservice conferences, such as The Culinary Institutes leadership retreats and CSP's Menu Directions conference. We met many of the right folks at these events and built some new relationships.

Forget Old-Style Dining

Once we started working with various campuses around the country, we noticed that the old cafeteria style of tray service using #10 cans of precooked food, serving everything out of an ice cream scoop and using boxed gravies has been replaced. Instead there are open kitchens, live fire cooking, made-from-scratch bakery items, noodle bars and authentic global cuisines.

One example where these trends are transforming dining options is the University of Iowa, where enrollment reached a record 31,000 students this fall. In April, we worked with the university's chefs to encourage them to add more pork dishes to their menus.

During an in-depth, day-long presentation, we provided a brief introduction about the National Pork Board and Pork Checkoff programs. Then we presented a butchering demonstration to show where the different cuts of pork come from.

The rest of the day was spent developing 10 new menu items with pork cuts from the demonstration. The dishes included porterhouse chops with herb butter, Sichuan style dan-dan noodles, pork burgers, a Puerto Rican-inspired sandwich, grilled pork brisket with harissa, Jamaican jerk pork kabobs and pork fries cut from muscles in the fresh leg of pork.

Executive Chef Barry Greenberg, a two-time Iowa Taste of Elegance winner and past attendee at the Checkoff's Pork Summit, was optimistic about what his staff members had learned from their day in the kitchen with the Pork Checkoff team. He was also confident that students would be eager to try some of the new offerings.

In addition, Chef Greenberg appreciated our focus on developing most of the dishes using value-added cuts and the fresh leg. Affordability is always a key consideration, since campus dining is often challenged with a very tight food-cost model.

More Campus Visits

To keep the momentum going, the Pork Checkoff is planning to visit the following campuses to conduct pork education sessions: University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Missouri, Ohio State University, University of California-Riverside, University of Michigan, Colorado State, Michigan State, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Illinois and Yale University.

The Checkoff will continue to develop new pork recipes that will better appeal to the way young people eat meals today. It's exciting to reach these kids at a pivotal stage in life and encourage them to become advocates and life-long pork consumers.

CHECKOFF REVAMPS WEBSITES TO BETTER SERVE AUDIENCES

The Pork Checkoff's three key websites – pork.org, PorkBelInspired.com and Porkcares.org – are among the pork industry's most important brand ambassadors in today's digital world. That's why the Pork Checkoff recently revamped all three sites to give them new life and make them more relevant and useful than ever.

"We're leading a world-class food industry and are implementing the latest technologies on our farms," said National Pork Board (NPB) President Dale Norton. "The Checkoff's websites need to include updated technologies, too."

The three sites, targeted to meet the needs of a range of audiences, incorporate the latest web design solutions to be even more user-friendly and to strengthen relationships with people seeking accurate, pork-related information online.

The Checkoff will continue to fine-tune Porkcares.org, pork.org and PorkBelInspired.com to stay current with the latest technologies and make the sites even more useful to visitors, Norton said.

"These websites remain a key way to get our messages out and allow us to be the go-to resource people turn to for accurate, reliable pork information," said Norton, who encourages producers to visit all three sites.

Producer-Oriented Pork.org Goes Mobile

Pork.org remains the go-to source for producers and others looking for everything from certification information to the latest research results on PED. But now with its new responsive

design, visitors can easily view the site on all mobile and tablet devices.

"Pork.org has a clean, simple look and feel that is mobile and tablet friendly," said Stephanie Holmes, web projects manager at NPB. "We've also focused on enhancing the search capabilities to make the site even more useful. Look for more improvements in 2015."

PorkBelInspired.com Offers New Pork Recipe Inspiration

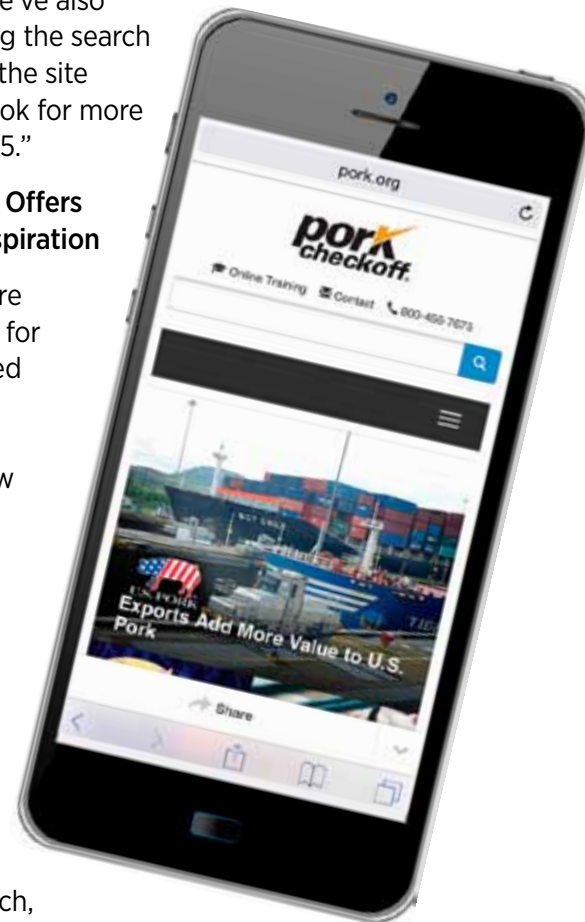
Because recipes are one of the big draws for the consumer-focused PorkBelInspired.com, the site's redesigned homepage offers new options to inspire people about pork's possibilities.

"Making the site more user friendly meant organizing it so consumers can easily find the recipes and information they need," said Amy Busch, digital marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff.

"The responsive design and new features make it more convenient, whether people log onto it from a desktop computer or a mobile device."

PorkCares.org Showcases Modern Pork Production

When people want to learn about pork production, many turn first to an online search. One place they can turn to is the Checkoff's Porkcares.org. Less than a year old, the site has been revamped to more effectively educate, engage and inspire visitors seeking information about responsible, modern pork production.



A Decade of Building TRUST

The Pork Checkoff launched Operation Main Street (OMS) in 2004 to “inspire producers to inform, educate and respond to issues facing the pork industry.” From the very first 13 OMS speakers to the 1,064 trained today, the inspiration has come from OMS volunteers to push the program every day to make a bigger impact and build consumer trust. OMS speakers started by telling their story to improve the pork industry’s image in rural America. In a few short years, thousands of speeches at local Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis clubs helped educate consumers about how pigs are raised today.

John and Connie Surber, pork producers from Sabina, Ohio, have given 108 OMS speeches to civic groups, dietitians, county and township officials, and high school culinary students.

**More than
34 million people**

have read or listened to a positive pork message thanks to the OMS media outreach program.



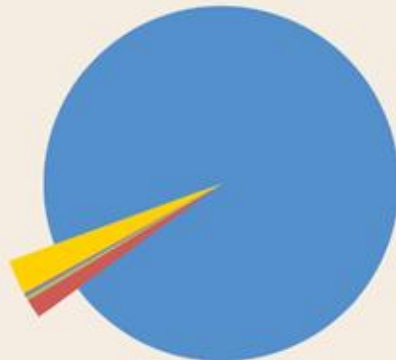
“We think it’s important to always ask what OMS can do better to help consumers understand our commitment to provide safe, healthy food,” John said.

“OMS also pushed us to be stronger advocates by confirming that nothing takes the place of farmers telling their own story,” Connie added.

OMS Expands Audiences

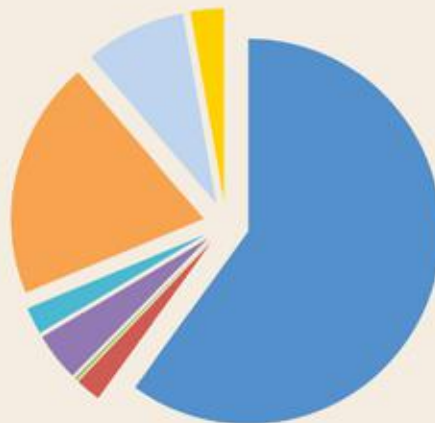
OMS Audiences 2004-2009

- Civic Groups
- County/Township Officials
- Veterinary Associations
- Dietitians
- Other



OMS Audiences 2010-Today

- Civic Groups
- County/Township Officials
- Veterinary Associations
- Dietitians
- Veterinary Colleges
- Culinary Students
- Ag Studies
- Other



Beyond the Backyard

By 2008, OMS speakers were going beyond their backyard to cities, such as Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis and San Francisco, and to speak to key decision-makers, including dietitian groups and county commissioners. In 2011, they pressed forward to reach the next generation of key decision-makers, with presentations at colleges of veterinary medicine and high school culinary arts classes.

In just the last three years OMS speakers have shared pork information with more than 1,000 culinary and animal science classes and almost 100 groups at colleges of veterinary medicine.

“Getting into the schools is one of the biggest OMS successes,” said Steve Brier, Murphy-Brown Midwest sow production manager. Steve has given OMS presentations to 26 high school classes in Missouri.

“The schools are the place to be because we have the best chance of making a long-term impact,” Brier said.

Interested in becoming an OMS speaker? Call (800) 456-7675 to learn how.



Nov. 2004

Launched to “inspire producers to inform, educate and respond to issues facing the pork industry,” Operation Main Street has grown from the original 13 trained presenters.

“These students are just starting to form opinions. They’re open and willing to listen.”

Sharing Science-Based Facts with Veterinarians

OMS-trained veterinarians are leading the way on another success story by reaching the next generation of animal health professionals. Thanks to a partnership between the Pork Checkoff and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV), OMS veterinarians have presented at 26 of the 28 U.S. schools of veterinary medicine. Today 86 veterinarians have been trained as OMS speakers.

Today




If you are a producer or veterinarian, looking to become an OMS speaker, please contact Mary Kelpiniski at kelpiniski@mipork.org.

“Veterinary medicine students will become an important resource for consumers about both companion and farm animal care,” said OMS Indiana speaker, Amy Woods, DVM, who also serves on the AASV’s Communications Committee.

“We need to make sure they understand the science-based practices used today for pig care,” Woods said. “Getting this information from a veterinarian also builds trust.”

Where does OMS go from here?

OMS speakers will keep moving the program forward to face new and emerging challenges and to demonstrate how the pork industry is evolving through science-based responsible, sustainable farming practices.

“As OMS has changed the last 10 years, the constant has been speakers’ desire to always stay ahead of the curve and meet the next challenge head-on,” said Ernie Barnes, director of producer services for the Checkoff. “This commitment is even more extraordinary when you add in the 30,000 hours OMS volunteers have spent speaking out for our industry since the program began.” 



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The Long View: Michigan's Dale Norton Values Strategic Planning on His Farm and in Leading NPB

By: Jan Jorgensen, NPB

It's no surprise that National Pork Board (NPB) President Dale Norton has held leadership positions at the local, state and national levels. Growing up on his family's Bronson, Mich., farm, his father, Rolland, taught him that if you have the ability, you need to take positions of responsibility.

"My dad was a Boeing B-17 pilot who flew 50 combat missions in World War II and then VIP flights with General Ira Eaker, commander of the 15th Air Force, at the end of the war," Norton said. "His leadership helped him advance to the highest rank offered to an enlisted soldier."

He added, "When my dad came home to start farming in 1946, he mixed farm work with service to our church, community and ag industries. Through the years, he encouraged us to do likewise."



"...we need to connect with the public and share that we are doing the right things in our barns every day."

Innovation and a focus on the future also have been mainstays on the five-generation farm founded by Norton's great-grandfather in 1880. Today, Norton is partners in Kendale Farm with his brother, Kenneth; his son, Michael; and his nephew, Josh.

The partnership includes a 1,450-sow breed-to-wean hog operation, with a third of the pigs finished yearly. The Nortons also have a cow-calf operation and raise

3,500 acres of corn, soybeans, hay, seed corn, peppers (bell and banana) and green beans for processing.

The latter two crops were added to grow and diversify the family farm when Josh and Michael returned to the farm after college. Long-term decisions such as this, as well as the day-to-day management of the farm, are guided by their farm's mission statement, which is on display in both the office and hog barn.

Long-term Farm Plan

"In 1985, my brother and I attended a strategic planning seminar where we wrote our mission statement," Norton said.

"With its emphasis on environmental and social responsibility and community leadership, it's not much different from the We CareSM ethical principles we emphasize today."

Being responsible members of their communities and acting with honesty and integrity are what pork producers across the country have done for decades, said Norton, who has served on the Pork Board since 2009.

"But only recently have we started sharing those values with our customers," he said. "It's so important that we keep telling our story."

Norton noted that NPB's new 2020 strategic plan cites "building consumer trust" as one of three key goals that will direct Checkoff efforts in the next five years.

As a member of the task force that guided the development of the 2020 strategic plan, Norton sometimes questioned how it would come together.

"But the end result is a cohesive, targeted plan to move the pork industry forward," Norton said. "Involving packers, foodservice operators, futurists and others in the process ensured that we looked at the long view, including the continued need to bridge the communication gap with the public."



Calendar of Events

Connect, Don't Defend

"The lack of trust in agricultural production is one of the biggest challenges we face today," Norton said.

"The mindset of many farmers is to defend what we do," he said. "Instead, we need to connect with the public and share that we are doing the right things in our barns every day."

The We CareSM initiative and Checkoff programs, such as Pork Quality Assurance[®], and Transport Quality Assurance[®], help demonstrate the care and commitment producers take in raising their animals, Norton said.

"But we always need to look at new ways to engage, educate and assure the public," said Norton, pointing to the Checkoff's channel marketing outreach, social media efforts and partnership with the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA).

Speaking with One Voice

"Through the USFRA, more than 80 agricultural groups have joined efforts to increase consumer trust and confidence in America's farmers," said Norton, who served as the first Pork Checkoff representative to the USFRA. "Speaking with one voice is an extremely effective tool."

USFRA's Food DialoguesSM, held throughout the country, and Faces of Farming and Ranching program also have helped initiate conversations with consumers about how their food is raised.

"As pork producers, we need to continue to be part of the conversation about food," Norton said. "We have a positive story to tell and can be proud of the safe, nutritious pork we provide consumers around the world." 🐷

April:

- 15-16 NPPC Legislative Conference
Washington D.C.

June:

- 3-5 Wold Pork Expo
Des Moines, Iowa
- 17 MPPA Annual Meeting
East Lansing, Mich.
- 20 Spartan Classic Show
East Lansing, Mich.
- 21 Spartan Jackpot Show
East Lansing, Mich.

July:

- 11 Mason County Breakfast on the Farm
- 15-19 Michigan Livestock Expo
East Lansing, Mich.
- 25 Sanilac County Breakfast on the Farm

August:

- 8 Van Buren County Breakfast on the Farm
- 15 Gratiot County Breakfast on the Farm



Social Media Update

By: Megan Sprague,
MPPA Program Director

With both regret and excitement for what's ahead I am announcing that this will be the last *Michigan Pork* issue that I work on. I have taken a position with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in their Animal Industry Division.

During my time at MPPA I have had the honor of working with Michigan pig farmers, who are some of the most passionate, generous and dedicated people that I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. My work at MPPA has also given me many opportunities to expand my network within agriculture nationwide. Through organizations like AgChat Foundation, I have met farmers of all types that have one thing in common, their zeal for consumer engagement. I am constantly impressed by their persistence in tough conversations and the level of openness they bring to those interactions.

Over the past three years I have been attempting to grow MPPA's social channel presence and have enjoyed watching Michigan producers tackle this new arena. My last challenge to you would be to "take the first step" digitally and create a social presence for your farm.

As I've mentioned in earlier issues, make sure to pick what channel fits your lifestyle best. Stick to just one channel, and do your best with it. Delegate, sometimes there is someone in your business outside of you, that has a passion for online communication, make them your point-person. This task can be so daunting at times, remember that MPPA is here to answer your questions and can help you get started with social media.

In order to inspire you in your social media adventures, I wanted to feature a "must follow" Michigan and out-of-state pig farmer:



Afton Blight, with Blight Farms Inc.

www.blightfarms.com

In addition to working full-time on the farm, Afton maintains a website, with a blog and a Facebook for her family's farm. She has engaged consumers keeping the Blight Farms Inc. Facebook page updated with photos, daily happenings and information. She is currently featuring members of the operation and their families in a "Get to know Blight Farms" series. She also has invited her local "followers" to contact her for riding in the combine during harvest and is always great about posting pictures of their pigs of all sizes. Afton's work on social media is putting a face on Michigan pig farming and agriculture. I highly recommend giving her farm's page a "like" and following their activities as a model of how to tell your farm's story on Facebook and connect with your community.

Wanda Patchse, Minnesota Farm Living

www.mnfarmliving.com

Wanda is a Southern Minnesota pig farmer that has found her voice in the nation's agriculture discussion using her blog, hosted on her website and a variety of other channels including Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. She recently gained national attention when she blogged about the Chipotle "meat shortage."

Blogs like "Let's Take The "Factory" Out Of Factory Farms" and "What I Wish People Knew About Pig Farming" actively seek to address the hard conversations that revolve around modern pork production. Wanda has participated AgChat Foundation activities and volunteers with Commonground (www.findourcommonground.com). Commonground is a group of farm women who are, "all about starting a conversation between women who grow food, and the women who buy it. It's a conversation based on our personal experience as farmers, but also on science and research..." She has done significant work connecting consumers to the people who raise their food. So make sure to check her out on your favorite social media channel or subscribe to her blog via email through her website.



Check out this list of additional "great follows"!

Erin - www.chitowntobulltown.blogspot.com

Jennifer - www.jentsfrontporch.com

Diana - www.righteousbacon.com

Heather - 3kidsandlotsofpigs.com

Cristen - www.foodandswine.com

Chris - www.chrischinn.wordpress.com

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MPPA Awards Scholarships to Michigan Youth

An outstanding group of six students came out on January 31st at the 2015 Green and White Education Fair and Show to contend for MPPA's Pork Industry scholarships. The students were interviewed by a panel made up of a pork producer, Michigan State University (MSU) associate and an industry representative. After the interview, the participants gave a presentation in front of the judges and other Green and White attendees. The judges had a tough decision to make and awarded four scholarships in total. The winners included:

Alex Schut- 1st place

Alex serves as Michigan FFA President with plans to pursue a career as an agriculture lawyer. She plans to attend Oklahoma State University in the fall. She is a proud West Michigan livestock showman who graduated from Caledonia High School. Alex raises club lambs and maintains a flock of 35 ewes. Additionally, she enjoys showing horses, pigs, rabbits, and goats at state and national shows. Her passion stems from her family's involvement in the agriculture industry. Alex has a passion to make a difference through agriculture!



Participants pictured left to right: Aaron Christy, Carsonville; Brooke Rupprecht, Vassar; Alex Schut, Belding; Addison Walstra, Fruitport; Ashley Rogers, Niles; and Brad Chapman, South Rockwood.


Addison Walstra- 2nd place

Addison currently attends Grand Valley State University and is pursuing a degree in Exercise Science and with hope to later attend chiropractic school. Once in chiropractic school, she will be looking to obtain a degree to practice on both humans and animals including equine, canine, and various livestock.

Ashley Rogers - 3rd place

Ashley is currently a junior attending MSU, majoring in Animal Science. After completing her bachelor's degree, she plans to attend graduate school and then pursue a career within the swine industry.

Brad Chapman - 4th place

Brad is a senior at St. Mary Catholic Central. His family raises show pigs, club lambs, grain - corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay on their farm. Brad has plans to attend MSU in the fall for a degree in BioSystems Engineering. 

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MSU and Industry in Beginning Stages of Planning Educational Days



A newly formed steering committee will play an instrumental role in establishing a series of agriculture education days hosted by Michigan State University beginning in 2016. The committee is looking for your input.

The days will be designed to offer specialized educational events held throughout the year for those in Michigan's food and agriculture industry.

The agriculture education days will replace Ag Expo, which was annually held in mid-July.

"This change was not an easy decision and was made after consultation with many industry groups, commodity leaders and vendors," said College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) Dean Fred Poston.

"This gives us an opportunity to hone in on the specific needs of the vastly different types of commodities, crops and livestock grown in Michigan and provide that information in a way that producers have told us they want it."

The steering committee composed of commodity and industry representatives, will work to ensure the needs of the industry are met, leveraging the university's resources, as they determine what these agriculture education days should look like.

The committee will work throughout this year so that a high-value experience can be offered in 2016 and beyond. One of the first steps in this process is to survey producers and industry representatives to determine topics, locations and program formats. Please take this survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/msuagdays> to help us make this a successful endeavor.

Contact Mike Kovacic, Director CANR Stakeholder Relations, with questions at 517-355-8469. 🐷

We're Listening

Dear MPPA,

Thank you very much for awarding me the 4th place scholarship. I sincerely appreciate your support. I am very excited about being a freshman at MSU next year and your generous support really helps me. I am planning to study BioSystems Engineering, but I am hoping to take as many agriculture/livestock classes as possible. My brother is in the Block and Bridle club and on the Livestock Judging Team, I already plan to do both. This past year I really enjoyed being a part of the Michigan 4-H National Livestock Judging Team so I know I will enjoy being a part of MSU's team. Thank you again for making all of this possible.

Sincerely, Brad Chapman

South Rockwood, Mich.

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Productive maternal females are the foundation to our program. Our high health, closed herd of 1,100 pure Landrace sows crossed on 100% Swedish large white boars, produces maternal females to be utilized as parent or grandparent lines.



Swine Systems' Swedish genetic lines originate from a program that has been evaluating genetics for efficient, lean quality production for over 70 years.

Swine Systems' program allows producers to purchase boars or gilts for their own production. Retailers or consumers can also purchase processed meat from our program.



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