

MICHIGAN

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PORK



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-Maksimchuk**

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growth is fastest
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**Domino's stands its
ground against animal
rights extremists**



MSU Swine Farm Supports MAEAP

By: Madison Wensley



Hog producers across Michigan show environmental stewardship through the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). MAEAP was created to mitigate agricultural risks and strengthen industry support, providing farmers with the resources needed to stay updated in pollution prevention and both state and local environmental laws.

In 1855, the Agricultural College of the State of Michigan was founded. Later established as Michigan State University (MSU), MSU has paved the way in many agricultural advancements. In 1862, MSU became the first land-grant institute in the nation. More than a century later, MSU joined forces with MAEAP. As a partner and supporter of MAEAP, it was only appropriate that MSU underwent the three-phase verification process to certify all their campus farms and outside stations, such as the Kellogg Biological Center.

In 2014, farmstead, cropping, and livestock verification was complete.

The MSU Swine Teaching and Research Facility was erected in December 1997. Shortly after the completion of the facility, eighty early-weaned, purebred Yorkshire females were segregated and relocated to the farm from the old facility. These eighty females mark the beginning of MSU's current 228-sow herd. The farm has been a farrow-to-finish, closed herd confinement operation since this transition.

Kevin Turner, Swine Farm Manager and MSU alumni began the MAEAP verification movement at MSU with the support and help of Dr. Dan Buskirk, Associate Professor and Beef Cattle Nutrition and Management. Given that MSU is a large supporter of MAEAP, Kevin believed it was important to set an example by not only encouraging fellow producers to become

verified but to become verified themselves. "How can you expect others to go through the verification process if you haven't taken the steps to?" he said. "With all the accreditations and inspections in place by the university, it made verification seamless."

Kevin believes that the opportunity to take part in a voluntary program, designed to help producers improve their current practices is advantageous. "As farmers, we all have a passion and a vested interest in the environment." Animal care, manure management, and waterway health are top priorities for Kevin. "We didn't do it for the white sign, but it's the white sign out front that strengthens community and employee awareness, benefiting our industry."

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PORK

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On the cover: New MPPA board member Afton Blight Maksimchuk works on her family farm with her cousin, Stan Weitzel.

SPOTLIGHT

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**By: Madison
Wensley**

Meet New Board Member: Afton Blight-Maksimchuk

The Michigan Pork Producers Association would like to welcome one of three new board members, Afton Blight-Maksimchuk. Afton is a shareholder in Blight Farms, Inc., located in Calhoun County, MI. The family operation is owned by her father, Art Blight, and uncle, Ken Blight, who are second-generation farmers. The Blight family farms approximately 2,800 acres of corn, wheat, and soybeans, in addition to a farrow to finish hog operation and a 600-head beef cattle feedlot operation. Afton, Art, Ken, and cousin, Stan Weitzel, all work together to successfully manage the farm. Afton's mom, Le Anne, helps keep the books for the operation.

Afton began working on the farm at a young age. After high school, she took a gap year before college to explore different areas of interest. "I didn't want to stay on the farm because it was easy. I wanted to stay on the farm because it was what I wanted to do," she said.

With that in mind, Afton relocated to South America to work with a non-profit organization called, Supporting Kids in Peru (SKIP). In Peru, she spent her time teaching first through sixth grade children English. Living along the coast in a dry environment that only saw rain once that year, she soon realized she liked working with her hands and wanted to be around vegetation. "I really just discovered what I liked to do. I like being able to plant something and see it grow." When she returned home, she attended Michigan State University as an Animal Science major to pursue a career in agriculture. In her spare time at MSU, she worked in the campus Meats Lab, in addition to interning at a livestock farm in Ohio and crop scouting in the thumb of Michigan.

Afton graduated from MSU in 2010 and returned home to her family farm. In 2011, she began working full-time as the swine herd manager. The farrow to finish operation markets 1,900 finisher hogs per year to Tyson, located in Logansport, Indiana. Her goal as the farm manager is to reach capacity while optimizing space and continuing to improve born-alive numbers. Currently, there are no plans for expansion. Afton also owns land for corn and soybean crop production.

In addition to her roles on the farm, Afton is extremely involved in Michigan Farm Bureau, both statewide and at the local level, serving on the Michigan Young Farmers Committee. She is also certified as an Operation Main Street (OMS) presenter. The National Pork Board's OMS Program trains volunteers across the country who are helping to set the



*Pictured above, Afton Blight
Maksimchuk holding a
piglet in the nursery.*



Pictured at left, Afton Blight Maksimchuk with her husband, Branden, and their dog. Below, Afton with her cousin, Stan Weitzel in front of their farm sign.



record straight by telling the pork industry's story of innovation, quality and stewardship starting at the local level. Afton said certification in OMS is beneficial because it teaches you the appropriate way to communicate with the public about pork production.

Along with educating the public on how pigs are raised, Afton believes that taking care of the environment is vital to a successful farming operation. Blight Farms was one of the first MAEAP verified farms in Michigan. Their system verification includes: cropping, farmstead and livestock. Afton said, since 2003, through MAEAP, Blight Farms has been able to reassure the community and strengthen consumer knowledge that as producers, they are being responsible. "The program is helpful because someone comes out and tells you your risks, mitigating potential hazards before

they occur."

In February 2016, Afton married Branden Maksimchuk, long time neighbor and family friend. When Afton is not working on the farm, she enjoys reading, refinishing furniture pieces, and spending time outdoors with her husband. 🐷



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“Second Time Around”



By: Bob Dykhuis
MPPA PRESIDENT

I started my second stint as President of Michigan Pork Producers Association Board of Directors during our June Board meeting. I never thought I would have to do that again when I finished my first term a decade ago. I kind of have mixed emotions about that as I look forward to this term. After sticking around the industry as long as I have, I guess it was bound to happen. I am very excited about the swine industry in Michigan. I do not think this will be a dull time in Michigan or our organization, but I will comment on that later. We are going through a transition in our own farm with generational transfer in full swing. My son Joseph is now the Company President and runs the day to day operations. I am the Senior Advisor and Board Chairman of Dykhuis Farms INC. Our roles are changing but have some overlap yet. This allows me to do more business development and project management. I also run construction equipment to relieve the stress a person later in his career develops.

I am excited about the MPPA organization. It too is going through a form of generational transfer and I may be able help with some of that. As Sam Hines finishes his career with MPPA, Mary Kelpinski has stepped into the role of Chief Executive Officer. I have worked with Sam since he was hired in. We spent a lot of time together with the Pseudorabies eradication effort nationally and in Michigan. I have the greatest respect for Sam and am pleased to have been able to work with him for as long as I have. Sam has always provided a lot of depth as a “been there went through that” type of person. Mary has served faithfully and with great capacity as a support person for the organization. I am looking forward to seeing her develop as the staff leader of MPPA. Emily is already demonstrating her competency by reminding me about my article I need to write and the deadline for this quarterly article. We are blessed with great staff.

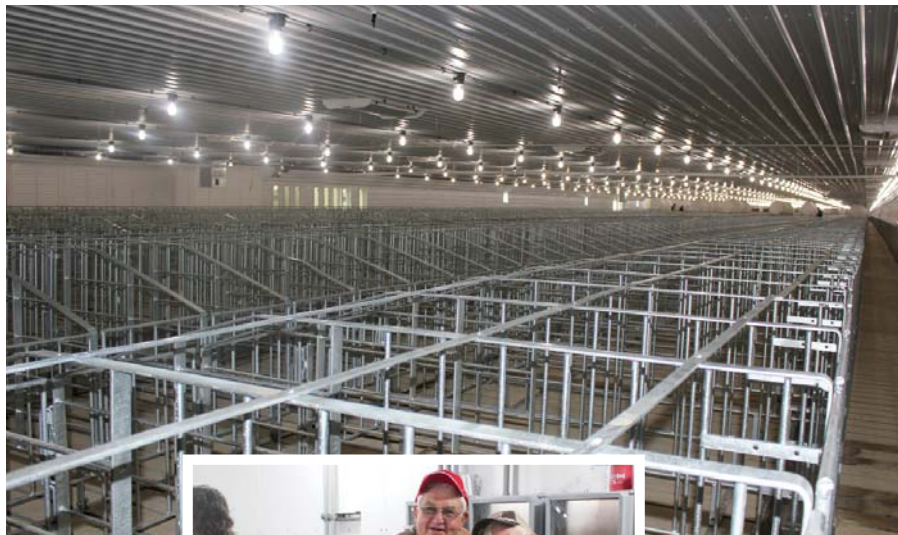
I think it will be interesting to see the growth of our industry because of the Clemens Food Group pork processing plant opening in Coldwater. I was able to attend the recent open house at the Spartanwood operation, the new sow unit of the Reiks and Norton families located near Bronson, Mich. It is a very impressive structure and filled with technology that will provide excellent pig care and will produce a smaller odor footprint. I think the open house was a huge success and was well attended. It was a great opportunity to showcase the industry to the public who attended. The site has a visitor’s

“ While this is an exciting time of growth for the pork industry in Michigan, we need our pork organizations more than ever. ”

viewing area and I like the construction of that with the idea of ongoing tours for visitors.

While this is an exciting time of growth for the pork industry in Michigan, we need our pork organizations more than ever. I am totally in when it comes to MPPA, National Pork Producers Council and the National Pork Board. I personally have invested hundreds of days of my career going to meetings and serving on committees. It is work worth doing. The by-product of that for me has been leadership development and training. I have learned a lot from that and it will help me serve you better as President of MPPA. If you are feeling all good and secure, I need to close with a warning. I started my career in 1978 and started selling hogs in 1979. I have never seen a good year in the pig business that ended in eight. We have a large expansion going on in our industry. We are more vulnerable than ever to Black Swan events because of the large production. We need our organizations to help take care of things for us. We need you to support us. We need some of your time and we need all of you to participate in the voluntary Checkoff for NPPC so they have the resources they need to be out voice in D.C..

Thanks for the opportunity to serve. 🐷



At left, Norton's new facility, Spartanwood, during an open house April 28.



Above, volunteers pass out food during the Spartanwood open house. At right, community members take tours of the new hog barns at the open house April 28.



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“2018 Farm Bill Request”



By: Mary Kelpinski

MPPA CHIEF
EXECUTIVE
OFFICER

In the pork industry, we talk a lot about BioSecurity and efforts to keep our pigs safe. Since 2013, and the emergence of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED) Virus, I feel we have made great improvements to our systems to keep pigs healthy. Unfortunately, PED is not the only foreign animal disease we have to worry about. One disease that is prevalent in many other countries is Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

At the recent Farm Bill Field Hearing in Frankenmuth, I had the opportunity to talk to Senators Debbie Stabenow (MI) and Pat Roberts (KS) and share a request from the pork industry to build up our protection against FMD. Senator Roberts serves as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Senator Stabenow is Ranking Member.

The United States hasn't experienced an FMD outbreak since 1929 and the good news is that there are now vaccines available that can be used as tools in the event FMD is found in the states. Unfortunately, the U.S. doesn't currently have enough vaccine to be much help.

FMD is an enormous risk to the U.S. livestock industry. An outbreak would cripple the entire agricultural sector and have long-lasting ramifications for the economic viability of U.S. livestock production. An outbreak would immediately close all export markets. Currently over 25 percent of the pork that is produced in this country is exported.

That is the reasoning behind the pork industry's Farm Bill request for

“ An outbreak would cripple the entire agricultural sector and have long-lasting ramifications for the economic viability of U.S. livestock production. ”

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funding a FMD vaccine bank. The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), along with state pork associations and many other state and national organizations, is requesting, through the next Farm Bill, that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) develop an adequate vaccine bank to address an outbreak. Ideally APHIS should contract for an offshore FMD vaccine bank that would provide vaccine antigen concentrate for all FMD strains currently circulating in the world. In addition, there is a need to make sure there is ample production capacity to produce the millions of doses of vaccine needed in the shortest amount of time.

We are requesting Congress to authorize annual funding in the five-year Farm Bill of \$150 million for the vaccine bank, \$30 million for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network and \$70 million, in block grants, for state animal health agencies to enhance their ability to respond to a foreign animal disease emergency.

An Iowa State University economist estimates the cumulative impact of an outbreak on the beef and pork sectors over a 10-year period would be more than \$128 billion. Corn and soybean farmers would also lose \$44 billion and nearly \$25 billion, respectively, making the impact on these four industries alone almost \$200 billion.

After the 2001 European outbreak, where the majority of

animals euthanized didn't have the virus but were within the infected area, it was realized the only effective way to clean up the disease was by vaccination.

We realize this is a big request, but agriculture is a big industry that affects everyone. A workable FMD vaccine bank can minimize the impact on the U.S. economy

and reduce government costs of a catastrophic FMD outbreak in the United States.

It is important that all farmers remain vigilant with their biosecurity practices on the farm and hopefully we will be prepared for whenever the next health issue hits. 🐷



Above, Mary Kelpinski of the Michigan Pork Producers Association meets with Congressman Dan Kildee and Senator Debbie Stabenow at the recent Farm Bill hearing in Michigan.

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Pork's Six-Year Growth Is the Fastest in Foodservice, Fresh Pork Presents an Opportunity

Pork has been the fastest-growing protein in foodservice since 2011, according to Technomic, Inc.'s 2017 Volumetric Assessment of Pork in Foodservice. Over the past six years, pork use has grown on a pound basis by more than double chicken, which is the next fastest growing protein. Pork use increased by 1.145 billion pounds, while chicken use grew by 515 million pounds.

On a percentage basis, pork grew three times the rate of turkey, which is the next fastest growing protein, at 3.6 percent versus 1.2 percent. During this same time period, pork represents 61 percent of all protein growth in the foodservice industry (1.145 billion pounds of a total growth of 1.867 billion pounds).

The pork category continues to increase in foodservice, with a growth rate of 0.8 percent from 2015 to 2017. Totaling 5.9 billion pounds, the growth reflects a volume increase of 114 million pounds over the 2013 to 2015 period.

Processed pork continues to be a strong performer in foodservice, making up the majority of total volume. The five largest categories driving pork category growth are bacon, processed ham, breakfast sausage, ribs and pepperoni. Collectively, the categories represent 66 percent of the total volume. The love of bacon shows no signs of slowing and represents the largest share of volume, at 20 percent, or 1.2 billion pounds, growing 4 percent since 2015.

"We are pleased to see continued growth of pork use in foodservice," said National Pork Board Past President Jan Archer, Goldsboro, North Carolina. "The volumetric study shows that pork continues to be a strong performer in the foodservice industry, underscoring pork's popularity specifically in value-added pork products such as ham, bacon and sausage."

As consumers demand more interesting flavor profiles and global cuisine, there has been an increase in authentic fresh pork applications. Since 2015, carnitas showed a compound annual growth rate of 5 percent and porchetta had a 15 percent increase. Notable growth in


fresh pork also was seen in belly, chops and ground pork.

"Fresh pork presents a huge opportunity in foodservice by offering a range of cuts and applications to deliver a variety of authentic and innovative dishes. Also, fresh pork's value has never been better," Archer said. "Fresh pork allows the foodservice industry to deliver what consumers want while turning strong profits.

"Over the past two years, limited-service and full-service restaurants represented the largest user groups of pork in foodservice, accounting for 67 percent of all pork volume. The growth in limited-service restaurants has been mainly driven by the all-day breakfast additions by major chains.

In categories where both uncooked and pre-cooked forms exist, pre-cooked pork has grown at a faster rate over the past two years, respectively growing at 4.7 percent and 0.9 percent. This growth can be attributed to packer/processor innovation and an ability to deliver quality pre-cooked products that address the labor challenges many operators face.

On an overall basis, the usage of pork is evenly split among the three main dayparts, with snacking representing a small share of volume, which is consistent with the 2013 and 2015 Volumetric Study findings. However, lunch has taken one share point away from dinner overall since 2015. This can be attributed to the extension of breakfast menu items to other dayparts, with lunch being the key beneficiary of all-day breakfast. In addition, slowing traffic in the dinner daypart, especially among Full Service Restaurants, is a factor.

"Pork continues to deliver on key criteria for both foodservice and consumers," Archer said. "And menuing pork presents a unique opportunity for the different foodservice segments to grow their businesses and be profitable." For more information on the 2017 Volumetric Assessment of Pork in Foodservice, or to find out how pork delivers across the menu, please contact the National Pork Board at (800) 456-7675 or at foodservice@pork.org. Valuable information also can be found at porkfoodservice.org. 

Pork Checkoff Publishes New PRRS Initiative Research Book

The National Pork Board's new porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) virus research booklet is now available. The guide, PRRS Initiative Research, is the most comprehensive source of Checkoff-funded research available on the subject, spanning 20 years of results.

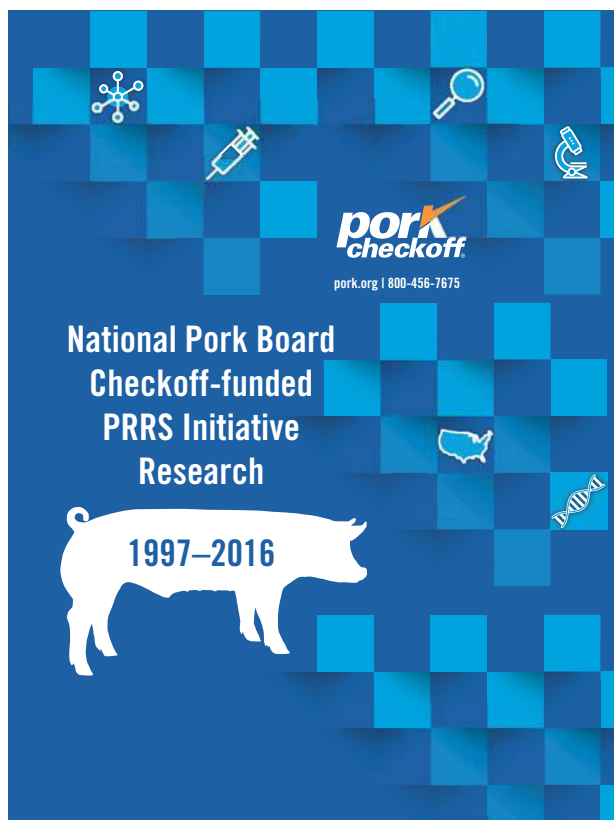
"Each year, the effect of PRRS is felt on pig farms across the country, and it has a \$664 million annual impact on the U.S. pork industry," said David Pyburn, DVM, senior vice president of science and technology, National Pork Board. "The Pork Checkoff has consistently invested in swine science and PRRS research, and the result is a guide that will provide value to understanding PRRS in an effort to address its impact."

The updated and expanded 2017 edition contains Checkoff-funded

PRRS research from 1997 to 2016, which can help producers, swine veterinarians and researchers learn more about how to control the costly virus. The guide has six sections including:

- Immunology, virology and pathogenesis
- Vaccine development
- Epidemiology, risk factors and control strategies
- Diagnostic testing
- Surveillance and elimination strategies
- Genetic resistance

The PRRS Initiative Research (1997-2016) is available online.



For more information on the guide, contact Lisa Becton, DVM, at LBecton@pork.org or at (515) 223-2791 or visit www.pork.org/pork-checkoff-research/.



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ITS GRILLING SEASON!

Summer means one thing: grilling season! And nothing beats a juicy pork chop sizzling on the grill. Prized as one of America's most loved and versatile cuts, grilled pork chops are quick and easy to prepare. **Just grill it like a steak!** From a weeknight dinner solution to a weekend cookout with friends, and with a variety of seasonings and side dish options, your grill will be busy all summer long. The best part of preparing grilled pork chops? The recommended cooking temperature is 145° F, which only takes 8-9 minutes on the grill!

COOKING DIRECTIONS: 145° F IS WHERE IT'S AT!

Regardless of your cut of choice, bone-in or boneless, all pork chops cook the same. The length of cooking time depends on the thickness of your chop and the temperature of your grill. The best way to ensure peak deliciousness is to cook by temperature with a digital meat thermometer. The USDA recommends that pork chops are best enjoyed when cooked to an internal temperature of 145° F followed by a three minute rest. The National Pork Board suggests the range of 145° F to 160° F optimal flavor.

KNOW YOUR PORK CHOP CUTS!

First things first, pick your cut! All pork chops come from the pork loin. Some common chops you'll see in the meat case or counter include:

Ribeye Pork Chop: Originates from the center of the loin in the rib area. Can be purchased bone-in or boneless. These are sometimes referred to as a "rib chop." It is incredibly tender and lean.

New York Pork Chop: Sometimes called "Center Cut Chops," or "Top Loin Chops," these chops are one of the most common cuts available. It is the leanest chop and the boneless version is perfect for stuffing.

Porterhouse Pork Chop: Derived from the lower back, these chops contain a piece of the loin and tenderloin, separated by a T-shaped bone. They are often regarded as the most tender and flavorful cuts.

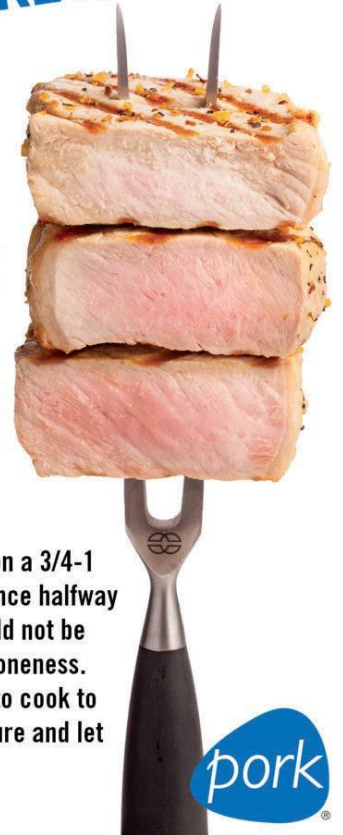
Sirloin Pork Chop: These come from the area around the hip and often include various muscle groups and a piece of the hip bone. This cut is often tougher than the others. Try marinating before grilling.

GRILL IT LIKE A STEAK!™

160° F
GRILL FOR 11-12 MIN.

150 - 160° F
GRILL FOR 9-11 MIN.

145 - 150° F
GRILL FOR 8-9 MIN.



Cooking times are based on a 3/4-1 inch thick chop, turning once halfway through. Color alone should not be used as an indicator for doneness. Use a meat thermometer to cook to the desired end temperature and let it rest three minutes!

PORK CHOP GRILLING TIPS

Don't be afraid to ask your butcher for advice picking out the best chop for the occasion!

Bone-in chops often provide the most flavor. There is fat (flavor!) found around the bone, and the bone does a lot to keep the meat from drying as it's cooked.

Avoid using sharp utensils to pierce the meat when flipping, which would allow valuable juices to escape.

Don't overcook your chops! Pork is best enjoyed (and safe!) when cooking to 145° F followed by a 3 minute rest.

Michigan Ag Bills Move Through House Ahead of Summer Recess

By: Nicole Heslip, Brownfield Ag News

Michigan lawmakers in the state House have passed a set of bills to clarify ag exemptions with less than one week remaining before the summer recess.

Majority floor leader Dan Lauwers tells Brownfield one of the bills builds upon changes requested by the Department of Treasury to specify exemptions to agricultural land tile, subsurface irrigation pipe, portable grain bins and grain drying equipment, even when they are a permanently fix

part of real estate. “If the foundation is not movable, you pay taxes on that, but the structure itself that can be disassembled, moved and reassembled—that is exempt from sales and use tax.”

The bills also eliminate sunset language on the Agricultural Disaster Loan Origination Program which was created in 2012 to help fruit growers impacted by catastrophic freeze events. “I’m not thinking we’re going to need it this year, but it’s much easier to have that structure that in the event that we ever find ourselves

in a situation where we need the ability to possibly offer those low or no interest loans for specialty crops.” The bills now move to the Senate Ag Committee for approval.

He says the House Ag Committee has also approved a measure that gives farmers the ability to move portable toilets, in addition to a service provider, as required in some farm fields under food safety standards.

Lauwers says he also expects legislation regarding vehicles of husbandry and the state’s horse racing industry to move forward yet this year.

Biosecurity—as easy as 1, 2, 3!

4-H members, volunteers and staff should have an understanding of basic biosecurity procedures to help limit and stop the spread of animal diseases. Following these simple and effective steps in this article will help protect your animals and other farms. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development provided the following tips for practicing biosecurity, regardless of your farm’s size and scope.

Keep your distance: It’s important to restrict animal access to people, wildlife and other domestic animals that could potentially be carrying disease. In addition, any time new animals are added to a farm there should always be a period of time in which they are separated from other animals. This ensures they are healthy

before introducing them to the established animals.

Keep it clean: Washing your hands, clothes and footwear thoroughly before and after working with animals and regularly cleaning and disinfecting your equipment are essential to preventing disease on any farm. Don’t bring in disease

It’s important to think twice before sharing equipment or supplies with neighbors. If you decide to share equipment with others, always clean and disinfect equipment before and after sharing. It’s also important to disinfect boots, vehicles and other items after returning from another farm.

Recognize a sick animal: Early detection of unhealthy animals can help prevent the spread of the disease among your animals and in your

community. It is always wise to consult with your local licensed veterinarian.

Separate newly acquired animals and animals that have been taken off the farm:

It is important to separate animals that are new to your farm or that have been off the farm from animals that were already there. New or traveling animals may bring new diseases onto your farm. To prevent the spread of disease to your entire herd or flock, simply separate new and traveling animals from the rest. Make sure to take care of animals that have always been on the farm first to help stop the spread of disease.

These practices will help reduce the spread of pathogens among our animal communities and help keep your 4-H project safe from disease.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension.



Information for an Industry on the Move

June 2017

Vol. 22 No.2

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Teams and Ideal Players

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information?



This newsletter is edited by:

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& Emily Schmitt MPPA, Program Director

Your Greatest Assets: Teams and Ideal Team Players

By Kristine Ranger, Guest Columnist

Editor's Note: Kristine Ranger is a lifelong educator and advocate for agriculture. She has degrees in Animal Husbandry and A.N.R.E. from Michigan State University and a Masters in Adult Education from South Dakota State University. While at MSU, she worked at the MSU Swine Barns and has delivered lessons in classrooms, board rooms, arenas, and barns for over 27 years. She coaches Herdsmen in HRM and teambuilding, and consults with farm owners to increase their leadership and organizational effectiveness. She is an Authorized Partner for Wiley workplace solutions and an Accredited Facilitator for The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team.

My goal here is to get you thinking more strategically about your human assets, especially in terms of how they perform on a team. With labor shortages impacting every segment of agriculture, it can be a challenge just to complete daily farm chores, but farm owners who lack knowledge and understanding about best practices in human resource management and development, and teamwork are at a distinct disadvantage. Farm laborers often work in shifts or teams, so not having a deliberate approach to recruiting, hiring and onboarding for improved team performance can be costly to the operation and demoralizing to individual employees, teams and managers. The latter group often spends up to three hours per day on interruptions because teams are dysfunctional; they waste time waiting for direction, get bogged down in conflict and personality differences, and pursue personal goals over team goals.

How you handle your human assets, or human resources (HR), can positively or negatively affect team results, turnover and profitability.

How Mismanagement Affects the Bottom Line

The true cost of turnover is seldom computed on farms. From comparable industry figures, we know that in jobs earning under \$30,000 a year, we can estimate the cost to replace a \$10/hour farm employee at \$3,328. For mid-range positions (earning \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year) the true cost would be closer to \$8,000/turnover. If your operation has annual turnover of 20% or higher, this affects

profitability, performance and your employment brand (aka reputation) in the community.

Another metric that impacts profitability, but is often ignored, is engagement. According to Gallup Poll, while there have been some slight ebbs and flows, less than one-third of U.S. employees have been engaged in their jobs and workplaces during the past 15 years -- meaning they are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace -- and two-thirds are disengaged.

Disengagement is an indirect cost to a farm business in lost wages, time and employee morale. If we assume that all employers hire good people; people who inherently want to do a good job, how do we explain the attrition from engaged to disengaged? Or consider the “actively disengaged”, which can be expressed thru vandalism, high absenteeism, insubordination and other acts of destruction. How do we slow the progression from “hire to fire” and keep workers satisfied in agriculture jobs?

a) It's not just the money.

Contrary to popular belief, salary is a satisfier, not a motivator. Performance will improve when people receive constant feedback on progress towards concrete goals and they are celebrated when they reach goals. Compared to verbal encouragement, the brain acclimates to higher pay very quickly and thereby ceases to be an incentive. Keep in mind that using bonus pay to reward an individual's performance often leads to competition, rather than collaboration. According to experts, the worst thing you can do is pit employees against each other. In other words, treat people who work for you as human beings, not human capital.

b) Managing Human Resources Must Be Somebody's Job.

You've probably heard or read that employees don't leave jobs, they leave people - specifically their boss or supervisor. Approximately 35 percent of U.S. workers would forgo a raise to see their boss fired and 75 percent of employees say their boss is the worst or most stressful part of their job. These high percentages are often the direct result of a manager in a small business operation who doesn't have time in his or her day to think about strategic people management or workforce planning. When you consider that the charter of HR is to “optimize the ability of a business to perform and complete” it seems logical that smaller operations could benefit more from a virtual or onsite HR Manager; someone who can have meaningful

conversations, listen and ask the right questions. Ideally, a talented HR person can manage the entire workforce so it fulfills its role as efficiently as possible and integrates human resource development with organizational change and improvement efforts.

c) Build high performing and cohesive teams.

High performing teams, such as those who are collectively responsible for feeding, sow care, farrowing, breeding, or agronomy can become a competitive advantage for farms. You'll know you have achieved that goal when all team members are committed to shared goals and they truly care about each other. As team manager or supervisor, you can encourage the latter by posting production or personal successes on a large board, arranging team outings or events for community service, learning new skills together, or even supporting each other during emotionally difficult times such as high pig mortality losses.

d) Increase engagement.

Increasing engagement means eliminating the root causes of job misery: anonymity, immeasurability and irrelevance. To make any job more fulfilling and more engaging, you should focus your coaching efforts to ensure that the following conditions are present in the workplace:

- Everyone knows AND understands everyone else on the team; they take a personal interest in others.
- Everyone understands their contribution to the farm and the overall success of the business,
- Everyone has an opportunity to measure or monitor their progress.

While inclusiveness and engagement are good, many business consultants are warning that engagement is not enough. They're even suggesting that empowering employees to track simple metrics like conception rate, mortality rate or litter sizes has additional advantages: it brings passion and joy to work. Joy is the outcome of doing something important as a member of a trusted team, a team where members hold each other accountable to shared results. Employees who develop a passion for their work are more likely to stay and perform.

e) Find and keep ideal team players

Patrick Lencioni, world renown business consultant and author of *The Ideal Team Player*, has defined three individual virtues that are needed to overcome dysfunctional teams

in the workplace. You can attract these kinds of people to your farm if your recruiting, hiring and selection practices are fully integrated with the desire to create high performing teams. If teamwork is critical to your success, your highest priority should be on identifying and hiring the “A” players who can demonstrate the three attributes of effective teamwork: humble, hungry and smart.

Humble

Ideal team players are humble. They lack excessive ego or concerns about status. Humble people are quick to point out the contributions of others and slow to seek attention for their own. They share credit, emphasize team over self and define success collectively rather than individually.

Hungry

Ideal team players are hungry. They are always looking for more. More things to do. More to learn. More responsibility to take on. Hungry people almost never have to be pushed by a manager to work harder because they are self-motivated and diligent. They are constantly thinking about the next step and the next opportunity.

Smart

Ideal team players are smart. They have common sense about people. Smart people tend to know what is happening in a group situation and how to deal with others in the most effective way. They have good judgment and intuition around the subtleties of group dynamics and the impact of their words and actions. People skills can be identified and teased out with job interviewing questions and scenarios, or employees can gain this important skillset from credible resources and tools (such as Everything DiSC Workplace Profile), workshops and coaching.

In summary, high performing, cohesive and functional team members trust each other; they avoid wasting time talking about the wrong issues and revisiting the same topics repeatedly because of lack of buy-in. Highly functional teams also make higher quality decisions and accomplish more in less time and with less distraction and frustration. They also hold each other accountable to decisions. The desirable “A” players that you want as career achievers (as opposed to job seekers) or possibly even potential successors to your farm, rarely leave when they feel like an insider and when they are part of a cohesive team.

Utilizing an HR Support System to Improve Teamwork

Not all farms have the luxury of using teams, but many

operations are mismanaging the recruiting and selection process and misrepresenting their farm because of a lack of practical knowledge about the human resource system and human resource management (HRM) practices. They hire the wrong people because they are unclear about the kinds of people needed on their operation to fit their culture and their teams. They attempt to solve problems by addressing individual parts of the HR system, rather than studying how the interdependent components can work together to accomplish the aim of the whole. Additionally, management has not quantified a return on investment from performance coaching, a required HRM skill for engaging and retaining employees.

Your HR system can also be leveraged to develop capacity and clarity throughout the organization, from top and middle management all the way to every single new employee. That clarity begins with your culture. If the hiring manager can't communicate the company culture, he or she also can't identify a good fit for a job, role or function. If the employee isn't a good fit with *the culture*, *he or she quickly becomes disengaged and eventually leaves, often taking a good employee with them. Hiring the wrong employees is toxic to teams and bad for business.*


Final Thoughts

- Prime the pump. Get to know your human assets on a personal level and invest in their future with your farm from day one. Make them feel like an insider.

- Teams at all levels can become high performing and cohesive in a culture of trust and engagement. Being trustworthy and building trust are not the same thing, but both are needed to increase joy and passion in work.

- Leadership teams need to understand that changing the HR system will change what people do, not vice versa. Leaders are responsible for improving the HR system which is important because a bad system will beat a good person every time. Stop blaming the workforce!

- Management should focus on increasing job performance through more effective coaching and increasing retention through more effective hiring practices. Using an interview guide and targeted questions can help you identify ideal team players who will contribute to team success.

For more information on HR systems, building cohesive teams, or finding ideal team players, call 517.974.5697. Email inquiries are also welcome at kristine@knowledgenavigators.com. 

Labor Considerations

By: James A. Kober, DVM, MS, Diplomate ABVP-SHM, svsmi@4starvets.com
Swine Veterinary Services of MI, LLC, partner of Innovative Veterinary Network, LLC

First let me tell you, I am not a human resource specialist nor am I an expert on employee matters. These are just my thoughts and observations on the dealing with employees on pig farms from 30 years of veterinary practice experience.

The days of hiring a local high school kid for your primarily source of labor is over for most producers. Most hog farms today need full time, committed employees to get the day-to-day work done.

Make sure the interview process is consistent with all applicants. A standard application and interviewing process is necessary so all applicants are treated equally from the start. If more than one person is going to conduct interviews, be sure he or she asks the same questions as other interviewers.

Be sure the job description is clear and concise. List every job this applicant may be doing so he or she knows up front what will be expected of him/her when she starts. This is true for all levels of employees regardless of management level all the way down to the person that does the pressure washing. This includes days working per week, hours per day, and overtime hours.

Utilize a consistent and thorough training program so everyone knows how to do their job. Continue the training until the new employee knows exactly what he is supposed to do and how to do it. **DO NOT ASSUME PEOPLE KNOW HOW TO DO A JOB, EVEN IF IT IS AN EASY JOB.** Remember that most people you hire did not grow up on a farm so they have NO experience with livestock. Taking care of pigs is not intuitive to most people so do not assume they know how and why they are doing a task. If a boss feels he needs to hover over an employee because he fears the job is not getting done properly, then chances are the employee was not trained well enough in the first place.

Give employees regular feedback on how they are performing a task. People thrive on feedback. If a boss never gives feedback, the employee will assume the job is getting done properly or that the boss just doesn't

care. Also, when giving feedback, be sure to give some positive feedback, not just all negative. Most employees will not respond to continuous negative feedback.

Remember that not all employees are good at everything. Proper interviewing and hiring hopefully gets the right people on the payroll. After that, it is the bosses job to figure out the best spot for the employee. In other words, once you get the right people on the bus, it is important to get the right people in the right seat.

Here are some thoughts on keeping employees once they are hired:

- Work environment is just as important as pay and benefits to many people. Well-lit workspaces, comfortable break areas, and functioning equipment all add to better employee feelings.
- Don't ask employees to do anything the boss is not willing to do.
- Give an unexpected bonus (gift card, lunch, etc) occasionally for a job well done or some extra effort in a job.
- Ask for employee input when making a decision for the farm. It makes them feel like they are part of the team.

Finally, many ask how to keep employees over the long haul. High turn-over rates can be a tremendous drag on all the employees and make them much more inefficient. Employee turn-over is very expensive! What is the key to lower employee turnover?

I work with farms where most of the employees have been there for 15 years, 20 years, and even longer. I also work with farms that have very high turnover rates, up to 70% per year. The big difference is this: Farms with high employee turn-over rates consider employees liabilities and something they "have to put up with." Farms with low employee turn-over rates consider their employees as assets and feel everyone brings something to the table.

Are you hiring assets or liabilities? 

Where will you find the necessary LABOR for our growing Industry?

Authors: Dr. Gretchen Hill, Dr. Dale Rozeboom, Jill Cords & Beth Ferry

When looking at the future of agriculture in the United States, meeting our industry's personnel needs may be as important as the price of corn and consumer's preferences. The ability to staff our Michigan farms with capable employees should be a priority for all of our agriculture entities. When looking for a pool of employees what options have you considered? From an "early retired" population to 4-H and FFA members looking to gain experience and "work" on the farm to the college "intern", there is a pool of individuals who need us as much as we need them.

One example of potential employees is the group of newly retired or "seasoned" employees. Many times these are people in your community that because of their choice or a changing industry, find extra time on their hands and a need for more cash. This group of people knows how to go to work on a daily basis and understands how to take direction, as they have already been an experienced member of the workforce. The individuals from this population at times appreciate being able to tailor a job to their situation and preferences, as some would rather work in farrowing or nursery rooms than be a greeter or stockperson at the local store. The opportunity to hire these people on a part-time or seasonal basis can be a perk to the farm, as the need for help may fluctuate and these types of employees often miss working in agriculture and enjoy being on a farm again.

Agriculture in the United States could be facing a crisis situation in its workforce, as the demand for labor has increased and the labor pool has not significantly grown, or in some areas has decreased. The need for a skilled agricultural workforce to replace our current aging population has become more important as America has woken up and realized that we need more young people to focus on science and technology. According to the USDA's Agriculture Census data the

average age of a Michigan farmer is 57.6 years old. As this group continues to age, a new population will need to get involved. The careers in agriculture are numerous, and 4-H and FFA programs are helping to direct young people to these opportunities. Michigan farmers can also be a part of this enlightening by working with youth to help them see these possibilities in agriculture operations and assist them with gaining hands-on experience.

Are you looking for seasonal help? Have you recruited at your local 4-H or FFA clubs to help fill these part-time and/or summer employees? Although many of the youth involved have little to no background in the livestock or the agriculture industry, they are willing to learn and need opportunities to do so. Remember most people from the general workforce lack "farm" experience and these may be the people you are looking at to hire, giving a young person a chance and helping them develop a good understanding of what farming involves is a positive thing for everyone. That person may not become a farmer or work as an ag laborer but they will always be a consumer and it is always a good thing to have consumers that understand how agriculture works.

Many times those students involved in FFA or 4-H go on to secondary learning institutions to study agriculture. In fact, a large number of incoming students do not have practical farm experience prior to attending a university or community college. Universities do not have the faculty and/or facilities to give students the practical and "hands on" experiences necessary to prepare them for many careers or open their eyes to the many opportunities in agriculture. This is why most agri-science programs rely heavily on internships to help craft these experiences for their studies. For the farming operation that takes on a student intern the benefits are numerous and include giving you the opportunity to (1) bring someone new into the industry, (2) evaluate their

potential as an employee and how they would fit into your organization, (3) give you some additional help when labor needs are high or you have other projects that need to get done but no one has the time to address them. These internship experiences are normally looked at as a chance to screen potential employees without having to go through the interview process, they also allow the intern to hit the ground running if they are hired as a full-time employee. Over 50 percent of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources recent graduates find their full-time positions from an offer after they complete their internship.


How can you set up an internship for your farm? Start early; more and more students and potential employers are working to “lock-up” a summer internship plan by December. Others are not secured until February or later. If you wait until after spring break the first week of March, we can help post the positions but cannot guarantee a large response of applicants. There is also a broad range of locations for internships, and students many times intern out of the state for a summer or semester.

Jill Cords (a graduate of the MSU Animal Science Department) the College of Agriculture & Natural Resource Career Consultant, assists students and potential employers. She organizes the Science, Agriculture, Food, Environment, Packaging & Health Career Fair scheduled for October 3. Throughout the year, she works with an on-line internship and job posting service called Handshake. Employers can search resumes of students on the site. Employers can register for Handshake at msu.joinhandshake.com – the career fair registration is also on that site. Contact Jill at 517-355-0234 or jcords@msu.edu.

The Michigan State University Animal Science

Department offers ANS-493, a professional internship course that is coordinated by Gretchen Myers Hill (hillgre@msu.edu). This allows students to work alongside professionals to accomplish goals and specific duties. The internship “experience” is one that you or a member of your staff develop with some input from the student intern. Most students are looking for an overall experience to help them gain knowledge and skills in your particular area of the industry. A minimum of 10 weeks is required for the student to earn 3 hours of credit for this course.

This summer, students are interning in all phases of production in many species (beef, dairy, equine, poultry, swine & meat), scouting crops, participating in pharmaceutical research, assisting commodity organizations, working in non-profits, and assisting veterinarians. The range and depth of experience varies from internship to internship, as does the skill set of the interns. When looking to develop your farm’s internship program it is important to be competitive, you will need to pay your intern and perhaps provide housing if the student needs to relocate for the time they spend on the farm. Having a general idea of what roles and responsibilities, along with what the student will see and experience will also help entice students to your program. Internships can be part of a student’s education during any semester of the school year.

If you are looking for a way to source potential employees or want to have an opportunity to broaden someone’s agriculture knowledge you should consider developing an intern program for your farm. The potential impacts of internships are great, you may find a great employee for your farm, have a hand in developing the next research scientist or impact consumer decisions because of the positive experience they had at your operation. 

Looking for more information?

The National Pork Board offers a toolkit of information on how to find employees, the hiring process and how to manage and train employees. Below is a sample of some of the information available in this toolkit. For more information, visit www.pork.org/human-resource-tools/



Candidate Selection

During the screening and selection process, you must drill deep, to uncover the best candidate. Doing so, however, adds time to the process. Improve your chances of making a good hire by considering some of the following recruitment tips:

- Pre-screen candidates. This is a must, even when hiring for entry-level positions. Doing so saves you valuable interviewing time and keeps you from lowering the bar just to get the position filled. Thoroughly review all candidates' applications and/or resumes before selecting candidates to interview. When your pool of candidates requires further narrowing, conduct a brief phone interview. Limit your inquiries to qualifications and abilities necessary to perform the job and perhaps salary expectations. Schedule interviews with only those who fit the qualifications for your position.
- Identify red flags within the application. The application itself can be quite revealing about your candidate. Stay away from candidates who have unexplained long spans of time between jobs, have frequently changed jobs in recent years, haven't listed references and/or display laziness in completing the application.
- Prepare candidates for the interview. Prepare candidates by briefing them on your company, the details of the position, etc., prior to beginning the interview. This might be something you want to cover when you contact the person to schedule the interview. This allows time in the interview to concentrate on the important issues like determining if the candidate's skills and qualities are a good fit for the company.
- Utilize an interview team. A team of two to three interviewers is optimal. Any more can be too intimidating for the candidate and feel more like an interrogation. By nature, one decision-maker will tend to hire people similar to him or her. The team approach encourages a harder look at the skills and experience that goes along with the candidate's personality. Interview teams are more prepared and improve the casual process an interview can sometimes become. Conversation is

necessary and informative. "Getting chatty" or being "too conversational" may distract from getting answers to job-related abilities, and could lead to legal trouble. Interview team members should evaluate each other. The types of questions should be discussed and decided upon ahead of time and members should determine who will ask what. The candidate's would-be direct supervisor should be a member of the interview team, whenever possible.

- Ask good, probing (but legal) interview questions. Prepare the basic questions ahead of time to ensure that each is job-related, not personal. In a nutshell, if you don't need to know, don't ask. Consider how you have worded your question to stay within legal bounds. For example, you cannot ask, "Are you a U.S. citizen?" However, you may ask, "Are you authorized to work in the United States?" Questions also should dig into details but remain within the acceptable lines of questioning when the qualifications you are looking for require it.
- Seek Contrary Evidence: When a candidate seems almost too good to be true, he or she might be. If you find yourself thinking that the person is perfect, challenge yourself to seek contrary evidence. Your desire to find a perfect candidate can sometimes cloud your vision. You may want to consider asking a question such as this one in your interview, "It sounds like you have done a fantastic job in the past as an animal caretaker. But obviously we aren't all perfect. Tell me about a time when things didn't go as planned." Conversely, if you find yourself feeling like the person just doesn't fit, don't give up too fast. Ask questions to make sure that your judgment of the person is on target.
- Check and verify validity of references and perform background checks. Don't rely solely on the interview when making a hiring decision. Keep in mind, no matter how complete your interview was, a candidate after a job may offer exactly what you want to hear. For an animal caretaker position it is recommended that, at a minimum, you follow up on references and perform background checks. Sameday offers are not always possible, and there is long-term value in maintaining the integrity of the hiring process.

All comments and suggestions should be directed to the:

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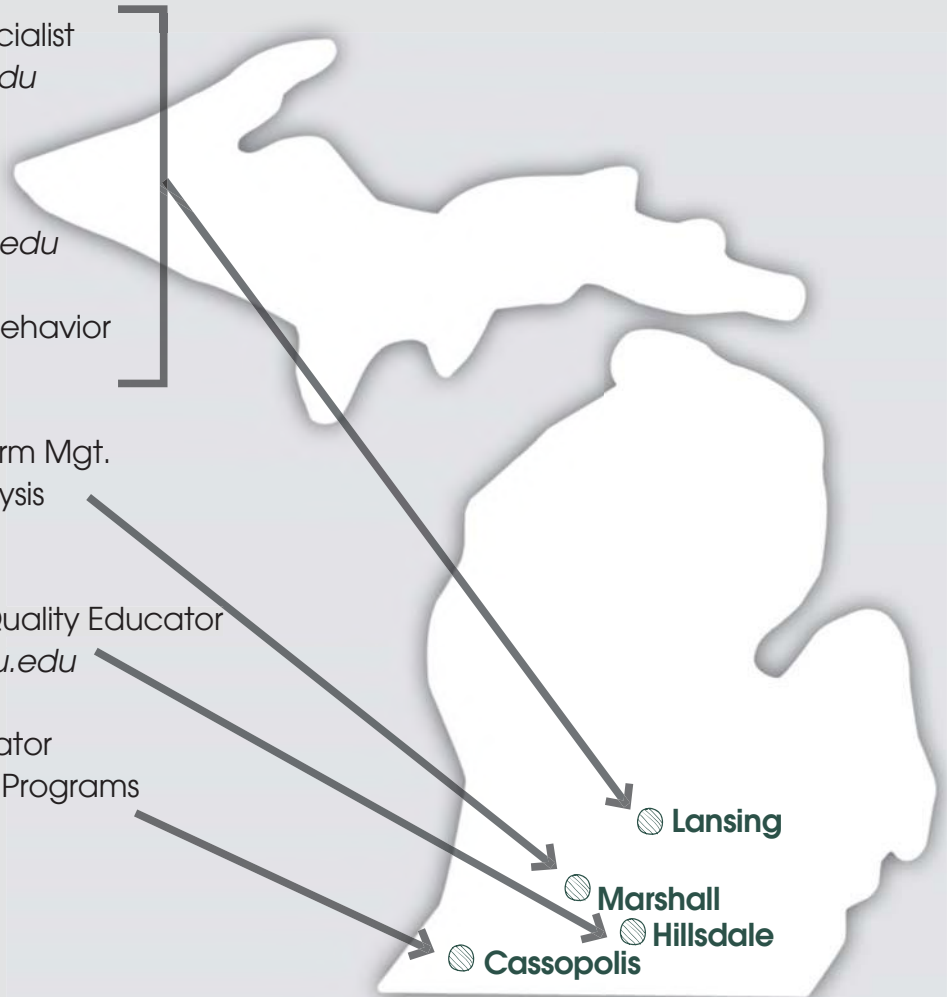
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Capital Update

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

WORLD PORK EXPO 2017 AN INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Approximately 20,000 U.S. pork producers and other pork enthusiasts, including more than 1,000 guests from locations outside the United States, gathered in Des Moines, Iowa, recently for NPPC's annual World Pork Expo. NPPC President Ken Maschhoff, President-Elect Jim Heimerl and NPPC board member Kraig Westerbeeck opened the world's largest pork-specific trade show and exhibition with a press briefing addressing the U.S. pork industry's regulatory reform priorities. NPPC's immediate past president, John Weber, and Vice President David Herring hosted a second press briefing to discuss international trade priorities and the importance of federal funding for a foot-and-mouth disease vaccine bank. More than 100 journalists attended this year's event. Nearly 450 pork industry suppliers from North America, Europe and Asia were showcased at the 29th Expo, which featured the largest exhibition space in the history of the show.

U.S., MEXICO SUGAR DEAL BODES WELL FOR NAFTA 'MODERNIZATION'

U.S. and Mexican negotiators recently reached a deal in principle related to imports of sugar from Mexico, a development that bodes well for future talks on renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement. In a statement issued, NPPC praised Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and his team for reaching the deal, which addresses a potentially contentious trade dispute. NPPC, which strongly backed NAFTA and is supportive of "modernizing" the agreement, wants to ensure that North American pork trade isn't disrupted during any renegotiation and that the zero-tariff rate on U.S. pork exports to Mexico and Canada remain in place. NAFTA has been a tremendous success for America's pork producers; Canada and Mexico represent 36 percent of global U.S. pork exports and more than 15 percent of total pork

production. According to Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes, U.S. pork exports to Mexico have created more than 9,000 U.S. jobs. But Hayes calculates that if NAFTA were terminated, the U.S. pork industry would lose the entire Mexican market. That undoubtedly would be the case for many other U.S. products, so the importance of Mexico and the United States reaching agreement on sugar cannot be overstated, according to NPPC.

SECURE PORK SUPPLY PLAN WILL MINIMIZE BUSINESS DISRUPTIONS

The National Pork Board announced the creation of a Secure Pork Supply plan to help the U.S. pork industry respond to major threats, including a foreign animal disease (FAD). It provides procedures that producers, processors and federal and state agencies can implement should an FAD strike, according to the veterinarian and director of swine health programs for the Pork Checkoff, Patrick Webb. The result of ongoing collaboration among NPPC, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Pork Board, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians and academia, the plan will provide business continuity to producers who enroll in the program before an FAD event.

NPPC, U.S. POULTRY SEEK REHEARING ON EMISSIONS REPORTING CASE

NPPC recently joined the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association in requesting a rehearing of a case related to air emissions reporting, following a ruling issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The court's decision rejected an exemption for farms from reporting emissions under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Emergency Planning Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA). CERCLA and EPCRA work together to notify local first responders of emergency hazards. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had

provided farms an exemption from CERCLA reporting of low-level emissions of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide generated from the natural breakdown of animal manure after an agency evaluation determined that any emergency response was “unnecessary, impractical and unlikely.” Environmental activist groups sued EPA over the exemption; NPPC intervened in the lawsuit to defend the agency’s common-sense exemption. NPPC’s and U.S. Poultry’s rehearing petition is supported by the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Milk Producers Federation and the United Egg Producers.

U.S. EXITS PARIS CLIMATE PACT

President Trump announced recently that the United States will exit the Paris Agreement, the non-binding climate change pact, dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance. In his remarks on the decision, the president said he’d be willing to explore a new international climate agreement if it offered better terms for the United States. He also said the United States will stop implementing the Obama administration’s domestic climate change efforts and stop funding the Green Climate Fund, an international program that supports developing countries on climate change issues.

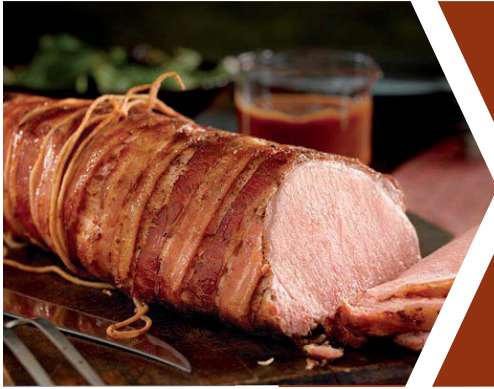
NPPC JOINS PORTS COALITION ON CONTRACT EXTENSION LETTER

NPPC signed onto a letter from the Ports Coalition, of which it is a member, applauding the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) for agreeing to early discussions on a contract extension that will allow ports on the West Coast to operate without interruption. PMA provided ILWU with a three-year contract extension offer April 28. ILWU voted to send the contract extension proposal to members for a vote, scheduled for later this summer. “Agreeing to early contract discussions was clearly a difficult and unprecedented step,” the coalition wrote. “However, we believe it is a step that should serve as a model for future negotiations. We strongly

believe that early and continuous dialog can strengthen the U.S. economy and the competitive position of West Coast international gateways.” The Ports Coalition, which represents the interests of manufacturers, agribusinesses, wholesalers, retailers, importers, exporters, distributors and transportation and logistics providers, had urged the ILWU, which represents dock workers, and the PMA, which represents port owners and operators, to begin negotiations on their next contract early to avoid another work slowdown such as the one that affected 29 West Coast ports in late 2014-early 2015. That labor dispute cost the U.S. meat industry millions of dollars in lost export sales.

U.S.-VIETNAM MEETING YIELDS PROGRESS ON KEY U.S. PORK TRADE ISSUES

Following a meeting between President Trump and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuân Phúc, the two countries recently announced plans to enhance political, diplomatic, economic and trade relations. Among the topics addressed directly with Vietnam’s prime minister were two key trade access issues for U.S. pork: the use of veterinary drugs and offal exports. Regarding veterinary drugs, Vietnam will not be issuing a circular, previously announced, implementing a zero-tolerance policy on residues for multiple veterinary drug, many of which are used in U.S. pork production. It agreed to follow U.S. food safety standards and maximum residue limits (MRLs) set by the U.N.’s Codex Alimentarius Commission. Vietnam will continue to allow U.S. imports of beef and pork that meet Codex MRLs. The policy aligns with U.S. food safety concerns. In addition, Vietnam said it is committed to working with the United States to address issues currently preventing the importation of white offal. Earlier in the week, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer touted “significant trade progress” underway between the United States and Vietnam at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce dinner attended by the prime minister. Lighthizer added: “Over the last decade, our bilateral trade deficit has risen from about \$7 billion to nearly \$32 billion. This concerning growth in our trade deficit presents new challenges and shows us that there is considerable potential to improve further our important trade relationship.”



Pork Checkoff

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

NATIONAL PORK BOARD ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

Terry O'Neel, a pork producer from Friend, Nebraska, was elected as president of the National Pork Board at the organization's June board meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. The National Pork Board is comprised of 15 farmer-directors representing America's pig farmers.

"I am proud to represent our 60,000 pig farmers and I am both honored and humbled by the confidence that the board is placing in me," O'Neel said. "From the farm, through food chain partnerships, to the consumer's table, people care about how their food is produced. I look forward to helping to tell the story of real pig farming in the year ahead, and also to meet first hand with the leaders who deliver our product from farm to table."

O'Neel and his wife Diane own and operate O'Neel Farms in Friend, Nebraska, a farrow-to-finish pig farm that markets 12,000 pigs annually. In addition to pigs, O'Neel Farms also grows corn and soybeans on 700 acres.

Serving with O'Neel on the executive officer team of the Pork Checkoff is vice president Steve Rommerein, a pork producer from Alcester, South Dakota, and, as treasurer, Brett Kaysen, a pig farmer from Nunn, Colorado. Jan Archer, a pork producer from Goldsboro, North Carolina, will serve as immediate past president. The four executive officers will serve one-year terms in their positions effective at the close of the June board meeting.

"As an industry, we stand ready to face our challenges and to celebrate our successes," O'Neel said. "And we have so much going for us - from establishing our Secure Pork Supply plan to redesigning how we market our product. The Pork Checkoff is energized and

we stand ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work in support of research, pork promotion and consumer and producer education."

Terry O'Neel, was elected to his second board term in 2016, most recently serving as vice president of the board. From 2015-2016, O'Neel was board treasurer. O'Neel also served on the Domestic Marketing, Producer Services, and Pork Quality, Safety and Human Nutrition committees. He has hosted farm tours for the Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska, The International Water for Food Project and various service, student and youth groups. He served as president of the Nebraska Pork Producers Board in 2007.

Steve Rommerein is the owner, manager and operator of Highland Swine in South Dakota. Highland Swine markets 10,000 pigs annually. He also grows corn and soybeans, and has a cow/calf operation. In March, Rommerein was elected to serve a second term as a producer-member of the National Pork Board. As 2016-2017 treasurer, he chaired the Finance committee and served on the Domestic Marketing committee. He is an Operation Main Street speaker and has served as a South Dakota delegate to the Pork Industry Forum since 2003. Rommerein was on the National Pork Board's plan of work task force in 2009. He is past president of the South Dakota Pork Producers Association, serving on its board from 2001 to 2011. He also is past president of Agriculture United for South Dakota.

Brett Kaysen, is a partner in Flatland Showpigs, a seedstock producer that markets 480 pigs annually. Additionally, Dr. Kaysen is the Western Regional Sales Director for the U.S. Pork Business at Zoetis, a global animal health company where he leads a sales team serving pork producers and swine veterinarians with

their animal health needs. Prior to joining Zoetis, Dr. Kaysen was in the Animal Sciences department at Colorado State University, Fort Collins. This past March Dr. Kaysen was elected to serve his second three-year term on the National Pork Board, and currently serves on the Animal Science committee and as board representative to the Swine Health Information Center. He is an Operation Main Street speaker and serves on the National Junior Swine Association board of directors. At the state level, Brett serves on the Colorado Pork Producers Council.

REPOSITIONING PORK TO REACH A CHANGING AUDIENCE

With the consumer market for pork and other protein sources changing rapidly, the Pork Checkoff is putting the finishing touches on a plan to capitalize on those changes by repositioning pork marketing, Terry O'Neel, president of the National Pork Board, told an audience at World Pork Expo. "The Pork Checkoff has embarked on a journey to determine how best to market pork today," O'Neel said. "The direction may be drastically different than we've seen in the last quarter century."

The big changes that require a new marketing plan, the National Pork Board's chief executive officer Bill Even said, are driven by what he called "the three M's":

Millennials: America's largest generation has increasing buying power and makes buying decisions differently than its predecessor generations.

Mobile: The speed of communication and access to information fuels demand, requiring constant attention to new means of communication.

Multicultural: Currently 36 percent of the U.S. population, the newest arrivals to the U.S. and their families will make up 50 percent of the population by

2050.

Even said that responding to those drivers in a way that assures pork demand remains strong prompted the National Pork Board to spend the past year conducting extensive research to define the critical needs of pork marketing. The research has included in-depth discussions with producers, packers, processors, retailers, foodservice, and consumers.

Jarrold Sutton, the National Pork Board's vice president of domestic marketing, said the research was designed "to find the marketing sweet spot at the intersection of market trends such as population growth and growing market diversity; market opportunity that capitalizes on pork's flavor, convenience and value, and marketing tools the Checkoff can use to reach younger and more diverse audiences.

Sutton views the changing marketplace as an opportunity to inspire all segments of the pork chain to find new ways to succeed. The signs are positive, Sutton said. Demand for protein remains strong. Red meat and poultry production is projected to grow over the next three years -- by 6.6 percent for beef, by 9 percent for poultry and by 12.3 percent for pork, starting with projections that 2017 will be a record year for pork production

Sutton said the new direction of Pork Checkoff-funded marketing will build on the three pillars of pork's brand identity – quality, trust and value – and "will provide a unique value to the pork supply chain to position itself as the industry leader in knowledge of the consumer's requirements and preferences, insights into category growth, and future-proof solutions for stakeholders to grow and thrive in a rapidly changing world."

O'Neel said he expects that the new marketing strategy will be deployed early in 2018.

Withdraw 'GIPSA' Rule, Say NPPC, Pork Producers

The National Pork Producers Council in comments submitted recently again urged the U.S. Department of Agriculture to withdraw a regulation related to the buying and selling of livestock. It also delivered to the agency comments from 630 pork producers and others in the pork industry, opposing the regulation and asking that it be withdrawn.

The comments were on an interim final rule of the so-called Farmer Fair Practices Rules, which was written by USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). The interim final rule is set to become effective Oct. 19. (NPPC in late March submitted comments in opposition to the broader Farmer Fair Practices Rules.)


The interim final rule would broaden the scope of the Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA) of 1921 related to using "unfair, unjustly discriminatory or deceptive practices" and to giving "undue or unreasonable preferences or advantages." Specifically, the regulation would deem such actions per se violations of federal law even if they didn't harm competition or cause competitive injury, prerequisites for winning PSA cases.

In its comments, NPPC said the rule "is illegal and in conflict with the clear direction of every federal Circuit Court of Appeals that has reviewed the Packers and

Stockyards Act, was improperly promulgated, is not supported by the Administrative Record and will have a destructive impact on the meat sector by harming the very farmers GIPSA is entrusted to protect."


USDA in 2010 proposed several PSA provisions – collectively known as the GIPSA Rule – that Congress mandated in the 2008 Farm Bill; lawmakers rejected a provision that would have eliminated the need to prove a competitive injury to win a PSA lawsuit. Additionally, eight federal appeals courts have held that harm to competition must be an element of a PSA case.

"The Interim Final Rule, promulgated without any justification, will trigger a torrent of lawsuits against members of the pork industry and create uncertainty that will stifle investment and innovation without providing any identifiable benefits to consumers," NPPC said. "In doing so, it will harm U.S. pork producers and their employees and customers, reversing decades of growth and job creation by the U.S. pork industry."

An Informa Economics study found that the GIPSA Rule today would cost the U.S. pork industry more than \$420 million annually – more than \$4 per hog – with most of the costs related to PSA lawsuits brought under the "no competitive injury" provision included in the interim final rule. 

Public Notice by MPPA and the National Pork Board

The election of pork producer delegate candidates for the 2018 National Pork Producers (Pork Act) Delegate Body will take place at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, June 14, 2017 in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of Michigan Pork Producers Association in the GreenStone Farm Credit Services Building at 3515 West Road, East Lansing, MI 48823. All Michigan pork producers are invited to attend.

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

Domino's Stands Its Ground Against Animal Rights 'Extremists'

By: Ken Anderson, Brownfield Ag News

Animal rights groups have been successful in pressuring many of the top food companies and restaurant chains to adopt stricter animal welfare policies, such as cage-free eggs and gestation stall-free pork.

One notable exception is Domino's Pizza, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which has stood its ground in the face of extreme pressure from animal activists.

Domino's spokesman Tim McIntyre tells Brownfield their philosophy is simple: Farmers know best.

"We will never tell a farmer how to farm. We will never tell a rancher how to raise his or her animals," McIntyre says. "What we believe is they're the experts. They have the most vested interest in raising their livestock. It's not just a job, we recognize that. It's a life and we appreciate that—and we're not afraid to stand up and say it."

Even though the "extremists", as McIntyre calls them, have pushed hard, he says Domino's will not cave.

"Over the years, because we have taken the tact of what I'll call 'leaning into the punch'—and we've taken the punch and sometimes we punch back—we've been lucky enough to see that the extremists will go away when they realize that we are not going to cave," he says.

"The best answer is to be deaf. To not hear them, to not respond, to not give them a platform. The biggest mistake we make is believing that they are reasonable people. We've learned they're not. That's why they're called extremists."

McIntyre was one of the speakers at the recent Animal Ag Alliance summit in Kansas City. 🐷



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The advertisement features a green and yellow background with circular images of piglets. It promotes EnMax nutrition technology, highlighting its customized nature and benefits for pig nutrition. The contact information for Bakker Consulting and the RALCO distributor logo are also included.

BREAKFAST ON THE FARM

Join us for Breakfast on the Farm this summer

Educational farm tours are providing the consumer an opportunity to see how modern farms work and to interact with producers and agribusiness professionals.

For the past several years, MPPA has joined Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) in their mission to engage with consumers by bringing the “little pig barn” to the BOTF events.


These events offer producers an

opportunity to talk with attendees about how pigs are raised. The barn also gives visitors a mini visual to help them better understand the farming process.






We would love to have more pig farmers join us at the event to help share the story of pig farming with the public. Please contact Emily Schmitt to sign up at schmitt@mipork.org or 517-853-3782. This year’s events will be held:

August 19: Gratiot County Breakfast on the Farm hosted by DeSaegher Dairy, Middleton, Mich.

Since 2009, more than 80,000 children and adults have attended Breakfast on the Farm events throughout Michigan to learn about where food comes from. At these events, attendees had a chance to learn how cows are milked, pet a calf, take wagon rides, see tractors and eat ice cream. Questions about farming and food production are encouraged.

BOTF gives consumers and farm neighbors a first-hand look at modern food production, and the farm families who work hard to produce a safe, wholesome food supply for Michigan communities and the world. 



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Recipe Corner:

All-Star Pork Meatballs



- 1 POUND GROUND PORK
- 1 TABLESPOON ONION FLAKES
- 3/4 CUP CORN FLAKES, CRUSHED
- 1/2 TEASPOON SALT
- 1/8 TEASPOON GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 1 EGG
- 1/4 CUP KETCHUP
- 3 TABLESPOONS BROWN SUGAR
- 1 TEASPOON DRY MUSTARD

Heat oven to 375 degrees F. In a large bowl, combine ground pork, onion flakes, corn flakes, salt, pepper and egg. In a small bowl, stir together ketchup, brown sugar and dry mustard. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the ketchup mixture into the pork and mix well. Spray muffin tin with vegetable cooking spray. Form 6 meatballs and place in muffin tin. Coat the top of each mixture with the remaining ketchup mixture. Bake for 30 minutes at 375 degrees F., until nicely glazed and internal temperature is 160 degrees F.

Serves 6.

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Calendar of Events

July: 29 **Kent County Family Fun on the Farm**
Sparta, Mich.

Aug.: 19 **Breakfast on the Farm**
Middleton, Mich.

Sept.: 12-14 **NPPC Legislative Conference**
Washington, D.C.

27 **MPPA Board Meeting**
East Lansing, Mich.

Dec.: 13 **Ag Club Breakfast**
Radisson Hotel
Lansing, Mich.

13 **MPPA Board Meeting**
GCSI, Lansing, Mich.

We're Listening

Dear MPPA,

Thank you for your support and donation of the Pork Activity books for our Project RED students again this year. We appreciate your continued help with our project every year. Commodity groups make it possible to provide ag education materials that make their way into hundreds of Hillsdale homes!

Sincerely, Jan Sober, Hillsdale County Ag Council

Dear MPPA,

Thank you for your donation and your Flag Sponsorship of the 26th Annual CANR Golfing for Scholarships outing. We truly appreciate your wonderful support for this annual event and in turn for support of students enrolled in the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. This academic year, 18 students received leadership scholarships and 16 student club grants have been awarded. These important scholarships and grants are possible because of donors like you.

Sincerely, Kathryn Reed, Director of Alumni Relations and Special Events, Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Alumni Association

Dear MPPA,

Thanks to you and everyone who made this another successful Project RED! My students really enjoyed this wonderful learning experience!

Sincerely, Tracey Williamson, Woodland Meadows, Washtenaw County Project RED

Dear MPPA,

Thank you so much for letting us use the pig barn display as well as for the pork coloring books. You helped us share ag knowledge with our 800 second-graders throughout Van Buren County. Your support is greatly appreciated. We look forward to working with you again in the future!

Sincerely, Van Buren FFA



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