

*Addressing consumer demands for socially responsible pork production***Distance Learning Features Health, Safety Seminars**

Free distance learning opportunities for pork producers, managers and safety personnel, featuring timely health and safety topics, begins April 10 and runs through Aug. 21 on the Internet.

The Pork Checkoff has teamed up with Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health to offer this series of health and safety online training sessions for the pork industry throughout the spring and summer. The initial round of 11 one-hour presentations will begin on Thursday, April 10 at 3 p.m. CDT with "Manager Responsibilities and Liabilities" at <https://admin.acrobat.com/a787702991/pit/>. Simply enter your first and last name and your company name in the box. When you click on the "Enter Room" button, you will be transferred to the meeting.

Beginning on April 17, a session will be held every other Thursday at 3 p.m. CDT. Topics to be covered include Slips, Trips and Falls (April 17); Hazard Communication (May 1); Emergency Action Plan (May 15); Electrical Safety (May 29); Personal Protective Equipment (June 12); Housekeeping (June 26); Animal Handling (July 10); Lockout Tagout (July 24); Fire Safety (Aug. 7); and Confined Spaces (Aug. 21).

For more information, contact Aaron Kline, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health at 319-335-4065 or Aaron-Kline@uiowa.edu.

Youth PQA Phase-Out Concludes June 1

After a one-year phase-in that began in June 2007, Youth PQA Plus will completely replace Youth PQA as the food safety, antibiotic use and animal well-being awareness and education program for producers of ages eight to 18.

On June 1, 2008, Youth PQA Plus will be the only program available for youth producers. The program mirrors the content of the industry's Pork Quality Assurance Plus™, or PQA Plus, but presents it in format conducive to the learning of youth.

"Youth PQA Plus ensures that pigs raised by youth producers, including pigs raised as 4-H and FFA projects, are raised following the good production practices in PQA Plus," said Erik Risa of the National Pork Board. "Youth will learn or have an opportunity to reinforce their knowledge of animal health product administration, residue and hazard avoidance in pork, use of antibiotics, recordkeeping and animal care," he added.

"PQA Plus reaches most of the pigs commercially produced in the country, but it's important that youth producers do their part to assure our industry's customers that pork is safe and that they follow animal care practices that promote animal well-being," Risa added. "It's not enough to just say we do the right thing anymore. Our customers, including packers, food service and retailers want to know that regardless of where pork came from, it was produced under certain standards. That applies for pork produced by youth."

The structure behind the youth program is similar to that behind PQA Plus. Youth receive training from certified Youth PQA Plus advisors who have received training from certified Youth PQA Plus (state) trainers. Youth who attend a class will be granted a 1 year certification. Youth aged 12-18 have an option to take a closed book test and certify for a multi-year certification. Please refer to the Youth PQA Plus Minimum Standards for more information at www.pork.org.

"Youth PQA Plus advisors and trainers may not be the same people who offered training to youth and educators in the old youth program," Risa said. Individuals wishing to offer youth training must be veterinarians, Extension personnel or secondary/post-secondary agriculture instructors. Qualified candidates must receive Youth PQA Plus advisor training and pass an examination. Advisor certification is valid for three years. Risa added, "We are excited to offer Web-based advisor training and testing as well as the traditional face-to-face sessions. Advisors can work with their state's trainers when deciding what the best option for training is."

Youth PQA Plus state trainers may not be the same people offering advisor certification sessions. Youth PQA Plus trainer candidates also must be veterinarians, Extension specialists or secondary/postsecondary agriculture instructors, complete training and pass

an examination. Current trainers can contact the Pork Checkoff to find out how to complete this training.

Risa will work directly with the states that have a youth program approved as equivalent to Youth PQA.

More information on Youth PQA Plus can be found online of the Pork Checkoff's Web site at www.pork.org. Follow the For Producers tab and click on Youth PQA Plus. Questions can be directed to the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-PORK(7675).

Adding measurable value to U.S. Pork

Runza Fans Eat Up BBQ Pork Sandwich

Savory stuffed sandwiches put the Runza® chain of upscale quick-serve restaurants on the map nearly 60 years ago, and the Nebraska Pork Producers Association have helped bring Runza's first pork sandwich to its menu since 1997.

The new Texas BBQ Runza sandwich featured hickory-smoked pork and a tangy barbecue sauce baked inside Runza's famous homemade bread. The sandwich was available for a limited time in early 2008 at all 79 Runza restaurants across Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and Iowa. The chain was pleased with sales during the eight-week trial, and company executives have indicated that the sandwich will reappear on the menu in the future.

Consumer advertising for the sandwich featured the well-known Don't Be Blah® logo, which featured prominently on window cling posters, drive-thru back lit prints, television ads and coupons. Couponing for the sandwich was extensive and was supported by advertising on network and cable television.

For more information, contact Karen Buchholz, KBuchholz@pork.org, 515-223-2632.

PORK CHECKOFF IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Pork Checkoff Highlights Work on Public and Producer Health, Celebrates National Public Health Week

In celebration of National Public Health Week, the Pork Checkoff will feature some of its efforts in public and producer health on its pork.org Web site.

The Pork Checkoff will highlight its activities through pork.org home page feature articles, interviews on farm radio and podcasts on topics including occupational safety; influenza preparedness; the judicious and responsible antibiotic use program Take Care and activities of the industry on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, toxoplasma and *trichinae*.

"We are using National Public Health Week as an opportunity to further our message of social responsibility," said Steve Weaver, vice president of the National Pork Board and pork producer from California. "As an industry we care for the communities we operate in, the environment, the safety of our product and the health of the people we work with. It's time that we let people outside the industry know that."

In March, producers affirmed their commitment to animals, the environment and the public by voting in support of an industry statement of ethical principles. "We recognize our obligation to maintain the trust of our customers, our communities, our employees and the general public. They need to know that we go to work every day thinking of the greater good and not only about our business," Weaver said. "National Public Health Week is a good time to showcase this commitment," he added.

National Public Health Week is an annual campaign organized by the American Public Health Association (APHA) to educate the public about issues important to improving the public's health. While climate change is this year's focus of the campaign, the overall goal of it is to raise awareness about issues of public health interest. The World Health Organization celebrates public health awareness with World Health Day on April 7.

For more information, contact Liz Wagstrom, LWagstrom@pork.org, 515-223-2633.