

*Providing the scientific research that allows pork production to be measured objectively and that maintains U.S. Pork as a safe, high-quality and high-value product*

## **Pork Gains Partner, Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council Joins Effort to Improve Nutritional Efficiency of Swine**

The Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council has joined the Pork Checkoff's Nutritional Efficiency Consortium, a group of organizations addressing the increasing cost of producing pork through research.

Today, the consortium's members include the Pork Checkoff, state pork associations, state and national corn grower associations and several allied industry organizations. Larry Kline, vice president of finance and business development for the Pork Checkoff, said, "We are 25 partners-strong in our quest to maximize feed efficiencies in the pork industry. This is a great example of pork producers working together and partnering outside the industry to find solutions."

Since its inception, the nutritional efficiency consortium has funded over \$1.1 million in research. Research priorities have included a review of alternative feed ingredients for swine rations; the use of coproducts, such as distillers dried grains with solubles (DDGS) in swine rations; the estimation of net energy for feedstuffs; a study into the physiology of nutrient utilization by pigs; and, the effects of coproduct use on pork quality.

More information on the Nutritional Efficiency consortium can be found online at [pork.org](http://www.pork.org/PorkScience/NutritionalEfficiency) following the Pork Science tab or by typing <http://www.pork.org/PorkScience/NutritionalEfficiency> on a Web browser.

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### ***Adding measurable value to U.S. Pork***

## **U.S. Pork Exports Remain on Pace**

U.S. pork exports continued their strong performance in July, as pork exports remain on an all-time record pace for the year.

The torrid pace of 2008 pork exports has been largely attributed to skyrocketing volumes of pork destined for China/Hong Kong. But even a significant July slowdown in this region could not break the global momentum for U.S. Pork, as it was offset by strong growth in other major export markets.

A new monthly record was set for pork and pork variety meat exports to Mexico in July, totaling 38,973 metric tons or 85.9 million pounds valued at more than \$75 million. Exports to Mexico in the first seven months of 2008 have totaled 202,280 metric tons or 445.9 million pounds valued at \$345.7 million - an increase of 31 percent in volume and 39 percent in value over last year. July pork exports to Russia were also record-large at 19,903 metric tons or 43.8 million pounds valued at \$42.3 million, putting Russia's total for January-July 2008 at 113,434 metric tons or 250.1 million pounds valued at \$240 million. This represents an increase of 153 percent in volume and 158 percent in value over the same period last year.

January-July pork exports to Japan - the largest destination for U.S. pork in terms of value - totaled 259,144 metric tons or 571.3 million pounds valued at \$849.7 million. This is an increase of 24 percent in volume and 27 percent in value over last year. Canada has shown similar results, as pork exports to Canada in the first seven months of 2008 jumped 24 percent in volume and 21 percent in value over last year to 96,106 metric tons or 211.8 million pounds valued at \$313.5 million. Exports to South Korea totaled 82,106 metric tons or 181 million pounds valued at \$172.2 million during the same period, an increase of 41 percent in volume and 23 percent in value over last year.

Pork and pork variety meat exports to China/Hong Kong set a series of monthly records during the first half of 2008, with the volume rising 324 percent over the same period in 2007. But with China taking significant measures to increase its domestic pork production, slower sales of U.S. Pork have been anticipated in the second half of this year. The volume and value of July pork exports to China/Hong Kong declined about 41 percent compared to June, but still remained well ahead of the results achieved in July 2007.

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# PORK CHECKOFF IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Reaction to the Undercover PETA Video

Pork producers around the United States were shocked late Tuesday when the evening news reported on an undercover video shot at an Iowa pork production facility depicting willful abuse to animals. The video was shot by representatives of animal rights activist group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) working undercover at the farm.

The farm near Bayard, Iowa, had been purchased on Aug. 18 by two well-respected pork producing families from another state and managed through an Iowa management company. The owners and management company have decades of experience in the pork industry and have a history of employing sound animal care practices on their operations. Both organizations were shocked and dismayed to learn about the abuse depicted in the video and vowed to fully and immediately investigate and take actions to correct any unacceptable practice taking place. Since then, action has been taken to ensure the well-being of the animals at the facility. Steps include dismissal of employees found to have broken the families' organization's policy of zero-tolerance for animal abuse.

On Wednesday, PETA representatives met with the farm's management to share additional details about the undercover operation taking place at the farm and to suggest corrective steps to each transgression depicted on video or logged into journals kept by the covert operation participants.

Later that day, PETA held a news conference in Des Moines, Iowa, to report on its findings.

Steve Weaver, president of the National Pork Board, issued a statement that was later distributed to media outlets, partner organizations, industry customers, allied industry and consumers. The statement reads:

"The pork industry condemns the abuse of any animal.

The National Pork Board and America's pork producers take their ethical responsibility for the proper care of pigs seriously and will not tolerate any mistreatment of animals.

The owners of the Iowa sow farm investigated by PETA also have said that they will not tolerate the misconduct of any employee involved in the care of animals. The owners said they are taking immediate steps to correct the problems at the Bayard, Iowa, facility they purchased on Aug. 18, 2008.

Representatives of the owners met Wednesday morning with PETA staff members to discuss specific corrective steps.

U.S. pork producers are committed to care for animals in a way that protects their well-being. The industry provides education and training programs – including Pork Quality Assurance Plus® and the Transport Quality Assurance® Program -- to ensure that all persons involved in the care of pigs understand their ethical responsibility and possess the skills necessary to provide good care.

I also would encourage anyone having knowledge of the possible mistreatment of animals to bring that immediately to the attention of the responsible persons."

This situation resonates with the entire industry because it reminds us that:

- The actions of an organization's employees will be construed as the actions of the organization's owner/manager. In the same way, the actions of a few within the industry may tarnish the industry's image as a whole.
- The industry works tirelessly to raise awareness and develop education programs to help producers and their employees raise wholesome products in a manner that ensures the well-being of animals, but there is still work to be done in this respect.
- While as pork producers we strive to understand the needs of our customers, there is a need to relate and understand the concerns of audiences including those of activist organizations.
- Willful abuse of animals cannot be tolerated and should be condemned by the industry.
- The training of employees and their involvement with organizational goals and philosophies should be a priority to the industry.

The industry has created a statement of ethical principles under an initiative labeled "We Care". A copy of these ethical principles can be found online at <http://www.pork.org/Documents/Statement%20of%20Ethical%20Principles%20--%20Forum%20version2.pdf> on a Web browser.

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