

*Promoting teamwork within the pork industry***FFA Honors National Pork Board's Partnership**

The National FFA Organization recently awarded the National Pork Board with FFA's special Distinguished Service Citation and a 25-Year Milestone Sponsor Award.

"We have been fortunate to partner with the National Pork Board for many years," says Doug Loudenslager, chief operating officer for the National FFA Organization and the National FFA Foundation. "We share an appreciation for the importance of helping young people learn about the tremendous opportunities in agriculture."

The National FFA Organization boasts 507,416 student members in 7,439 local FFA chapters nationwide who are preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture. Interest in FFA continues to grow, says Loudenslager, who notes that the organization set a 31-year record for FFA membership this year. About one third of these students have a farm background, one third are rural/non-farm, and the remaining third are urban.

During the 81st National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., the National Pork Board accepted the Distinguished Service Citation, which recognizes clubs, agencies and organizations that have greatly contributed to agricultural science education and FFA programs. Members of the Iowa State and National FFA Organization staff nominated the National Pork Board, and the National FFA Board of Directors approved the nomination.

The National Pork Board has a long record of supporting agricultural education and FFA. It was one of the first organizations to invest resources in the development of online instructional materials for teachers. In addition, the Team Ag Ed Learning Center was created through the National Pork Board's support.

Pork Checkoff dollars have also supported FFA's LifeKnowledge program, which fosters leadership, personal growth and career success. Recently, Pork Checkoff dollars have helped to fund the exploratory phase of a middle school agricultural science/literacy curriculum that will help students understand the relationship between food, agriculture, science, and careers. Curriculum development is underway, and the program is expected to be rolled out in the next few years.

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Niche Pork Puts Buy Local into Motion

The market potential for niche food products remains large, and consumers buy niche products because they desire the freshness, flavor and healthful qualities which they believe these products deliver.

"More customers come in every day and ask for local products," says Carl Pursh, meat and seafood director for Pennsylvania-based McGinnis Sisters Special Food Stores, which carries many value-added pork products.

To get a clearer picture of niche pork's potential; the Pork Checkoff funded a study to determine the factors that influence a consumer's decision to purchase a niche food product. "This is based on the idea that it would be more efficient to grow the niche pork category among these consumers," says Jarrod Sutton, director of retail marketing for the National Pork Board, who shared the following results during a recent Progressive Grocer webinar about how grocers and their suppliers can serve high-value customers by incorporating niche pork into their fresh meat programs.

- Just about two thirds (63 percent) of consumers typically buy niche food products at a conventional grocery store, about half (53 percent) purchase them at a farmers market or food coop, 37 percent purchase them directly from local farmers and another third (33 percent) buy them at a specialty food store.
- When asked how frequently they buy each type of niche food product, purchasers indicate that they buy niche fruits and vegetables on average 37 times a year (about three times a month). Niche fresh or frozen pork is purchased about 16 times a year (or a little more than once a month).

- More than half (53 percent) of niche pork purchasers say they buy that product at a conventional grocery store. Another one-third (33 percent) purchase niche pork at specialty food stores, 23 percent purchase niche pork products at a farmers market or food coop, and 20 percent buy it directly from a local farmer.
- Healthfulness was given as the most important reason for purchasing niche pork by 25 percent of respondents. Other most important reasons included freshness, quality (14 percent), and flavor or taste (14 percent). When all mentions of reasons for purchasing niche pork products were combined, more than half of respondents cited quality, flavor or taste, freshness, and healthfulness as most important.
- Lack of availability in the places that consumers shop, inability to find the product locally, and price are given by one third or more of niche food purchasers as the top reason for not purchasing niche pork products more often. If these purchase barriers are removed, 77 percent of niche food purchasers are likely to extremely likely to purchase niche pork more often.

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PORK CHECKOFF IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Operation Main Street Celebrates Four Years of Growth and Making a Difference for the Pork Industry

Human development experts say four-year-olds feel good about things they can do, show self-confidence and are willing to try new adventures. You could easily say the same thing about the Pork Checkoff's Operation Main Street (OMS) program.

Launched on November 8, 2004, this grass-roots communications effort has grown from a handful of volunteer pork producers reaching out to local civic organizations to hundreds of producers from across the country who are also taking the industry's message to regional and county planning commissions, government-related associations, governor's conferences and other high-level opinion leaders.

Through the OMS program, pork producers are helping to set the record straight by telling the pork industry's story of innovation, quality and stewardship. OMS features a speakers' bureau that involves intensive speaker training along with a scheduling program to get producers out into the community to talk about modern pork production.

Today this four-year-old effort also includes:

- A media outreach program to generate positive pork industry stories in communities where OMS speakers present
- Advanced speaker training to further develop the skills and confidence required of speakers in more challenging situations
- Refresher training to help speakers brush up on their skills and learn from other speakers

Thanks to the commitment and passion of OMS speakers, here now is a 4th anniversary celebration of OMS by the numbers:

OMS Numbers	November 2004	November 2008
Trained Speakers	15	651
States Participating	7	23
Number of Presentations	8	2520
Speaker Audience Reach	200	73,500
Media Outreach Audience	N/A	1,990,008*

*Newspaper and broadcast stories' audience reach. Program was piloted for two months in 2006 and rolled out in Jan. 2008.

To become involved in Operation Main Street visit www.pork.org/Producers/OMS.aspx.

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