

*Exceeding the expectations of its stakeholders***Cross-species Team Hosted Livestock Emergency Preparedness Training**

In response to the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in the United Kingdom, the National Pork Board, Dairy Management Inc. and the Beef Checkoff formed the cross-species FMD communication team (cross-species team). The goal of the cross-species team is to help ensure a united voice that reassures consumers about the safety of milk and meat products and that provides accurate information to producers.

The cross-species team hosted a livestock emergency preparedness training for 30 farm broadcasters during the recent National Association of Farm Broadcasting annual meeting. The broadcasters learned how the cross-species team works together on crisis preparedness and were trained in the Incident Command system used by federal and local responders. They also participated in covering a simulated disease outbreak using a tabletop model and discussed their role as a partner in communicating rapidly and accurately with producers during a crisis.

The pork industry is committed to a crisis preparedness plan that works to prevent a foreign animal disease and in the event of an outbreak the plan will return the industry to business as usual as quickly as possible. The goal is to protect our producers' livelihoods, our animals and our markets.

For more information, contact Cindy Cunningham, CCunningham@pork.org, 515-223-2643.

*Addressing consumer demands for socially responsible pork production***Checkoff Adds Videos to YouTube**

From wacky online marriage proposals to the official Web videos of political candidates, YouTube has become an Internet phenomenon that offers something for everyone... including an untapped resource for pork producers.

The Pork Checkoff released three new videos on the Checkoff's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/porkcheckoff, to answer consumers' questions about animal care, feeding and the environment. Produced in conjunction with The Other White Meat® tour, these videos feature pork producers and industry experts answering consumer questions on these issues.

These three videos compliment the other four videos that are posted on the Checkoff's YouTube channel. Since the first videos were posted in May, they have been seen across the world. Please take a few minutes to watch the videos and pass them onto your friends and neighbors.

For more information, contact Teresa Roof, TRoof@pork.org, 515-223-2616.

*Adding measurable value to U.S. Pork***Record Export Levels Continue through September**

While economic caution flags are flying as we enter the final quarter of 2008, U.S. pork export levels continued to exceed expectations through the first nine months of the year according to data released by the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

U.S. pork exports built on the record set in August, skyrocketing 61 percent in September over totals from a year ago. U.S. pork and variety meat exports for the month totaled 163,055 metric tons, just shy of 360 million pounds, valued at \$425.5 million. Year-to-date, pork exports are up 70 percent in volume versus 2007 to 1.5 million metric tons or 3.4 billion pounds, valued at \$3.6 billion – a 64 percent increase.

Japan is now the top market in volume and value for the year at 335,671 metric tons or 740 million pounds valued at \$1.1 billion, increases of 26 and 32 percent, respectively. Exports in September were 38 percent higher than last year, totaling 36,394 metric tons or 80.2 million pounds.

Mexico was the second-largest destination overall for U.S. Pork in September with exports totaling 29,575 metric tons or 65.2 million pounds, up 43 percent from a year ago and putting the January through September total at 267,230 metric tons or 589.1 million pounds – a 36 percent hike, valued at \$474.5 million, a 48 percent increase.

The Hong Kong/China region continued to be the second-largest destination measured in volume for U.S. Pork through the first nine months of 2008, with exports up 214 percent to 330,601 metric tons or 728.8 million pounds, valued at \$572 million, a 268 percent jump.

Russia ranked third among U.S. pork markets in September with exports totaling 27,157 metric tons or 59.9 million pounds, near the record of 28,000 metric tons or 61.7 million pounds set the prior month. For the 2008 calendar year, U.S. pork exports to Russia stand at 168,603 metric tons or 371.7 million pounds, valued at \$365 million, increases of 185 and 194 percent, respectively.

For more information, contact John Hinners, JHinners@usmef.org, 303-623-6328.

Women are BZZing about Pork

In its first ever social marketing campaign initiative, the Pork Checkoff is working through BzzAgent - a word-of-mouth marketing firm to implement the Pork Bzz Campaign. The Pork Bzz Campaign, which began Nov. 1 and runs 10 weeks, targets Atlanta-based women ages 25-44 years young with children at home and partners exclusively with Publix ® Super Markets in this target city.

How does it work? Individuals who believe in honest, word-of-mouth conversations sign up to become bzz agents. Agents then get to discover and check out new products, services, books and other cool stuff. After experiencing a product or service, they share their honest opinions with people within their peer groups.

The 1,000 BzzAgent volunteers are Atlanta-based women in our target market. Volunteers are not paid, since word of mouth is genuine, natural and unforced.

Each BzzAgent received a BzzKit containing pork recipes, cooking accessories including a pot holder and digital cooking thermometer, tips and tools that demonstrate pork's versatility and endless menu options. The kit also contained one \$5 coupon for the agent to use on fresh pork product, and three \$2 coupons for the agent to share with friends and family. The Checkoff will stay in contact with these BzzAgents with weekly e-blasts that include recipes and other great pork information to share with others.

After the 10-week campaign, the Pork Checkoff estimates that it will have reached 40,000 people through this initiative. This grassroots initiative will further build the network of passionate pork advocates at the consumer level.

For more information, contact Cathy Lee Fredrickson, CFredrickson@pork.org, 515-223-2767.

PORK CHECKOFF IN THE SPOTLIGHT

USDA Will Pursue Pork Checkoff Request for Referendum

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service will conduct a Request for Referendum involving eligible producers and hog, pig and pork importers to determine their desire for a referendum related to the National Pork Checkoff program.

This one-time Request for Referendum is being conducted as part of a 2001 lawsuit settlement between USDA and the Michigan Pork Producers Association, et al.

USDA will conduct a referendum on the order only if at least 15 percent of the total number of eligible U.S. pork producers and importers request it. If needed, the referendum would be conducted within a year after the Request for Referendum results are announced.

The Request for Referendum will be held Dec. 8 through Jan. 2. Producers and importers who were engaged in pork production or who import hogs, pigs, pork or pork products between Jan. 1, 2007, and Dec. 31, 2007, and were at least 18 years of age on or before Dec. 31, 2007, are eligible to participate.

For producers, the Request for Referendum will take place at USDA's County Farm Service Agency offices where administrative farm records are maintained. For producers not participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to participate will occur at the County FSA office where the person owns or rents land.

Importers may obtain Form LS-54-1 through the Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA. Form LS-54-1 and accompanying documentation can be returned in person, by mail or by facsimile. Forms returned by mail must be postmarked no later than midnight on Jan. 2, 2009, and received by Jan. 9, 2009.

For more information, contact Kenneth R. Payne, Chief, Marketing Programs Branch, Room 2628-S; Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA; Stop 0251; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0251; by calling (202) 720-1115; or faxing (202) 720-1125.; or e-mail at Kenneth.Payne@usda.gov.