

*Adding measurable value to U.S. Pork***“Kinda Cuban” Showcases Pork at Tropical Smoothie Café**

It’s the details that distinguish Tropical Smoothie Café, which is known for its premium meats and cheeses, healthy food options, and its unique menu items, including the new “Kinda Cuban” pork sandwich.

“Less than a year ago, we didn’t have any pork on the Tropical Smoothie Café menu, other than slices of ham on some sandwiches,” says Paul Perfilio, national foodservice marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff. “The ‘Kinda Cuban’ is a fun, cool concept that is opening the door for more pork items at Tropical Smoothie Café, which is a good partner for us.”

When Tropical Smoothie Café launched its new line of Bistro Sandwiches, the Pork Checkoff supported the “Kinda Cuban” sandwich, a Cuban-style sliced pork loin with Swiss cheese, signature Bistro Sauce, field greens, tomatoes and banana peppers on a toasted ciabatta roll. To promote the sandwich, the Pork logo is included on menu boards and printed menus at the nearly 300 Tropical Smoothie Café locations nationwide.

The “Kinda Cuban” is meeting expectations for sales, says Barbara Valentino, vice president of marketing and communications for the Tropical Smoothie Franchise Development Corporation. “We certainly appreciate any help we get to assist us in bringing new, innovative products to market, and the National Pork Board helped us with our new sandwich line.”

Tropical Smoothie Café is also testing a line of grilled flatbread sandwiches and has a pork-inspired Caribbean Luau in the lineup. This item, which features savory Cuban pork, Jamaican jerk sauce, pineapples, melted mozzarella and crispy romaine lettuce served on a toasted flatbread, will debut at all Tropical Smoothie Café locations around March 1. “We will launch it as a limited-time offer and gauge the success to see if it hits our permanent menu,” Valentino says.

For more information, contact Paul Perfilio, PPerfilio@pork.org, 850-650-5402.

*Promoting teamwork within the pork industry***Pork Checkoff Offers Pork Management Conference - Your Pork Industry Investment**

The Pork Checkoff is offering the 2009 Pork Management Conference, Your Pork Industry Investment, May 6-8, at the Sanibel Harbour Resort & Spa in Fort Myers, Fla.

During the conference, participants will learn about topics such as emerging food trends, global trade, U.S. agriculture outlooks, changes in input costs and more from several pork industry professionals. Two concurrent sessions are being planned for Thursday. Topics include managing employee benefit costs, real life production budgeting, hedge strategies, business interruption, GAAP update, production targets, tax update, the A-Z nuts and bolts on pork production and worker safety.

The registration fee for the Pork Management Conference, Your Pork Industry Investment is \$395 per person and \$435 per person after April 24. The first 10 pork producers that have not attended in the past two years receive a \$300 discount on registration courtesy of AgStar Financial Services. A brochure with a registration form and a detailed list of events is available on pork.org or by calling 800-456-PORK.

For more information, contact Sharlotte Peterson, SPeterson@pork.org, 515-223-2614.

*Addressing consumer demands for socially responsible pork production***Are you the next environmental steward?**

Pork production operations in general are good stewards of the environment. But, only four operations receive a Pork Industry Environmental Steward award in one year. Will yours be one of them?

The Pork Checkoff and its partner, *National Hog Farmer* magazine, are now receiving applications and nominations for the 2009 Pork Industry Environmental Steward awards. The application/nomination form is available online at pork.org.

Pork production operations are invited to apply or nominate another farm considered deserving of the award. Likewise, state pork associations and allied industry are invited to nominate producers that are representative of the industry's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Applications and nominations must be received by, or postmarked, March 31.

Applications and nominations will be judged by a group of producers, past award recipients and environmental experts. The judges select the award recipients based on their manure management systems; water and soil conservation practices; odor-control strategies; farm aesthetics and neighbor relations; wildlife habitat promotion; innovative ideas used to protect the environment and an essay describing what environmental stewardship means to the candidate operation.

Award recipients are featured in the *Pork Checkoff Report* magazine, a promotional video and several other Pork Checkoff-sponsored publications. *National Hog Farmer* magazine features the environmental steward award recipients in its magazine too. Recipients will be honored for their effort and achievements at the 2010 Pork Industry Forum in Kansas City, Mo.

For more information, contact Allan Stokes, ASTokes@pork.org, 515-223-3447.

PORK CHECKOFF IN THE **SPOTLIGHT**

U.S. Pork Export Streak at 17 Years

The international marketplace continued to roll out the red carpet for U.S. Pork in 2008, according to statistics released by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

Pork has been the pacesetter for U.S. red meat exports, achieving a 17th consecutive record-setting year of increased export numbers in 2008. For the month of December, total pork (pork plus variety meat) export volumes rose 19.7 percent over 2007 while export values rose 19.2 percent. While those are healthy gains, they are dwarfed by the 12-month figures for 2008: volume up 57 percent to more than 2 million metric tons or 4.5 billion pounds, and value up 55 percent to nearly \$4.9 billion.

Mexico, the largest U.S. pork market in December, set a monthly record with 48,151 metric tons or 106.2 million pounds, valued at \$77 million. This represents a jump of 16 percent in volume over the prior month and a 77 percent increase over the previous December. For the year, Mexico was the third-largest destination for U.S. Pork, registering a 43 percent hike in pork volume (396,609 metric tons or 874.4 million pounds) and a 54 percent jump in value to \$691 million.

The largest market for U.S. Pork, Japan reported substantial gains for December and the entire year: achieving 16 and 28 percent gains in volume and value, respectively, for the month versus December of 2007, and 26 percent and 34 percent in volume and value for the year. Japan imported 451,853 metric tons or 996.2 million pounds of pork valued at \$1.5 billion –

Other pork highlights include:

- Canada – U.S. pork imports remained fairly close to year-ago levels during the last quarter of 2008, with December exports at 13,390 metric tons or 29.5 million pounds. For the year, exports were up 15 percent to 170,536 metric tons or nearly 376 million pounds, valued at \$557.6 million, a 13 percent increase.
- South Korea – Imports were steady in December at 10,535 metric tons or 23.2 million pounds. Although below year-ago levels, this volume was not far off the 2008 monthly average of 11,128 metric tons or 24.5 million pounds. For the year, exports to Korea were up 34 percent to 133,532 metric tons or 294.4 million pounds, valued at \$284.5 million, up 23 percent versus 2007 totals.

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