

# PORK LEADER



PORK CHECKOFF NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL PORK BOARD

## *Addressing consumer demands for socially responsible pork production*

### **We Care Initiative Gains Momentum**

Most Americans are at least three generations removed from the farm and know little about agriculture or how their food is produced, therefore the We Care initiative is helping pork producers tell their story in every state and increase the level of trust with U.S. pork consumers.

“Support for We Care has been truly remarkable,” says Steve Weaver, a pork producer from Elk Grove, Calif., who serves as president of the National Pork Board. “If we don’t speak up, the public’s perception of our industry will be shaped in a manner we may not care for. Through We Care, we have a way to present a united front that keeps our industry on the right track.”

The Pork Checkoff-supported We Care program was developed to communicate to the public a better understanding of modern pork production. A variety of tools have been developed to help producers and their state pork associations tell that story, including producer-to-consumer talking points, question-and-answer pieces, PowerPoint presentations, editorials, print advertising, billboards and radio spots. In addition, a new We Care Web site will be launched soon.

So far, more than 30,800 pork operation owners and employees have been certified through the Pork Checkoff’s Pork Quality Assurance Plus® (PQA Plus), which focuses on animal well-being and food safety. In addition, nearly 4,000 farm operations have completed the on-site assessment, which provides an objective evaluation of animal well-being.

“We know that consumers care about the environment and animal production practices,” Novak says. “By taking a two-pronged approach through We Care, our industry is helping producers address consumers’ concerns about modern food production as well as tell our story.”

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

### **First-Time BarbeQlossal™ Competitor Earns Grand Champion Honors**

Although Ryan Newstrom has been cooking for years, he didn’t try competition barbeque until 2008, after he stumbled across contest information while searching online for rib recipes. With just a few local competitions under his belt so far, this Iowa native and his Big T’z Q Cru earned grand champion honors on June 6 at one of the most prestigious barbeque events in America—the Pork Checkoff’s 22nd annual Great Pork BarbeQlossal™.

Fifty-nine teams from 11 states competed in the annual pork barbecue contest held at the conclusion of the World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa. Of those, 18 were competing for the first time in the Great Pork BarbeQlossal, which is sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbecue Society and highlights barbecue techniques from across America.

Great Pork BarbeQlossal teams compete in one or more of the four categories. Monetary prizes are presented for first through tenth places in each category, as well as the top four overall scores. Newstrom was awarded cash and prizes, including the grand prize of \$8,000. Reserve Grand Champion honors and \$3,000 went to Todd Johns and Randy Hinck of Pork Pullin’ Plowboys from Blue Springs, Mo. Reserve champion honors and \$2,500 went to Greg Anthony with Ribs 4 U from Paola, Kan. Shad Kirton from A Boy & His BBQ in Grimes, Iowa, finished fourth in overall scores and received \$2,000.

Randy Twyford of Twyford’s BBQ & Catering from Jacksonville, Ill., earned champion honors of the Whole Hog category, which garnered \$2,500 for the top the prize.

Each year, the top score from a single state also is honored during the Great Pork BarbeQlossal. Special recognition was awarded to the top team from South Dakota—Jack Sieben of Rollin Smoke BBQ Team from Mission Hill, S.D.

Back by popular demand was the Big Green Egg® Scramble. Five teams were selected to participate in the Big Green Egg Scramble. The teams were provided a basket of pork, which included a new pork cut, the pocket roast. They prepared their pork on a Big Green Egg grill for a chance to walk away as Big Green Egg Scramble champion. Todd Johns of Pork Pullin’ Plowboys from Blue Springs, Mo., received a Big Green Egg grill as the grand prize winner.

For a complete list of results visit [pork.org](http://pork.org).

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## Schwan's Showcases "Marinate on Demand" Pork Fillet

Today's time-pressed consumers demand convenient, flavorful meals that can be prepared in minutes. In response, Schwan's Home Delivery Company is taking advantage of new pork cuts to promote its new Herb and Garlic Pork Fillet, a best-selling item in the company's popular "Marinate on Demand" program.

"We launched this product during the grilling season, which has been encouraging strong sales," says Scott McNair, president of Schwan's Home Service, based in Marshall, Minn. "We sold more than 54,000 units in the two weeks when the product was featured this spring for our News at the Door promotion to customers."

The Herb and Garlic Pork Fillet includes two 6-ounce pork breasts and 4 ounces of herb-and-garlic marinade within the sealed package. After the marinade is pressed within the plastic, the liquid is distributed to both pork breasts within the sealed package. This convenient process saves the consumer time and ensures a flavorful, ready-to-grill pork product with no mess.

The new pork fillet, which has been developed from the Pectoralis profundus—the pork breast—is promoted by colorful photos and a full-page ad in the Schwan's catalog, in addition to being presented at the door to millions of home service customers. "The Pork Fillet idea came from the Pork Checkoff and their supporting documentation," McNair said. "It filled a gap in our portfolio, and the product has resonated with consumers."

Schwan's is excited that there are many more opportunities available with pork, especially with the convenience platform that the company is currently working on, McNair says. "We look forward to working with the Pork Checkoff, because they provide great information and are always very responsive to our needs."

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# PORK CHECKOFF IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## April Pork Exports Remained Strong in Mexico, Japan

Despite the outbreak of the H1N1 influenza virus and the prolonged slowdown in global economic activity, U.S. pork exports held up reasonably well in April of 2009.

"The good news is that in spite of the turmoil we saw in the latter part of the month, April pork exports were not down as much as had been predicted, given the continued economic slump," says Philip Seng, U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) president and CEO.

While pork plus pork variety meat exports declined by 10 percent in volume compared to April 2008, reports USMEF, the trade association responsible for developing international markets for the U.S. red meat industry that is supported in part by the Pork Checkoff. The drop in value was limited to about 4 percent, according to USMEF, which the Pork Checkoff. For the first four months of the year, pork export volume (648,063 metric tons, or 1.43 billion pounds) is about 3 percent above the record pace of 2008. The value has increased about 6 percent to nearly \$1.5 billion.

Mexico continues to be the pacesetter for U.S. pork exports in 2009, with April exports climbing 61 percent in volume and 50 percent in value compared to last year. For the first four months of the year, pork export volume to Mexico rose 71 percent to 177,164 metric tons (390.6 million pounds), and the value increased 62 percent to \$265 million.

Perennially the leading market for U.S. pork exports, Japan is performing well again in 2009, with export volume for the first four months of the year increasing 9 percent to 158,265 metric tons (348.9 million pounds) and value up 24 percent to \$571 million. While Japan's April export volume was down slightly due to higher inventories and lower domestic pork prices, exports still increased in value by nearly 19 percent.

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