

*Adding measurable value to U.S. Pork***New Pork Recipes Pack a Punch for School Lunch**

Maybe they won't receive applause and standing ovations, but school cooks can count on smiling faces when they serve innovative new pork recipes, from Baked Spaghetti Pie with Ham to Pork Taco Pasta with Chipotle Cream. The Pork Checkoff received a tremendous response when the kid-friendly culinary creations debuted recently at the School Nutrition Association's (SNA) annual conference in Las Vegas, Nev.

The nutritionally balanced pork recipes, which include Open-Faced Cuban Pork Sandwich, Asian Pepper Pot with Ham, and Roasted Red Pepper Lasagna, are designed to keep kids coming back for more. They also provide a valuable solution for school foodservice professionals who are taking advantage of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's commodity purchase program.

"The commodity pork purchases through the USDA in 2009 are much greater than in past years, and many conference participants told us this is the first time they've bought pork," says Traci Rodemeyer, manager of pork information for the Pork Board. "They are looking for recipe ideas, and we were happy to show how pork fits into a healthy diet."

The Pork Checkoff distributed more than 500 recipe sets and supplied the 7,000 SNA members at the conference with additional pork nutrition information and consumer recipes. In addition, the Checkoff promoted youth education materials, including the Kids' Cookbook brochure, filled with child-friendly pork recipes, and "Step Up to a Healthier You," which focuses on the USDA's new MyPyramid food guide to teach students about sources of protein and the safe handling of meat.

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**Nation's Restaurant News Serves Up New Pork Possibilities**

Less expensive cuts of pork are helping restaurants manage their food costs while providing diners with the extra flavor they crave, and Nation's Restaurant News is taking note. In its recent article "Soaking in flavor: Marinades add pizzazz," the author cited information from the National Pork Board, along with Celebrated Chef Nancy Longo's use of yogurt to tenderize pork cap steak.

The article grew out of the Pork Checkoff's Taste of Elegance competition in Baltimore this summer, says Stephen Gerike, national foodservice marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff.

"While the Taste of Elegance promotes innovative ways for chefs to menu pork, we wanted to create a new angle to court the writers and editors who cover the foodservice industry. The Baltimore event offered a great opportunity to host a short Pork 101 presentation and provide useful information for the editors who attended."

Leading publications represented at the Taste of Elegance included Foodservice Monthly, Plate Magazine, Nation's Restaurant News, Food Arts, Restaurant Business, Meeting Place, and Flavor & The Menu. During an hour and a half of downtime at the Taste of Elegance, the editors stopped by Baltimore's International Culinary Institute to watch Gerike showcase new cuts of pork from the leg and shoulder. They also enjoyed Chef Longo's recipe demonstrations featuring these pork cuts.

"To be included in a feature in Nation's Restaurant News is great, because this publication is on every food industry professional's desk every week," says Gerike.

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**New Pork Cuts Appeal to Meat Processors**

When the members of the American Association of Meat Processors (AAMP) gathered in Omaha this summer for their 70th annual convention, they weren't interested in sitting through the same old presentations. During the meat fabrication demonstration, which showcased different ways to fabricate the pork carcass, primal and subprimal cuts to create value cuts from the fresh leg and long shoulder, the Pork Checkoff provided plenty of innovative ideas and food for thought.

"PowerPoint presentations are okay, but our members are really receptive to seeing demonstrations conducted right in front of them," says Jay Wenter, executive director of the AAMP, North America's largest meat trade organization. "It was good to have the Pork Checkoff involved; because they provide a whole spectrum of valuable information to help our members provide the cuts that their customers want."

Stephen Gerike, national foodservice marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff, demonstrated the pork cap steak, ham eye, pocket roast, pig wing, pork breast and collar butt during the meat fabrication demonstration.

“The key message was how value can be added to the fresh ham and shoulder primals by merchandising new cut options for consumers,” says Gerike, who presented the one-hour workshop for more than 100 member operators from across the nation. “It was very well received, and members spent 30 minutes after the presentation asking questions and getting more information.”

This was the first time that the Pork Checkoff was invited to address AAMP members, who are part of North America’s largest meat trade organization and have been bringing safe, wholesome, quality food to America’s tables since 1939. AAMP’s membership includes more than 1,700 medium-sized and smaller meat, poultry and food businesses, including mom-and-pop meat lockers, packers, processors, wholesalers, in-home food service business, retailers, deli and catering operators, and industry suppliers.

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## PORK CHECKOFF IN THE **SPOTLIGHT**

### U.S. Pork Export Update

The lingering global economic slump and low prices for domestic pork products in key export markets contributed to declines in U.S. pork exports in June, according to statistics compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

Through the first six months of the year, 2009 is still shaping up as the second-best year for U.S. pork exports, but it remains 9 percent behind 2008 in terms of volume and 7 percent in value. Thus far in 2009, the U.S. has exported 925,339 metric tons or more than 2 billion pounds of pork and pork variety meat valued at nearly \$2.2 billion.

Compared to export totals in June of 2008 – the second-highest single month totals in history – combined pork and pork variety meat exports were down 31 percent in June of 2009, totaling 133,594 metric tons or 294.5 million pounds valued at \$320.4 million.

“The H1N1 influenza virus has been an important factor for U.S. pork exports,” said Jon Caspers, USMEF chairman and a pork producer from Swaledale, Iowa. “We have had market access issues in two of our top six pork export markets (China and Russia), which makes it all the more important to maintain a strong presence in our other key markets.”

In the No. 1 market for U.S. pork exports, Mexico, USMEF recently conducted an extensive training program for personnel in the hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI) sector to familiarize them with U.S. red meat. Mexico has rebounded well from its experience with the flu virus, and U.S. pork exports there are up 52 percent in volume to 248,694 metric tons or 658.5 million pounds for the first half of 2009. The value of those exports is up 37 percent to \$369.6 million. In June of 2009 versus one year ago, pork exports were up 22 percent in volume but slipped 4.3 percent in value as consumers continue to look for more affordable menu options.

The United States’ No. 2 pork market, Japan, also is up for the first half of the year. Volumes rose 1 percent to 223,290 metric tons or 492.3 million pounds while the value of those exports is up 13 percent to \$808 million. For the month of June, export volumes to Japan dipped 13.5 percent versus a year ago while the value of the exports slipped just under 6 percent.

On the flip side, exports to the No. 3 market, the greater China/Hong Kong region, are off just over half for the year, dropping 52 percent in volume to 121,412 metric tons or 267.7 million pounds and 54 percent in value to \$203.3 million. Russia, the No. 6 pork export market, has seen volumes drop 35 percent to 60,826 metric tons or 134.1 million pounds. The value of pork exports to Russia is down 37 percent compared to the first half of 2008, reaching \$123.9 million.

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