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Addressing consumer demand for socially responsible pork production

Feed Bags Convey We Care Message

The Pork Checkoff is partnering with Sunglo Feeds to spread the industry's We Care message on thousands of feed bags. The nationwide feed company, which specializes in the show feed market, is printing the We Care logo and ethical principles on the back of 10 different varieties of its bagged swine feed.

"Everyone in the pork industry has a stake in the We Care initiative, including young producers exhibiting livestock at fairs and shows," said Ben Vainner, producer and industry relations outreach specialist for the Pork Checkoff. "We're excited about this opportunity and are pleased that Sunglo Feeds was the first company to step up and get involved."

Brian Hines, national sales account manager for Sunglo Feeds said that effort fits the company's philosophy of "doing the right thing to help the pork industry."

"While each youth who shows a pig is a small-scale pork producer, his or her product ends up in the food chain," Hines said. "What better way to promote the We Care ethical principles than by repeating them in producers' daily environment?"

For more information, contact Ben Vainner at BVainner@pork.org or at (269) 962-9241.

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Educating the public about modern pork production

Media Coverage of Operation Main Street Speakers Extends Reach

The nearly 800 participants in the Pork Checkoff's Operation Main Street (OMS) program continue to make a difference, helped along by the media. Recognizing the news value of the pork industry's message, reporters are increasingly attending OMS presentations. First-quarter media coverage of OMS speeches and news interviews with OMS speakers reached an audience of more than 4.5 million people through 44 print stories, 10 radio interviews and four television interviews.

And now the Checkoff's new OMS 2.0 program is reaching influential groups, such as dietitians, foodservice sale representatives, county commissioners, economic development groups and veterinary students. To qualify for OMS 2.0 training, participants must have completed the OMS program and have given several speeches. As of May, the 43 people trained in OMS 2.0 had given over 100 total presentations.

"OMS 2.0 is important because you're speaking to people who can have a significant impact on the pork industry," said OMS 2.0 speaker Bill Kessler of Kessler Farms in Mexico, Mo. "For example, dietitians can pass on what they learn to patients, thereby increasing our consumer base. And county commissioners have tremendous clout when it comes to county regulations and ordinances that can make or break hog production."

For more information, contact Ernie Barnes, director of industry services for the Pork Checkoff, at EBarnes@pork.org or at (515) 223-2751.

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Adding measurable value to U.S. Pork

After Rebounding in 2009, U.S. Pork Exports to Mexico Remain Strong

What a difference a year can make. In May of 2009, the U.S. pork industry had just begun to deal with the trade repercussions of the H1N1 influenza outbreak. One of the greatest areas of concern was Mexico, where widespread misinformation about the disease placed consumer demand for U.S. Pork in serious jeopardy. The pork industry worked closely with trade and public health officials to educate consumers about H1N1.

The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), which is supported in part by the Pork Checkoff, also implemented timely marketing strategies in Mexico, including new recipes and point-of-sale information to promote U.S. Pork to consumers. As a result of these efforts, 2009 U.S. Pork exports to Mexico recovered and went on to set an all-time annual record. The strong momentum has continued in 2010, with first-quarter pork and pork variety meat exports up another 7 percent in volume (to 324 million pounds) and 26 percent in value (to \$258 million).

"The numbers for January through March are very strong, particularly in light of the economic difficulties Mexico is undergoing," said Chad Russell, the USMEF regional director for Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic.

For more information, contact Jim Herlihy, vice president of information services for the USMEF, at JHerlihy@usmef.org or at (303) 226-7312.

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Pork Checkoff Represented at the World Animal Health Meeting

At the annual World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) meeting held in Paris, France, last week, representatives of 176 countries came together to discuss the latest animal health issues, ranging from disease outbreaks to new standards on animal welfare.

Dr. Paul Sundberg, vice president of science and technology for the National Pork Board, was part of an eight-person OIE delegation from the United States headed by the U.S. Chief Veterinary Officer. Specifically, Sundberg said delegates acted on international standards in the case of foot-and-mouth disease or other diseases that are in other parts of the world but could enter the United States. Also, issues such as antimicrobial resistance, pseudorabies vaccines and standards on Classical Swine Fever status were debated.

The delegate from Haiti presented animal health issues facing the island nation and

highlighted the severe clinical consequences of Teschen virus. This is another swine disease foreign to the United States, but one that still poses a risk to American production because of the proximity of Haiti.

"It was important to participate in this global meeting," Sundberg said. "It's critical that we maintain a visible presence at these international standard-setting venues to help protect the best interests of U.S. producers concerning animal health, animal well-being and international trade."

For more information, contact Paul Sundberg, vice president of science and technology for the Pork Checkoff, at PSundberg@pork.org or at (515) 223-2764.

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In the Spotlight

Burger King Corporation Debuts Bone-In BK Fire-Grilled Ribs

With support from the National Pork Board, Burger King Corp. (BKC) recently introduced BK™ Fire-Grilled Ribs at participating BURGER KING® restaurants nationwide. Media support for the ribs started May 24, with the product available for a limited time only.

"We are pleased to see Burger King Corp. become the first national fast-food hamburger chain to serve authentic bone-in ribs," said Paul Perfilio, national foodservice marketing manager for the National Pork Board. "When you talk about barbecue, you talk about pork, and these bone-in ribs are 100 percent pork and full of flavor."

BK™ Fire-Grilled Ribs offer BURGER KING® guests a premium option that rivals casual dining offerings but at a more affordable price, Perfilio said. The ribs have been tested successfully during the last year with support from the National Pork Board.

"Anytime we can get a major foodservice chain to feature a great product like this, it helps keep pork top of mind with the public, and that's beneficial for everyone involved," said Dianne Bettin, chairman of the Pork Checkoff's Domestic Marketing Committee. Bettin, from Truman, Minn., runs a farming operation with her husband, Doug.

"Offering authentic bone-in ribs is a testament to our commitment to bring guests premium products," said John Schaufelberger, senior vice president, global product marketing and innovation, Burger King Corp. "We were pleased that the Pork Checkoff supported us throughout the development process."

Guests at participating restaurants can try the ribs by adding on a three-piece serving to a BK® Value Meal for a suggested retail price of an additional \$1.99. BK™ Fire-Grilled Ribs are also available for value-conscious customers in three- and six-piece serving sizes designed for snacking or as an add-on item. They are available for a suggested retail price of \$2.99 and \$5.69 respectively. An eight-piece order also is available for a suggested retail price of \$7.19.

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

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