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Addressing consumer demands for socially responsible pork production

Tennessee producers join flood-relief effort

Tennessee pork producers were out in force in the Nashville area just days after massive flooding devastated Middle Tennessee in the wake of more than 13 inches of rain. They were there to serve pork to relief workers and victims of the 100-year event that caused severe damage throughout the Cumberland River valley.

The Tennessee producers worked in concert with the Red Cross and other volunteers to serve pork loin, bratwursts and other pork items from Red Cross headquarters in a hospital parking lot. The Pork Checkoff's We Care trailer, which is equipped with grills and other equipment needed to serve large numbers of people, was driven to the Nashville area from Des Moines.

"I'm glad we will be working from the We Care trailer," said Estill Springs, Tenn., producer and the state's pork producer president, Jamie Weaver. "All pork producers understand the importance of giving back to our communities. It's one of the ethical principles outlined in our We Care initiative. This just happens to be a way Tennessee producers can help in a time of crisis and personal tragedy."

The Tennessee producers prepared more than 4,000 pork chop sandwiches and thousands of other pork-centered meals.

For more information contact Nicole Boettger nboettger@pork.org or 515-223-2612

PQA Plus Certification Time Draws Near

While PQA Plus enrollment efforts have been successful, the National Pork Board seeks to

maximize participation in the program. In June 2009, the National Pork Board of Directors adopted a resolution urging that:

By June 30, 2010, all U.S. pork producers become certified in the PQA Plus program; By December 31, 2010, all producers' farms should achieve PQA Plus site status.

This decision, reached by national producer leadership and supported by state pork association boards, is intended to add momentum to the industry's We Care initiative by asserting as proof the education of the 10 Good Production Practices and assessment of on-farm animal-care practices.

To date, more than 45,000 individuals have become certified in PQA Plus, surpassing the previous number of PQA Level III certifications of 36,000 individuals. While more than 9,000 sites have already achieved PQA Plus site status, there is still more work to be done as we move toward the December 2010 deadline.

Stacy Revels, education programs manager for the Pork Checkoff, says "We urge all producers to become certified in PQA Plus and have their sites assessed. We know producers care about their animals and the food they produce. These programs help demonstrate that commitment."

For more information about PQA Plus certification, site assessment, to locate a state trainer or to get a list of advisor training dates, go to www.pork.org.

For more information, contact Stacy Revels, SRevels@pork.org or 515-223-2795.

Adding measurable value to U.S. Pork

Japanese Bloggers Praise U.S. Pork

A recent U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) pork cooking seminar held for more than 30 high-profile Japanese bloggers has generated very positive reviews and more than a quarter of a million online media impressions for U.S. Pork in the No. 1 value market for U.S. pork exports.

The event, held earlier this month in Tokyo, was conducted by famous author and blogger Junko Ooi, who writes the Yome chan blog for an estimated 70,000 consumers every day. Invited by USMEF-Tokyo to conduct the session, her reputation drew an overflow crowd to the seminar that was broadcast on oversized television screens so that all participants could see her pork preparation techniques.

USMEF-Japan invited only "power bloggers," whose postings on a variety of consumer products and recipes are viewed by a minimum of 5,000 consumers daily.

"Of course, the safety of food we consume is most important for us," wrote one blogger, Keiple Sylup, after the event. "American pork goes through many inspections in the U.S. before shipping. Only the products which pass the inspections could be shipped to Japan. That's why we can enjoy safe American pork free of any concern."

The bloggers were given samples of several U.S. pork recipes to try, including back ribs,

which were introduced to the Japan market last year by USMEF.

The presence of four U.S. pork producers and National Pork Board CEO Chris Novak made an impression on the participants. The author of *Tama's Caf?*, who was seated at a table with National Pork Board president and Larrabee, Iowa, pork producer Tim Bierman, wrote: "There are many U.S. pork producers at the event, and we learned a lot about safety, nutrition and wholesomeness of American pork. One of the producers at our table is taking care of 5,000 hogs with only help from his wife! It's amazing!"

The event was supported with funding from the USDA Market Access Program (MAP) and the Pork Checkoff.

In 2009, the United States exported 929 million pounds of pork to Japan valued at more than \$1.5 billion. That represented nearly 23 percent of all U.S. pork exports by volume and nearly 36 percent by value.

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Pork Checkoff in the Spotlight

Bacon Foodservice Sales Top 1.7 Billion Lbs. Annually

In the last eight years, bacon has become the second fastest-growing category for pork at foodservice outlets, second only to ground pork and tied with pulled pork. More than 1.7 billion pounds of bacon are consumed in foodservice in the United States each year, according to Paul Perfilio, national foodservice manager for the Pork Checkoff. He noted:

- 600 million pounds of the 1.7 billion total pounds are consumed in the South.
- 436 million pounds are consumed in the Northeast.
- 419 million pounds are consumed in the central United States.
- 285 million pounds are consumed in the West.

"Bacon is a big part of the pork business today, and it goes way beyond breakfast,"

Perfilio said. "We're pleased that restaurant operators have come to us to learn more about bacon, and we continue to work with our chain partners to help them learn more about bacon's possibilities."

In the last two years, the Pork Checkoff has sponsored a number of bacon-themed educational workshops for restaurant chains on how bacon is made and how chains can offer customers high-quality bacon products. Topics include selecting the right vendor or processor, slicing options, curing solutions and other practical considerations important to operators that buy large quantities of bacon.

The highlight of the three-hour seminar, presented to executives from the marketing, operations, culinary and logistics departments, includes the "bacon buffet."

"We offer to them the opportunity to sample as many as 20 different kinds of bacon from various national, regional and local brands," said Perfilio. "We want to give them a complete taste of what's available, as well as help them find better products and save money, whenever possible. We hope this leads to the continued additional use and menuing of bacon," he said.

According to Pork Checkoff data:

- 69 percent of all foodservice operators buy bacon.
- 77 percent of non-commercial operators (foodservice companies that supply hospitals, schools, stadiums, etc.) buy bacon.
- From 2004 to 2009, bacon menuing increased from 62 to 64 percent at fast-food restaurants, 85 to 88 percent at family-dining menus, 59 to 68 percent at fast-casual restaurants and 81 to 88 percent at casual-dining restaurants.

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