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34 Secure Pork Supply plan advances
38 Annual PRRS costs fall
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SPECIAL REPORT

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People. Pigs. Planet.℠
Celebrating America’s Pig Farmers

From educating youth about proper animal care to tackling “what-if” scenarios of a foreign animal disease outbreak, Pork Checkoff-funded programs and initiatives were on full display at World Pork Expo, which was held June 7-9 at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines, Iowa.

The show rings were busier than ever, including 1,349 junior exhibitors with 2,615 pigs spanning 32 states. The Pork Checkoff hosted a Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) program, offering the first opportunity for youth to become certified. The National Pork Board was a contributing partner in the development of the YQCA program, which sets quality standards for all livestock exhibitors.

Bryleigh Betters (top left), Abernathy, Texas, showed the champion farm-bred-and-owned Chester White. Her father, Todd Betters, said the family has shown pigs at Expo for three years as a “fun family activity that also teaches kids life lessons.”

Lessons of another sort took place at the Pork Checkoff’s tent, where Expo attendees could earn their “Passport to Pork” by sampling pork variety meat dishes, such as Cuban-style jowl bacon and Asian-spice seasoned tongue.

“While not popular domestically, variety meats play a key role in overall U.S. pork exports,” said Checkoff consultant Benjy Mikel (left), who was on hand to grill the unique cuts. “We promote variety meat exports to add value to U.S. producers.”

Producers learned about export initiatives and other programs at both the Pork Checkoff booth and through the annual PORK Academy. Several Operation Main Street training sessions also were held to train producers and others in sharing pork’s story in their communities and with key audiences, such as dietitians.

The annual World Pork Expo also allows the Checkoff to reach well beyond Des Moines through news conferences and media interviews that articulate how our industry is undergoing continuous improvement. National Pork Board CEO Bill Even and newly elected President Terry O’Neel (below) recapped the role we all play in food safety and meeting the world’s growing demand for pork.

All in all, Expo served up a full menu of Checkoff activities and events to help fulfill its ongoing mission of research, education and promotion. See you in 2018!

– Jan Jorgensen, editor
Protein variability making you queasy?

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From developing the Secure Pork Supply plan to redesigning how pork is marketed, producers have much to celebrate, according to newly elected National Pork Board President Terry O’Neel.

The Pork Board elected the Friend, Nebraska, producer at a meeting held in conjunction with June’s World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa. During Expo, O’Neel talked about opportunities for pork producers in the year ahead.

“Today is a beautiful day at Expo, which is indicative of the future of our industry,” said O’Neel, who owns and operates O’Neel Farms with his wife Diane. They have farrow-to-finish barns and market 12,000 pigs annually, as well as grow corn and soybeans on 700 acres.

“It’s a great time to be in the pork industry with new plants coming online, growing export opportunities and a new approach to marketing our product,” said O’Neel. “It’s also exciting to see the Secure Pork Supply plan coming to fruition.”

At the June meeting, the Pork Board allocated $1.6 million for further development of the plan.

“With the growing importance of exports, the Secure Pork Supply plan is key to preparing for the possibility of a foreign animal disease outbreak,” O’Neel said. “The cooperation of pork producers will be critical for the plan to be effective.”

Rounding out the officer team are Steve Rommereim, Alcester, South Dakota, as vice president and Brett Kaysen, Nunn, Colorado, as treasurer. Jan Archer, Goldsboro, North Carolina, will serve as immediate past president.

Rommereim, who owns and operates Highland Swine, markets 10,000 pigs annually. He also grows corn and soybeans and has a cow-calf operation.

Kaysen is a partner in Flatland Showpigs, a seedstock producer that markets 480 pigs annually. He also grows corn and soybeans and has a cow-calf operation.

Kaysen is also the western regional sales director for the U.S. Pork Business at Zoetis, a global animal health company.
The Talk

We could tell you your pigs will gain more efficiently, but 3.9 pounds per pig says it better. We know that a strong start can result in a strong finish. In fact, every 1-pound difference at weaning can support a nearly 4-pound heavier pig at finishing. The Progress to Profit® Program is your wean-to-finish feeding solution, promoting consistent transitions and providing benefits in each phase. With over 16 proven swine nutrition products that span each stage of production from pre-wean to finish, you have the option to select the products that work best for your operation. Our research shows that these tried-and-true products work even better when used together.

The Walk

Animals speak louder than words. Your local Purina representative can tell you more than this ad ever could. Or visit progresstoprofit.com
Exports 101: How Your Pork Checkoff Dollars Pay Off

By Bill Even

When I led South Dakota’s Office of Economic Development, I learned five tried-and-true success principles. First, retain the business you have. Second, expand your existing businesses. Third, find ways to attract new businesses to your area. Fourth, it is twice as hard to win back a customer that you lose. Fifth, economic development is all about relationships.

Many of these lessons also apply to pork exports. I was reminded of this on a recent trade mission to Mexico with National Pork Board leaders (see page 20). On the right are key takeaways that show the importance of your Checkoff investment in export markets.

Exports Put More Dollars in Your Pocket

U.S. pork and pork variety meat exports in the first quarter accounted for 27.2 percent of total pork production, adding $52.42 in value per head, according to USDA. In March, pork and pork variety exports were up 28 percent year-over-year, adding $54.93 per head in value.

America Will Remain a Producer AND an Exporter

America’s vast land resources, water supplies, arable soils, stable government and hard-working, efficient farmers mean the United States is destined to be both a pork producer and an exporter. To paraphrase author Ayn Rand, “America is blessed with the miraculous power of the saints – only it is not the power to heal, but the power to produce.”

Pork Puts More Protein on the World’s Table

As incomes rise around the globe, people’s purchasing power increases. This is happening not only in Mexico, but also in other emerging economies from Asia to South America. Pork is perfectly positioned to benefit because these emerging economies tend to have youthful, growing populations, cultural heritages linked to pork and a continuing love of pork at mealtimes.

You Can’t Take Things for Granted

While North America is a mighty economic engine, other competitors such as the European Union, Brazil, Russia and China also have the power to be big players in international trade. Tough competition in the international markets means you cannot assume existing relationships will run on autopilot.

Mexico, for example, has 45 trade agreements worldwide and continues to build new alliances around the globe. Compare this with the United States, which has only 20 free trade agreements. We must assure buyers that the United States will remain a reliable, consistent source of high-quality pork. If we do not, buyers will look elsewhere.

Steady Investments Pay Big Dividends Over Time

In the National Pork Board’s annual budget, $2 of every $3 goes into pork promotion, both at home and abroad. Of that, a third goes into international marketing. The Pork Board works closely with the USMEF not only to build relationships and to promote pork worldwide, but also to coordinate our messages when possible.

This includes our new efforts to align Hispanic-language marketing campaigns in Mexico and the United States. Your Checkoff investment and our marketing strategies add up over time. A key goal? Enhance exports, which remain one of our industry’s economic development success stories.
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Enables faster decision making
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Next time you’re working in your hog barn, take a quick glance at every fourth pig. Why? More than one fourth (27.2 percent, to be exact) of U.S. pork and pork variety meat production was exported from January to March 2017, which put more money in your pocket.

“U.S. pork exports provided $52.42 of added value per head, based on January to March 2017 export figures,” said Bill Even, CEO of the National Pork Board.

The Pork Board is working hard to ensure this momentum accelerates, especially as domestic pork production continues to grow. In fact, the Pork Board increased Checkoff funds for 2017 international activities more than 12 percent compared with 2016.

“Rapid growth in the U.S. pork industry makes exports more essential than ever,” Even said.

Dermot Hayes, an economist and distinguished professor in agriculture and life sciences at Iowa State University, agrees.

“U.S. sows are becoming about 3 percent more productive each year, plus, we’re adding sows to the pork industry,” Hayes said. “As the U.S. pork industry expands, we have a lot...”
more pork available.”

With a planned increase in U.S. packer capacity, packers will be able to handle 6.1 percent more pigs this fall than in the fall of 2016, said Steve Meyer, vice president of pork analysis for Express Markets, Inc. Analytics.

Increases of another 1.6 percent and 2 percent by the autumns of 2018 and 2019, respectively, also are expected. Meyer estimates that there will be about 4.1 percent more pork this fall than in 2016.

“While production and capacity increase, now we need to answer: Where are we going to market all the pork?” Hayes said. “The U.S. remains a low-cost pork producer globally, so there’s optimism if we can take advantage of international trade.”

More than 95 percent of the world’s population lives outside the United States, and demand for high-quality protein continues to grow worldwide, said Bill Luckey, who chairs the Pork Checkoff’s International Trade Committee. Pork also remains the No. 1 meat protein consumed worldwide.

These combined factors are why the Pork Board committed additional resources for export market development in 2017.

“Because we produce more pork in America than we consume, we definitely need exports to grow demand for our pork and to help maintain prices,” said Luckey, who runs a wean-to-finish swine operation near Columbus, Nebraska. “The Pork Board is committed to increasing sales of U.S. pork worldwide.”

95% of the world’s population lives outside the United States

By 2050, over 60% of the world’s population will need more food.
Exports are essential in today's world. More international consumers crave U.S. pork, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). This is reflected in the way exports grew from just 7 percent of production in 2000 to more than 27 percent by the first quarter of 2017. The United States has become the world's largest pork exporter and is expected to dominate the global pork market over the next 10 years, according to the USMEF, which partners with the Pork Checkoff to develop overseas markets for U.S. pork exports.

“The pork industry entered 2017 with an optimistic outlook, confident we can continue our recent strong momentum in international trade to expand pork exports and boost pork producers’ bottom line. Following are 10 key points.”

1. **Exports are essential in today's world.**

   More international consumers crave U.S. pork, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). This is reflected in the way exports grew from just 7 percent of production in 2000 to more than 27 percent by the first quarter of 2017. The United States has become the world’s largest pork exporter and is expected to dominate the global pork market over the next 10 years, according to the USMEF, which partners with the Pork Checkoff to develop overseas markets for U.S. pork exports.

   “The pork industry entered 2017 with an optimistic outlook, confident we can continue our recent strong momentum in international markets,” said Philip Seng, USMEF president and CEO. “With record-large pork production, it’s more important than ever to move more product out of the country by growing U.S. market share in established markets and by breaking new ground in emerging destinations.”

---

**WHO'S BUYING U.S. PORK?**

Top 6 markets, volume - 2016

Source: USDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Volume (metric tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China/Hong Kong</td>
<td>544,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>730,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>387,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>205,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and South America</td>
<td>135,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>135,353</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The shaded boxes on the following pages, such as the one to the left for Mexico, highlight specific opportunities in these top six markets.

---

**MEXICO**

With more than 130 million people and an annual per capita pork consumption that tops 35 pounds, Mexico shows no sign of losing its appetite for U.S. pork, especially with a growing middle class. Domestic pork production cannot keep up with demand, according to the USMEF, helping to make Mexico the No. 1 destination for U.S. pork by volume.

Mexico imports U.S. hams, picnics, Boston butts, skins, trimmings and variety meat. The marketing strategy for our southern neighbor is focused on building and reinforcing long-time purchasing loyalty among targeted buyers and on educating potential buyers on how to effectively handle and merchandise a variety of pork products, according to the USMEF.

Mexico consumes about 40 percent of U.S. ham production.

Mexico imports U.S. hams, picnics, Boston butts, skins, trimmings and variety meat. The marketing strategy for our southern neighbor is focused on building and reinforcing long-time purchasing loyalty among targeted buyers and on educating potential buyers on how to effectively handle and merchandise a variety of pork products, according to the USMEF.

The volume of first-quarter 2017 U.S. pork exports to Mexico was up 29 percent compared with the same period in 2016.
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In the first quarter of 2017, demand from China and Hong Kong for U.S. pork exports was strong, fueled by strong pork variety meat sales, according to the USMEF. While trade access and geopolitical issues came into play, China and Hong Kong were the second leading U.S. pork market in terms of volume.

The pork industry is building long-term purchasing loyalty with China and Hong Kong by positioning the United States as a reliable supplier of safe, high-quality pork that consistently meets expectations. The USMEF also is highlighting U.S. pork’s versatility, high quality and profit potential.

China and Hong Kong offer strong market potential for U.S. pork exports

90 pounds per person 1.5 billion people

per capita pork consumption

2. BIG GOALS EQUAL BIG OPPORTUNITIES

Value-added products, variety meats and pork muscle cuts are helping the National Pork Board increase U.S. pork exports through access to new markets and expansion of existing markets. The five-year Checkoff Strategic Plan goal? Achieve a 9 percent average annual increase in value and volume. While an aggressive goal, it’s doable, Even said.

“Demand for U.S. pork is increasing, and customers are willing to pay more for it,” Even said. “The U.S. pork industry has had success in displacing competitors, even with trade barriers and a strong U.S. dollar. By investing 12 percent more Checkoff funds this year in international marketing, the Pork Board is working to maintain market access and to grow market opportunities for U.S. pork around the world.”

That is great news for producers, according to Luckey. The Nebraska pork producer is pleased to see U.S. pork export demand rising, especially with expanding U.S. pork supplies and political uncertainty.

3. THE PORK CHECKOFF’S PROACTIVE APPROACH PAYS DIVIDENDS

The safety, consistency, high quality and affordability of U.S. pork set it apart from the competition. The Pork Checkoff’s marketing efforts with the USMEF promote the positive attributes worldwide.

“The focus in each market is different based on opportunities, consumption patterns, price and other key factors,” Luckey said. The Pork Checkoff Trade Committee prioritizes international markets each year and allocates funds accordingly for the USMEF to carry out market development activities.

Each export destination offers different challenges and requires tailored marketing approaches. Initiatives to promote U.S. pork include everything from direct consumer messages to educational seminars for importers and processors. The Checkoff also hosts international trade teams and supports reverse trade teams that allow U.S. packers and exporters to align with importers and potential global customers.

The U.S. pork industry also invests Checkoff funds in research and economic analysis each year to gauge export growth opportunities and to identify and apply scientific approaches to reduce trade barriers.

“We must remain competitive and build long-term relationships and business in foreign markets,” Luckey said. “We need to defend markets, open new markets and eliminate trade barriers.”
GOAL: ACHIEVE A 9 PERCENT AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE IN THE VALUE AND QUANTITY OF U.S. PORK EXPORTS

JAPAN
Japan continues to be the top value importer of U.S. pork and third in terms of volume. The country boasts an annual per capita pork consumption of almost 45 pounds and a population of 126 million people.

While there is potential to increase sales of U.S. pork to Japan, more than 20 countries export pork to Japan. The fierce competition and an aging population create challenges for U.S. pork sales to Japan.

The main goal is to defend market share and increase the volume of cuts sold. This will be accomplished by highlighting different ways to prepare pork and by further developing the market through expanded sales of chilled (never frozen) U.S. pork to new and existing users.

4. FREE TRADE IS KEY

Although trade deals such as the Trans Pacific Partnership and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have been a major focus in politics, a protectionist approach isn’t good for agriculture, said Iowa State’s Hayes. He noted that Mexico and other key buyers of U.S. pork already are negotiating lower import duties and more free trade agreements with other nations.

“While the Pork Checkoff cannot control or engage in political issues, producers understand the importance of win-win trade deals,” Luckey said. “And, we hope to see bilateral agreements take shape to open markets.”

THE CHALLENGES …
Increasing global supplies, political uncertainty, strong-dollar risk

… AND OPPORTUNITIES
U.S. reliability, more product and continued growth in demand around the globe
Canada’s 37 million people consume less pork than their U.S. neighbors, with an average annual per capita pork consumption of 55 pounds. And, they export nearly two-thirds of their own production.

Canada, our fourth biggest customer by volume, is a very good trade partner for further processed pork items, such as bone-in hams, boneless picnics and trimmings. At the retail level, boneless loins, tenderloins, sirloins and spareribs offer additional opportunities for U.S. pork exports.

Marketing efforts north of the border include assisting customers with import processing opportunities, as well as building strong relationships with key importers, processors and retailers.

Number of countries that bought U.S. pork in 2016: **110**

“IF CHINA INCREASED U.S. PORK IMPORTS BY JUST 1 PERCENT OF CONSUMPTION, IT WOULD TAKE AN ADDITIONAL 5 PERCENT OF ANNUAL U.S. PRODUCTION.” – Dermot Hayes, Iowa State

5. MAJOR MARKETS MATTER

Mexico, Japan and China remained top markets for U.S. pork in the first quarter of 2017. The volume of U.S. pork exports to Mexico rose 29 percent from January to March 2017 compared with the same period a year ago. Mexico consumes over 7 percent of U.S. pork and pork variety meat production and about 40 percent of U.S. ham production, much of which is further processed there.

U.S. chilled-pork exports to Japan were up 3 percent in volume and 10 percent in value in the first quarter compared with 2016.

“Volume doesn’t necessarily mean buyers are purchasing more pork just because it’s inexpensive,” Luckey said. “Chilled pork sells at a premium price, so it helps drive up the value of U.S. pork exports.”

China remains a huge market for U.S. pork, in part because of the nation’s massive population. U.S. pork variety meat exports to China and Hong Kong remain strong and have grown 24 percent in volume compared with last year, he added.

“If China increased U.S. pork imports by just 1 percent of consumption, it would take an additional 5 percent of annual U.S. production,” Iowa State’s Hayes said. “We may actually see less of a surge in the China/Hong Kong market for imported muscle cuts because they are rebuilding their swine herds.”

6. OTHER MARKETS HELP FUEL GROWTH

The United States exported pork to more than 110 countries in 2016, and while all of those markets differ in size and potential, all are crucial, Luckey said. U.S. pork exports to South Korea, the No. 6 U.S. market, were up 31 percent January through March compared with the same period a year ago, thanks to duty-free access from a free trade agreement. Canada, the No. 4 U.S. market, showed small increases in the first quarter.

The day may not be that far away when 1 in every 3.4 pounds of pork traded in the world will originate from the United States, according to the USMEF.

“With exports, the totals from each country matter,” Luckey said. “Collectively, they make a big impact on my bottom line. The same is true for other pork producers across the country.”
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“IT SOMETIMES TAKES YEARS TO BUILD NEW MARKETS FOR U.S. PORK. THAT’S WHY WE HAVE TO BE READY NOW...” – Bill Luckey

7. EMERGING MARKETS OFFER ROOM TO GROW

Building new export opportunities for U.S. pork doesn’t happen overnight, as Luckey points out. As a participant on trade missions to Colombia, Argentina and Peru, he’s seen firsthand the initiatives needed to grow sales in emerging markets. Once these relationships take root, however, they benefit U.S. producers.

In the first quarter, the volume of U.S. pork exports to South America (Colombia, Peru and Chile) soared nearly 95 percent. Also, Honduras in Central America showed an increase of 14 percent for the first quarter compared to 2016. Other markets, such as the countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, restrict trade access, but growth potential is clear.

“It often takes years to build new markets for U.S. pork,” Luckey said. “That’s why we have to have be ready now for continued success.”

8. COMPETITION DRIVES EXPORT MARKETS

A variety of ever-changing market factors influences which nations can supply pork at the most competitive prices. For example, 2014 and 2015 were tougher for U.S. exports due to a strong dollar, a lack of access to major markets and the West Coast port labor disputes.

“In the wake of the port slowdowns, Canada and the EU seized a lot of our pork export opportunities,” said Luckey, who added that Canada exports two-thirds of its pork production.

“The United States is working to rebuild market share and to reach new markets.”

9. CATERING TO BUYERS’ NEEDS IS CRUCIAL

“In the global marketplace, one product doesn’t fit all,” Luckey said. “U.S. pork’s big selling points are safety and a consistent supply. Plus, we can be nimble to meet market needs, especially with the new packing and processing plant capacity coming online.”

With vigorous global competition, the United States must provide the types of pork products that buyers want, in the form they want it.

“We have to understand each country’s unique needs and be as accommodating as we can,” Luckey said.
10. **VARIETY MEATS ADD VALUE**

Variety meat exports were up 22 percent in volume and 33 percent in value during the first quarter, compared with the same period in 2016. Sales were dominated by China/Hong Kong and Mexico, which account for about 85 percent of the variety meat export volume.

Many variety meat products traditionally are not consumed by U.S. domestic consumers, but they fit well into diets and cultures of other markets, said Luckey, who has traveled to China and Mexico on trade missions.

A large portion of variety meats produced in the United States is rendered, which can mean only pennies on the dollar for producers. For the past three years, the Pork Checkoff has led a project to determine ways to add value to variety meats and by-products.

“The research showed that a by-product of pig blood can be used as a ‘binder’ for meat and variety meats to produce low-cost, high-nutritional products to consumers in other nations while returning value to U.S. producers,” Luckey said.

“Whether it’s through pork exports or sales of variety meats, maximizing opportunities for U.S. pork is a big challenge, but buyers know we offer one of the best and safest pork supplies in the world,” Luckey said. “We all win with trade.”

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

For every $1 million of pork variety meats exported, the live value of U.S. hogs increases by $0.20/cwt.

For muscle cuts, live value increases by $0.05 per cwt.

**Source:** A regression analysis conducted by Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes.

**SOUTH KOREA**

South Korea boasts a population of over 50 million people with a per capita pork consumption of over 80 pounds. South Korea regained momentum after a slow year in 2016, making it No. 6 by volume for U.S. pork sales.

Most U.S. pork now enters Korea duty-free under the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which has helped boost sales of raw material for further processing, as well as for processed pork products.

The USMEF is working to defend U.S. pork’s export market share and to further develop the market for U.S. products for further processing and U.S.-branded pork.
Pork Board Explores Trade Opportunities in Mexico

By Kevin Waetke

With Mexico’s growing hunger for U.S. pork, it has become one of the most important export markets. Earlier this year, members of the National Pork Board traveled to Mexico City to further build trade relations by emphasizing the safety and reliability of the U.S. pork supply.

“We’re trade visit was eye-opening,” said Jan Archer, immediate past president of the National Pork Board. “As board members, we were able to witness why Mexico is such an important trading partner. The average Mexican family spends 30 to 40 percent of its income on food. Consumers there appreciate the ability to access safe, nutritious and affordable U.S. pork.”

Within the next five years, economists predict Mexico may become the largest market for all U.S. goods, surpassing both Canada and the European Union.

The key objectives of the trip were to discuss and define areas of mutual interest, to extend appreciation to Mexico’s trade industry for the high volume of U.S. pork purchased and to emphasize the reliability and availability of U.S. pork and the next steps needed to support expanding trade.

“Our trade visit was eye-opening,” said Jan Archer, immediate past president of the National Pork Board. “As board members, we were able to witness why Mexico is such an important trading partner. The average Mexican family spends 30 to 40 percent of its income on food. Consumers there appreciate the ability to access safe, nutritious and affordable U.S. pork.”

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“Humbling” Experience

“I enjoyed walking into a local meat market and watching videos that showed consumers how we raise our pigs in the U.S.,” said board member Gary Asay, Osco, Illinois. “To know that U.S. pig farmers are helping feed families across the world by supplying safe, nutritious and affordable pork is humbling.”

In 2016, Mexico was again the No. 1 market for U.S. pork and pork products by volume, with more than 730,000 metric tons exported there last year. In terms of value, Mexico was No. 2 at $1.4 billion.

New Milestone

In January 2017, Mexico was No. 1 in terms of both volume and value for the first month ever. The United States accounts for more than 90 percent of the total pork imported by Mexico.

During the five-day tour, board members met with USDA’s Foreign Ag Service to understand Mexico’s economy and its current political environment. The
Good Return to Producers

“Our investment of producer dollars in the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) returns great dividends as it develops relationships with importers and retailers,” Archer said. “Our Mexican neighbors import fresh pork and ham. Also, by-products valued less by U.S. consumers, such as pork offal and pig heads, fill an important need in the Mexican marketplace.”

Mexican facilities process and transform more than 40 percent of U.S.-produced pork hams into deli meats and formed-ham products. These products are crucial for low-income diets.

“Pork is a mainstay in Mexican culture. Consumers appreciate it and know how to prepare it,” said National Pork Board CEO Bill Even. “The challenge Mexico faces is getting more protein-rich food into the diets of low-income residents and children. This requires a focus on new product development and education.”

The National Pork Board works directly with the USMEF to address this key issue, specifically through outreach to dietitians and other medical professionals in Mexico. USMEF also educates students on the role pork and protein play in the diet and, to Mexican consumers, provides point-of-sale promotional materials at retail stores.

Beyond these direct consumer messages, Pork Checkoff-funded USMEF activities include work with trade representatives – importers, brokers and processors – to educate trade groups on the benefits of U.S. pork and its quality, safety and availability.

“As a pork producer, I value our trade relationship with our neighbor even more after visiting this beautiful country,” Archer said. “Growth in our industry is the result of a strong trade balance.”

Pork Board members Brett Kaysen and Mike Skahill look at pork at Costco in Mexico City.

Pork Board CEO Bill Even and President Jan Archer meet with Carla Suarez and Luis Musi of Comecarne.

Consumers shop at wet markets, shown here, and supermarkets.

This retail meat manager from one of Mexico’s traditional markets is all smiles as he sports a new U.S. Pork cap.

Pork Board members Brett Kaysen and Mike Skahill look at pork at Costco in Mexico City.

Pork Board CEO Bill Even and President Jan Archer meet with Carla Suarez and Luis Musi of Comecarne.

Consumers shop at wet markets, shown here, and supermarkets.
New Plant Capacity, Rising Exports Are Welcome News with Growing Supplies

By Steve Meyer

It is no surprise that the U.S. pork industry is growing. Production increased 7.3 percent in 2015 and 1.8 percent in 2016, with expected bumps of 4 percent this year and 2.3 percent in 2018. This equates to annual growth of over 4 percent for the four-year period. Total 2018 U.S. pork output of 26.58 billion pounds, carcass weight, will exceed the PEDV-shortened 2014 total by 16.9 percent.

Two things drive growth in any industry: Resources and profits. Resources pork producers need include capital, management, labor and production inputs, such as feed. One could argue that labor is a limiting factor in some locales, but the other factors are in good supply.

Corn, soybean meal and lean hog futures suggest 2017 profits of just under $9/head on the Iowa State University Estimated Costs and Returns series — the best since 2011. June 1 futures contracts for 2018 point to similar profits.

10 Percent More Plant Capacity Expected by 2019

The packing sector is quickly solving a growth constraint by adding a substantial plant capacity. The Moon Ridge Foods pork plant in Pleasant Hope, Missouri, and the Prime Pork plant in Windom, Minnesota, are not yet up to announced capacities, but the latter opened in late April.

Triumph-Seaboard’s plant in Sioux City, Iowa, will begin operations in late July and expects to be up to full one-shift capacity near the first of the year. Clemens Food Group’s Coldwater, Michigan, plant will open Sept. 5 and expects to be at one-shift capacity by February 2018.

In May 2018, Triumph-Seaboard will add a second shift. Finally, Prestage Foods has broken ground on its Wright County, Iowa, plant, with plans to open in October 2018. When it reaches capacity sometime in 2019, the pork industry will have nearly 10 percent more capacity than in the fall of 2015 and over 9 percent more than just last fall.

Surprising Rise in Exports

Growing supplies, coupled with new plant capacity to process pigs provide an export opportunity. This year’s surprising rise in exports has buoyed pork and hog markets in spite of record-large output. I’m not aware of any analyst who forecast anything close to the 17 percent export growth we have seen through March.

Exceptional sales to Mexico, Japan, Korea and other markets helped market hog prices exceed expectations back at the first of the year. U.S. exports should nearly match last year’s levels for the rest of 2016 and break the 2012 record.

Counting on domestic consumption to take a large share of the coming growth is risky. The U.S. population
has grown only about 0.7 percent per year since the beginning of the Great Recession.

Per capita pork consumption averaged 51.0 pounds from 1988 to 2007 (before corn-based ethanol and PEDV). Forecasts for 2017 and 2018 are 51.2 and 51.9, respectively. If exports underperform and U.S. production increases enough to fill the new packing capacity, per capita availability could easily exceed 53 pounds. That would likely put significant pressure on pork and hog prices.

Nothing says that the new capacity must be filled, but most of it is owned, at least in part, by hog producers who will see better financial performance of their integrated system if the plants run at high capacity. The economic incentives will be high to increase hog output.

As this trend continues, it will be imperative for pork marketers – including the Pork Checkoff – to continue to increase pork demand around the globe and here at home to keep prices high enough to support profitable production.

A PIECE OF THE BIG PICTURE

U.S. Pork Production, Consumption and Exports

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Source: Livestock Marketing Information Center; Data from USDA NASS and ERS
Quality Initiative Builds Momentum
By Mike King

There will be a major momentum shift this year in how pork quality is classified if USDA’s revision of its voluntary pork quality standards is approved. After more than 30 years, the federal government is moving forward with its internal process to revise the voluntary standards – an action likely to affect all pork chain segments, including how consumers view pork.

“This holds great promise for increasing pork consumption,” said Everett Forkner, a Richards, Missouri, producer and a member of the National Pork Board’s Pork Quality Task Force. “It also addresses one of the biggest concerns we hear from consumers – that pork packaging is inconsistent.”

The task force, consisting of seven producers, four packer/processors and an academic, met the past two years to help find new ways to improve the consistency of pork quality based on Checkoff-funded research. The objective is to establish new quality benchmarks needed to meet consumer demand and expectations.

As part of its 2020 strategic plan, the National Pork Board set a quality goal of reducing pork loin chops that score below the board’s color score of “3” by 10 percentage points compared with the 2012 retail baseline study (55 percent cut to 45 percent, with an 18 percent overall improvement).

“We’re discussing this goal with all pork chain segments, including packers, processors, retailers and foodservice,” said Steve Larsen, assistant vice president of science and technology for the Pork Checkoff. “New voluntary standards will build on efforts to educate consumers about what quality attributes to look for in pork, such as meat color and marbling.”

A Win-Win Scenario
According to Forkner, it’s about giving consumers what they want and having a system that rewards that ability. “Improved voluntary standards can allow for product differentiation based on quality and eating experience,” Forkner said. “This will offer consumers new pork purchasing opportunities.”

Forkner sees this benefiting both domestic and international markets. “Ultimately, this should raise the quality and eating experience of all U.S. pork, and that’s good for all pork producers,” said Forkner, who offers practical, on-farm advice for fellow producers.

“As USDA works on the revisions, talk to your genetics supplier, packer/buyer and nutritionist about how you can improve pork quality,” Forkner said. “Review anything that can affect it, from pig handling to hauling.”

He added, “If you believe an opportunity is coming to help your farm, take action. You need to start now if you want to be there when it becomes available.”

In the interim, Pork Checkoff-funded research into various new technologies for assessing quality in packing plants is being evaluated for real-world use, Larsen said.

Consumers base their pork purchases on quality as defined by color, packaging and expiration date.
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Producers who use Circumvent® G2 see reduced mortality, fewer culls, improvement in ADG and improved feed conversion rates, all of which help to elevate herd health – and protect your bottom line.2
Promoting Pork in a Digital World

By Angela Anderson

From hailing an Uber ride, ordering movie tickets or finding a new recipe, today’s consumers are turning more and more to smartphones, laptops and tablets. To capitalize on the growing digital world, the Pork Checkoff is tapping new ways and places to promote pork’s great flavor and convenience.

“We have connected with consumers through the Pork be Inspired® website for years,” said Jarrod Sutton, domestic marketing vice president for the Pork Checkoff. “But today, YouTube ads, social media, targeted emails, digital advertising and other online efforts are building a robust, meaningful marketing story to consumers and elevating pork when planning meals.”

Two of pork’s largest target demographics, millennials and multicultural consumers, are heavily engaged online through mobile technologies. This is one of the primary reasons the Pork Checkoff’s Pork be Inspired® marketing efforts have gone digital.

“One of the pluses of effectively engaging millennials and multicultural consumers is that you automatically tap into the massive trend of mobile connectivity,” said Bill Even, National Pork Board CEO. “The Pork Checkoff has increased its investments in digital marketing – from $2.25 million in 2016 to $3.5 million this year.”

With a digital marketing strategy, pork content is available 24/7. To help consumers find pork information at any time of the day, the Pork Checkoff has updated content on the Pork be Inspired® website, improved online search results and purchased Google AdWords that drive consumers directly to all things pork.

Through the yearlong Taste of Now marketing campaign, the Checkoff is connecting with consumers online to ensure that they have the correct information about pork. From factual cooking temperatures to high-quality, delicious (and easy) recipes, pork consumers are instantly finding what they need.

Partnering with Retailers

The Pork Checkoff also has worked with retailers to reach multicultural consumers digitally.

“Most of our pork promotions with major retailers have a digital marketing component to ensure that we are reaching the right consumers at the right time,” said Sara Crawford, director of retail...
marketing and innovation for the Pork Checkoff.

“From retail website banner advertisements to co-sponsored social media posts, we work closely with retailers to ensure a strong digital marketing presence during our promotions,” Crawford said.

Sutton said that with abundant pork supplies, keeping pork top of mind with all consumers is key.

“When consumers search for pork information, we are ready and able to deliver them facts about pork and to encourage them to put more pork on the fork this year.”

The Pork Checkoff has turned to Google to learn what consumers search most for on the internet when it comes to pork, according to Jenna Bieri, digital marketing manager for the Checkoff.

“The results were eye-opening,” Bieri said. “The top question is: ‘How do you cook a pork chop?’ That provided the opportunity to market pork online by getting back to the basics.”

Based on Google insights, the Pork Checkoff created 10 short back-to-basics Make it Like This videos. The videos feature the top internet search questions and provide easy, delicious step-by-step guides. Cooking basics are included for boneless loin roast, spiral ham, pulled pork, rib roast, pork chop, tenderloin, oven-roasted ribs, honey-ginger pork tenderloin, bacon BBQ chops and oven BBQ back ribs.

The Pork Checkoff also sponsored three Buzzfeed Tasty videos earlier this year, featuring Slow Cooker Honey-Garlic Pork Sliders, Western Breakfast Enchiladas and Cheesy Spinach-Stuffed Pork Chops.

“For social media, Buzzfeed Tasty videos are the gold standard for consumer engagement,” Bieri said. “The quick video format of under a minute showcases all the ingredients while appealing to almost every consumer. For pork, it truly allows us to show our flavor and convenience to consumers.”

Most-Googled Pork Question

- 31 millions views
- 312,000 reactions (think Facebook – like, love, smiley face, etc.)
- 46,000 comments
- 204,000 shares of the three videos

Slow Cooker Honey-Garlic Pork Sliders
Western Breakfast Enchiladas
Cheesy Spinach-Stuffed Pork Chops
Consumer interest in how food is produced has never been higher, leading the National Pork Board to continue its outreach to affirm the pork industry’s commitment to antibiotic stewardship. In the first half of the year, the Pork Checkoff staged three unique events to underscore the real change occurring on pig farms today.

“There is real change happening across the country, and we want people to understand the commitment pork producers have to antibiotic stewardship and continuous improvement in animal welfare,” said John Johnson, chief operating officer of the National Pork Board.

“For nearly two years, we have been educating farmers about antibiotic stewardship, investing in research and helping prepare for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) new antibiotic use rules that took effect Jan. 1,” Johnson said.

“Hands down, it has been the Checkoff’s largest producer education campaign.”

**Leading the Way**

The first event of 2017 took center stage at the annual producer update session of the National Pork Industry Forum in Atlanta. *Real Change: A Live Discussion of On-Farm Antibiotic Use* brought together experts in pork production, retail and animal care and welfare for a live, web-based broadcast.

During the 30-minute program – viewed online at RealChangeOnFarms.org by more than 60,000 people – experts discussed the pork industry’s leadership in responsible antibiotic use and how it has implemented FDA’s new guidelines.

FDA guidances 209 and 213 end the use of medically important antibiotics for growth promotion and increase veterinarian oversight for on-farm antibiotic use through the veterinary feed directive and prescriptions. All human medically important antibiotics administered to pigs in feed and water must have direct veterinarian oversight.

This has created strong veterinary-client-patient relationships between farmers and their vets. Pig management and biosecurity steps are being taken to increase the health of pigs and reducing the need for antibiotics.

“We are committed to defining the ideal balance of the right medicine, in the right dose, at the right time for our pigs.”

– Michele Sprague, DVM

“We’ve always been committed to continuous improvement, especially regarding responsible antibiotic use,” said Brad Greenway, a Mitchell, South Dakota, pork producer and the 2017 America’s Pig Farmer of the Year.

“We have a great relationship with our vet, with regular check-ins to ensure we’re raising pigs safely and effectively,” Greenway said. “Our vet prescribes antibiotics only when medically necessary for our pigs’ well-being.”

**Veterinary, Human Medicine Play Joint Roles**

In April, the Pork Checkoff participated in the annual Global Ag Investing forum in New York City. Johnson shared the stage
with physician Steve Solomon, formerly with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and retail economist Len Steiner.

The CDC estimates that 47 million yearly human prescriptions are not medically necessary.

“Antibiotics will and should continue to be used in human and veterinary medicine, but physicians and veterinarians need better information on the epidemiology and microbiology of infections,” said Solomon, now a public health consultant.

“This understanding will allow them to become better stewards of antibiotics in an era where one-third of human health prescriptions written by physicians are unnecessary,” Solomon said. “We need to first unravel the chain of what causes antibiotic resistance.”

Economist Len Steiner acknowledged that the highest consumer hurdle is often the rising cost of meat carrying “antibiotic-free” claims.

“Antibiotic-free pork will always cost more than conventional pork to produce,” Steiner said. “The chance of the industry moving to all antibiotic-free production is very close to zero due to this cost and to animal welfare. Farmers and consumers alike need to know animals are cared for with medicine rather than left to die.”

**Farm Tour Opens Dialog**

In May, the National Pork Board welcomed 20 journalists from news media outlets to tour Iowa Select’s new sow farm near Humeston, Iowa. The four-day, all-agriculture immersion introduced the journalists to pork production and carcass fabrication. (See page 34 for more details.)

“The bottom line on this complex issue is that antibiotic resistance is a shared responsibility, and we all have a role to play,” Johnson said. “We need to continue to share that pork producers are committed to using antibiotics carefully to protect the health of pigs and that healthy pigs make safe food.”

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Swinging the Barn Doors Wide Open
National media visit sow farm to learn firsthand about pork production

The opportunity to show a journalist from the Washington Post around a sow farm is rare, but imagine if that reporter also was in the company of staff from CNN, USA Today, National Public Radio, the Huffington Post and a host of regional press.

That is exactly what happened May 16 when 20 journalists affiliated with the National Press Foundation (NPF) arrived in Iowa for a four-day agriculture immersion tour. The Pork Checkoff teamed with DuPont Pioneer to welcome the journalists, who each applied to be a part of the experience.

“Hosting the tour allowed us to share the message of responsible pork production with highly influential, well-traveled journalists,” said John Johnson, chief operating officer of the Pork Checkoff. “We are starting to see this investment pay off with enlightening articles centered on the current state of increasing pork production and packing capacity.”

This is the second year that the National Pork Board has coordinated an event with the NPF, a non-profit organization that educates journalists on complex issues. According to NPF President Sandy Johnson, the organization educates through staging professional development opportunities all across the United States.

As part of the tour, participants visited Iowa Select Farms’ new 6,200-

“I appreciate the help and plan on following up with some stories soon. I found the week in Des Moines incredibly informative and helpful.”
– Kristofor Husted, KBIA radio and a contributor to National Public Radio

“I am the one who should be thanking you for giving us such a rarefied opportunity to spend a few days steeped in large-scale pork production. I will definitely be calling on your organization's expertise in the future.”
– Andrea Shea, with WBUR in Boston
The journalists learned that producers follow the We Care® principles every day in their barns.

sow farm near Humeston, Iowa. Participants learned about the state-of-the-art air filtration systems that keep pigs healthy, as well as the diverse sow housing systems and the farrowing process.

“Iowa Select Farms is committed to being open and transparent about what happens on our farms,” said Jen Sorensen, the farm’s director of communications.

The journalists also took part in a Butcher Shop 101 event conducted by Neel Sahni, foodservice marketing and innovation manager for the Pork Checkoff. The reporters could see precisely where today’s pork cuts originate on the pig and how they are packaged and displayed in meatcases and on menus. The demonstration highlighted both the versatility of the pig, and why pork demand is growing.

Nationally renowned expert Mike Apley, DVM, Kansas State University, updated the journalists on the issue of antibiotic resistance.

“The discussion was very beneficial for the journalists,” said Johnson. “They seemed to appreciate learning about the complex issue and the pork industry’s commitment to antibiotic stewardship.”

The media were all ears – and cameras – during the Butcher Shop 101 demonstration conducted by the Pork Checkoff’s Neel Sahni. He showed the journalists where popular pork cuts come from on the pig and highlighted pork’s versatility.

Swine Nutrition Webinar Series Coming in August

- **Aug. 1:** How Dietary Enzymes Work
- **Aug. 8:** Gut Physiology of Pigs Fed Diets with Carbohydrase Enzymes
- **Aug. 15:** Applying Enzyme Technology to Optimize the Utilization of Fibrous Feed Ingredients
- **Aug. 22:** Evaluation of Nutrient Uplift Provided by Xylanase in Finishing Diets

The **FREE** webinars begin at noon (CDT).
To register, go to [pork.org/animalscience](http://pork.org/animalscience)
EuroTier Highlights Innovations

By Mike King

While not totally pig-centric like World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa, EuroTier provides a look at the high-tech world of pork production. The massive fair, held every two years in Hanover, Germany, is the world’s leading trade fair for livestock production.

EuroTier offers a smorgasbord of everything related to raising pigs, cattle, sheep and chickens. In 2016, 2,629 exhibitors from 58 countries presented innovations and product developments for agriculture worldwide. At the biennial EuroTier, awards are given for the most innovative products. Last year, judges considered 270 entries from all species. Not all items are yet readily available in the U.S.

**Weigh, Sort Pigs with a Tablet or Smartphone**

The gold-medal winner in the swine category was the software called Piggy Check from Meier-Brakenberg. This software makes it possible to weigh and sort market hogs with a smartphone or tablet PC with 3D-camera. The user takes pictures of an animal inside a pen. The camera then creates depth images and calculates the animal’s weight, producing a traffic-light indicator that shows the recommended marketing action.

Users also can integrate Piggy Check technology to collect and evaluate all data in a cloud-based databank. This can offer keen insights as to when barn cutouts should happen to maximize market prices. Producers need to have the hardware to make the system work, as well as a monthly subscription.

CulinaFlex by Big Dutchman International won a silver award. The central part of its system is a pinch valve installed in the drop pipe, which functions similarly to a balloon. This differs from many drop-pipe systems as it squeezes remaining feed from the pipe when emptied. The balloon also displaces oxygen to create an anaerobic environment, which prevents germs from reaching the feed pan. The company claims this reduces labor because pipes no longer require cleaning.

**EU Not So Different**

From sow stalls to tail-docking or antibiotics, there was no shortage of conversations and presentations at EuroTier. While the European Union has some differing animal welfare codes than in North American production, industry sentiment may be more similar than Americans would think.

Martin Scholten, managing director of the animal sciences group at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, was a speaker at EuroTier. He said, “We can’t regulate our animals into being happy, but we can use technology to look at their performance to ensure they are well cared for.”

Scholten said that “dealing with politics and marketing campaigns” is a worldwide phenomenon facing farmers. He thinks the voices of farming need to continue to point out the difference between what may make people feel good versus what is in the best interest of the animal.

“We must combat those outside of agriculture who think they know more about what animals need than what science tells us they do,” Scholten said. “Because we’ve been slow to do this, marketers have taken advantage and are using consumer emotions to drive changes.”

**Editor’s Note:** Mike King, director of science communications for the Pork Checkoff, attended the 2016 EuroTier as a guest of the German Agricultural Society. The next EuroTier will be Nov. 13-16, 2018.
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Imagining if a foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreak occurred near your farm. Movement of susceptible livestock would cease immediately, and you couldn’t transport hogs to market or receive new pigs without permission from state officials.

Consumer confidence would falter, and export markets would close immediately, slashing demand for U.S. pork. The upshot? You would face a serious risk of lost revenue. How would you and other producers ensure the business continuity of your farms?

To address this scenario, the Pork Checkoff helped create the Secure Pork Supply (SPS) plan and recently allocated $1.6 million for its further development.

“Producer interest in the SPS plan has exploded in recent years,” said Patrick Webb, DVM, director of swine health programs for the Pork Checkoff. “Producers know it’s vital to be prepared to minimize the negative effects of an FAD outbreak on their business while the disease is being contained and eradicated.”

The size, structure, efficiency and extensive movement of livestock of the pork industry present unprecedented challenges in the event of an FAD outbreak such as foot-and-mouth disease, classical swine fever or African swine fever.

“There are a million pigs on the road every day being transported to the next stage of production or being shipped to packing plants,” Webb said. “Business continuity revolves around being able to move pigs to processing and other production premises.”

Threats to Exports

Business continuity also involves market access. Not only could an FAD outbreak harm the domestic pork industry, it could devastate the export markets that play a growing role in U.S. pork producers’ profitability.

“Business continuity revolves around being able to move pigs to processing and other production premises.”

– Patrick Webb, DVM, Pork Checkoff

Rapid disease detection and response, coupled with a workable SPS plan, will be critical in managing an FAD outbreak and helping producers return to business as usual as quickly as possible.

“Time is of the essence with any disease outbreak, as we learned from outbreaks of the porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) and the high-pathogenic avian influenza,” Webb said. “That’s why the Pork Checkoff is stepping up to the plate to implement the SPS plan.”

Lessons from Sept. 11

The concepts behind the SPS plan can be compared to the response following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, according to Webb. Just as airplanes were not allowed to fly over America until the extent of the crisis was determined, new shipments of hogs could be stopped in the event of an FAD outbreak until the full scope of...
the outbreak is determined.

A few days after Sept. 11, planes were allowed to take off again but only after new security measures were put in place.

“For our industry, livestock movement will be allowed to resume at some point following an FAD outbreak, but only after enhanced biosecurity and surveillance measures are implemented and movement permits are issued,” Webb said.

A Collaborative Effort

All this is part of the SPS plan, which reflects a multi-year collaborative effort by pork producers, pork industry leaders, academia and state and federal officials.

“The SPS plan has been developed with a lot of pork producers’ input, from state pork associations to the Pork Checkoff Swine Health Committee,” said Webb, who noted the program is voluntary. “The goal is to make this plan practical, workable and credible.”

The SPS plan will allow the safe movement of pigs with no evidence of infection in an FAD control area.

“These animals will be allowed, under a permit issued by officials, to be transported to processing plants or other sites to accommodate different stages of production,” Webb said.

The SPS plan, funded in part by the Pork Checkoff, is one of several plans supported by USDA’s Animal

Take Action Today

You don’t have to wait for the Secure Pork Supply (SPS) program to be finalized to accelerate your efforts to protect your swine herd and ensure business continuity.

“There are things you can incorporate on your farm today to support the enhanced biosecurity efforts that will be required if there is a foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreak,” said the Pork Checkoff’s Patrick Webb, DVM, who offers these tips:

• **Designate a biosecurity manager for your farm.** This person needs to have an understanding of infectious diseases as well as production agriculture and to be familiar with the production site.

• **Develop a site-specific biosecurity plan** for your operation.

• **Train your farm employees** about proper biosecurity procedures.

• **Use a premises identification number (PIN)** on all your records, including diagnostic laboratory submission forms and bills of lading for animals shipped to the packing plant.

• **Make sure you have sharable electronic records**, including electronic certificates of veterinary inspection.


• **Train employees how to spot signs of an FAD.** The Pork Checkoff’s FAD push packs contain sturdy, barn-friendly wall charts showing foot-and-mouth disease, classical swine fever and African swine fever. The charts include visitor and employee biosecurity, along with a special report on African swine fever and what to do in case an FAD is diagnosed in the United States. To order the packs, access the Pork Store at pork.org and search for “FAD.”
and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Others include the Secure Milk Supply program and Secure Beef Supply program. The egg and turkey industries have also been developing programs.

“Common components include risk assessments and enhanced biosecurity,” Webb said. “A lot of things the pork industry is doing already are part of the SPS plan.”

SPS planning started in 2011, with the first draft completed in 2013. Pilot projects in 2014 tested the plan, and it was revised in 2016 to incorporate lessons learned from the 2015 outbreak of high-pathogenic avian influenza in U.S. poultry and turkey industries.

The Pork Checkoff is working with the Center for Food Security and Public Health to create a step-by-step guide to help pork producers implement the plan. The guide is slated for completion in 2018.

**Plan Specifics**

“This is the ‘cookbook’ to help producers organize biosecurity efforts and enroll in the SPS plan,” said Webb, noting the SPS plan will continue to evolve as scientific knowledge advances.

In an FAD outbreak, state and federal incident command officials will make decisions guided by the unique characteristics of the specific disease outbreak.

“The pork industry will not be in charge but will play a supporting role to assist the federal and state officials,” Webb said.

To restrict movement in the area, officials will establish a control area at a radius of at least 10 kilometers (about 6.2 miles), although the state veterinarian can enlarge it if necessary. The control area could also be defined on a county-by-county basis, Webb said. Livestock producers in the control area will face the most restrictions.

Several factors will determine if daily movement permits for feed trucks, manure hauling, etc. will be issued to keep the farm running. Business continuity permits also may be required to move animals off the site.

Answers to key questions will determine whether permits are issued: How confident are regulatory officials that animals on the site are not infected? How large is the outbreak? If the permit request involves moving pigs from one site to another, what is the disease status in the area the animals must pass through? Have animals been vaccinated? What about moving pigs that have been infected but have now recovered?

“Thinking about these questions now and adopting enhanced biosecurity measures improve the pork industry’s preparedness for an FAD outbreak, Webb said. “Implementing the SPS plan before an FAD outbreak occurs will speed up a successful FAD response, reduce producers’ risk and ensure business continuity.”

For more program details, go to [securepork.org/](http://securepork.org/).
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For use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian. Federal law prohibits the extra-label use of this drug in food-producing animals. Swine intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 5 days of receiving a single-injection dose. Use with caution in animals with known or suspected CNS disorders. Observe label directions and withdrawal times. See product labeling for full product information.

In humans, there is a risk of user photosensitization within a few hours after excessive exposure to quinolones. If excessive accidental exposure occurs, avoid direct sunlight. For customer service, to obtain a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or to report adverse reactions, call Norbrook at 1-866-591-5777.

PRECAUTIONS: The effects of enrofloxacin on cattle or swine reproductive performance, pregnancy and lactation have not been adequately determined. The long-term effects on articular joint cartilage have not been determined in pigs above market weight.

Subcutaneous injection can cause a transient local tissue reaction that may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter. Enroflox 100 contains different excipients than other enrofloxacin products. The safety and efficacy of this formulation in species other than cattle and swine have not been determined.

Quinolone-class drugs should be used with caution in animals with known or suspected Central Nervous System (CNS) disorders. In such animals, quinolones have, in rare instances, been associated with CNS stimulation which may lead to convulsive seizures. Quinolone-class drugs have been shown to produce erosions of cartilage of weight-bearing joints and other signs of arthropathy in immature animals of various species. See Animal Safety section for additional information.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: No adverse reactions were observed during clinical trials.

ANIMAL SAFETY: In cattle safety studies, clinical signs of depression, incoordination and muscle fasciculation were observed in calves when doses of 15 or 25 mg/kg were administered for 10 to 15 days. Clinical signs of depression, inappetance and incoordination were observed when a dose of 50 mg/kg was administered for 3 days. An injection site study conducted in feeder calves demonstrated that the formulation may induce a transient reaction in the subcutaneous tissue and underlying muscle. In swine safety studies, incidental lameness of short duration was observed in all groups, including the saline-treated controls. Musculoskeletal stiffness was observed following the 15 and 25 mg/kg treatments with clinical signs appearing during the second week of treatment. Clinical signs of lameness improved after treatment ceased and most animals were clinically normal at necropsy. An injection site study conducted in pigs demonstrated that the formulation may induce a transient reaction in the subcutaneous tissue.

Norbrook Laboratories Limited, Newry, BT35 6PU, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

I02 September 2016

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Annual PRRS Costs Fall $83.3 Million

Productivity gains blunt the impact of PRRS on the U.S. herd

By Marlys Miller

Producers and veterinarians are making progress in the battle against porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRS). Based on a five-year moving average, annual productivity losses due to PRRSV fell $83.3 million from October 2010 ($663.91 million) to October 2016 ($580.62 million) in a recent interim report.

An ongoing Pork Checkoff PRRS project, conducted through Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota, provides semi-annual updates on the disease’s cost to the U.S. swine herd.

“Our goal, as outlined in the Pork Board’s strategic plan, is to decrease its impact 20 percent by 2020 from the 2010 baseline.”

Herd distribution regarding PRRS status and productivity are what influence the annual losses, said Iowa State University’s Derald Holtkamp, DVM, who directs the study.

“All of the gains have come from productivity improvements in PRRS-affected herds, particularly in herds that have not had an outbreak in 12 months,” Holtkamp said.

While more breeding herds are PRRS-positive today, improved biosecurity and herd-health management have contributed to gains. This includes limiting piglet cross-fostering, closing the breeding herd and maintaining immunity through vaccination versus live-virus inoculation.

“Fewer pigs are PRRS-negative at weaning than in 2010,” Holtkamp said. “To continue the progress made during the past five years, we need to increase efforts to stabilize sow farms so they can wean more PRRS-negative pigs.”

Still Most Costly Disease

Despite advances made against PRRS, it has not been unseated as the U.S. pork industry’s most costly disease.

“Even at its worst, porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) did less damage than PRRSV does year after year,” said Holtkamp, adding that lessons learned from PEDV have helped make progress against PRRSV.

“There’s been a shift in the producer mindset,” Holtkamp said. “Producers are more committed to biosecurity since PEDV, and they’re more convinced that it can make a difference.”

Before PEDV surfaced in
2013, PRRS outbreaks affected 30 to 40 percent of all U.S. breeding herds. After PEDV, it dropped to 20 to 25 percent. Greater attention to biosecurity and better sow-farm management has reduced PRRSV’s impact on productivity, but there has been a shift toward control and away from elimination since 2010. With fewer PRRSV-negative breeding herds, progress will require prioritizing elimination.

“Herd immunity wanes over time, and then outbreaks become more severe again,” Holtkamp said. “Considering long-term financial losses, it still pays to work toward elimination.”

Improved biosecurity on individual farms and industry-wide are keys to building confidence that PRRSV elimination efforts can prevent an outbreak or at least delay it for several years. Holtkamp endorses on-farm risk assessments and outbreak investigations to identify weaknesses and prioritize where to allocate resources.

“It comes down to risk/reward trade-offs.” he said.

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The adage that “you can’t get anywhere unless you know where you are” certainly rings true in pork production. Simply put, you can’t make progress at the farm level unless you know where your herd’s productivity stands.

“Continuous progress is a hallmark of U.S. pork production,” said Chris Hostetler, director of animal science for the Pork Checkoff. “To help measure productivity, track progress and set goals, the Checkoff’s Animal Science Committee has made gathering and disseminating productivity data a priority since 2011.”

Each year, a data collection company and Ken Stalder, swine Extension specialist at Iowa State University, compile and analyze production data from about 35 percent of the U.S. sow herd and offspring. All production phases (sow farm, nursery, wean-to-finish and conventional finisher facilities) are included.

Highlights of the results are published annually in the Industry Productivity Analysis. The latest industry report card shows both progress and hiccups.

“While there have been gains in the overall production efficiency of the U.S. swine herd, the analysis points to areas producers can tweak for additional improvement, such as preweaning mortality,” Hostetler said.

With the latest dataset, he noted, producers must take the impact of the porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) into account. PEDV began in 2013 and affected herds more broadly in 2014 and 2015.

“While PEDV’s impact may hide some improvements in key productivity indicators over time, it draws attention to the devastating impact that health challenges can have on the...” – Chris Hostetler, the Pork Checkoff

Producers can use the data, such as shown here, to identify areas they can improve to impact productivity and profitability. From 2011 to 2016, nursery pig mortality increased only slightly for the top 25% of farms but grew on average 0.25% per year for the bottom 25%. The latter farms can make significant improvement by changing management practices.
farm,” Hostetler said.

The height of the PEDV outbreak in 2014 is reflected in increased preweaning mortality and fewer pigs weaned per litter. These measures also were off-trend in both 2013 and 2015. “Not until 2016 did the number of pigs weaned per litter return to pre-PEDV levels,” Hostetler said. “And preweaning mortality is yet to recover.”

Compile and Compare

The data analysis provides annual averages for key performance indicators. For each key performance indicator, producers also can see where the top 25 percent, the average and the bottom 25 percent of farms shake out.

“Producers can see where their farm falls and change management practices in areas to maximize performance in each stage of production,” Hostetler said.

Better genetics, improved health, precise management and excellent pig nutrition are the biggest factors driving herd productivity.

“Producers need to compile and analyze their farm’s data and then compare it to the national database,” Hostetler said. “That is how you really get a feel of where you stand and how much progress you need to make to stay competitive today.”

For the full report, go to pork.org/animalscience.

### Average Sow Farm Productivity (±standard deviation)

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<td>Pigs/Mated Sow/Year</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
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<td>Litters/Mated Sow/Year</td>
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<td>2.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Born</td>
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<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number Born Alive</td>
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<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number Weaned</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
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<td>Preweaning Mortality (%)</td>
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<td>17.3</td>
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<td>17.3</td>
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<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.1</td>
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**Pig Welfare Symposium**

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A forum for sharing ideas, learning from other segments of the industry and fostering dialogue on topics related to pig welfare.

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Animal Care Remains Focus of TQA®

By Carrie Webster

More than a million pigs are transported every day on U.S. roads to packing plants or to the next stage of production. Behind the wheel are hundreds of drivers trained to do the job right, thanks to their training in the Pork Checkoff’s Transport Quality Assurance® (TQA) program.

“The program recently was updated to ensure continuous improvement in how pigs are handled and transported,” said Dinah Peebles, manager of certification programs for the Pork Checkoff.

Since 2001, TQA has built a culture of protecting and promoting animal well-being through the training and certification of animal handlers and transport personnel.

New Trends Incorporated

“Drivers and transporters are responsible for the safety and well-being of a large percent of the pork in production each day,” said Jamee Eggers, animal welfare manager for the Pork Checkoff. “It is vital those drivers are properly equipped and educated to transport swine.”

To stay current with transportation trends, a TQA task force of producers and industry experts and representatives identified updates needed to build consumer confidence. Changes include revised guidelines for boarding and bedding, worker safety, confined spaces and public interaction, which address how an accident should be handled.

With the updated TQA program, transporters can complete 40 percent of training using six different interactive modules ranging from five to eight minutes each. The modules also can assist in retraining. The other 60 percent of training uses existing slide presentations.

Small but Critical

“These updates may seem small, but they are important,” Peebles said. “Each section of the program is thoroughly reviewed to ensure that it continues to sync with current research and transportation standards. That matters to consumers.”

The revised TQA program officially launched in March. The Pork Checkoff has been conducting sessions across the country since then to train advisors on program updates so they are ready to certify transporters.
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Learning to Lead

By Darcy Maulsby

If you ever attended summer camp as a kid, you know you can leave camp, but camp never leaves you. That’s even more true at a pork leadership camp, where young people learn to lead, find inspiration to pursue ag careers and become lifelong ag ambassadors.

Just ask Cassidy Smith, director of communications for the Texas Pork Producers Association (TPPA). “The Texas Pork Leadership Camp opened my eyes to the diverse pork production in Texas and around the country,” said Cassidy Smith, director of communications for the Texas Pork Producers Association (TPPA). “It also influenced my career choice.”

Smith grew up raising show pigs and participating in 4-H and FFA. She never experienced the full scope of the pork industry, however, until she attended the Texas camp in 2004.

“I made lifelong friendships through the experience and had so much fun that I wanted to stay involved in the pork industry,” said Smith, who followed through on that sentiment.

That’s the power of youth pork leadership camps, said Cindy Cunningham, assistant vice president of communications for the Pork Checkoff. The camps are organized each year by several state pork associations nationwide, three of which are featured here.

“The camps, which are supported by the Checkoff, tap into the passion kids have for raising pigs and give them tools to succeed as the next generation of pork leaders,” said Cunningham, who assisted with media training at the 2016 Oklahoma Pork Youth Leadership Camp.

Kylee Deniz, producer outreach and marketing manager for the Pork Checkoff, agrees that the camps play a key role with youth. “The impact of the camps can’t be overstated,” Deniz said. “We encourage more states to get involved.”

Texas Offers Career Focus

The TPPA has hosted its Texas Pork Leadership Camp for more than 20 years. “Since Texas is largely show-pig driven, with just a few large, commercial hog operations, our camp focuses on the diverse career paths available today,” said Brandon Gunn, TPPA executive vice president. “We want students to discover there is more than one way to succeed as an ag leader.”

Camp alumni include Trent Ashby, a member of the Texas House of Representatives; Daryl Real, who worked with the National Swine Registry before becoming senior vice president of agriculture and livestock at the Texas...
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state fair; and Kevin Mock, who owns Mock Livestock in Hico, Texas, and is a national accounts manager for Show-Rite Feeds. Other alumni have pursued careers as attorneys, Extension specialists and more.

The 2016 camp followed a pig from conception to the dinner plate, with visits to commercial swine farms, a tour of a Tyson bacon processing plant and other pig-centric training.

“The 2016 camp included an overview of the U.S. pork industry, media training, a visit to a sow farm, meat quality training and a tour of a culinary school in Oklahoma City. The experience has encouraged some youth to choose a career in the pork industry,” Lindsay said.

One participant had wanted to be a physical therapist,” Lindsey said. “But the leadership camp sparked his interest in pigs, and he planned instead to earn an animal science degree and work in the pork industry.”

“The Illinois Pork Leadership Institute was fun while also providing encouragement for me and other youth to work full-time in the pork industry,” Borgic said.

The institute, held in late June, is geared toward high school and college students. Tours have included Fair Oaks Farms in Indiana, culinary schools in Chicago, a Purina feed facility in St. Louis and the Northern Illinois Food Bank.

The Illinois institute, like other pork youth development programs nationwide, is committed to expanding students’ horizons.

“It’s all about supporting the next generation of pork industry leaders,” Borgic said. “We need to encourage youth to step up.”
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