Making a Good Thing Even Better

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People. Pigs. Planet.™
Are We There Yet?

Before hand-held games and in-car movies, parents tried to ward off the “Are we there yet?” question on road trips by keeping kids busy playing 20 Questions, I Spy or the License Plate Game, with the winner spotting plates from the most states. I couldn’t help but think of the latter game while attending World Pork Expo June 8 to 10 in Des Moines, Iowa. Just a quick pass through the parking lot showed cars from Minnesota to Texas and from California to New York. The more than 20,000 pork producers and ag professionals that attended also represented 48 countries around the world.

At Expo, the Pork Checkoff sponsored several activities that addressed the “Are we there yet?” question when it comes to pork producers doing what’s best for people, pigs and the planet. The Checkoff debuted its updated Pork Quality Assurance® program, which more fully incorporates the industry’s six We Care™ ethical principles and the role of caretakers.

Also at the three-day event, the Pork Checkoff continued to lead the conversation about responsible antibiotic use and to build awareness of the new antibiotic rules that will take effect Jan. 1, 2017. At the Checkoff booth, producers learned more about the changes and could sign a pledge vowing to be ready. Two of the many who did so were pork producers Rod Leman and Alicia Wittrop.

“We need to do the right thing every day in our barns, including using antibiotics responsibly,” said Leman, of Swine Graphics, Webster City, Iowa. “And we need to share with consumers how we raise pigs.”

Wittrop, who raises Berkshire show pigs and pork, agreed, saying, “We need to be an open book to consumers, with us all doing our part.”

With producers’ unwavering dedication to continuous improvement, the pork industry will never “get there” – and that’s just the way it should be.

– Jan Jorgensen, editor
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.

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Even to Head National Pork Board

By Kevin Waetke

The National Pork Board has named Bill Even, an agriculture-industry leader with substantial senior management experience in crop and livestock production, as its new chief executive officer. Even began his new role June 6, attending the board's meeting and World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa, in his first official week.

“As a fourth-generation farmer, I have deep, personal knowledge of the challenges facing pork producers today,” Even said. “I look forward to working on behalf of America's more than 60,000 pork producers to build consumer trust, drive sustainable production and grow consumer pork demand.”

Before joining the National Pork Board, Even managed DuPont Pioneer's global industry relations strategy. In that role, he built collaborative stakeholder relationships in the areas of seed, biotechnology, biofuels and farm policy.

Prior to that position, Even served as DuPont Pioneer's commercial unit lead for South Dakota, North Dakota and northwest Minnesota. He was responsible for leading seed sales, operational marketing, agronomy, training, demand planning, precision agriculture and policy needs in the region.

Immediately prior to joining Dupont Pioneer, Even served from 2007 to 2010 as South Dakota's secretary of agriculture. He managed six department divisions, including Agriculture Regulatory Services, Agriculture Development, State Fair, Wildland Fire, Resource Conservation and Forestry, and Agricultural Policy.

Even also served as deputy secretary of tourism and state development, director of the governor's office of economic development, state energy policy director and policy advisor for South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds.

**Focused on the Future**

“Bill's stellar career in public service has been devoted to defining ag policy and implementing the often difficult changes needed to continuously improve,” said National Pork Board President Derrick Sleezer, Cherokee, Iowa.

“His ability to build trusted relationships is critical to the U.S. pork industry,” Sleezer said. “I'm confident that he has the experience and discipline needed to build and lead teams to meet the growing demand for protein in the U.S. and abroad.”

Even holds a degree in agricultural production from Lake Area Technical Institute and a bachelor of science degree in agricultural business and a minor in economics from South Dakota State University. He also has a Juris Doctorate from Drake University Law School, where he was an Opperman Scholar.

Even and his family own and operate a fifth-generation diversified crop and livestock operation near Humboldt, South Dakota, where they raise corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and cattle. The farm was homesteaded in 1883 by his great-grandfather, and Even began farming in 1983. He and his wife, Janell, have three children.
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North Carolina’s Jan Archer to serve as president

Pork Board Elects New Officers

By Jan Jorgensen

Jan Archer, a pork producer from Goldsboro, North Carolina, was elected president of the 15-member National Pork Board at the board’s June meeting held in conjunction with World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa.

Also elected were Terry O’Neel, Friend, Nebraska, as vice president and Steve Rommereim, Alcester, South Dakota, as treasurer, with all of their posts effective July 1. Derrick Sleezer, Cherokee, Iowa, will continue on the board in a non-voting role as immediate past president.

“As the incoming president, I’m excited to help guide the pork industry to continued success both domestically and abroad,” Archer said.

Archer is an owner of Archer Farms LLC, a 1,200-sow farm that produces 26,000 weaned pigs annually and raises corn, soybeans and hay on 120 acres. Through Archer Consulting, she provides personnel training to the pork industry, including certification in Pork Quality Assurance® Plus and Transport Quality Assurance®.

“Pork Checkoff programs such as these are key to ensuring that we do what’s best for people, pigs and the planet everyday on our farms,” Archer said. “Everyone on our farm is certified in PQA Plus, and animal care is the linchpin of everything we do.”

The 2007 Pork Leadership Academy class member is an Operation Main Street (OMS) speaker, as are O’Neel and Rommereim.

“Our customers increasingly want to know how the food they eat was raised,” Archer said. “We all need to speak up for pork, whether it’s through OMS, on social media or at the local coffee shop.”

O’Neel is owner and manager of O’Neel Farm, a 500-sow farrow-to-finish farm in southeastern Nebraska. He markets 12,000 hogs annually and raises corn and soybeans on 700 acres.

Rommereim is owner, manager and operator of Highland Swine, which markets 10,000 pigs annually. The South Dakotan also grows corn, soybeans and alfalfa.

In May, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack appointed five pork producers to serve three-year terms on the 15-member National Pork Board. The appointees were nominated by the National Pork Act delegate body at the National Pork Industry Forum, which was held in Indianapolis in March.

Jan Archer and Terry O’Neel, both on the newly elected Pork Board leadership team (see above), were reappointed. Secretary Vilsack also appointed new members Alicia Pedemonti, Hopkinton, New Hampshire; Gene Noem, Ames, Iowa; and Michael Patrick Skahill, Williamsburg, Virginia.

At Pork Forum, the industry honored Archer and O’Neel for their achievements during their first three-year term on the board. Retiring members Wathina Luthi, Gage, Oklahoma; and Mike Wyant, Nevada, Missouri; and outgoing National Pork Board President Derrick Sleezer, Cherokee, Iowa, also were recognized for their contributions on behalf of America’s pork producers.
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Making a Good Thing Even Better

Updated PQA Plus® program focuses on doing what’s best for people, pigs and the planet

By Darcy Maulsby

In the sports world, good things come in threes, such as strikeouts in baseball and 3-point shots in basketball. In pig farming, good things also come in threes with the third revision of the Checkoff’s Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus®) program, which offers timely updates, greater convenience and a stronger focus on the caretaker’s role.

“PQA Plus 3.0 reflects producers’ commitment to doing what’s best for people, pigs and the planet,” said Bill Winkelman, vice president of producer and industry relations for the Pork Checkoff. “New research and better ways of presenting practical information have made a good program even better.”

Continuous improvement has been the hallmark of PQA Plus since its inception as PQA over 25 years ago. The program is revised every three years, with PQA Plus 3.0 debuting June 8 at World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa.

“We incorporated feedback from producers, packers, industry partners, PQA Plus advisors and others,” said Dinah Peebles, manager of certification programs for the Checkoff.

Revisions were reviewed by Pork Checkoff committees, with proposed changes tested to ensure their usefulness. Enhancements include:

1. Greater focus on caretakers.

The revised program emphasizes the key role of caretakers, with information reorganized to reflect the daily work flow on the farm. The We Care™ ethical principles now serve as the main chapters for the PQA Plus program, with the 10 Good Production Practices (GPPs) restructured as sub-chapters for a more consistent flow for animal caretakers.

“The updated program takes producers from the farm gate, where the need

“PQA Plus is a great way to ensure that all of our employees are on the same page and have a clear picture of our farm’s priorities and processes.”

– Jan Archer, incoming National Pork Board president
for biosecurity is highlighted, into the barn, with a focus on veterinarian oversight, records, animals, safety and the environment,” Peebles said. “The program finishes with the importance of community, such as volunteering and giving back.”

Built-in flexibility allows larger farms to customize the certification program to include their standard operating procedures.

“Organizing the 10 GPPs by how they support We Care helps demonstrate our commitment to the six ethical principles in a practical way,” said Jan Archer, the incoming National Pork Board president. Her family runs a 1,200-sow farm near Goldsboro, North Carolina. “PQA Plus is a great way to ensure that all of our employees are on the same page and have a clear picture of our farm’s priorities and processes,” Archer said.

2. New, interactive learning modules.

To be certified in PQA Plus, participants must pass a test, which includes questions related to the 10 GPPs. With the updated program, producers may continue to renew their certifications online through new interactive learning modules.

The 90-minute online training is divided into 14 modules that range from two to 14 minutes each. Review questions with each module are designed to help improve comprehension.

“Earlier versions offered continuous online modules with no breaks,” Peebles said. “This latest version lets you start and stop the training, completing the process when it’s convenient.”

The online modules also

A History of Doing What’s Right

Launched in 1989, the Pork Quality Assurance® (PQA) program has evolved, expanded and grown over the years as part of producers’ commitment to continuous improvement and education. The 2016 PQA Plus revision reflects the desire of pork producers to continually improve and meet higher standards. The timeline below provides a historical perspective.

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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>TQA®</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>PQA Plus revision 1.0</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>PQA Plus third-party verification added</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>PQA Plus revision 2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>PQA Plus revision 3.0</td>
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As of March 1, more than 63,000 people were certified in PQA Plus, with more than 17,000 sites assessed.

now are interactive, Winkelman said. Users can “fill up” a syringe electronically, for example, and place it on an on-screen pig to indicate where a vaccination should be injected.

3. Alignment of audits and assessments.

The PQA Plus Site assessment aligns with the Common Swine Industry Audit, helping producers prepare for a third-party audit. The assessment covers animals, facilities, caretakers and records, highlighting the 27 key swine care and preharvest pork safety aspects addressed in the Common Swine Industry Audit.

“In the last few years, the Pork Checkoff has worked with industry stakeholders on a one-audit format that will be accepted by packers and customers so producers will only have to do one audit,” Winkelman said.

There is an important difference, however, between PQA Plus assessments and a third-party audit.

“An assessment from a PQA Plus advisor is an educational opportunity that helps you learn what you need to improve to meet the audit standards,” Winkelman said. “An audit, on the other hand, is not focused on education. The auditor is there to assess whether you meet the established standards.”

As of March 1, more than 63,000 individuals were through all of its revisions, the PQA Plus program has remained a comprehensive guide to help producers do what’s right every day on their farms.

“PQA Plus 3.0 reflects producers’ commitment to doing what’s best for people, pigs and the planet.”

– Bill Winkelman, Pork Checkoff
certified in PQA Plus, with more than 17,000 sites assessed.

“PQA Plus helps ensure that everyone on your farm is invested in the process and the outcome of a site assessment and audit,” Archer said.

These processes include antibiotic use. While proper antibiotic use has always been part of PQA Plus, there’s now a stronger focus.

“The updated program is designed to help producers prepare for the federal government’s new antibiotic-use guidelines that will become effective Jan. 1, 2017,” said Winkelman, who noted that a 12-page Responsible Antibiotic Use Guide and video are shared with the PQA Plus training materials.

“These enhancements will help increase the accountability and effectiveness of PQA Plus, all in the name of producing better, safer pork,” he said.

“Our industry is dynamic, and change is constant,” Archer said. “PQA Plus does a great job of keeping our farmers informed and focused on continuous improvement with animal well-being, environmental stewardship and public health.”

For more information about the updated PQA Plus® program, visit: pork.org/pqa-plus-certification/
Q: In your opinion, what are one or two key strengths of the PQA Plus program to the pork industry?

A: Bollum: Our customers recognize the PQA Plus program and associate it with safe, high-quality pork. Through the program revision process, the PQA Plus task force utilizes the most current scientific and production information to uphold the pork industry’s history of continuous improvement.

Leeth: The strengths of the program are many, but two of note are the veterinarian-client-patient relationship and site assessments, which both focus on and evaluate the well-being of the pigs.

Summerlin: PQA Plus demonstrates to our customers our commitment to doing what is right when it comes to raising and caring for pigs to produce pork that will feed people. It also lets our employees on our farms, as well as our supplier partners in raising pigs for our pork brands, know that we have high standards and expectations for food safety and animal care.

Q: Does your company require PQA Plus training for pork suppliers? What value does it offer your company and/or customers?

A: Bollum: We require our producers and their pig caretakers to maintain current certification in PQA Plus. We also certify our plant employees involved in animal care and/or movement in PQA Plus.

Leeth: Smithfield requires all suppliers to participate in the PQA Plus program. As both a producer and a processor, Smithfield is well-positioned to see the value of the program at all points in the supply chain. We have seen value in having a unified industry initiative to ensure and improve animal care on the farm.

Summerlin: Seaboard Foods requires PQA Plus certification. It serves as the foundation for good production practices on our own farms, as well as our partners’ farms who supply pigs to our plants. The program helps ensure that every pig we process is raised and cared for in a way that meets industry standards for food safety and animal care.

Q: Why do you encourage America’s pork producers to be certified in PQA Plus?

A: Bollum: PQA Plus provides producers with a platform to base their own animal care programs around so that they can meet the expectations of customers and consumers.

Leeth: Compliance with programs like this is not “nice-to-have” in our industry; it is a “must-have.” We need more tangible ways to show customers and consumers our commitment to animal care, and PQA Plus helps provide that.

Summerlin: We do more than encourage certification; we require it because it provides the basis for good production practices for food safety and animal care. Because we believe so strongly in PQA Plus, we train and certify every employee working with pigs on our Seaboard Foods farms.
INTRODUCING CONTINUOUS FLY CONTROL. A FEED THROUGH FOR SWINE.

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For over 25 years, the Pork Quality Assurance® program and its successor, PQA Plus®, have served as the gold standard for quality assurance programs. Today, the education and certification components of PQA Plus show consumers that producers are doing what's right for people, pigs and the planet.

As science has evolved, PQA Plus has not only kept pace, but has moved ahead of the curve to meet the needs of the pork industry, its customers and consumers. The latest revision of the Checkoff program debuted at World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa. With a focus on responsible antibiotic use and emphasis on the We Care® ethical principles, PQA Plus revision 3.0 continues the tradition of merging the latest in science with producer ideals.

Within PQA Plus, producers can gauge how well the program’s Good Production Practices are being implemented on their farms through a PQA Site Assessment. Conducted by a qualified, trained site assessor, it also can play an important role by serving as a “dry run” for a subsequent Common Swine Industry Audit.

The PQA Plus site assessment covers animals, facilities, caretakers and records, highlighting the same 27 key swine care and preharvest pork safety aspects addressed in the Common Swine Industry Audit. This makes having a PQA Plus site assessment before undergoing a Common Swine Industry Audit on your farm extremely valuable. The PQA site assessment lets you know what management practices need to be improved before a third-party audit is performed.

PQA Plus site assessors assist producers with farm-specific management and facilities improvements during and after an assessment. Auditors, however, strictly report findings through the audit process and cannot assist with needed farm improvements. This makes PQA Plus site assessors valuable resources to advise pig farmers on management or facility areas that can be improved.

The advice and improvements shared through a site assessment will improve production on the farm, as well as lead to a more successful Common Swine Industry Audit. Together, PQA Plus certification, PQA site assessment and the Common Swine Industry Audit provide tangible benefits to producers and a time-tested measure of reassurance for all segments of today’s pork chain.
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MORE WAYS BAYER IS HELPING SAVE YOUR BACON
Responsible Antibiotic Use Takes Center Stage at D.C. Forum

All stakeholders play a role in addressing antibiotic resistance

By Kevin Waetke

The National Pork Board recently joined with the Atlantic Media Group to bring experts together to discuss responsible antibiotic use. Farmers, physicians and other stakeholders shared what is being done to address antibiotic resistance concerns, including U.S. pork producers continuously improving on-farm practices.

“Antibiotics are a critical tool to treat and prevent disease in both humans and animals,” said National Pork Board President Derrick Sleezer, Cherokee, Iowa.

“We’re committed to responsible use of these medicines in pigs to protect their efficacy for both humans and animals,” Sleezer said. “Through a science-based approach, we must work together to better understand and address the potential impact of antibiotic resistance.”

Shared Responsibility

Citing that combating the growing threat of antibiotic resistance is a “shared responsibility,” participants in the Washington, D.C., forum echoed that antibiotics – used responsibly – continue to be equally necessary on farms and in hospitals.

“We have to think about this from a collaborative perspective,” said Georges Benjamin, MD, executive director, American Public Health Association. “We have 260 million outpatient antibiotics courses each year. We need to cut that number in half.”

Beth Bell, MD, agreed. The director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted that it is not an option to eliminate antibiotic use in animals.

“We must have antibiotics, but we have to use them correctly,” Bell said. “The right medication, at the right time, for the right indication, in the right dose.”

That view was shared by pork producers at the forum. Panelist Colby Ferguson, a small-scale pig farmer from Maryland, recounted how he tried to raise a herd once without antibiotics, but the loss of life was too great.

He now supports using antibiotics in “much smaller doses as prevention” in the first few weeks of a pig’s life to reduce the likelihood of illness that would require larger doses later.

“Without timely use of antibiotics, sickness can spread rapidly, endangering both the health of animals and the safety of our food,” said Brad Greenway, a Mitchell, South Dakota, pork producer who also attended the event.

“Through the pork industry’s stewardship and the FDA’s upcoming new rules, real change is underway on the farm,” Greenway said. “America’s pig farmers embrace the new rules and are committed to responsibly treating and preventing disease in pigs.”

This helps keep animals healthy and the food supply safe, he added. Several factors help toward that end:

• Farmers work closely with their veterinarians to protect their pigs’ health and reduce the need to use antibiotics whenever possible.

“We must have antibiotics, but we have to use them correctly, The right medication, at the right time, for the right indication, in the right dose.”

– Beth Bell (pictured here), MD, director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Since 2000, the pork industry has funded more than $6 million of research on antibiotic use and resistance to ensure continuous improvement in on-farm antibiotic use. The goal is to protect the long-term effectiveness of antibiotics in both humans and animals.

- The pork industry works closely with human and animal health experts to define and guide responsible antibiotic use.
- Farmers keep detailed records of all medicines they use in raising and caring for pigs.

“A Real Game Changer”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversees the use of antibiotic products in pigs and other livestock. New FDA regulations – through Guidance 209 and 213 – will be fully enacted in January 2017 and will eliminate the use of medically important antibiotics on the farm for growth promotion.

William Flynn, deputy director for science policy at the FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine, also spoke at the forum. He emphasized that new FDA regulations, which many farmers have already put into practice on their farms, “are a real game changer” in the big picture.

FDA’s new regulations will strengthen rules requiring licensed veterinarians to oversee on-farm antibiotic use for prevention, control and treatment of disease. The pork industry has been working for nearly two years to help farmers prepare to implement the guidelines.

“We are all in this together, and pork producers need to be part of the dialogue,” said Jan Archer, incoming National Pork Board president and Goldsboro, North Carolina, producer. “We’re working to ensure that farmers are equipped with the information and resources they need to use antibiotics responsibly. Using as much as necessary but as little as possible helps ensure safe food and healthy people and animals.”

The USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service also monitors and tests meat to ensure its safety before entering the food supply.

Nearly 130 experts took part in the forum, which drew the attention of pork industry press and social media. The event garnered nearly 3.5 million social media impressions and online followers. The forum is the first of many proactive steps the National Pork Board is taking this year to become part of the dialogue on responsible antibiotic use.

Attendees included experts from the U.S. pork industry, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Public Health Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Veterinary Medical Association and representatives from across the food chain.

To learn more about the Pork Board’s antibiotics on-farm stewardship priorities, visit porkcares.org/antibiotics.
Preventing Sickness in Pigs Is Ethical Responsibility for Producers

By Mike King

As a pork producer, treating sick pigs is part of the job, but it’s also the right thing to do. Like humans, pigs sometimes get sick and need medical attention. However, the best-case scenario is to work closely with your vet to keep pigs healthy and develop ways to prevent disease in your herd.

Antibiotics

Visit pork.org/antibiotics under the On-Farm Resources tab to download the new fact sheet and other tools to enhance your pigs’ health.

“Veterinarians take their responsibility to protect both animals and people very seriously,” said Harry Snelson, DVM, director of communications, American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV). “Preventing and relieving animal suffering play a critical role. It’s important that producers and vets have a strong veterinarian-client-patient relationship.”

Practical Interventions

The Pork Checkoff’s science and technology team recently collaborated with the AASV on a fact sheet, Preventing Sick Pigs: An Ethical Responsibility. The group outlined four critical areas to keep pigs healthy and growing on the farm:

• Prevent the introduction of viruses and bacteria by following recommended biosecurity measures. This includes attention to management, barn design, washing and disinfection and controlling movement of pigs, people, vehicles and other items that could transmit disease.

• Understand bacterial and viral disease threats that can affect the herd. Diagnostic tools can help vets recommend the best prevention or treatment option.

• Enhance herd disease immunity with appropriately timed vaccinations.

• Use antibiotics responsibly under the supervision of a vet to prevent and treat bacterial diseases.

No Farm Is Immune

“No matter how good a farm’s biosecurity is or how stringent the vaccine regimen, sometimes weather, nearby disease or other variables can conspire to bring illness to a group of pigs. Veterinarians are committed to working closely with producers to prevent animals from becoming exposed to bacteria and becoming sick.”

Snelson said, “For both farmers and veterinarians, the goal is to prevent disease rather than to have to treat sick pigs. Preventing disease will reduce the need to use more antibiotics for treatment.”

“When producers and veterinarians decide to use preventive antibiotic therapy, the appropriate antibiotic is administered as a short-term management practice,” Koeman said. “Its use should be re-evaluated regularly to eliminate unnecessary or ineffective antibiotic treatment.”

Snelson said, “For both farmers and veterinarians, the goal is to prevent disease rather than to have to treat sick pigs. Preventing disease will reduce the need to use more antibiotics for treatment.”

Work with your herd vet to optimize pig health through good husbandry practices, strict hygiene, regular herd health monitoring and other strategies.
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- Understand the new feed (VFD) and water (Rx) rules
- Strengthen your vet-client-patient relationship (VCPR)
- Communicate with your feed mill
- Assess your herd health and welfare strategies
- Renew your commitment to responsible antibiotic use
- Ensure your record-keeping compliance

Visit pork.org/antibiotics for more information.
New Antibiotic Rules Will Apply to Youth Swine Exhibitors

By Marlys Miller

For youth swine exhibitors, parents and project advisors, Jan. 1, 2017, will usher in major changes in accessing medicated feeds for show pigs. That’s when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will implement new rules, known as Guidance 209, for antibiotic use in all animals raised for food.

Antibiotics identified as medically important (to human health) will no longer be available for growth promotion purposes, including for show pigs.

“If you have even one pig, this action applies to you,” said Jennifer Koeman, DVM, director of producer and public health for the Pork Checkoff. “Every antibiotic compound will be affected except for bacitracin, bambermycin, carbadox, ionophores and tiamulin.”

Use of medically important antibiotics will be limited to the prevention, treatment or control of a specific health challenge under a veterinarian’s guidance.

“A veterinary-client-patient relationship or VCPR, will be required,” Koeman said. “VCPR specifics can vary by state, but a veterinarian must have a working relationship with an exhibitor and be familiar with the pigs.”

“In other words, get to know your veterinarian on a first-name basis,” said Ernie Barnes, director of industry services for the Checkoff. “Your veterinarian needs to visit the site for each set of show pigs.”

Over-the-counter sales of medically important antibiotics administered in feed and water will end, Koeman said. Access to feed-grade antibiotics will require a veterinary feed directive (VFD) for a specific group of pigs for a specific timeline as

FDA's new antibiotic rules will impact everything from record-keeping requirements to feed purchases.

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established by the herd veterinarian. Water medications will require a prescription. Note that leftover medicated feed will not be able to be fed beyond the timeline or to other animals.

**Plan Now for Changes in Feed Purchases**

“Show pig exhibitors often have just a few pigs and buy bagged feed from the local feed or farm supply store,” Barnes said. “With FDA’s new rules, these stores may no longer carry feed that exhibitors are used to buying. Folks need to think about where they’re going to get feed that contains needed medication.”

He advises exhibitors to contact a veterinarian if they don’t already have one and get a comprehensive health plan in place. This will include which antibiotics are needed to maintain good health along with other animal husbandry tools, such as biosecurity and vaccinations.

**New Record-Keeping Rules Will Be Introduced**

FDA’s new rules will usher in new record-keeping requirements for producers, including youth with show pigs. Veterinarians who issue VFDs will need to keep the original form for two years. Youth exhibitors/parents/advisors also will need to keep a printed or electronic copy for two years.

Feed mills or distributors also will be required to keep a copy on file for two years. Water prescriptions will need to be kept for one year. All of these records must be made available to FDA on request.

**Other Tools to Keep Pigs Healthy Are Important**

“Of course, animal management, including proper nutrition, housing, daily observation and care, remain key to keeping pigs healthy and growing,” Koeman said. “Implementing recommended biosecurity practices also minimizes disease exposure.”


For more about FDA’s new antibiotic rules that will take effect Jan. 1, 2017, visit: pork.org/antibiotics

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Download this Pork Checkoff booklet for tips on biosecurity and other ways to help keep your show pigs healthy.
Checkoff Awards Scholarships

The Pork Checkoff recently awarded 22 scholarships to college students for the 2016-2017 school year. The applicants were selected based on scholastic merit, leadership activities, pork production involvement and future plans for a career in pork production.

“The next generation of industry leaders will face new challenges, so we will need a skilled workforce and strong leadership,” said Derrick Sleezer, president of the National Pork Board and a pork producer from Cherokee, Iowa. “We are excited that this group of young people looks at pork not just as a food choice, but also as a career path.”

The 22 student recipients hail from 10 states and 15 universities and represent five different majors in swine-related fields. The 2016 Pork Industry Scholarship recipients, along with their hometown and college, are:

- Taylor Homann – Pipestone, Minnesota; University of Minnesota
- Kyle Anderson – Abilene, Kansas; Kansas State University
- Ashton Yoder – Welda, Kansas; Kansas State University
- Kristin Hansen – Elk Horn, Iowa; Iowa State University
- Marissa Lorenz – New Paris, Indiana; Purdue University
- Rachel Stika – Ames, Iowa; Iowa State University
- Tyler Dick – Mountain Lake, Minnesota; University of Minnesota
- Julia Holen – St. Paul, Minnesota; University of Minnesota
- Riley Wattonville – Huxley, Iowa; Iowa State University
- Katelyn Kahler – Cambridge, Iowa; Iowa State University
- Tana Luna – Troy, Texas; Texas A&M University
- Scott Schroeder – LeMars, Iowa; South Dakota State University
- Kayla Hoener – Wadesville, Indiana; Purdue University
- Sarah Battista – Suffield, Ohio; West Virginia University
- Morgan Weinrich – Yuma, Colorado; Colorado State University
- Caleb Plett – Duncan, Oklahoma; Cameron University
- Carly Lukas – Galesburg, Illinois; Western Illinois University
- Madison Furr – New Braunfels, Texas; Texas A&M University
- Sarah Morton – Nehawka, Nebraska; University of Nebraska Lincoln
- Keegan Vander Molen – Pella, Iowa; Oklahoma State University
- Camille Ogdon – Normandy Park, Washington; Washington State University
- Madalyn Tessa Cowser – Elmwood, Illinois; University of Illinois

This year’s top candidates were Taylor Homann and Kyle Anderson, who will receive $5,000 and $3,500 scholarships respectively. Homann, a senior in animal science, plans to pursue a doctorate of veterinary medicine degree in the fall. Anderson, a junior, has worked at Kansas State University’s feed mill and would like to pursue a career as a mill manager after graduation. The other award recipients will receive $2,000 each.
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Bridging the Gap
Youth show pig projects help shape tomorrow’s leaders

By Darcy Maulsby

If you see a pig exhibited at a county fair, a state fair or a junior swine show, look beyond the pig to the young person in the ring. You’ll see a life being transformed.

“Developing a passion for pigs offers countless benefits far beyond the show ring,” said Ernie Barnes, director of industry services for the Pork Checkoff. “It strengthens families, sparks young people’s interest in agriculture and creates more knowledgeable consumers.”

While show pigs represent a small sector of the pork industry, interest has exploded. Just look at the annual World Pork Expo Youth Show where the number of exhibited pigs has increased from 1,500 several years ago to 3,500 today.

Along with the ribbons and banners that are handed out, young show pig exhibitors learn priceless lessons. “Responsibility, animal husbandry, a strong work ethic and compassion are just a few,” said National Pork Board President Derrick Sleezer, Cherokee, Iowa.

“Youth learn how to ensure pigs’ well-being while focusing on continuous improvement and emphasizing the Good Production Practices taught in the Pork Checkoff’s Youth Pork Quality Assurance® Plus program (Youth PQA Plus®). “Training in the program is especially important since many show pig exhibitors don’t have a farm background,” said Bill Winckelman, vice president of producer and industry relations for the Pork Checkoff.

Youth PQA Plus teaches exhibitors how to handle young people’s interest in agriculture and creates more knowledgeable consumers.”

“Raising and showing pigs provides remarkable, dynamic learning experiences.”

– National Pork Board President Derrick Sleezer

Kade Hummel, who’s spent 26 years in the show pig industry, chose pigs over baseball as a high school freshman.
livestock properly, from medications to basic care.

“While some young exhibitors will pursue careers in agriculture, others will go on to be teachers, lawyers and business executives,” Winkelman said. “What they learn from showing pigs will help them be long-term ambassadors for pig farming.”

Kade Hummel, Olsburg, Kansas, can attest to that. Now a Lindner-United feed salesman and western region account manager, Hummel, who has spent 26 years in the show pig industry, was hooked on showing pigs after acquiring his first pig at age 12.

“My show pig experience has included showing pigs, judging, serving as a field man, raising pigs, selling show pig feed and helping families get their show pigs ready for the ring,” he said.

That “Show Pig Thing”

Hummel will never forget his freshman year of high school when he wanted to try out for the baseball team.

“The coach told me to decide if I was going to ‘chase this show pig thing’ or play baseball,” he said. “Well, I didn’t try out for the team. The next year, the coach asked if I could fit show pigs and baseball into my schedule. I saw him a few years ago and told him that I’m still chasing the show pig thing.”

Hummel takes pride in being “raised in a barn” and credits show pigs for teaching him the responsibility of caring for livestock, the value of hard work and the commitment it takes to succeed.

“I continue to apply those principles to all aspects of my life, and I am grateful to make my living and provide for my family through the show pig industry,” he said.

Smithlets “Born into It”

Family is also a big part of Alyssa Smith’s show pig experiences, as well as for her triplet siblings, Brant and Courtney. Raised on a Michigantown, Indiana, pork farm, the “Smithlets” were always in the barn, playing and helping with pig work.

“We were born into the swine industry,” Smith said. “We started showing pigs when we were just two. Later with 4-H and FFA, family vacations revolved around shows. We had 20 to 30 show pigs on feed each summer.”

After high school, the triplets earned associate degrees at Black Hawk College East in Illinois. Each received a full-tuition scholarship for livestock judging.

“We made contacts with industry leaders and developed keen communication and decision-making skills,” Smith said. “We also had the opportunity to judge youth swine shows all over the country, which is our favorite thing to do by far.”

After graduation, Smith transferred to Texas Tech University to major in ag education, Brant transferred to Western Illinois University and Courtney transferred to Purdue University. They all continued livestock-judging careers at their colleges.

“One of the biggest impacts of showing pigs for us is the people we’ve met and the friendships we’ve made,” Smith said. “We’re still close with our pig friends.”

Showing pigs also opened an array of career opportunities. Smith is now a high school ag science teacher and FFA advisor in Brownfield, Texas. She runs the school’s farm and advises all the stock show projects.

“I encourage students to show livestock because it’s one of the best ways to learn responsibility and time management,” Smith said.

“Students are eager to dive into the show world, but the hard part is keeping them motivated when the glamour turns into long hours and hard work,” she said.

Alyssa Smith offers tips to a young exhibitor. She says showing pigs teaches responsibility and time management.

“Students are eager to dive into the show world, but the hard part is keeping them motivated when the glamour turns into long hours and hard work.

Kids fall in love with it when they start understanding things for themselves.”

– Alyssa Smith, a Brownfield, Texas, ag science teacher
“Kids fall in love with showing when they start understanding things for themselves,” Smith said. “The first time they diagnose an illness or correctly adjust feed additives on their own, it becomes a passion.”

Doug Albright, a territory business manager for Zoetis, can relate. His career path can be traced to his youth in Coldwater, Michigan. “I grew up raising pigs with my family and started showing at the county fair,” said Albright, who still lives in Coldwater. “It grew into an obsession.”

Showing pigs also has allowed him to interact with people around the world. “The experiences I’ve gained have helped me talk and interact with customers today,” Albright said.

He remains connected to show pigs through Albright Swine Farms, which raises and sells 500 show pigs annually. Albright has judged swine shows in 25 states, from Maine to Oregon. “The experiences I’ve gained have helped me talk and interact with customers today,” Albright said.

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Having an animal critiqued by a judge helps young people learn to take constructive criticism, even though they may not always agree, Arnold said. “When raising pigs, there also will be instances where things don’t go as planned,” said Arnold, who served as an instructor and co-livestock judging coach at Black Hawk College East in Illinois for six years. “Learning to handle adversity and challenges is invaluable.”

The NJSA hosts regional shows in California, Oklahoma, New York and Georgia that include speech and sales competitions, judging contests and more to help prepare swine exhibitors for future career success. “There has never been more interest in youth swine shows than today, nor a bigger need to help educate youth on the importance of doing things right in the barn and show ring, he noted. “Livestock shows help young people develop into the next generation of leaders in agriculture and other industries,” Arnold said.
Training Ambassadors

Leadership can take on a different role, with youth exhibitors becoming advocates. “We won’t make hog farmers out of all the kids that show pigs, but their experiences can encourage them to be ambassadors for the pork industry,” said Warren Beeler, executive director of the Kentucky Governor’s Office of Agriculture Policy.

“The show ring helps showcase the pork industry to the world. I’ve been blessed to be involved with it for years,” said Beeler, who has judged swine shows for nearly 40 years in 43 states.

Jennifer Shike agrees. She is the communications and marketing director for the University of Illinois College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences. “The show pig industry gives the public a unique glimpse into the swine industry,” said Shike, who developed, organized and ran the NJSA and served as the NSR director of junior activities for nearly 10 years. “It introduces animal agriculture to a world that knows less and less about farming and raising safe, nutritious food.”

From posting pictures of their swine projects on social media to speaking up for agriculture, youth swine exhibitors can help spread the good word, she said. David Ammann is doing just that. He pursued a career in agriculture before life took him in another direction, but he remains an ambassador for pork.

“My goal was always to come back to the family business, but I learned a lot from showing pigs and working in the pork industry that helped prepare me for my current job,” he said.

The former 4-H member started showing livestock at age eight and earned his animal science and leadership studies degree from the University of Illinois. He worked in Cargill Pork’s procurement division before returning home to be a sales engineer for Central Rubber Extrusions, his family’s Highland, Illinois, business that makes rubber gaskets for the architectural industry.

“The communication and interpersonal skills Ammann learned through his show pig experiences helped him succeed in his 2013 summer internship with the National Pork Board in the Producer Services department. “No matter my career path, I’ll always be an advocate for animal agriculture” said Ammann, a former member of the National Junior Swine Association’s youth board of directors.

Family Connections

For many show ring exhibitors, it’s a family tradition that brings them closer, according to Ed Tice, an Indiana-based hog buyer for Tyson. “I teach kids that there’s much more to it than buying animals and then showing them. The journey in between is what matters.”

– Ed Tice, an Indiana-based hog buyer for Tyson

For Ed Tice’s family, showing pigs is a family tradition. His daughter and son have followed him into the show ring.
Tyson. He grew up showing hogs, and his children have carried on the tradition.

“I teach kids that there’s much more to it than buying the animals and then showing them,” said Tice, whose 10-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son enjoy showing pigs. “The journey in between is what matters.”

Since there are no days off with livestock, showing pigs is a good family activity to teach kids dedication and confidence, along with animal husbandry and communication skills, said Tice, who served two terms on NSR’s Youth Advisory Board.

“It’s exciting that generations of families continue to see the value in the show ring. Without a doubt, their show pig experiences will stay with them forever and provide valuable life-long skills.”

– Ernie Barnes, Pork Checkoff

“Not every kid can be a superstar athlete, but showing pigs is open to everyone. If you have a good work ethic, desire and perseverance, you can be at the top,” Tice said. “But if you measure success only by dollars and trophies, you’ve missed the point. All the work kids put in and the lessons they learn are what really count.”

He added, “And as a parent, you can be with your kids every step of the way, from the barn to the show ring, which builds family bonds. I want kids to fall in love with the pork industry and to stay curious about agriculture so they can help tell pork’s story.”

Barnes agrees, saying, “It’s exciting that generations of families continue to see the value in the show ring. Without a doubt, their show pig experiences will stay with them forever and provide valuable life-long skills.”

Funding Future Leaders

Along with Youth PQA Plus, the Pork Checkoff supports a number of programs to benefit youth in agriculture. These include major sponsorships with the National Junior Swine Association, Team Purebred, Agriculture Future of America’s annual leadership conference and the National FFA Convention.

Fact sheets offering guidance for show pig biosecurity and other topics are offered at pork.org. The Checkoff also assists state pork associations with cost-share opportunities for youth activities and supports the youth advocate group for the Checkoff’s Real Pig Farming social media campaign.

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By-product Values Are Critical to Producers

By Steve Meyer

When I think “pork,” I think of pork chops, loin roasts, spareribs, ham, bacon, pulled pork and sausage. You know, the cuts that most of us see at the grocery store or find listed on our favorite restaurant’s menu. But there is an entire other class of pork products that are very important to producers and packers: by-products or, in packer terms “the drop.”

By-product values have changed dramatically since 2005. The items that once accounted for only about $10 per head, according to this series computed by the Livestock Marketing Information Center, increased in value to almost $30 per head in 2014 before plunging back to $13 per head early this year. As of early June, the value rebounded to nearly $20 per head.

The primary reason for the fluctuation is international trade. While many by-products are sold and used in the U.S., exports primarily determine their value. Pig livers, stomachs, hearts and other organs are delicacies in many export markets. A relatively cheap U.S. dollar made by-products even less expensive to foreign buyers until mid-2014. A stronger dollar since then has put significant pressure on the quantity and value of U.S. variety meat exports.

Why Is the By-product Value So Important?

First, chops, ham, bacon, stomachs, fat, skin, hair, etc., all contribute to the total value that drives packer bids for hogs. Hog demand is derived from this value by deducting processing costs and packers’ desired profit margins.

Whether packers get their desired margins depends largely on the availability of hogs. Plentiful numbers allow full margin realization. Tight supplies force packers to pay more than what they might want in order to keep their customers satisfied and to more fully utilize fixed plant and equipment costs and almost-fixed labor costs.

When by-product values fall, either cutout values must rise or hog prices must fall. Higher by-product values from 2008 to 2014 allowed “meat margins” (the difference between cutout and hog values) to drop below zero on several occasions, including most of 2012 and 2013.

Second, the value of by-products is critical in developing long-term hog pricing agreements based on the cutout value. This is becoming more important as producers and packers look for new ways to determine hog values as the traditional negotiated market for hogs shrinks.

An agreement to price hogs, for example, at 92 percent of the cutout value or $8 less than the cutout value is based on assumptions about the by-product value. If the value changes, what was once a good deal for both the packer and producer will become a bad deal for someone.

The rising by-product values of 2011-2014 meant that packers did better than expected while producers selling hogs on a cutout-based formula missed out on a share of the windfall. Conversely, as by-product values fell over the last 20 months, packers have felt short-changed.

The Bottom Line:

By-products are important. Pork Checkoff export promotion efforts rightly focus on high-value pork muscle cuts but are also mindful of the critical role that trade plays in the value of pork by-products. As the chart shows, these products also are important contributors to hog value.

Producers and packers should include some mechanism that provides a role for by-product values in any cutout-value based hog pricing mechanism. By-product values change over time. Omitting them from a cutout-based pricing scheme simply ensures that someone or everyone will be unhappy at some time in the future.
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Checkoff Teams Fun with Good Taste in Grill for It! Campaign

By Marlys Miller

If your grill could talk, it would probably share its love for pork, just like The Grill and Gloria, co-stars and “spokes-grills” of Grill For It! – the Pork Checkoff’s summer consumer campaign.

“Pork is bringing the grill to life this season with two fun characters and flavorful recipes that inspire creativity,” said Ceci Snyder, vice president of consumer marketing for the Pork Checkoff. “To stand out, we’re offering inspired meal ideas from the grills to consumers.”

The Grill is an outgoing guy who’s up for anything, while his Latina neighbor, Gloria, knows how to infuse flavor into every occasion. Through Labor Day, the Pork Checkoff is featuring the two grills in an integrated marketing campaign across both general and Hispanic markets. The campaign includes radio and online advertising, print and digital media buys and public relations efforts.

When it comes to grilling, The Grill knows what he likes and how to get it done with pork. He displays his love of cooking at holidays, social occasions and in social media, where he’s eager to share intriguing pork meal ideas.

A video vignette series featuring pork and both grills is running on paid social media platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube. Consumers are being encouraged to visit PorkBeInspired.com and PorkTeInspira.com for delicious recipes and more.

“Online video is one of the fastest growing ad mediums,” said Snyder, who cited surveys showing that 91 percent of marketers plan to maintain or increase their investments in online videos.

In the Grill For It! videos, The Grill and Gloria highlight grilling activities for backyard barbecues, the July 4th holiday, vacations and tailgating. They share recipes that highlight global flavors, including Cuban-Style Pork Burgers, Korean Pork Chops and Grilled Pizzas with Herbed Pork and Brussels Sprouts.

“Follow me @GrillFort on Facebook and Twitter. And also follow Gloria @PrendeElSabor on Facebook and Twitter.”

– The Grill, celebrity spokes-grill
TV Actor Piques Interest

The lively voice of The Grill is David Koechner, an actor and comedian known for his roles in the movie, “Anchorman,” and the TV series, “The Office.”

“Like the Pork Checkoff’s Grill Crashers campaign last summer, we know the value of working with chefs, food experts and other spokespeople who attract media attention,” said Pamela Johnson, director of consumer communications for the Checkoff. “David, who also will host a satellite media tour, is a great fit for the Grill For It! campaign.”

The Checkoff is extending the campaign’s reach through bloggers and well-known BBQ experts, such as Ray Lampe and Moe Cason. Of course, the grills themselves have a lot to say about pork as an exciting, flavorful, grilling option.

“How do passionate cooks share their enthusiasm today? They start a cooking blog,” Johnson said. “To share fun and recipes, we’ve created a blog for The Grill.”

The blog, found online at GrillForIt.com, follows The Grill’s summer adventures on his mission to get more pork on America’s grills. Pork recipes, interviews and videos are featured in the blog. The Grill’s own Facebook, Twitter and other social media channels also are helping to connect with consumers.

Check out the Pork Checkoff’s recipes starring pork on the grill this summer at PorkBeInspired.com or at PorkTelinspira.com. A blog written from the viewpoint of The Grill, one of the spokes-grills, is adding to the fun.
“Like the Pork Checkoff’s Grill Crashers campaign last summer, we know the value of working with chefs and food experts, as well as other spokespeople who attract media attention.”

– Pamela Johnson, the Pork Checkoff

Ads Feature Delicious Pork

Radio advertising for the campaign also features The Grill. National radio ads are airing on several networks, including ESPN Radio, Pandora and Sirius XM Radio programming such as Entertainment Weekly Radio and PGA Tour Radio.

Attention-getting half-page print ads, as shown below, are running in Good Housekeeping, Woman’s Day, People and other consumer magazines. A full-page ad is appearing in Sports Illustrated and other titles.

“It’s important to use a mix of marketing strategies to reach our target audience of creative cooks,” said Laurie Bever, director of consumer advertising for the Pork Checkoff.

“From the visuals in print ads to the voices of the grills on the radio and in online video, our goal is to bring the grills to life and inspire excitement for grilling with pork,” Bever said.

Hispanic Grillers Inspired

The Grill For It! integrated campaign was adapted to ¡Prende el Sabor! for the Hispanic market to better reach the fastest-growing U.S. consumer segment in the United States, said Jose de Jesus, director of multicultural marketing for the Checkoff.

The campaign encourages Latinos to turn up the flavor on the grill via a series of video vignettes that showcase pork as the undisputed star at summer barbecues.

The vignettes feature Gloria, voiced by Mexican actress, comedian and singer Angelica Vale. Vale promoted the ¡Prende el Sabor! campaign through a Miami media
day in May and will partner with the Checkoff this summer for a food entertainment media event in Los Angeles.

“Angelica is effectively delivering our message to the Hispanic segment, which is a key market since Latinos are major pork consumers,” de Jesus said. “Engaging Latinos in a fun way with something so embedded and relevant in our culture, such as pork, is important.”

Spanish-language digital mobile ads are helping consumers keep pork top of mind during the grilling season. Also, a video series featuring pork and Gloria is being featured on PorkTeInspira social media channels and on PorkTeInspira.com.

The Checkoff also is working with digital influencers in key Hispanic markets, such as Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, Orlando and New York, to further extend the campaign.

Hitting the Right Mark

The Pork Checkoff’s integrated campaign already has garnered consumer attention, Snyder said.

“A creative, fun approach to marketing is a great way to break through all of the seasonal clutter to resonate with consumers,” she said. “The Grill and Gloria are proving to be the perfect pair to bring pork to more summer get-togethers.”

Spokes-grill Gloria invites Hispanic consumers on “aventuras que te llevan a encontrar sabrosas recetas,” or “adventures to find tasty recipes” featuring pork.
Putting an Inspired Twist on Traditional Favorites with Pork

By Claire Masker

At first glance, the Super Bowl, National Nutrition Month, Easter and baseball’s opening day might not seem like they have much in common. But when you add pork, they all offer fun opportunities to celebrate great taste. During the first four months of 2016, the Pork Checkoff targeted these food-focused events to inspire consumers to enjoy pork more.

“The Checkoff’s consumer public relations efforts are all about connecting pork with current conversations and what is happening in consumers’ lives and providing relevant, creative and approachable recipes,” said Pamela Johnson, director of consumer communications for the Pork Checkoff.

Leveraging new food trends helps the Checkoff transform traditional recipes and favorites into pork dishes that are refreshing, surprising and tasty for consumers, Johnson said. Following are highlights of how the Pork Checkoff has connected with consumers this year.

**Bowled Over with Pork**

To kick off 2016 and celebrate the game everyone would be watching, the Checkoff reinvented favorite game-day dishes with pork to ensure fans had the “superest” bowl ever.

“From noodles and high protein to topping-off greens, flavor-filled bowls are a booming trend,” Johnson said. “We encouraged consumers to add pork to bowl dishes to experience traditional football flavors in a new way.”

The Checkoff partnered with Tastemaker, which is an influencer network, and blogger/publisher Liren Baker of Kitchen Confidante. Baker created a Filipino Pork BBQ Bowl and a Spicy Korean-Style Meatball Bowl for the PorkBeInspired.com website and her blog.

Baker’s 18 social media posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram resulted in over 700,000 social impressions, Johnson said. A co-op satellite tour featuring the recipes resulted in 36 media interviews, with the total program reaching 23.6 million consumers.

**A Healthy Pork Twist**

Throughout American Heart Month in February and National Nutrition Month in March, the Pork Checkoff teamed with registered dietitian and nutritionist Carissa Bealert to inspire consumers to put a healthy pork twist on dishes that represent hot food trends.

Bealert spotlighted Spicy Buffalo Pork Enchiladas and Pork Quinoa Fried Rice on her social media channels.

Twenty-eight social posts and media outreach for the content resulted in 1.15 million consumer impressions.

Social and traditional media outreach:

**23.64 million**

people encouraged to try something new for the “superest” game.

Pork Quinoa Fried Rice combines great taste with healthy eating.
A Fresh Take on Easter

For Easter, the Checkoff worked with Haylie Duff, an actress, cookbook author and host of “The Real Girl’s Kitchen” on the Cooking Channel. Duff opened her home to inspire consumers and help them to re-envision their Easter celebrations with new pork dishes.

“Easter is a holiday where ham reigns supreme,” said Randy Brown, chair of the Pork Checkoff Domestic Marketing Committee and a pork producer from Nevada, Ohio. “We also want to encourage home cooks to test new flavors and ideas for their families. With pork, that’s easy.”

Each of Duff’s recipes incorporated timeless Easter ingredients, such as ham, fresh herbs and potatoes, with creative, modern preparations. The reimagined recipes included Prosciutto-Wrapped Pork Roast with White Wine and Herbs, Ham and Smoked Gouda Biscuits with Maple Butter and Ham Stacks Au Gratin with Thyme.

The recipes were offered to consumers through attention-grabbing social media formats, with Duff also sharing how she planned to set her Easter table.

“The social and traditional media outreach totaled 15.7 million impressions,” Johnson said. “The messages helped encourage consumers to take a fresh take on their Easter menu this year.”

Hitting It Out of the Park

“Just in time for opening day of Major League Baseball, the Pork Checkoff upended traditional ballpark favorites with an inspired pork twist,” Johnson said. “Fun, new recipes allow pork fans to look past the normal peanuts and popcorn and to knock it out of the park with pork.”

The Pork Checkoff surveyed sports writers, asking them to share their...
Chef Tre Wilcox, a James Beard Award-nominated chef and TV personality, partnered with the Pork Checkoff earlier this year in its ongoing efforts to promote pork as a healthy choice to African American consumers. To celebrate February’s Black History Month and American Heart Month, Chef Wilcox served as the ambassador for the Pork Checkoff’s Soulful Side of Pork campaign.

“African-Americans tend to eat more pork than other consumers, but they have health concerns and misconceptions about doing so,” said Jose de Jesus, director of multicultural marketing for the Pork Checkoff. “Healthy eating is especially important to these consumers because they have a higher risk for heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity.”

Wilcox promoted three soulful, heart-healthy recipes: Jerk-Seasoned Pork Tenderloin, Sizzling Pork Chops and Spicy-Sweet Pork Stir Fry. He took part in 22 live and taped media interviews to share his love of pork and the recipes, which can be found at PorkBeInspired.com. The interviews reached 10 million people and included placements in Madame Noire, Houston Style Magazine and The Culinary Scoop website.

Heart-Healthy Pork Tenderloin Well-Suited to Soulful Dishes

“Incorporating leaner cuts of pork into soulful dishes offers a great way to reduce fat, calories and sodium,” said Wilcox, known as the Chef-tain-er and past contestant on Bravo’s Top Chef and Top Chef All-Stars TV shows. “Pork tenderloin, in particular, is a great option because it is certified as heart-healthy by the American Heart Association.”

The certification means the cut has less than 6.5 grams of fat, 1 gram or less of saturated fat and 480 milligrams or less of sodium per label serving.

Working with one of the top U.S. African-American radio programs, The Willie Moore Jr. Show, Wilcox shared the pork recipes and pork’s health benefits. Promotional spots and an on-air interview reached 4.8 million listeners. The campaign also tapped into the power of social media, with over 9,000 clicks on Facebook and Twitter posts.

“African-Americans love pork, which is an important ingredient in many of their cultural dishes,” de Jesus said. “Chef Wilcox did a fantastic job of relaying pork’s health benefits to this market segment.”

As a pork producer, Brown appreciates her enthusiasm and the impact of promotions held throughout the year.

“Reaching out to consumers in new and unique ways offers a win-win for pork producers,” he said. “We need to continue to encourage consumers to enjoy pork in new and exciting ways.”
The Culinary Institute of America’s Greystone Campus in St. Helena, California, was the backdrop for the sixth annual Pork Summit in April. Participants included state and regional chef competition winners and food editors from leading foodservice publications.

“The summit focused on educating chefs and editors about the defining traits of meat quality and how high-quality pork can be featured on the menu,” said Stephen Gerike, foodservice marketing and innovation director for the Pork Checkoff.

Featured chefs were on hand to demonstrate culinary techniques using high-quality pork. Farm-to-fork educational sessions and the opportunity to work in the Culinary Institute of America’s famous teaching kitchens also were highlights for attendees.

Ali Bouzari, a culinary scientist from Pilot R&D, conducted an interactive session to define food quality and taste from a food-science perspective. Through taste, smell and sight, participants learned to identify quality levels.

A Pork 101 session, led by Gerike, provided advanced education about pigs, pork production and processing. He also discussed pork quality with participants, including what happens when muscle is converted to meat. Raw and cooked samples were evaluated and tested to exemplify variations in quality and their impact on the eating experience.

“I loved learning about new aspects of the industry,” said Dana Moran, deputy editor at Foodservice Director. In written comments, she also said, “An educational session especially got me thinking about a different part of the puzzle – that financial sustainability may mean greater environmental sustainability.”

**Snout-to-Tail Versatility**

“During the summit, we butchered a whole hog to demonstrate the versatility of a pig,” Gerike said. “One side was fabricated based on the institutional meat purchase specifications (IMPS) familiar to most restaurateurs. The other side was fabricated from snout to tail to show chefs how to utilize a whole hog in their restaurants.”

Liz Grossman, managing editor of Plate Magazine, appreciated the educational demonstration. “We used to think the best place for leftover pork skin was in crispy chicarrónes until we saw how well the porcine by-product worked in a tender, juicy noodle,” Grossman said. “Add pork meatballs and tomato sauce to the mix and you’ve got the tastiest example of total utilization we’ve seen.”

The highlight of the summit was a market-basket exercise. Participants and top chefs worked in teams to butcher half of a hog and to create unique pork dishes focused on pork quality.

The chefs were Matt Jennings of Townsman in Boston, Mary Dumont of Cultivar in Boston, Leah Cohen of Pig & Khao in New York City, Kris Morningstar of Terrine in Los Angeles, Christine Flynn of IQ Food in Toronto, California, and the creative talent behind the anonymous Instagram celebrity @chefjacqueslamerde.

“It was a wonderful weekend and definitely an educational one, too,” said Nicole Duncan, associate editor at QSR Magazine. “Participants went home inspired and with a deeper understanding of pork’s versatility and how quality impacts pork dishes that they create and include on menus,” Gerike said. “This annual event helps us create pork ambassadors in kitchens and in the media.”

**Summit Highlights Importance of Pork Quality to Foodservice**

By Angela Anderson
Winning New Global Customers
By Claire Masker

Connecting buyers and sellers around the globe to help increase U.S. pork exports remains a top priority for the Pork Checkoff. This priority is strengthened through a partnership with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

“U.S. pork exports make an important contribution to pork producers’ bottom line,” said Becca Nepple, vice president of international marketing for the Pork Checkoff. “It’s important for the Pork Checkoff to continue to reach out to international customers through technical seminars and training programs, by hosting trade teams and by providing in-depth educational programs.”

Highlights of efforts to expand international demand for U.S. pork are featured here. These activities were funded by the Pork Checkoff through the USMEF.

First Global Further Processing Seminar Held

Food companies from Mexico, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, South Korea and Southeast Asia attended the first USMEF Global Further Processing Seminar last year at the University of Wisconsin. At the two-day event, attendees learned about U.S. pork and beef, including how to use various pork cuts and how to improve product quality. Product demonstrations focused on ham, bacon, frankfurters and smoked sausage, with tips on proper meat selection and on the manufacturing process.

“Further processors here and around the world need to know that U.S. pork has a lot to offer as a raw material,” said Elizabeth Wunderlich, USMEF Caribbean representative. “This seminar promoted the superior taste of U.S. pork and also showcased its consistency and how that will improve the quality of finished products.”

South Korea Seminars Focus on U.S. Pork

During February 2016, pork-processing seminars were conducted for three leading manufacturing companies in South Korea. According to USMEF, competition in the Korean processing sector has intensified since Russia placed a ban on pork from the European Union (EU), resulting in more EU pork cuts being imported into South Korea. Keeping South Korean processors informed about technical issues, product availability and market conditions helped keep the focus on U.S. pork.

The sessions provided new information on U.S. pork used for further processing. According to Jihae Yang, Korea director for USMEF, attendees showed particular interest in choosing proper raw material for processed pork and in thawing methods for frozen pork.

During 2015, pork exports accounted for 24 percent of total pork and pork variety meat.

Export value averaged $48.31 in 2015
Increasing Pork Menuing in China

To promote U.S. pork to potential customers in China’s hotel and restaurant sectors, an educational seminar was held late last year in Shanghai with a leading international consumer goods company with a strong presence in China. Chef Zhou Yuan Chang, one of China’s master chefs who is well-known for his expertise in traditional Chinese cuisine, developed three U.S. pork dishes for the event. Various cuts and cooking methods were introduced.

“The cutting demonstration and the dishes showing real applications for U.S. pork taught the guests how to use these cuts to add value to their menus and directly help their restaurant sales,” said Ming Liang, marketing director for USMEF in Shanghai.

Future Chefs Learn U.S. Pork Basics in Mexico

Students at 26 campuses of the Universidad del Valle de Mexico (UVM) last year learned firsthand about U.S. pork’s high quality, value and versatility. Developed in 2014 as a pilot program, the sessions provided an overview of the U.S. pork industry. Students also learned how to handle, prepare and present different pork dishes, including guidance on proper meat handling and selecting muscle cuts.

“These students will be working in restaurants and hotels across Mexico, and they will be the ones determining future menus,” said Julieta Hernandez, USMEF’s hotel, restaurant and institution manager in Mexico. “Giving them insight to U.S. pork and a taste of it is important now as they get ready to launch their careers.”

Colombia Seminars Highlight Safety of U.S. Pork

Educational seminars held last year in Colombia demonstrated the high quality and safety of U.S. pork to importers and distributors. U.S. pork production practices, including animal nutrition, animal health, transportation, harvest processes and the Pork Quality Assurance Plus® program, were discussed. To help clarify import inspection procedures at key ports in Colombia, a separate series of workshops focused on food safety and logistics of U.S. meat product customs inspections.

According to the USMEF, the seminars were well-received by the agencies dealing with importation and will lead to future opportunities for U.S. pork sales to Colombia.

16 Countries Represented at Latin American Showcase

The 2015 USMEF Latin American Product Showcase was the largest and most productive ever. The annual event drew 44 USMEF-member companies to Costa Rica to exhibit U.S. pork to more than 90 buyers from 16 countries. Education and training have become important aspects of the annual event. Representatives from the packaging, transportation and storage and processing equipment sectors addressed unique challenges in supplying meat to Latin American markets.

The Latin American product showcase continues to be a success every year, because both buyers and exporters have an opportunity to gain knowledge about the region and to find new ways to expand their businesses and enhance their profitability, according to Gerardo Rodriguez, director of trade development for Central American and the Dominican Republic for the USMEF.

More than 90 buyers from 16 Latin American countries learned about the benefits of U.S. pork from both suppliers and educators.

Well-known Chinese Chef Zhou Yuan Chang developed three recipes featuring U.S. pork.
Enhance Your Farm’s Worker Safety

By Carrie Horsley

To improve farm worker safety, the Pork Checkoff debuted its revised Employee Safety Toolkit June 8 at World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa. The online resource, found at pork.org, provides the core components of a worker safety program to reduce accidents and injuries and to provide a safe workplace.

“Tools such as these are important because farming is one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in America,” said Karen Hoare, producer learning and development director for the Pork Checkoff. “The potential for farm injuries is a key concern of pork producers across the country.”

The pork industry has a long-standing commitment to worker safety, as reflected in the We CareSM initiative. Providing a safe work environment is one of the six We Care ethical principles.

The revised Employee Safety Toolkit addresses the hands-on, visual learning styles of barn workers. Its six units focus on preparedness, movement, environment, hazards, tools and equipment. Topics include:

• emergency action plans
• trips and falls
• respiratory hazards
• electrical hazards
• power washing
• blood-borne pathogens
• confined spaces

“It’s crucial to protect the caretakers in our barns, as well as the animals,” Hoare said. “With the new revisions, the easy-to-use toolkit can aid producers in creating an even safer work environment on their farms.”

According to 2014 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the incidence rate for non-fatal injuries and illness for hog production was nine out of 100 workers.

“That’s 2.5 times higher than the average of all industries, 2.8 times higher than construction and 1.6 times higher than crop production,” Hoare said. “These statistics underscore the importance of continuing to improve farm safety.”

The toolkit is available for both barn workers and supervisors. The interactive training materials reflect in-barn realities, while the flexibility of the toolkit allows it to be adapted to different learning environments.
Checkoff Tools Offer On-farm Solutions
By Carrie Horsley

The Employee Safety Toolkit, outlined on the facing page, is one of many resources that the Pork Checkoff has developed and made available at pork.org to help make raising pigs easier and more efficient. Producers are putting these resources to work with good results.

Take Goldsboro Milling Company, Goldsboro, North Carolina, which uses the Safe Pig Handling Toolkit for training employees. “This toolkit has helped reduce worker injury by educating employees about the importance of safety,” said Yusef Ewais, human resource director for the company.

The company certifies employees in the Pork Quality Assurance® Plus program, but sees value in additional training through tools such as the Safe Pig Handling Toolkit. The toolkit provides a realistic look at what the job position entails. This helps cut costs thanks to fewer injuries and more in-

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formed workers, Ewais said. “The videos and interactive pictures make the learning process relatable,” Ewais said. “This fits the needs of all our hires, no matter the education level or language barrier. We are continuing to develop our onboarding process, but with the help of toolkits like this, we can continue to enhance safety.”

The Hog Production Division of Smithfield Foods also uses the Safe Pig Handling Toolkit to ensure that safety messages to employees are standardized.

“We discussed as a team how to implement this toolkit into our system,” said Samantha Raynor, production technical trainer, South Central Region of Smithfield Foods. “We decided to send it to all of our managers to use at their own discretion.”

The interactive toolkit allows learners to go at their own pace, Raynor said. This helps managers ensure that areas that are more difficult can be retaught or reviewed. “This has proven to be worthwhile for the learner and manager,” Raynor said.

“We enjoy the ability to customize the toolkit and the ease of access for managers.”

Jim Fisher of Middleton, Missouri, uses the Employee Care Toolkit. He and his brother operate Fisher Hog Farms with nine employees. “The toolkit helps show our employees how much we value them and how invested we are in them,” Fisher said. “What we like best is the ability to customize the toolkit based on our needs.”

The toolkit provides guidance on salaries, raises, insurance, tax forms and more.

Implementing New Ultrasound Technology

By Todd Mezera

A few of the biggest questions when choosing whether to implement a new technology on your farm is will it work, can we easily learn to use it and can we afford it. When it comes to deciding on an ultrasound scanner, the technology has remained largely unchanged for a number of years.

With the newly introduced SV-1 wireless ultrasound scanner this has changed dramatically. The SV-1 is the first new generation ultrasound scanner developed to be software driven, allowing for the user to upgrade (via the app store) the system as new technologies become available.

As Jason Kilmer from Bio Town Ag succinctly put it “The SV-1 is new technology versus old technology. It plugs into the technology based vision that we have for our farm”.

Kilmer expanded by saying “I see it as a new technology platform, that just like any other app can be updated whereas the older system is only a preg checker. The SV-1 is designed to have new tools added. The ability to update and add to the SV-1 system in the future is what interested me the most”.

Soon to be released software updates will allow for a back fat probe and ear tag reader. Future releases will allow for the system to be fully integrated with popular production software programs.

Perhaps the best news is the technology works well today, is extremely easy to learn and is priced right in line with traditional ultrasound scanners.

For more information on the SV-1 wireless ultrasound scanner, you can contact Veterinary Sales & Service Inc. at: (800) 617-0503 or by email: info@vetsales.net.
PORK Academy Sessions Offered Online

Did you miss out? This year’s PORK Academy, held June 8-9 at World Pork Expo, featured hot-topic seminars on all aspects of the pork industry. Leading pork industry experts shared the latest on upcoming antibiotic use changes, cyber security, the Common Swine Industry Audit, seasonal swine infertility, the Checkoff’s summer consumer promotion, U.S. pork exports and on-farm health, safety and environmental issues.

The seminars, recorded by SwineCast, are available at pork.org under Conferences and Seminars.

Get the Latest Information about On-farm Antibiotic Use

New on-farm antibiotic use guidelines from the federal government will go into effect Jan. 1, 2017. For details, go to pork.org/antibiotics.

Get pork industry text alerts.

Sign up today for the Pork Checkoff’s new Pork Crisis Alert system. Just as a school alert system notifies people about bad-weather closings, participants will receive text alerts during a major pork industry emergency. To sign up, text PorkCrisis to 97296. Alert texts only will be used in a crisis, with the system tested twice a year. The subscriber database will not be used for marketing or shared with third parties. The service is free, but message and data rates may apply. Participants may cancel at any time. For more details, call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-7675 or go to pork.org/smsterms.

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