

Washington Pork Producers Newsletter

Summer 2007



Pork Quality Assurance Plus Officially Launched

The National Pork Board officially launched the Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus program at the World Pork Expo. The PQA Plus program incorporates an animal well-being component into the PQA certification program. Below is an article by Marlys Miller, Editor of the "Pork" magazine, that outlines the importance of being proactive in food safety and animal care for the future of American agriculture and the pork industry.

You Have to Take Ownership

Marlys Miller, Editor, Pork Magazine

The days of society being tied to the farm and understanding why you do what you do are gone. You have to accept that fact and move on.

Of course, that's easier said than done, because farmers get really frustrated with people challenging their actions and intentions.

Bottom line, the world is different. Sure, the world is always changing, but the rate is much faster today. No question, consumers are very different. They have more choices, they are less loyal, and more competitors are ready to meet their needs. The Internet provides access to more information (accurate or not), and consumers expect more from companies and product suppliers.

Overall, there's probably less trust and more skepticism, and that is especially true with "traditional" food suppliers.

Meanwhile, pork producers have closed up their facilities and locked people out. You and I know that's to protect the animals' health and well-being, but that's not how it plays with the public. You must be hiding something. That's one reason why it's so easy for activists to play the factory farming and animal abuse cards.

Now, you can try to educate consumers and argue your point, but they're really not interested, especially because they see you as a biased source. However, actions really do speak loud, and you have a golden opportunity awaiting you.

Pork Quality Assurance Plus Program

This month, the industry, through the National Pork Board, is rolling out its PQA Plus program. It merges the food-safety-driven Pork Quality Assurance Level III program with the Swine Welfare Assurance Program. It is available to anyone and everyone involved with pork production, and it's a must-do.

PQA Plus is a way for you to identify and verify what you do behind those closed doors. It is a

way for you to demonstrate your social responsibility, build your customers' trust and polish your image. It is a way for the industry to act together with one animal-care and food-safety program versus segmenting into individual programs and further confusing the issue and customers.

Most important, it is a way to take ownership of two critical issues—food safety and animal well-being. The PQA Plus program is a positive, proactive way to deflate the activists' efforts.

Will it work? Maybe, that remains to be seen. But a coalition of producers, scientists, packers, grocers and food service entities worked together on the effort. Companies such as McDonald's have endorsed it, saying "we support this process, which allowed the entire chain to come together and develop this solution. That's a very good start."

Besides, any well-managed operation is already addressing most of the programs requirements, and if you're not, you need to get there soon. It is logical that packers and other customers' will eventually require program participation before they'll buy your product.

There are three stages to PQA Plus:

1. Individuals. Anyone associated with the operation, from the farrowing manager to the bookkeeper, can go through the program. Much like PQA III, it involves a two-hour training program, leading to certification.
2. On-farm assessment. This involves a certified advisor coming on-site to assess your procedures. The advisor can also help you address challenges that might surface.
3. Operations that have passed site assessment could be selected for a random audit. This is not designed to critique the producer, but to survey the program's effectiveness and identify any needed adjustments.

Jean Smith and Sarah M. Smith, WSU Animal Science Extension Educators have been certified as PQA Plus Trainers and Advisors for the new PQA Plus program. If you would like more information about PQA Plus, contact Jean at 509-735-3551, email smithjea@wsu.edu, or Sarah at 509-754-2011 x413, email smithsm@wsu.edu.

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Audio Swine News Available via Internet

SwineCast® is an audio program specifically designed to meet the needs of today's swine producers and managers. Individuals can listen to



timely information on production, management, market and business issues

in the swine industry by simply clicking the icon on the SwineCast® webpage at www.swinecast.com. SwineCast® brings together the best professionals in the swine community to discuss production practices, environmental stewardship, animal welfare, marketing, and critical swine issues as they arise. S. M. Smith

Proposed Rule Concerning Federal Food Purchases

A proposed U.S. House bill would require the federal government to purchase meat, dairy and egg products from producers who meet specific animal welfare standards. The Farm Animal Stewardship Purchasing Act (H.R.-1726) was presented by Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) and Chris Shays (R.-Conn). Among the items, the bill would require animals to have adequate space to stand, lie down, move his or her head freely, turn around completely, and fully extend all limbs or wings; no forced feeding or feed withdrawals; and adequate veterinary care, including prompt treatment or humane euthanasia.

The bill's sponsor cite Americans' demand that "we curb the most abusive factory farming practices. As a significant buyer of farm animal products, the federal government can and should help lead the way, encouraging better practices within the industry." For more information, go to http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=675&ed_id=4941. *Pork Magazine, June 07*

Food Trends Impact Marketability

Consumers likes, dislikes, and knowledge of food animal production is as diverse as our population. Consumers' food buying decisions used to be primarily based on quality (taste/tenderness) and price. However, today's consumer are using social issues, such as labor treatment, fair trade, environmental stewardship, community sustainability, and animal well-being in their food buying decisions.

North America's largest pork producers, Smithfield and Maple Leaf, recently announced they would phase out gestation stalls over the next ten years. The world's second-largest fast food chain, Burger King, also announced they will start buying eggs and pork from suppliers that don't confine their animals in cages or crates. Burger King purchases more than 40 million pounds of eggs and 35 million pounds of pork annually. Burger King officials say they want to increase cage-free egg purchases to 5 percent and crate-free pork purchases to 20 percent by year's end.

The demand for local food is one of the biggest culinary trends in the country. A new word, "localvores", has even been developed to describe consumer who prefer to buy locally grown food. These consumers desire a connection to their food, the land, and the farmers that grow it. The definition of local or regional is flexible, with some defining it as a very small area (city/surrounding area), a growing region, a state, or the nation.

Farmers should not seek to change their way of production based on this article, but know that understanding consumers and food trends are essential when developing a sustainable business plan for your farming operation. S. M. Smith

Pork Producers Keep Increasing Production

High corn prices still aren't having much effect on pork production, notes Glenn Grimes, University of Missouri agricultural economist. Presenting outlook perspectives at the Marketing Information Center, co-sponsored by Pork magazine, Grimes looks for production increases over last years levels, with the exception of summer farrowings, which he estimates as unchanged.

There will be more hogs this year and into next year, he said. Among the factors he cites is the increase usage of vaccines to combat porcine circovirus associated disease. Vaccine supplies are finally expected to increase this fall, which could push market-hog numbers by 3 percent or more. "If that happens, we'll see some live prices in the \$30 (per hundredweight) area", he added.

Grimes said there is a 90 percent probability for red ink in the fourth quarter, noting that corn costs have added \$7 to \$9 to production costs. "Our real concern is not hog prices", he said, "but what it's costing to produce hogs." *Pork Alert, 6.12.07*

Impact of Circovirus on Swine Market

One of the factors that affected U.S. hog markets in 2006 was death losses from what is now called porcine circovirus associated disease (PCVAD). This disease complex was called post-weaning multisystemic wasting syndrome or PMWS when it was first identified several years ago. It was characterized by pigs becoming generally unthrifty, ceasing growth and, in many cases, losing weight and eventually dying. The disease was thought to be associated with porcine respiratory and reproductive syndrome (PRRS), but veterinarians finally decided that there was something else at work. The problems started in Europe and then moved to Eastern Canada. From there it first spread to the Eastern U.S. and then to the Prairie Provinces of Canada and the Midwestern states. Circovirus was diagnosed as a factor in the disease but there was a problem: One could find circovirus in virtually every pig, even the healthy ones. Two types of circovirus were finally identified and it was discovered that Type B was the harmful one that was associated with many of these health breaks. The disease was blamed for death and morbidity losses of up to 50% in some Canadian and North Carolina finishing barns and death/morbidity losses were 20% or more in many instances. There is no doubt that the disease hurt output last year but pinpointing a number is virtually impossible because, at least in economic terms, the disease struck slowly and losses were widespread over time and geography.

Vaccines became available in Canada in late 2005 and in the U.S. in mid-2006. They have been very effective. One producer tells me he has seen "miraculous" results. The vaccine was in limited supply last year and began to be used on farms in September and October. Vaccine production is increasing and one major supplier will have one-third more vaccine available in July than it did in June. The question must be asked, "How many more pigs will make it to market this year due to these vaccines"? Not knowing how many died last year makes answering quite difficult, indeed. We are very certain the number will not be trivial and we will be watching the June 29 Hogs and Pigs Report for some guidance. The 3.8% year-over-year increase in federally inspected slaughter from March 10 to April 21 was very likely due to several weeks' worth of good-performing vaccinated pigs catching up with older, unvaccinated pigs. As a comparison, slaughter for all other weeks this year has averaged 0.7% higher than last year. *Steve Myer & Les Steiner, CME Daily Livestock Report, 06.15.07*

Hogs Cleared of Melamine Feed Contamination

The meat from swine fed rations supplemented with pet food by-product contaminated with melamine has been cleared as safe for human consumption by the FDA. The USDA allowed the swine held on farms to be released and approved for processing.

There were approximately 56,000 swine that consumed the contaminated pet food by-product as part of their complete daily diet. These pigs were held on farms in

California, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, Kansas, Utah and Illinois. The pigs were held voluntarily by the producers until the feed issue could be resolved.



It is common for the swine industry to use many feedstuffs and by-products to balance a cost competitive, nutritious diet.

The meat from swine fed diets that were contaminated with melamine tested below levels considered to be a health risk for human consumption and confirms that melamine does not accumulate in pork. The compound is excreted out of the body through the kidneys. These test results support the conclusions that there is a very low risk of human illness from the consumption of meat from animals fed diets containing the melamine contaminated pet food by-product.

The updated risk assessment by the FDA on May 12th concluded that in the most extreme risk assessment scenario, where all the food a person consumes in an entire day contained melamine and the melamine compound cyanuric acid at levels potentially present in the meat, the potential exposure is about 250 times lower than the dose considered safe for human consumption. To translate this into actual consumption levels, an average person would have to eat more than 800 pounds per day of pork or other food items containing melamine and its compounds to approach a level of consumption that would cause a health concern.

The compound melamine is used in industry to produce fire or heat resistant resins in plastic manufacturing and was generally considered to be a safe compound until the recent pet deaths. The FDA believes the original contamination came from imported wheat gluten and rice protein from two Chinese companies that was used in pet food manufacturing and then the by-product from these pet foods were fed to swine and poultry across the US. *Dr. Brian Richert, Purdue University*

Feeding Ethanol Co-Products to Swine

Increased demand and price for corn, driven in part by increased consumption for ethanol production, has motivated pork producers to evaluate alternative ingredients and feeding strategies. One ingredient many pork producers are considering using is distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS), the primary co-product of ethanol production. Historically, DDGS has been utilized in dairy and beef rations, but improved processing and knowledge of DDGS has increased its usage in swine and poultry diets. Nutritionally, DDGS contains a similar amount of energy as corn, but is about 3x greater in concentration of crude protein,

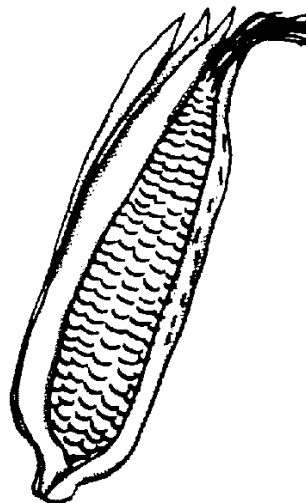
fat, fiber, and minerals. Additionally, the phosphorus in DDGS is much more available than that in corn, due to the enzymatic processes that occurs during fermentation of corn to produce ethanol and DDGS.

When included in the swine diet, DDGS primarily replaces corn (energy source), but it also replaces some soybean meal (protein source) and inorganic phosphorus. When evaluating use of DDGS in swine diets, there are several key factors in addition to economics to consider:

- **Level of inclusion:** Most producers using DDGS will include 5 – 10% in growing and finishing diets. More producers, however, are including 15 – 20% DDGS in grow-finish, and are also including 20 – 30% DDGS in gestating sow diets. University of Minnesota research suggests a maximum DDGS inclusion level of 25% in nursery, 20% in grow-finish, 40% in gestation, and 20% in lactation.
- **Growth and reproductive performance:** In most studies, including 10 – 20% DDGS in grower and finisher diets results in similar growth, feed intake, and feed efficiency rates. Occasionally, reduced feed intake and/or growth are observed at 20% levels or greater, but the reason for this phenomena is not known. Much less is known about sow performance, although preliminary trials indicate a positive effect of dietary DDGS inclusion on subsequent litter size.
- **Carcass quality and yield:** No appreciable effects on percent lean, loin depth, or backfat depth have been observed when including DDGS in properly formulated diets. Including 20 – 30% DDGS in late finishing has been shown to increase the unsaturated:saturated fat ratio, resulting in softer fat. Eating quality, however, does not appear to be negatively affected. Carcass yield is largely

unaffected at 10% inclusion levels, but including 20 or 30% DDGS has been shown, at times, to reduce carcass yield slightly.

- **Animal health:** Primary health concerns of DDGS in diets revolve around presence of mycotoxins, especially if fed to gestating sows. Mycotoxins in corn are not destroyed during the ethanol



fermentation process. In drought-stressed crops, extra quality control measures should be taken to ensure DDGS produced in these areas do not contain mycotoxins, especially zearalanone. On the other hand, limited disease challenge and field trial data indicate a positive effect of DDGS on gut health, especially when herds have historically been challenged with ileitis or hemorrhagic bowel syndrome.

To learn more about DDGS, proper usage in swine diets, and research conducted, go to the University of Minnesota DDGS website at www.ddgs.umn.edu. *Dr. Mark Whitney, Assistant Extension Professor, University of Minnesota Extension*

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NEWS FROM WSU...



Swine Research at WSU

After 37 years of service to the PNW Pork Industry, the Department of Animal Sciences bid a fond farewell to valued colleague Dr. John Froseth. We look forward to advancements in swine research, teaching and extension, but continue to maintain our farrow-to-finish facility under the management of the new Swine Herdsmanager, Asa Timm. We also continue our teaching and training of students interested in pigs and the pork industry, primarily through the Student Swine Cooperative (SSC), and our core courses in nutrition, breeding, and genetics.

Primary contributors to the program include Dr. Ruth Newberry, who is doing impressive research in the behavior and welfare of pigs. Dr. Zhihua Jiang, Chair of the committee for the national Swine Genome Project, is helping to map the swine genome for QTLs (quantitative trait loci) and SNPs (single nucleotide polymorphisms). More simply, this means that we are identifying the key genetic traits for the most efficient and high quality animals, directly on the gene. From this we can be much more selective and efficient in our breeding programs.

Dr. Derek McLean continues to study the basic biology of male reproduction, with the goal of improving boar fertility and longevity. Dr. Jan Busboom continues his fine work in producer and youth training, including the Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) program.

A new addition to the extension team, Dr. Jason Mann, specializes in product quality and safety. In this team, Jan and Jason are embarking on a 'benchmarking' program to identify the key quality data of PNW pigs for the Japanese and other markets to help ensure a market for your pork. Dr. John McNamara continues his work on nutrient utilization of growing and breeding pigs.

We will be starting research this summer on nutrigenomics in pigs on alternative feeds. Funded in part by the WPP, we will identify the most efficient animals on diets including garbanzo beans, peas and canola meal. Mike Swan, now in the Middle East, continues to provide input at the national level on facilities. Our intent is to quickly provide you with useful practical data to adapt your pigs and operation to changing and increasingly expensive feedstuffs. Funding is being sought at state, regional, and national levels to maintain a stable funded research program in pork production.

We continue the SSC program under the advisement of Asa Timm, with help from several faculty members. Students learn the basics of a farrow to finish pig operation, with hands on training in pig handling, feeding, breeding, and 'minds-on' managerial training in business planning and personnel management. In the counties, Jean Smith, Janet Schmidt, and Sarah Smith continue to provide top notch producer and youth education. We look forward to a continued great relationship with the PNW pork industry. For further questions, call John McNamara; 509-335-4113, Asa Timm; 509-335-2287, or Margaret Benson, Department Chair; 509-335-5521. *J. McNamara*



Dr. Wenz Appointed as the New WSU Field Disease Investigation Unit Veterinarian

Washington State University is pleased to announce the addition of Dr. John Wenz to the Field Disease Investigation Unit (FDIU) to fill the position that

has often been referred to as the "Dr. Clive Gay position". The FDIU is an integral part of the College of Veterinary Medicine's Agriculture Animal Health Program (AAHP) and receives support from the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Director of the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. The position is structured, such that sixty percent of Dr. Wenz's time is to be dedicated to getting out in the field and re-establishing the FDIU presence that had previously been established by Dr. Clive Gay.

Dr. Wenz grew up on a family farm raising, showing, and shearing sheep and goats in upstate New York, outside of Albany. After receiving his B.S. from Cornell University, Dr. Wenz received his DVM from the University of Illinois in 1996. Dr. Wenz credits the University of Illinois for his swine knowledge. He also completed a M.S. and internship in Food Animal Medicine and Surgery from Colorado State University in 1999. Dr. Wenz worked two years in a mixed practice in New York before returning to CSU as an Ambulatory Veterinarian primarily responsible for dairy. However, during this time Dr. Wenz developed data management, evaluations skills, and education efforts to aid all livestock producers monitor and improve herd health and production efficiency.

In addition to working with Washington pork producers as animal health concerns develop, Dr. Wenz looks forward to meeting with the producers at upcoming educational meetings.



Dr. Dale Moore Accepts New Extension Veterinary Outreach Specialist Position

Washington State University Extension and College of Veterinary Medicine are excited to announce Dr. Dale Moore has officially accepted the Veterinary

Extension Outreach Specialist position. This new position will provide current science-based information regarding animal disease management/prevention, food safety, biosecurity measures, federal and state regulations, as well as promote multi-state and regional educational agendas concerning the health of animals and the public.

Dr. Moore comes to WSU from University of California Davis where she was an associate professor with the UC-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Dean for Student Programming. Dr. Moore is highly recognized for her work in dairy epidemiology and for her continuing educational efforts of both veterinarians and producers to enhance food animal production and product safety.

Dr. Moore will officially start her new position July 1st. The Washington Pork Producers welcome Dr. Moore to Washington and look forward to working with her on swine related issues in the near future.

High Feed Cost Impact 4-H Swine Projects

Many 4-H and FFA youth involved with swine projects have already selected their pig(s) for the upcoming fairs and are quickly learning that feed prices have significantly increased since last year. It is important for youth, parents, leaders, and advisors to expect feed prices to remain high and be prepared to factor these additional costs into raising project animals.

Feed prices are increasing rapidly because of the increased demand for corn. Corn prices hit a ten-year high in January of 2007, primarily on the anticipation of high demands for ethanol production. Rising corn prices have also resulted in higher soybean, wheat, and other cereal grain prices as more farmable acres are transferred into corn production and grain supplies decrease.

As feed prices continue to rise youth livestock producers will need to find ways to maintain or improve production while keeping feed cost at a reasonable level. Some tips are included here:

1. Evaluate feeds based on the nutrients provided and balance diets to make sure you are feeding to the animals' level of production and/or growth. Do not over feed any unnecessary nutrients. Protein supplements are often misused resulting in wasted money and animals not performing as expected. All animals need a certain level of protein in their diets. In addition, high performing animals (fast growing, heavily muscled, and excessively exercised) will need more protein than the average animal. However, adding high levels of protein to get a pig to grow faster is not always cost effective when you consider high energy grains such as corn, barley, and wheat cost less and typically have higher calories per pound than the average protein supplement. In addition, excessively high protein diets can at times limit gain and the animals ability to put on fat—Remember the Atkins Diet.
2. Reduce feed waste by checking and repairing feed storage containers, covers, and feeders to prevent feed spoilage, rodent/insect damage, or animal waste.
3. Evaluate alternative feeds that are available locally. However, cheap feeds are not always the most economic solution. As stated earlier the type and amount of feed greatly impacts production level—you might save \$0.10 per pound on grain, but lose more than \$0.10 in decreased production or purchasing supplementation to support the alternative feed.
4. Make sure pigs have fresh, clean, cool water. If pigs do not have adequate clean water they will consume less feed and grow slower.
5. Weigh the feed on a scale, do not measure by volume. Make sure animals are consuming adequate feed daily for desired performance and they are not wasting feed. Animals utilizing self feeders tend to waste more feed than animals that are fed a set amount at each feeding.
6. Implement an effective health program to keep animals from becoming diseased or infected with internal or external parasites. Make sure animals have been vaccinated and are treated for health or parasite concerns appropriately and quickly.
7. Ensure the animal's facilities are clean, dry, and the temperature is comfortable.
8. Handle animals calmly and gently to prevent unnecessary stress.

These basic management practices will not only help improve your animal's performance (growth and gain), but will also improve the animal's basic feed efficiency. S. M. Smith



4H Weigh-in Biosecurity Recommendations

This time of year it is important for exhibitors to remember that any time pigs from multiple sources are held in common areas at events like weigh-ins or

county fairs there is an increased risk for spread of disease.

Recommended bio security practices to prevent disease spread:

Isolate pigs returning from weigh-in from other animals for a minimum of 30 days before reintroducing them. Identify your isolation area at a minimum of 300 yards away from other livestock.

Designate separate handling, grooming, feeding or watering equipment to be used only with the isolated animals. You also should designate a pair of boots and coveralls to be used only with the isolated group. These items should not be used with other animals on the farm unless the clothing items have been cleaned and disinfected.

Do not take pigs exhibiting clinical signs of any contagious disease or in the early treatment phases for a disease to a weigh-in or to an exhibition.

Do not take healthy looking pigs from groups that are exhibiting signs of ANY contagious disease to a weigh-in or exhibition.

Wear clean clothing and shoes to weigh-in and change into clean clothing and shoes before returning to work with other animals at home. Vehicles used to transport your pigs should also be cleaned, disinfected and allowed to dry before other pigs are hauled.

Make sure that you have a premises identification number (PIN) for where you are housing your pigs. Movement records for each pig should also be kept by the exhibitor in a safe place. They should include a source PIN, individual animal identification for each pig, date the pig(s) were moved and destination PIN.

Be sure to observe your pigs daily for signs of disease or infection and to contact your veterinarian if your pigs become sick.

For more information, contact Patrick Webb, PWebb@pork.org, 515-223-3441. *Pork Checkoff News from the National Pork Board*

Watch Out For Sunburned Pigs

During these hot summer months, extra precautions should be taken to ensure your pigs do not sunburn. Sunburns can be common in the white non-pigmented breeds or show pigs that have their hair clipped extremely short.

The symptoms are similar to those in humans, with rapid reddening of the skin and considerable pain. Severely sunburned pigs will have decreased appetites, and will not grow as well as healthy pigs.

To protect pigs from sunburn, make sure they have adequate shade and access to a good wallow. Do not use sunscreen on pigs to prevent sunburn, as it has not been approved for use on food animals.



