

Washington Pork Producers Newsletter October 2006

WSU EXTENSION ANNOUNCES ONLINE RESOURCES FOR WASHINGTON PORK PRODUCERS

Washington State University Extension and the Department of Animal Science has partnered with the U.S. Pork Center of Excellence; National Pork Board; and over 20 other land-grant universities to develop an online resource with current, accurate, and readily available information concerning pork production. This new system, called the Pork Information Gateway (PIG), will increase knowledge and will be valuable for Washington pork producers, managers, stakeholders and educators.

PIG is a virtual library with information from national swine researchers contained in over 200 fact sheets.

This valuable resource is free to anyone interested in the pork industry. People can access the site and register for a free account on the WSU PIG page that can be found at <http://wsu.porkgateway.org/web/guest/home>. Free registration allows visitors to search PIG for any topic they may need or be curious about.

In addition to fact sheets, registered producers also can submit questions regarding pork production. The goal of the site is for industry experts to respond to questions within 72 hours.

The U. S. Pork Center of Excellence is a public/private partnership that brings together academic research and extension related to pork production. In addition to universities, the coalition includes two governmental agencies, two industry associations and seven state pork producer associations.

wsu.porkgateway.org

TRIVIA: CATS EXCHANGED FOR PIGS IN “LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG”

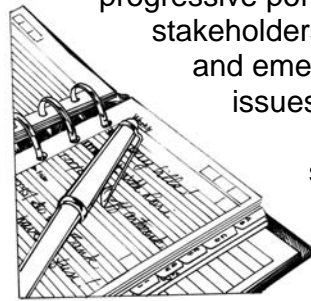
According to Etymologists (people who study words and their history), the phrase “let the cat out of the bag” has been used since the Renaissance but was first written down over 100 years later in the mid 1700’s. In early market communities young suckling pigs would be sold in a bag (also called a ‘poke’) for upcoming feasts. Dishonest sellers often were inclined to put a cat in the bag when the purchaser was not working. The seller’s secret would be revealed when the purchaser got home and discovered the truth when they “let the cat out of the bag.”

Adapted from word-detective.com



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! SWINE INFORMATION DAY—Feb. 2, 2007

The 2007 Swine Information Day is scheduled for Friday, February 2, at the Red Lion Hotel in Pasco. This educational session is designed for progressive pork producers and



stakeholders and will address critical and emerging swine production issues in the Pacific Northwest.

National, state and local speakers will provide information about meat quality and food safety issues, farm and swine economics, animal

health, swine production, and much more information important to Washington State pork producers.

Swine producers of all sizes; 4-H/FFA youth producers; agency representatives; agriculture educators; and fair/show representatives are invited to participate. Swine Information Day is sponsored by the Washington Pork Producers, Washington State University Extension, and the National Pork Board.

In Memory of

Bella Ayupan



Bella Ayupan, wife of Carl Blauert, passed away July 6th, 2006 in Moses Lake. Bella was born on April 28, 1951, and was one of 11 children. In the summer of 2001 Bella moved to the Columbia Basin and married long-time resident of the Columbia Basin and pork producer, Carl Blauert.

Bella loved kids, she enjoyed arts and crafts and recently became interested in digital photography. Bella also enjoyed gardening and helping Carl out around the farm.

A memorial service for Bella was held on July 13 in Moses Lake. Bella is survived by her husband Carl and nine brothers and sisters.

Cards can be sent to Carl Blauert, 1630 Rd B NE, Moses Lake, WA 98837.

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PORK CHECKOFF OFFERS NEW DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

The Pork Checkoff has developed three new distance learning programs for pork producers. These programs include the Production Series, the Manager Series and the Customizable Employee Training Series.

"These new programs combine the current distance learning courses with new courses to maximize learning and minimize downtime," said Jim Lummus, curriculum director for the Pork Checkoff. "The end result is a concise distance learning package for producers with more information on fewer CD's."

The Pork Checkoff's Production Series, a four-disc set, is designed for those people who are new to the pork industry. The series also works well as a refresher for seasoned veterans. The first disc includes a bilingual English/Spanish versions of the new Farrowing Management course, the new Grower Finisher Management course and the Nursery Management course. The new Your Role as a Swine Caretaker course, Biosecurity in Pork Production and Effective Handling of Pigs is included in the second bilingual disc. The third disc is a bilingual DVD on the Pork Production Safety System. The final disc in the Production Series includes the new Swine Disease Recognition and Treatment course, the Breeding and Gestation Management, Ventilation Management, the On Farm Euthanasia of Swine and Pig Husbandry and Stockmanship.

The Pork Checkoff's Manager Series, a two-disc set, includes resources for those in need of help with personal development as well as a set of financial and business-management decision tools. The personal development portion includes the new Swine Caretaker course, the Human Resources Management course and the bilingual Pork Production Safety System course. The decision tools include the new Financial Analysis tool, the Sow Housing Alternatives Calculator and the Troubleshooting Production and Financial Benchmarks.

Leon Sheet, a pork producer from Ionia, Iowa and chair of the Pork Checkoff's Producer Services Committee stated, "The new Pork Checkoff distance-learning programs expand education to the farm...[and]... make it possible for producers and their employees to learn on their own schedule."

Pork Checkoff has developed a suite of electronic employee training tools for pork producers and employee training managers. The bilingual Customizable Employee Training Series includes the new and improved courses: Your Role as a Swine Caretaker; Farrowing Management; Nursery Management; Grower Finisher Management; Pork Production Safety System and Biosecurity in Pork Production.

"These customizable tools allow a producer or trainer to create their own branded, operation-specific training materials and repackage them to use in their operation," said Lummus.

All the new Pork Checkoff distance-learning courses are available at no cost to U.S. pork producers by calling the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-PORK or at www.pork.org.



"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."

-Abigail Adams (1744-1818)

NATIONAL PORK BOARD IDENTIFIES 2007 CRITICAL ISSUES

During World Pork Expo, the National Pork Board identified the critical issues it will tackle during 2007. The board named five specific issues and several operating principles it will use as it continues planning for how it will allocate Pork Checkoff funds for the year beginning Jan. 1, 2007. The five issues identified by the board are:

- The way the industry can positively impact the consumer and the their purchase of pork.
- The trust and image of the industry and its products.
- The development of human capital.
- The profitability and competitive advantage of U.S. pork.
- The safeguard and expansion of international markets.



Additionally, the 15 members of the board recognized that the evolution of the National Pork Board's way of operating now includes a number of operating principles that also will be applied to the development of the new strategic plan. Those are:

- A focus on partnerships and alliances.
- The effective transfer of knowledge and technology.
- The early identification and management of issues.

Finally, an appointed board subcommittee wrote proposals for the National Pork Board's Mission, Purpose and Core Values and Beliefs statements. The new statements read:

- Mission – The National Pork Board harnesses the resources of all producers to capture opportunity, address challenges and satisfy customers.
- Purpose – The National Pork Board contributes to the success of all pork producers by managing issues related to research, education and product promotion and by establishing U.S. Pork as the preferred protein worldwide.
- Core Values and Beliefs – The National Pork Board earns the trust and support of its investors and customers by: exceeding the expectations of its stakeholders; providing the scientific research that allows pork production to be measured objectively and that maintains U.S. Pork as a safe, high-quality and high-value product; educating the public about modern pork production; addressing consumer demands for socially responsible pork production; adding measurable value to U.S. Pork; and promoting teamwork within the pork industry.

"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."

-Will Durrant 1885-1981

WHAT IS PCV-2?

Porcine Circovirus (PCV) is a member of the Circoviridae family. PCV-2 was first identified in sick and healthy pigs in the mid- to late-1990s. Today, it appears to be in swine herds worldwide and has been documented in North America since 1991. As a result of this, it may be next to impossible to find negative semen sources or pigs that have not been exposed to the virus. It's important to know that a farm that is positive for PCV-2 may not show clinical signs of any PCV-associated diseases. Scientists suspect the virus is the causal agent or one of the agents in many syndromes. They don't know, however, how the virus causes disease.

Some of the syndromes include porcine dermatitis and nephropathy syndrome, a disease that primarily affects the skin and kidneys; porcine respiratory disease complex, a disease causing mostly respiratory signs, including pneumonia; postweaning multisystemic wasting syndrome and even syndromes in which the major signs are reproductive failure or central nervous system signs.

It is suspected that environmental factors, management practices and/or the presence of other agents in a herd may influence the expression of disease associated with PCV-2.

Information from:

<http://wsu.porkgateway.org/web/quest/home>

contaminated with virus from infected pigs. The virus can even be carried on a workers hands, boots or clothing for a short (less than an hour) period of time. Virus can be transferred from one pig to another by using instruments (castrators, dockers, milk teeth cutters and needles) on an infected pig followed by use on an uninfected pig.

If a pig is infected with PRRS virus how long can it be a risk for infecting other pigs?

Although many pigs remain infected with the virus for life, they actually only shed the virus for a short period of time. Younger animals tend to shed virus longer than older animals. Generally, shedding occurs for only 30-60 days after initial infection but in rare cases can continue for up to 5 months. Boars can also shed virus in their semen but usually only do so for a few weeks. However, there have been boars that have shed the virus in their semen for up to 6 months. All semen used for AI should be periodically tested for PRRS virus.

How is PRRS diagnosed?

In order to confirm a diagnosis of PRRS laboratory testing must be done. Many diseases can resemble PRRS and often PRRS viral infections co-exist with other infections. It is very difficult to obtain the appropriate specimens for testing from live animals. Therefore, suspect pigs are often sacrificed in order to make a diagnosis. Blood testing can only indicate the presence of antibodies against the virus. If the pig's dam or the pig itself was previously vaccinated or infected with PRRS it will blood test positive. A blood test cannot tell if a pig is currently infected or shedding the virus.

Can this virus harm other livestock or people?

No! With the exception of mallard ducks, PRRS virus only infects swine. It poses no threat to humans or other animals and in no way makes eating pork a threat to human health.

What can I do to protect my herd from becoming infected with PRRS virus?

Use caution when and if you buy pigs and insist that they originate from a source known to be negative for PRRS. Physical separation of potentially infected and uninfected pig enterprises is probably the most effective control measure the producer can take.



What other biosecurity measures can I take to protect my pigs from PRRS?

The virus cannot tolerate heat or drying but can survive up to 11 days in water. It generally survives less than 1 day on plastic or stainless steel surfaces, shavings, feed and clothing. Cleanliness, dryness and disinfection with Virkon® S (Antec International) of all surfaces that may have had contact with infected pigs will remove environmental sources of infection. Also, insects such as flies and mosquitoes should be controlled.

Reprinted from Oregon State University PRRS factsheet.

WHAT PIG PRODUCERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PRRS VIRAL INFECTIONS

What exactly is the PRRS virus and what does it do to pigs?

PRRS stands for porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome. It is a virus that has been around at least since the 1980s when it was known as Mystery Pig Disease. In the early 1990s the virus that caused Mystery Pig Disease was identified and renamed PRRS.

PRRS infections cause a variety of problems in pigs ranging from mild to severe. In herds without immunity to the virus, sows may suffer from a depressed appetite or fever and pregnant sows may abort in late pregnancy or give birth the premature litters. Weaners and growers are usually most severely affected but even these pigs may not show any signs at all. Those that become sick will generally go off feed and become "fuzzed up." They may have a cough, and if they become infected with other disease causing organisms, may develop severe pneumonia and die or waste away over a course of several weeks.

How is the PRRS virus spread?

The major way the virus is spread is by direct contact between infected and uninfected pigs. The more intensive the swine operation, the more likely the virus is to spread between pigs. The sow is the reservoir animal for PRRS and can pass the virus to her unborn piglets who in turn pass the virus to other pigs after weaning. Actually, although PRRS is infectious (meaning it is caused by a disease-causing virus) it is not highly contagious. There are instances where infected pigs are penned with uninfected pigs and the uninfected pigs remain free of the virus despite close association with infected pigs known to be shedding the virus.

There are other ways the virus is spread. It can be carried on trucks and trailers that have become

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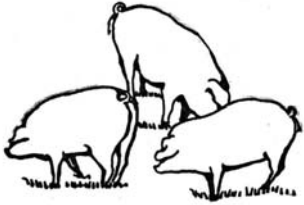


NEWS FROM WSU . . .

WSU DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCE COMMITMENT TO SWINE CENTER FACILITY

Recently there have been changes to the personnel at the WSU Swine Center, including the retirement of Dr. John Froseth after 37 years of excellent service to the pork and barley industries. These changes provide new challenges and opportunities for WSU programs in pork research and teaching. The WSU Department of Animal Science faculty met to discuss the future of the Swine Center and agreed that maintaining strong teaching, research and extension programs in the swine area are important objectives of WSU Department of Animal Science and Extension.

Dr. Chris Hostetler has been hired on a temporary basis to manage the Swine Center and Mr. Asa Timms has been assigned to work the majority of his time at the center. Two excellent undergraduate students live at the Swine Center and provide the center with dedicated and valuable assistance. The Department is in the process of revising the Swine Manager position description and plan to hire a new manager as soon as possible.



The Swine Center is a self-supporting unit that does not presently receive money for salary support from our Agricultural Research Center or the WSU College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences' teaching budget. Therefore, it is imperative that the operation is efficient and has at least a break-even budget. A committee of animal science faculty has been appointed to:

- Develop a vision and plan for the next 10 years for the future of the Swine Center.
- Develop a strong statement of need and justification for the Swine Center.
- Summarize the research at the Swine Center for the past 10 years.
- Summarize potential research project for the next 10 years.
- Summarize past teaching activities and planned or potential activities for the future.
- Discuss with the Washington Pork Producers how they can be involve in WSU swine teaching, research and extension programs.
- Review the position descriptions for the Swine Center Manager.
- Discuss how the cost of operation can be reduced and the revenue enhanced.

If you have any questions or comments concerning the WSU Swine Center please contact Dr. Charles Gaskins, Department of Animal Science Chair, at (509) 335-6416 or gaskins@wsu.edu



This newsletter can be accessed online at www.animalag.wsu.edu

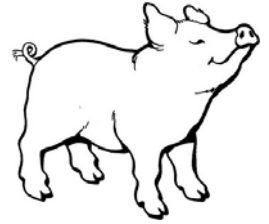
If you would like to receive future newsletters via email please email smithsm@wsu.edu

WSU CAHNRS DEAN BERNARDO ANNOUNCES THE SELECTION OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCE CHAIR

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Margaret Benson has accepted our offer to serve as the next chair of the Department of Animal Sciences. The appointment will become official once Dr. Benson's tenure application passes through the WSU approval process. Dr. Benson will begin her appointment at WSU Effective February 1, 2007.

I am extremely pleased that we were able to lure Dr. Benson away from Michigan State to come to WSU. I believe she has the blend of administrative experience, leadership skills and academic credentials that are needed for this important position. I want to thank everyone involved for their active engagement in the interview process. We were able to secure the services of Dr. Benson because we were able to collectively communicate a positive future for Animal Sciences at WSU. The faculty, staff, students and stakeholders of the department are largely responsible for this outcome. I look forward to working with the department and Dr. Benson to craft a successful future for the Department of Animal Sciences.

Dean Dan Bernardo



WSU EXTENSION HIRES LIVESTOCK EXTENSION ECONOMIST

Shannon Neibergs has returned to WSU as an Extension Economist. He is a graduate of WSU and PhD graduate from Texas A&M University. Shannon spent the last twelve years as a Professor and Economist at the University of Louisville in the Department of Equine Business. Shannon returns to WSU in an extension position that concentrates on a state-wide Extension effort to develop new economics-oriented extension programming for livestock producers and industries. Shannon is housed in the Southeast Extension District at WSU Pullman. You can contact Shannon at sneibergs@wsu.edu or at 509-335-6360.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Washington State University Department of Animal Sciences will be starting a search for a Swine Herdsperson in the next few weeks.

Person interested in this position can contact Dr. Charles Gaskins in the Department of Animal Sciences at (509)335-6416 or by email at gaskins@wsu.edu.

When final approval is obtained to fill this position there will be a position description at the WSU Human Resource Services website. Go to <http://www.hrs.wsu.edu/> and click on WSU jobs.



IMPACT OF YOUTH SHOW SWINE PROJECTS TO THE U.S. SWINE INDUSTRY

Thousands of 4-H and FFA projects are exhibited and shown. Industry experts estimate **approximately one million show pigs** enter the food chain each year through county and state fairs and major livestock shows. This equals about 1% of the total annual U.S. production. Additionally, it is estimated that another two to three million hogs are bred, fed and raised as show pigs but are shown at non-terminal shows, jackpots, or are raised as penmates to those entered in shows and perhaps harvested for family and friends. All told, these animals have a substantial impact on the U.S. swine industry. Even more importantly, by properly educating the young people raising and exhibiting these animals about the importance of animal agriculture and the science behind production, a positive impact can be made on the future direction of the swine industry.

In Washington alone, almost 10,000 show or fair pigs are produced every year. Those 10,000 pigs will produce approximately 1,480,000 pounds of pork meat—that is enough meat to make over 23.6 million one ounce sausage links.



Most 4-H and FFA members will not be directly involved in the swine industry as a career. However, they will all be consumers and voters and may be indirectly involved in some aspect of the industry. With the shrinking percentage of the U.S. population directly involved in agriculture, the disconnection between producers and consumers continues to grow. When asked to comment, vote or otherwise have an influence on our industry (i.e. gestation stalls), most consumers no longer have anything to relate to. This was never more evident as the recent passage of H.R. 503 (Sept. 7, 2006) in the House of Representatives to prevent the harvest of horses in the U.S. This bill passed soundly in the House (263 to 146), reflecting the lack of understanding that many people have about agriculture. The ripple of effects to the swine and other livestock industries if this bill passes in the Senate are far-reaching and potentially devastating.

By properly educating youth livestock producers, we not only stimulate interest in the livestock industry (or allied industries) as a future career, but also create “friends of the industry” – something the industry is desperately seeking. Programs such as Youth PQA, plus numerous state 4-H and FFA quality assurance programs, educate youth using hands-on demonstrations of proper medication usage and food safety. Creating “blue ribbon kids” through raising livestock projects,

allowing them to grow and care for something that nourishes and feeds numerous other people, and creating awareness and stimulating interest in food production is a wise investment in the future swine industry.

Adapted from Jodi Sterle, Associate Professor and Extension Swine Specialist, Texas Cooperative Extension/Texas A&M University System



CHAMPION MARKET GILTS DON'T NECESSARILY MAKE GOOD BREEDING GILTS

Again this year I saw individuals purchasing market gilts back through 4-H/FFA livestock fair auction and the “turn pen” for breeding purposes. There are many reasons why individuals interested in purchasing breeding gilts should not purchase gilts that have been raised and exhibited as market animals at fairs and shows around the area.

Just because the gilt may have placed well at the fair does not mean she will be a great or even a good breeding gilt. Selecting for both carcass and reproductive traits are difficult because they work against each other. Breeding gilts need more fat than most show pigs because cholesterol is needed to synthesize some important reproductive hormones that cause the gilt to cycle. In addition, market swine are not evaluated for their reproductive traits; such as, underline (udder) soundness, breeding soundness, number born alive, number weaned or 21 day litter weight in fair and junior show market classes. You can have the greatest looking market gilt, but if she cannot breed, deliver or care for a litter of piglets she has no use as a breeding animal and will cost you significantly.

Another concern with selecting a gilt from the fair market pen is that these gilts have been fed and conditioned to be a market animals not breeding animals. The feed additive Paylene used to enhance the amount of lean muscle is not approved for use in breeding swine. It is not completely understood how Paylean will impact a

gilt's ability to breed, produce and care for a litter of pigs. In addition, because exhibitors are feeding market swine to a specific date, sometimes they must limit feed or hold an animal.



Holding a gilt at a certain weight for an extended period of time may have long-term negative effects on her reproductive potential.

Most importantly, show pigs can bring many disease organisms home to your farm and spread them to other animals. Animals that are farrowed at one location, and not exposed to other swine, are typically healthier than animals exposed to other pigs and animals at a fair. When buying breeding gilts, it is best to buy them directly from one farm of origin that has a successful herd health program. Because fair pigs are from multiple farms and co-mingled they have likely been exposed to many disease-causing organisms (see articles on page 5).

It can be educational and exciting for both youth and the whole family to experience raising a breeding swine project. If you are committed to investing in a breeding project it is wise to go the extra step and invest in a breeding gilt that comes from a reputable breeder that has selected, fed, and raised a gilt to be a breeding animal. In addition, not bringing home gilts from the fair/show will help protect other swine operations located nearby from potential devastating disease outbreaks.

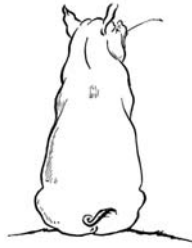
Sarah Smith

HOG/PORK OUTLOOK FROM THE USDA ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

Live Swine Imports Increase, But Not As Fast As Expected

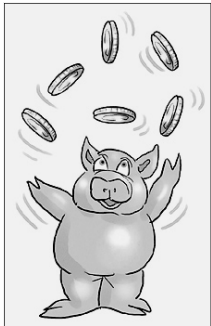
Forecast for U.S. imports of Canadian swine were lowered for the second half of 2006 and for 2007. The reductions reflect slower-than-expected increases so far this year, and expectations of much the same level of imports in 2007. Total U.S. swine imports are expected to be about 8.6 million head both this year and in 2007.

U.S. pork production estimates for the second half of 2006 and for 2007 were each lowered slightly to reflect reduced growth in swine imports. Second-half U.S. pork production is expected to be about 10.7 billion pounds, almost 1.7 percent above the second-half 2005. Pork production in 2007 is expected to be 21.6 billion pounds, almost 3 percent above anticipated production for this year.



Both Hog Prices and Slaughter Higher Than July 2005

Prices of 51-52 percent live lean equivalent hogs in July were \$51.89 per cwt, almost 4 percent above July 2005. Both June and July 2006 are, thus far, the only months in 2006 where hog prices have been higher than the same periods of 2005. Estimated federally inspected (FI) slaughter in July was 7.815 million head, more than 3 percent above July 2005. The willingness of packer/processors to pay higher prices for a larger number of hogs in July likely reflects both increased slaughter capacity in the United States and continued strong demand for pork products. An indicator of wholesale supply



and demand conditions, the USDA estimated carcass cutout, averaged \$74.43 in July, more than 5 percent higher than in July 2005.

Third-quarter hog prices are expected to range between \$48 and \$50 per cwt, 3 percent below the same period last year. Third-quarter pork production is expected to be 5.05 billion pounds, or 1 percent above third-quarter last year. For 2006, pork production is expected to be slightly more than 21 billion pounds, 1.6 percent above 2005. Next year, pork production is expected to increase almost 3 percent above 2006.

First-Half 2006 Retail Pork Prices Below Same Period Last Year

Retail pork prices in the first half of 2006 averaged about \$2.78 per pound, about 2.4 percent below 2005. Strong competition from good availability of competing animal protein—beef and poultry—as well as the availability of larger quantities of pork products than last year, are the likely factors that held retail pork prices below a year ago. In the second half of 2006, retail pork prices are expected to average in the high \$2.70s per pound.

First-Half Pork Exports Impressive, Imports Increase Slightly

In the first 6 months of 2006, U.S. exporters shipped over 1.5 billion pounds of pork products to foreign markets, an increase of more than 15 percent over the same period last year. The top five foreign markets for U.S. pork for January to June 2006 were Japan, Mexico, Canada, South Korea and Russia. During the same period last year, the top five export markets were Japan, Mexico, Canada, South Korea, and China. The relatively low foreign exchange value of the U.S. dollar together with animal disease-related restrictions imposed by some major importing countries largely explain the strong demand for U.S. pork products in the first half of 2006.

Japan's imports of U.S. pork for the first half of 2006 do not match the buying pattern of other major importers. Although Japan remains, by far, the largest importer of U.S. pork products, its year-over-year imports of U.S. pork are down by more than 8 percent in the first six months of 2006. The reduction is attributed to larger than normal levels of pork stocks, brought about by very large pork imports in 2004, when animal diseases—avian influenza and bovine spongiform encephalopathy—were significant factors in shaping Japanese import demand. Imports have also been slowed this year by stepped-up monitoring by Japanese customs authorities to ensure importers adherence to the procedures of the Japanese pork import regime.

First-half U.S. pork imports were 7.5 million pounds higher than in the same period last year, an increase of just over 1.5 percent. Most of the increase is attributable to slightly higher shipments from Denmark and other small countries that export to the United States. U.S. imports from Canada, however, were slightly lower than the first half of 2005.

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