

# The Iowa Pork Industry Center

***To promote efficient pork production technologies in Iowa, maintain Iowa's pork industry leadership, and help strengthen rural development efforts.***

## Objectives

The Iowa Pork Industry Center (IPIC) was created in July 1994. Dedicated to serving the Iowa pork industry through educational programs and demonstrations of emerging production and marketing activities, the IPIC will

- serve as the central access point for Iowa State University (ISU) programs related to the pork industry;
- integrate ISU resources that serve the pork industry by serving as an interdisciplinary catalyst;
- help members of the Iowa pork industry become efficient producers of high quality, value-added pork;
- coordinate ISU resources and programs with those of commodity, agricultural, and governmental organizations to maximize opportunities for the pork industry;
- anticipate and explore emerging technologies and issues that will affect the pork industry; and
- provide unbiased information to the industry on issues such as risk management, market access, meat quality, food safety and quality, and the environment.

## Leveraging the Advantages

The Iowa Pork Industry Center is a coordinated effort of the colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, and focuses on programs that are integral and complementary to work by ISU Extension. Extensive use of traditional as well as emerging technologies from private and public partners enhances the organization and delivery of these programs and improves access to all Iowans.

The IPIC works closely with faculty having responsibilities for teaching, research, and extension in the departments of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, Animal Science, and Economics within the College of Agriculture, and in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Thirty extension field specialists in livestock, farm management, and agricultural engineering and all county extension education directors (CEEDs) work with the IPIC to provide program delivery.

The IPIC uses multidisciplinary expertise to secure external funding from a variety of sources, including the USDA, state, commodity, and industry organizations.

## Priorities in 2004

The Iowa Pork Industry Center will assist in developing data collection and compiling production systems comparisons for commodity and value-added market products for Iowa pork producers. This project will provide information on costs of production and market return for comparison and strategic planning purposes for the state's pork producers. Specifically, the IPIC will

- use field-collected data to help producers determine specific strengths and opportunities for improving their operations, and aggregate these data to develop decision aids for the Iowa pork industry;
- work with industry representatives, commodity organizations, and producers to establish value-added markets for Iowa pork products;
- assist animal industry personnel in establishing and evaluating animal identification/traceability and swine welfare assurance programs; and
- respond to industry critical challenges, such as animal care and well-being, food safety, and production profitability.

## Accomplishments

The Iowa Pork Industry Center sponsors educational programs on current topics for all segments of the pork industry. For example, in 2003 the IPIC sponsored a satellite program on mandatory country of origin labeling that featured a USDA associate deputy administrator of the Livestock and Seed Program for the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). In addition to the approximately 180 people who attended at one of the more than 70 Iowa ISU Extension county offices scheduled to host the program, IPIC received inquiries from media, legislators, educators, and other industry professionals from at least three midwestern states.

A five-site series on improving swine health was held in cooperation with Iowa Pork Producers Association (IPPA). Nearly 290 people attended, including veterinarians who were eligible to receive five hours of education credit by attending this program. Eighty-four percent of those completing evaluation forms rated the program superior or excellent. Numbers represented by those attending totalled more than 2.7 million finisher pigs, 1.1 million feeder pigs, and more than 1,000 clients. Two programs on feeding ethanol co-products to swine and beef were held in northwest Iowa, both with excellent attendance. Interest in the topic continued after the meetings, with calls to field specialists from as far away as Colorado.

The IPIC included on its Web site a listing of all known Pork Quality Assurance trainings in Iowa for youth and adult audiences. This page averaged more than 88 hits a month for the first six months of 2003, when all of these meetings were scheduled. Although certification procedures changed in 2004 to include Food Safety Quality Assurance for 4-H members, the same type of informational Web page was made available. In the first 10 days following a statewide request for training dates, ISU Extension staff submitted information on 52 related events.

## Expected Outcomes

The IPIC will continue to address the value-added marketing and agricultural quality systems by educating pork producers and other users and helping to implement these systems.

The IPIC will expand the applied research base of field and campus-based staff members and will continue its technology transfer efforts with a focus on current challenges for producers and other representatives of the pork industry.

The IPIC will continue to promote the use of its Group Tracker software to help producers recognize the importance of treating their operation as a business by knowing their costs of production.

Through ICN programming, educational seminars, and personal contact, the IPIC provides consistent and unbiased research-based information through appropriate formats to meet client needs.

## Resources

ISU Extension allocates approximately \$160,000 to the Iowa Pork Industry Center of which \$85,000 is from the Extension 21 initiative. The Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station allocates approximately \$50,000. The Center also receives project-specific funds from the Iowa Pork Producers Association, the National Pork Board, and other agencies.

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