



National Pork Board

A quick quiz: Name the five most recognizable slogans in American advertising:

According to a study a few years ago by Northwestern University, the answers are: “Snap, crackle and pop.” “You’re in good hands with Allstate.” “Wheaties – Breakfast of Champions.” “Please don’t squeeze the Charmin” And ...

... “Pork. The Other White Meat.”

As well-known as that slogan has become – a 2003 Maritz Research Meat Tracking Study discovered that it is recognized by nearly 90 percent of all respondents – few consumers know that “The Other White Meat” is due to the efforts of pork producers who nearly 40 years ago realized that together they could accomplish goals that individually would be impossible. Starting in the mid-1960s, a group of visionary producers began pooling some of their money through a voluntary program to “check off” a portion of their revenue to promote their product to U.S. and world consumers. By 1985, Congress had made it possible for all pork producers to participate. The modern Pork Checkoff was born, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Pork Checkoff’s mission and goals haven’t changed much in the subsequent 20 years. The Checkoff exists to generate added value to the U.S. Pork production industry by creating and executing forward-looking promotion, research and consumer information programs based on principles reflecting its investors’ commitment to quality, innovation and stewardship.

Through their investment in the Pork Checkoff, U.S. producers have developed the Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) program, which helps to assure consumers that U.S. Pork is raised to standards that assure a safe and nutritious product. They have developed the Swine Welfare Assurance Program to help producers provide the best possible care for

their animals. They have created the Trucker Quality Assurance Program to train truckers in the safe transport of their animals. They’ve conducted research and provided seed money for other research projects to solve nettlesome animal diseases. They’ve provided education programs so farmers and their employees have the latest information in pork production.

And, the Pork Checkoff has helped producers to continue to promote their product in the United States and overseas with a wealth of strategies ranging from airing programs on RFD-TV, to helping fast-food restaurants get more pork products on their menus, to teaching chefs in China’s emerging economy how to prepare better cuts of pork, specifically U.S. Pork.

The Basics

The Pork Checkoff is based on having producers involved in all major decisions. In accordance with the way Congress established the Pork Checkoff, the Pork Act Delegate Body – a group representing all 50 states and importers who contribute to the Pork Checkoff – meets annually to make recommendations to the U.S. secretary of agriculture about the rate of the Checkoff. Currently, producers contribute 40 cents of every \$100 in pork sales, or just under a half percentage point. Importers contribute an equivalent amount.

The delegates also nominate for the secretary’s approval the 15 members of the National Pork Board, which develops budgets and awards contracts to carry out a coordinated program for pork promotion and research activities. The board’s office is in Des Moines, Iowa. In addition, several hundred producers from throughout the country serve on marketing and science and technology committees that help the board members find solutions to industry problems and to allocate resources.

The 2005 Checkoff budget is \$53.7 million. Most of that will be used at the national level for continuing programs, such as advertising, retail and foodservice marketing, foreign market development/world trade, production improvement/ production technology, and swine health/pork quality and safety. \$12 million will be distributed to the 44 state associations for use in Checkoff-funded programs at the local level.

The Checkoff returns this investment a number of ways, but most importantly by working to increase domestic per capita demand for pork, increasing export demand for pork, establishing science-based standards from which the pork production industry may be fairly measured and providing knowledge and opportunities that allow producers to be competitive

The Programs

With the help of Checkoff-funded demand-building programs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that U.S. consumers eat about 50 pounds of pork per person each year. Based on a general guideline of 3 ounces per serving, that averages out to about a serving of pork each day per person.

In addition to the well-known Pork. The Other White Meat marketing campaign, the Checkoff's Pork Information Bureau focuses on providing information to consumers – directly and through key influencers who help them make menu, purchasing and dietary decisions. Recipes are distributed through magazines, the Internet and through personal contact.

The Pork Checkoff also is at work to expand overseas markets for U.S. Pork. Checkoff-funded export market activities have helped move the United States from a net importer to a net exporter and have made the United States the world's No. 2 exporter of pork.

2004 marked the 13th consecutive record year for exports, with the value of U.S. Pork exports set at \$1.3 billion. Marketing efforts have increased U.S. Pork's penetration into foreign markets. Product representing about one of every 10 hogs raised in the United States is now exported. That's up from one on 100 just 15 years ago, and the figure continues to grow, in part because of Checkoff-funded foreign market development programs.

Sound Science

Checkoff research priorities for 2005 include swine health, on-farm pork safety, post-harvest pork safety, pork quality and human nutrition. Biosecurity and security are key to preventing domestic and foreign animal diseases in pork production operations. Through the Checkoff, information about security and biosecurity is available to all pork producers.

The Checkoff is at work to meet the challenges of responsible 21st century pork production by helping producers face challenges ranging from disease outbreaks to consumer concerns about the environment and about the quality and safety of their food.

Through the Pork Checkoff, nine distance learning courses are available to allow producers and their employees easy access to the latest production information via CD-ROM or the Internet.

More than 1,100 pork producers each month get answers to their questions by calling the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-PORK, while Internet sites provide information for producers, consumers and others. All Checkoff-funded information on the Internet is available at porkboard.org. Informational opportunities are available through the year and can be viewed on the calendar of events that also appears porkboard.org

The Checkoff and RFD-TV

The Checkoff has used RFD-TV to reach both producers and consumers with information about the pork production industry. "We've found RFD-TV a great vehicle to reach audiences that are important to us," said Dave Culbertson, pork producer from Geneseo, Ill., and president of the National Pork Board. "We've done a call-in program where producers could question our leadership. We did a program to show consumers and producers how we use stock-car racing to raise awareness and to build retail sales in the metropolitan areas where the races are scheduled. And just last month, we were able to inform consumers about modern pork production methods while at the same time telling producers about the latest educational programs available to them."

"It's been a good partnership," Culbertson said.

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