

Swine producers oppose labeling regs

DES MOINES, Ia. — Top priority issues of concern to the nation's pork producers were the subject of three days of Congressional visits by over 170 pork producers taking part in the annual Pork Producers Washington Seminar, sponsored by the National Pork Producers Council.

The producers, representing 31 states, called on their respective delegations to authorize and fund a National Academy of Science review of nitrates in food curing, and for voluntary, rather than mandatory nutrition labeling.

Council spokesman said NPPC opposes listing suggested nutrients on all labels, especially cholesterol content by percentage, which could well mislead consumers and create unnecessary concern over products so labeled.

The Council also asks that labeling of imitation and or substitute food products be accurate and free from labeling that would "trade unfairly" on generic products.

representatives say they are concerned, too, over the increased food costs to consumers resulting from the present proposed labeling regulations and legislation.

In the area of dietary guidelines, recently released jointly by USDA and HEW, the NPPC expressed continued concern on aspects of the guidelines.

"The most recent guidelines take a more realistic and positive approach to U.S. eating habits because they recommend a balanced diet and eating in moderation instead of singling out a specific food or food component as dangerous," says Chris Herbert, NPPC Director, Nutrition Services. "However," she says, "the guidelines continue to implicate animal products in heart disease without scientific evidence in agreement on this issue. NPPC feels each person must assess individual health needs and act accordingly."

Pork producers, con-

cerned over possibility of entry of African Swine Fever into the U.S. and spread of the disease by garbage feeding of hogs, have called on members of Congress for support of legislation prohibiting garbage feeding of hogs except when done under a strict control/inspection system.

A four-member NPPC study team has recently returned from a three-country tour to Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Spain. They told producers that their observations show spread of ASF linked to meat from infected or carrier pigs and that meat scraps in garbage fed to swine is a vehicle by which ASF gains entry into countries previously free of the disease.

"This situation emphasizes the extreme importance of strict controls on garbage feeding programs," says Dr. C. Donald Van Houweling, NPPC's director of government affairs, and a member of the study group.

Van Houweling noted that his group was impressed

with efforts underway in Puerto Rico to prevent introduction of the disease from the Dominican Republic, and with Dominican Republic moves to eliminate ASF there.

"Unfortunately," Van Houweling continues, "there is little evidence of such effort in Haiti, and presence of ASF in Haiti continues to be a threat to both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic as well as the U.S. as a result. Spain is apparently content to live with ASF, a disease prevalent there for 20 years."

NPPC is presently supporting ASF legislation drafted by Illinois Congressmen Madigan and Findley and will be working with the USDA, AID and other agencies to support programs designed to eradicate ASF where it exists and to strengthen efforts to prevent spread of the disease.

Washington seminar participants also gave support to continued moves calling for positive action on an NPPC-American

Cyanamid petition to the FDA for increasing the interim tolerance level for sulfa residues in swine while current studies are continuing.

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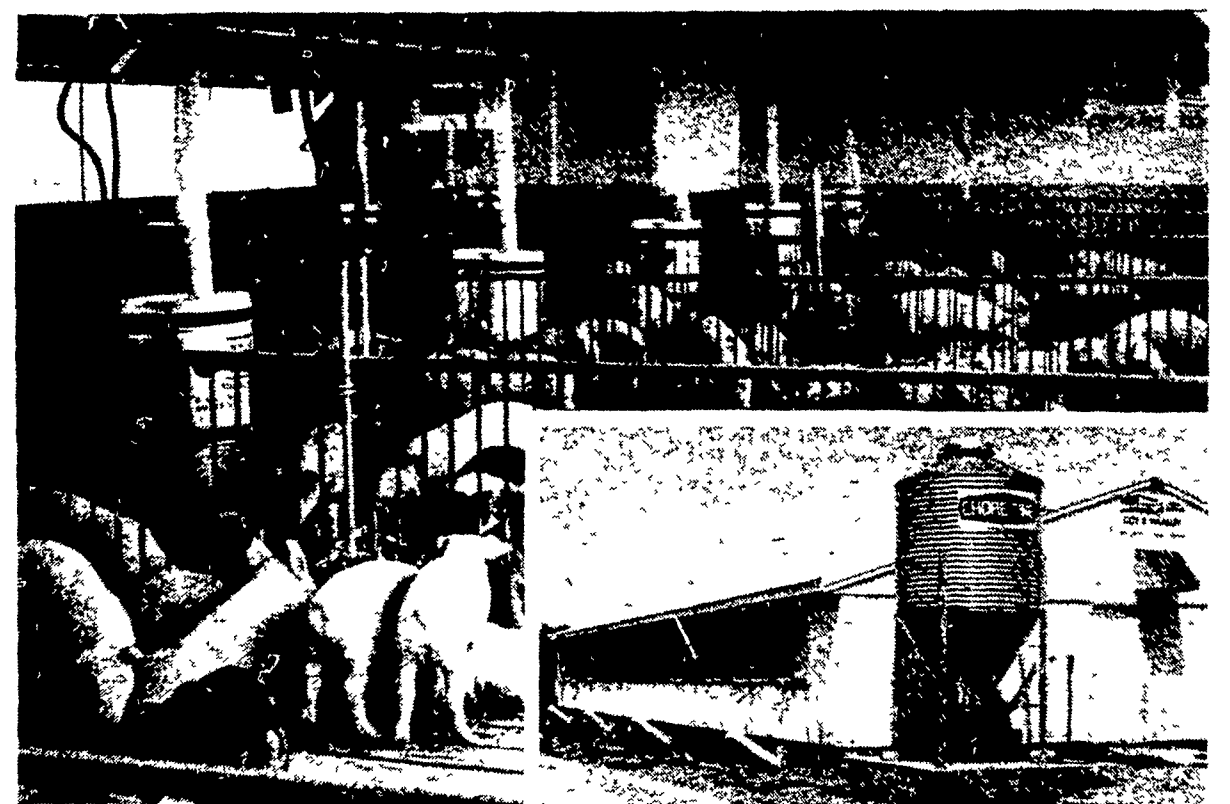
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