

## Pork Study Shows Fat Important, Price Secondary

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Fat, with its perceived negative impact on health, is the key factor in the majority of pork buying decisions, according to a just-completed comprehensive market research study of U.S. pork consumers.

"The pork industry has been promoting and moving toward a leaner product through genetics and nutrition," says Dr. David Meisinger of International Minerals & Chemical Corporation.

Speaking at the November 20 Carcass Merit Seminar sponsored by the National Pork Producers Council, the American Merit Institute and IMC, Meisinger said: "Even leaner pork products are possible and necessary to increase consumption. That's why IMC and other companies are working with porcine somatotropin and other growth enhancing products for pork."

He cited an IMC consumer study to identify factors influencing retail pork selection, whether consumers placed a value on leaner pork, and what sensitivity pork consumers have to various

treatments and products that result in a leaner pork product. While overall consumption of pork has declined recently, the study shows that at-home consumption of pork has stabilized at an average of 2.1 times per week. The reason given for cutting back on pork primarily centered on the desire to lower fat and cholesterol intake, and an overall desire to reduce the amount of meat in the diet.

Researchers noted that "consumers are closely scrutinizing different pork products at the retail level for visible signs of fat in their selection process. In our study, we see 70 percent selecting chops, roasts and ribs on the basis of visible fat, with only 16 percent selecting for the next most important factor—cost." Thus, not only is a leaner product desirable, but the product must also look lean, the study found.

This selection criteria is important, they add, because 55 percent of the consumers studied said they would buy more pork if it had less fat on it. In addition, nearly 75 percent of current pork

purchasers indicated they would choose a 10 percent leaner pork product over a normal product regardless of what was done to produce the leaner meat. And, they would be willing to pay an average 24 cents more per pound.

"Anyone following work to date with porcine somatotropin knows the resultant tremendous production of lean tissue versus fat in university studies," says Meisinger. "But the fact that porcine somatotropin may produce significantly leaner pork products does not mean those buyers most capable of boosting pork consumption will rush to the meat counter unless their concerns with production practices and health issues are addressed first."

"We have the data that show consumers are willing to buy more pork, even pay more for it, if it is a leaner product," he says. "It's imperative that, as an industry, we take as much care in accurately marketing the production techniques as we do in marketing that ultimate leaner, more nutritious product."

## Vets Urge Fall Pregnancy Checks

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — A 100-head cow herd can be pregnancy checked for the cost of feeding one open cow through the winter, according to a report prepared at the University of Idaho by the Idaho Veterinary Medical Association.

Pregnancy checking of cows that calve in the spring is recommended in the fall.

Another report, part of a model program developed by the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, shows how every \$1 invested in professional cow/calf herd management practices returns the producer \$5. The Georgia report estimates savings from pregnancy checking cows at \$875 for a 30-cow herd and savings from castrating, dehorning, and implanting calves at an additional \$729 for total annual herd savings of \$1,604.

"While the cows are being pregnancy checked, they can also be vaccinated and treated for parasites...and checked for general health," the Idaho report says. "Early detection and

treatment of cancer eye can add \$4 to \$10 per hundredweight on cull cows and extend the life of other cows in the herd," the report says.

"Maximum fertility must be number-one in maintaining a beef cow herd for maximum production," said bovine practitioner Michael K. Moore, DVM, of Superior Nebraska.

## Charolais Heifer

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banners from the 1986 American Royal and Tulsa ROE shows, FH Miss Mac 080 sold for \$15,000 to C&J Charolais of Edmond, Okla. Fox Hollow Charolais of Hulbert, Okla., consigned the pride of their string, a polled May 12, 1985, daughter of Minute Man Superman. She is out of Miss HCR Mac 1303 and sold bred to Fh Cujo 085.

The youngest lot in the sale, Thomas Miss Candy 6514 by 1986 National Champion bull, Immortal, sold for \$15,000. She is a May 5, 1986, heifer calf and sold to Granada Cattle Co. and Triple R Charolais. The extreme show heifer prospect from the Thomas Ranch of Harrold, S.D., is out of Thomas Miss Madonna 4009 and will be seen in the showing this season.

Miss Stone-Del Poker Jag by Poker King Junior GV 18G sold for \$13,000 to Miller Charolais Co. of Spring Grove, Pa. The Paul Miller Family purchased this Jan. 6 show heifer calf from Stone-Del Farms of Hartville, Ohio. She is out of Miss SDC Jaguar 940L.

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