



News from New Bolton Center...

School of Veterinary Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Heidelberg, Germany, and have an extensive publishing record on swine reproductive diseases.

The clinical swine program at New Bolton Center is broadly divided into three components: teaching, service and research. Teaching is a top priority and Drs. Pitcher and Parsons are focusing on service and research commitments as issues that

directly embellish their teaching efforts. The primary responsibility of the swine initiative is to graduate veterinarians that are trained to provide service to the Pennsylvania swine industry. However, the education mission does not stop with veterinary students. Several continuing education programs are now available for both veterinarians and local swine producers, and

are described in detail below. Subsequent articles in this series will address the development of a swine curriculum at the veterinary school, and the research endeavors of the Penn swine group.

The goal of our swine service mission is to complement and extend the existing expertise provided to the Pennsylvania swine industry via the local

swine practitioners, cooperative extension agents, and allied industry consultants. Producer education programs are recognized as the most effective approach to accomplish the service mission goal. In collaboration with the Pennsylvania State University Extension Service, two educational programs have been implemented. Both are sponsored by the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and target sustainable pork production.

Producer Education Programs

The first is Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) program designed to maintain consumer confidence in pork products. Swine producers are provided with a list of 10 critical control checkpoints that will help ensure that pork reaching the consumer's table is of the highest possible quality. A major emphasis of this program is reinforcing management practices that prevent antibiotic residue from entering the human food chain. Producers can progress through three levels of certification, and must be re-certified every two years.

Progressive meat processors such as Hatfield's Quality Meats strongly recommend their suppliers of market hogs be certified at the highest level (level III). Hatfield's continues to take an active role in the support of this important educational process. Food safety concepts in this country are shifting more toward the "farm-to-fork approach", and the PQA program remains the livestock industry's gold standard. During the 10 year existence of the PQA program, incidence of antibiotic residues found in pork carcasses has been reduced from 10 to 1%. PQA certification was initiated by the NPPC more than 10 years ago and can now be obtained via the Penn swine group at producer meetings or in combination with Environmental Assurance program farm visits.

The second program is the Environmental Assurance (EA) program that emphasizes the need for hog producers to utilize environmentally friendly management practices. In addition to the best management practices for manure handling, suggestion are provided for odor



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management, dealing with complaints by neighbors, and developing contingency plans to deal with manure crisis situations. This program has recently been described in more detail in another series of Lancaster Farming articles. EA certification remains available through the University of Pennsylvania swine group and requires a farm visit.

In addition to these two programs, clinical services, provided in the context of the School's teaching mission, include: ventilation assessments, blood collection for regulatory issues, computerized record analysis consultation, in-depth investigation of herd health problems, and slaughter checks.

The swine initiative at the School of Veterinary Medicine University of Pennsylvania is committed to strong service, teaching, and research components in its effort to better serve the Pennsylvania swine industry. It looks to train the future Pennsylvania swine veterinarians, to complement existing local practitioner activities with extensive continuing education programs for the swine producers, and to generate new information via research to help the industry progress in to the 21st century. For questions or additional information call the Center for Animal Health and Productivity at 610-444-5800, ext. 2345.