

**Family Living
Focus**

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Extension Agent



Take a Look at Pork

What do extension agents talk about over lunch?

We talk shop, of course. "People are looking for quick and easy ways to cook dinner." "Most families don't know how to cook a roast." These were a few of the comments from our lunch group a few weeks ago.

Finally, Livestock Agent Chet Hughes said to me, "You should do a workshop about preparing meats, like pork for instance."

I replied, "I will if you will help with it."

So a workshop was born.

Chet agreed to provide information about pork quality assurance on the farm, discuss different cuts of pork and how to select cuts for your needs. The program will include cooking demonstrations geared to active families, quick preparations, slow cooker ideas, rubs, marinades, and more. The evening will also feature pork trivia and other games with prizes, and, of course, tasting the demonstrated foods.

Today's pork is lean, nutritious, and versatile. In fact, today it is about 31% lower in fat

and 14% lower in calories than in the past. Many cuts of pork provide less than 180 calories in a 3-ounce serving, about the same as a serving of skinless chicken thigh. The reduction in fat and calories is a result of pork producers making genetic, feeding, and management improvements. Today's hogs are bred to provide lean meat that contains important nutrients like B vitamins, protein, iron, and zinc.

There are a variety of pork cuts available. Choose from the shoulder, loin, side or leg of the animal. Read the label to identify what part of the animal the cut is from. As you make your selections, consider how you plan to cook the meal. Smaller cuts cook more quickly, whereas larger cuts require less attention during preparation. Plan on about four ounces of raw, boneless pork per serving.

Add some zest to your meals by seasoning with marinades, rubs, or sauces. Pork has a great flavor that goes well with a multitude of seasonings. Rubs are mixtures of your favorite herbs and spices rubbed onto the sur-

face of the meat. Season with salt and pepper, garlic or lemon pepper.

Marinades are another way to bring out the flavor in pork. Create a marinade out of a mixture of your favorite spices, an oil and an acid component like fruit juice. Marinate the cuts in a freezer bag or glass container in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, or up to two days so the marinade can be absorbed. Make sure you discard the marinade before you prepare the meat.

Sauces like creamy mushroom, or hot and spicy low fat sauces like salsa or fruit chutney, also complement the taste of pork.

Since pork is lean, overcooking will make it dry. The recommended final cooking temperature is 160° F, which allows the meat to be cooked to safe level and still retain its natural juices, texture, and tenderness. Use a thermometer to check for doneness. To prevent dryness, baste while grilling or boiling with meat drippings, fruit juice or marinade. Be sure to discard the unused marinade.

You can further control the fat in meat by trimming visible fat before cooking using cooking methods that do not use fats, and avoid added fats in sauces, spreads and dressings in the rest of the meal.

Our family enjoys many pork dishes. This one is a favorite. My son can prepare it after school and have in the oven when I get home.

Pork Chop Casserole
4 pork chops
cooking spray
3/4 cups uncooked rice
4 onions
4 slices tomatoes
1/4 teaspoon thyme
1/2 teaspoon marjoram
1 can beef consommé soup undiluted

Spray frying pan with cooking spray. Sauté chops until brown, add 1/4 cup water to the pan and cover. Braise for 15 minutes. Save the liquid.

Put rice in a casserole. Add thyme and marjoram and consommé soup. Stir. Place chops on rice. Top each with a slice of

onion and tomato. Pour braising liquid over the top. Cover and bake for at 350° F for one hour.

In the winter I substitute a piece of sun dried tomato for the fresh tomato. I double the amount of rice, consommé, braising liquid and spices when we are all at home.

For more pork pointers, join us at our "Cooking With Pork" workshop on Monday evening, February 22 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center in Lancaster.

The cost is \$3. Pre registration is requested. For information call (717) 394-6851.

**Birth Center Holds
Annual Quilting Bee**

QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — Love to quilt? Lend your talents to a good cause!

Don't quilt? Come and learn how!

Birth Care and Family Health Services will host an old-fashioned Quilting Bee on Thursday, February 11, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hoffman Building, Quarryville. All are welcome to attend this annual event and to enjoy a day of fellowship, fun and delicious food.

Experienced needlewomen and novices will join together to stitch several donated tops. The finished quilts will be offered for sale at the birth center's Annual Benefit Auction on Saturday, June 5.

A delicious homemade lunch will be offered at noon. If you wish, bring fruit or a favorite

goodie to share at the potluck table. Many wonderful door prizes donated by local businesses will be awarded throughout the day. Children are welcome and child care help will be available. If you have them, bring your own thimble and scissors.

At this year's Bee, a Tupperware fund-raiser to benefit the birth center will be sponsored by Elaine Bledsoe of Golden Eagle Enterprises. The display will be available throughout the day and packets are available in advance by calling Elaine at (717) 786-7935. Gifts and prizes will be given to quilters who receive packets and bring orders.

For more information about the Quilting Bee, call (717) 786-4010 or write to the Birth Center at 1180 Dry Wells Road, Quarryville, PA 17566.

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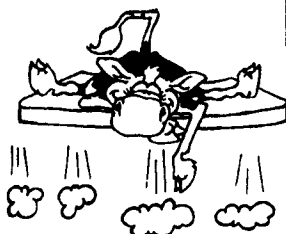
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