

USDA Announces Rules For Pork Checkoff Referendum

DES MOINES, Ia. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced the rules for the referendum on continuation of the pork checkoff program. The nation's pork producers will have the opportunity to continue the successful 14-year-old pork checkoff, which has repositioned pork in the minds of U.S. consumers, by voting "yes" in a referendum. According to the rules, the vote will be held Sept. 19, 20, 21, 2000, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. Absentee voting will be Aug. 18 to Sept. 21 with absentee ballots available Aug. 1.

"I think it is critical that producers get informed and understand what the checkoff has done for them and can continue to do for them," said Donna Reifschneider co-chair of the Vote Yes Task Force. "I want to encourage all pork producers to vote yes. Pork producers need to be making the decision about our future, not letting that decision be made for us," according to the Smithton, Ill., pork producer.

Co-chair of the Vote Yes Task Force, Karl Johnson said, "The pork checkoff has been a phenomenal success at what it was designed to do, build demand and address issues that individual producers couldn't do on their own. The pork checkoff is producer-driven and has evolved to meet the needs of pork producers."

According to Johnson, a Mankato, Minn., pork producer, "the checkoff-funded pork. The Other White Meat® advertising campaign, originally undertaken to reposition pork to U.S. consumers, has done so. Today the campaign has increased U.S. pork demand, reversing a dramatic decline from 1979 to 1985."

Johnson continued that U.S. pork is making its mark worldwide. Through checkoff-funded foreign market development, the U.S. is now a net exporter of pork instead of a net importer. In 1990, the U.S. exported only 244 million pounds of pork. In 2000, the U.S. will export about 1.275 billion pounds of pork.

Johnson also sighted a 17 percent increase in pork's usage at restaurants as a direct result of checkoff-funded efforts. He said that increase is important because 54 percent of all U.S. pork is eaten by people away from home.

The USDA rules restrict voting eligibility to those producers who have marketed one or more hogs from Aug. 18, 1999, through Aug. 17, 2000. Upon a challenge of eligibility, the USDA will require documentation of proof of sale. A complete set of rules on the referendum on continuation of the pork checkoff program are available through the USDA, or by logging on to pork's website at www.nppc.org.

Stress, Sweat, And Sweet Success In Store At Shippensburg Fair

Photos by Michelle Ranck



Lonni Wickard of Lo-Vi Swiss holds the winner of the lifetime production class. The Wickard family from a dairy in Shippensburg shows only Swiss at the fair. "That's just what we liked so we got into it. They're your pets and we just enjoy them," said Lonni's wife Vickie, who takes care of fitting the animals for the shows. "They're more gentle and docile, just nice to work with. They're friendly and adapt a little quicker to different temperatures and weather," Vickie pointed out that the Swiss exhibit longevity in production and in the show ring.



Cow playing cards were the hottest item sold at this year's Shippensburg fair. Holly Killinger, 9, Carlisle, Dominique Righi, 14, of Newville, and Tori Fuller, 14, also from Carlisle took advantage of a break in the action to try out the Holstein-patterned cards, even though Tori showed only Jerseys at the fair. "This is a tough show for the Jerseys, since it's a district show," said Tonda Fuller, Tori's mother.



Janel Zinn, 9, of Newville, Sarah Wickard, 12, of Lo-Vi Swiss and owner of the animals, and Jenny Zinn, 13, also of Newville won the Brown Swiss division of the three-generation class. The class is unique to the Shippensburg fair. "We just started this last year," said Art Salisbury of Alto Genetics who worked at the show's record table. "We're getting into a day and age where a cow can flush and have 20 daughters. This was a class actually brought out in the '50s and '60s in the Guernsey breed." Salisbury compares the class to picking up a pedigree to check a how a cow's family is evolving.



A preveterinary major at Juniata College, Billie Jo Zeigler showed the grand champion market goat. Zeigler spent her summer working with a veterinarian to prepare for her chosen career. Matthew Souder showed the reserve winner in the market goat class.

Also at Tuesday night's FFA livestock sale, the 115-pound grand champion market lamb, owned by Josette Fought, went for \$800 to Hoss' Steak and Sea House. Bill Leib owned the reserve grand champion market lamb.



Celebrating her first year in the dairy beef ring, Amy Kaucher showed the champion dairy beef animal. She has shown Jersey cows for the past eight years.



Charity Fisher, 16, Greencastle, is a junior in the Tuscarora School District. Today Fisher, who learned how to fit cattle in 4-H, helps friends scrub down their Jerseys on a warm afternoon.