

Wal-Mart Meat Division V.P. Keynote Speaker At Midwest Pork Conference

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.—Pork producers from Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan have joined forces to organize the first ever Midwest Pork Conference (MPC), September 6 and 7 at the Indiana State Fair Events Center, Indianapolis, Ind.

"Marketing For Profitability" is the theme for the educational sessions on Friday, September 7. Experts will conduct professional training sessions on maximizing opportunities in a changing market, marketing manure, successful industry marketing ventures,

mandatory price reporting, packer profiles, adding value to pork through niche marketing and food safety issues in the pork industry.

Keynote speaker is Ken Parnell, vice president of Wal-Mart's meat division. Parnell will discuss Wal-Mart's meat sales activities and where he sees the future for the meat industry.

Sponsored by the Indiana Pork Producers Association (IPPA), in cooperation with the Ohio, Michigan and Kentucky pork producers associations, the two-day

event will focus on professional development for today's pork producer, with a customized trade show time exclusive of other conference events.

"With the World Pork Expo being cancelled because of the foot and mouth disease outbreak in Europe, this is the opportunity for producers from around the Midwest to get together and learn from each other," says Sherrill Rude, MPC Manager.

MPC's trade show will feature more than 250 exhibitors involved in the pork industry. To give

MPC participants quality time with exhibitors, the trade show will run from 12:45 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thursday and Friday after the educational segments have concluded.

According to Rude, the MPC will offer five different professional development educational tracks producers can participate in. Sessions are planned for each track on both Thursday and Friday. "We've tried to meet the needs of all types of pork operators by picking timely topics and featuring the best experts in the business," adds Rude.

Track 1 sessions are designed for key decision makers in pork operations with multiple employees at different site production facilities.

Track 2 targets the producer who receives a significant portion of their income from pork production and is interested in how to differentiate their operation.

Track 3 sessions focus on contract growers/managers who are looking for new ways to diversify and maximize their income.

Thursday's Track 4 session has been developed for people involved in the office/business management activities in a pork operation.

Friday's Track 4 sessions are geared towards employees interested in upgrading their skills.

In addition, there is a Track 5 session for producers interested in getting a first-hand look at the retail and foodservice industry who utilize pork.

Thursday, September 6, is

"Production Technology Day" and feature sessions with industry experts on profitable management of swine facilities, exploring pork production options, new ideas in pork production, employee relations, financial management, swine nutrition, liabilities in pork production, and how to get the best contract.

Other MPC activities include a Ribs N' Bibs golf outing Wednesday afternoon, September 5 before the official conference kickoff. The golf outing will be followed with a Ribs N' Bibs reception at the Indiana State Fairgrounds Exposition Hall.

Thursday evening the "Best of the Midwest" tasting reception will feature new value-added pork products available to consumers.

Friday morning conference attendees can participate in a continental breakfast and learn about new university research projects in the Midwest.

Early-bird registration for all events (before July 31) is \$75 and \$100 at the time of the conference. For producers interested in attending only one full day of the MPC, registration is \$50.

Registration is \$25 for producers wishing to attend only the trade show and luncheon. Children ages 6-18 registration is \$25. To register for MPC call the registration office at 317-713-1553.

For more information about MPC, contact the Indiana Pork Producers Association at (800-535-2405) or email them at info@midwestpork.com.

Humans And Horses At Risk For Mosquito-Borne Diseases

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Concern about mosquito-borne disease infecting Maryland's equine animals, ostriches and emus is rising among Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) veterinarians. Conditions are favorable for appearance of both Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Viral Encephalitis (WNV) in Maryland and surrounding states this summer. Both viruses are spread by mosquitoes from infected birds to humans, horses, and various species of birds.

Mosquitoes trapped recently on Chincoteague Island, Va. were found infected with EEE virus. Four crows found dead in Baltimore tested positive for WNV, and the disease has been found in New Jersey crows and mosquitoes as well as in mosquitoes trapped in Delaware. Furthermore, large populations of mosquitoes are predicted in all Mid-Atlantic states.

Horses, ponies, donkeys, and mules can be protected from EEE by vaccination, but the vaccines are only effective for six to 12 months. Maryland State Veterinarian, Dr. Roger Olson, urges owners of equine animals, ostriches and emus to take precautionary measures against the diseases and to consult their local veterinarian about vaccination

against EEE. It is hoped that a vaccine for WNV will be available for horses later this year. Meanwhile, the risk can be reduced by avoiding exposure to mosquitoes and helping to eliminate breeding sites of mosquitoes.

Recommendations, which can be adapted to protect both horses and humans, include avoiding outdoor activities after dusk, use of insect repellents, eliminating standing water, installing fine mesh screening in windows and doors of homes and stables, and avoiding marshes and wetlands.

People are advised to wear light colored, long sleeved shirts, and long pants. Standing water is the largest source of mosquitoes. Bird baths, used tires, rain gutters, tarps and grill covers, or any other containers should be emptied or flushed to minimize mosquito populations.

Maryland horse owners should be alert for any of the following symptoms in their animals: apprehension, depression, listlessness, trembling, head shaking, lower lip or tongue paralysis, lack of coordination or staggering, weakness of hind legs, paralysis, or sudden death. If any of these symptoms are observed, a veterinarian should be contacted immediately.

More animals recover from

WNV than from EEE, but many do not. Some die and others are humanely destroyed because of permanent brain or spinal cord damage. MDA's five Animal Health Laboratories will perform free post mortem examinations including testing for rabies, EEE, WNV, and other neurologic diseases on such cases.

Citizens are advised also to report dead crows, blue jays, or raptors (hawks, owls, etc.) to Maryland's West Nile Virus Call Center at 1-866-866-CROW (2769) from 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on weekends. General information regarding WNV is also available at that number.

PENNSBURG (Montgomery Co.) — Local groups that have received a PA DEP Growing Greener Grant or are interested in improving their application for one can receive free technical assistance from the C-SAW Program.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development (SEPA RC&D) Council is accepting applications from local groups and municipalities for the C-SAW Program.

C-SAW, Consortium for Scientific Assistance to Watersheds, is a group of technical specialists available to assist on watershed activities.

Arthur B. Holland, SEPA RC&D chairman said, "Help is available for organizations and agencies to gain the knowledge and

skills necessary to successfully complete a Growing Greener Grant or prepare an accurate application for a grant."

The Growing Greener Grant Program is part of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection effort to protect and improve the state's watersheds.

Five organizations are available to help. The participating technical experts are Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring at Dickinson College, Canaan Valley Institute, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Stroud Water Research Center and the United States Geological Survey. These specialists will not conduct the monitoring or complete the projects, but are available to help identify solutions and provide training to accurately monitor activities.

C-SAW Offers Help With Pa. Watershed Grants

Some of the services available include: determining watershed issues, selecting appropriate equipment, identifying macroinvertebrates, riparian and stream restoration, and data interpretation. The C-SAW Program is funded by a special Growing Greener Technical Grant. This partnership's free services will be available for the next two years.

Information about the C-SAW Program or to obtain an application for technical help, please visit the project Website, <http://pa.water.usgs.gov/csaw>. For more information or to submit an application, contact the Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation Development Council. The office is located in Pennsylvania, Montgomery County. Phone: (215) 541-7930.

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