

# Hog Production Provides Opportunities For Large And Small Operations

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.)—Hog production in Pennsylvania is a growing market for family farmers across the state. With almost 99.5 percent of Pennsylvania farms and acreage being family owned, all of the hogs in the state are raised by family farmers.

Although the majority of those family owned farms are larger, more modern and environmentally friendly operations, there is still room for smaller, independently operated farms to produce pork products for market.

"We support the efforts of all hog farmers in Pennsylvania, whether they manage a large or small operation," said Bob Gueldner, president of PennAg

Industries Association. "A safely produced, high quality product is what's important to the consumer," he said.

Gueldner points out, however, that much of the sustainable production on smaller farms often cannot produce the desired end-product. Free range access can increase the animals' risks of being exposed to diseases, safety hazards are eminent since biosecurity is often overlooked, and there is a greatly increased threat of environmental endangerment due to relaxed management practices.

The environmental controls practiced in modern units generally exceed those of older and smaller operations. For example, larger hog operations mini-

mize water waste. "A nursery pig uses about one gallon of water per day, a finishing pig uses about 3 gallons of water per day, and a sow uses about 6 gallons of water per day. That's a relatively small amount compared to the 100-plus gallons of water per day used by the aver-

age person," said Brent Hershey, chairman of PennAg's Swine Council.

"These controls which protect the environment are also strictly regulated and enforced by local and federal government programs in which many smaller farms are not required to partic-

ipate," Hershey said.

Due to the firm management guidelines practiced on larger farms, some of the highest quality food in the world is produced. The population of the U.S. last year was 284,000,000 and yet food in the U.S. was still some of the most affordable of anywhere in the world.

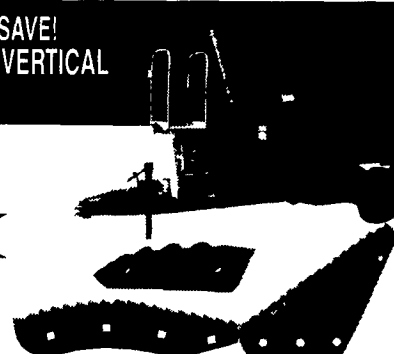
The average U.S. citizen spends a little more than ten percent of their income on food. Elsewhere, people spend upwards of 20 to 25 percent of their income on food. "Local consumers prefer the high quality food which is safely produced throughout numerous Pennsylvania communities," said Gueldner.



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