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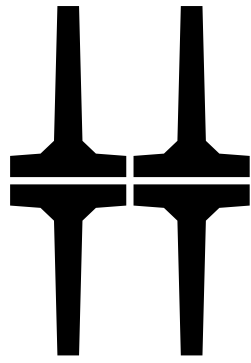


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The Minnesota Pork Producers Association (MPPA) publishes the Minnesota Pork Congress Magazine. For more information on future tradeshow and exhibiting opportunities, contact the MPPA office at (507) 345-8814 or email [mnppork@mnppork.com](mailto:mnppork@mnppork.com)

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## On the Cover

Family of the Year family members, fourth generation farmer, John Anderson, poses with sixth generation grandson, Cooper, during harvest.



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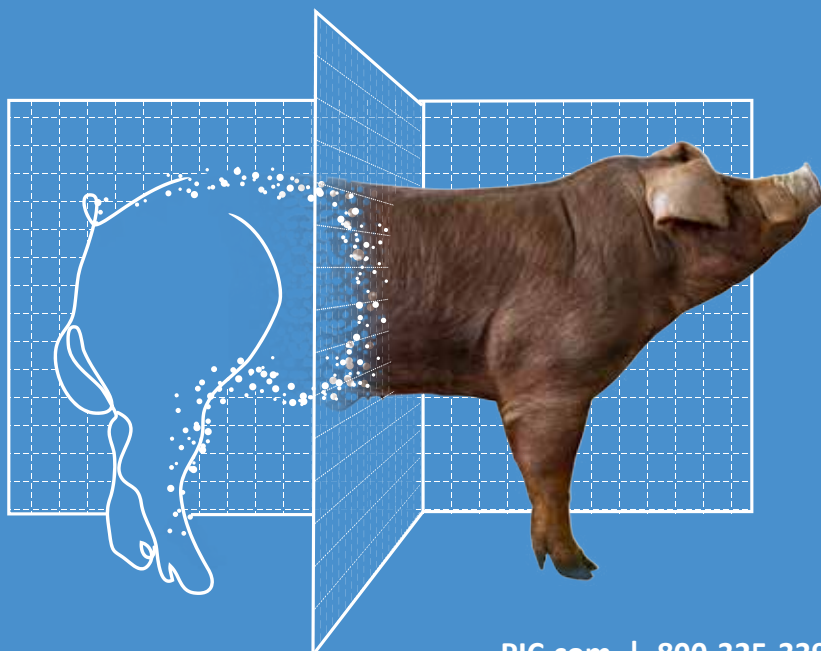
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## MPPA STAFF



**Jill Resler**  
*Chief Executive  
Officer*



**Colleen Carey**  
*Administrative  
Assistant*



**Lauren Servick**  
*Director of Public  
Policy Strategy  
and Sustainability*



**Pam Voelkel**  
*Director of Events  
and Promotions*



**Bailey Ruen**  
*Director of  
Communications*

---

## National Pork Producers Council Staff



**Brad Schmidt**  
*Director of  
Producer Services  
Minnesota SIP  
and Partners*



# MPPA / MPB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The 12-member Minnesota Pork Producers Association (MPPA) and Minnesota Pork Board (MPB) Board of Directors joined together as one board in 2023. The board represents the variety of pig farms found throughout the state. Each elected representative serves on the board of directors for three-year terms and may not serve more than three consecutive terms.

The board member's primary duties include:

- Promoting MPPA policy positions at the local and state levels
- Working with the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) on federal level policy
- Interacting with government agencies on issues important to the association
- Listening and relaying members' ideas and opinions to the full board and staff
- Representing the MPPA at NPPC meetings and at other legislative, commodity, business, and industry events
- Recommending and overseeing MPPA investments and budgets
- Overseeing the investment of pork checkoff dollars on behalf of Minnesota's pig farmers
- Increasing domestic pork sales through checkoff-funded promotions through consumer, retail, and food service outreach
- Allocating research funds for all areas of pork production, processing and human nutrition
- Investing research dollars in animal welfare, environment, and production studies to help producers meet the challenges of responsible pork production
- Funding seminars, workshops, videos, and digital tools available for all Minnesota producers to remain competitive
- Collaborating with chefs, dietitians, teachers, and other food trend influencers to demonstrate how pork fits into a healthy diet

## MPB Board of Directors:



**Daryl Timmerman**  
*North Mankato*



**Todd Selvick**  
*Waseca*



**Abbie Redalen**  
*Chatfield*



**John Anderson**  
*Belgrade*



**Vince Baack**  
*Jackson*



**Mike Boerboom**  
*Marshall*



**Chris Compart**  
*Nicollet*



**Brad Hennen**  
*Ghent*



**Amber Portner**  
*Sleepy Eye*



**Roger Punt**  
*Prinsburg*



**Brian Schwartz**  
*Sleepy Eye*



**Myrna Welter**  
*Stewartville*

## Ex Officio NPB Board Member | Ex Officio NPPC Board Members



**Dale Stevermer**  
*Easton*



**Todd Marotz**  
*Sleepy Eye*



**Lori Stevermer**  
*Easton*



**Terry Wolters**  
*Pipestone*

# RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS



The Minnesota Pork Board (MPB) and Minnesota Pork Producers Association (MPPA) recognizes several individuals this year for their service on the board of directors. We are grateful to Amber Portner, Brad Hennen and John Anderson for their time and dedication. Ranging from diverse backgrounds in the Minnesota Pork industry, each of them led the board sharing their knowledge and expertise while overseeing the investment of mandatory checkoff dollars and voluntary non-checkoff dollars.

Each of the outlined retiring board members served on the board for a varying amount of time, from three years to ten years; each ran for a spot on the board for a different reason; and each acknowledged something different that they learned or found the most rewarding about their experience.

\*At the 2024 annual meeting held on Feb. 12, prior to the Minnesota Pork Congress, four board members will be elected to the Minnesota Pork Board of Directors.



## Amber Portner

### How long did you serve on the Board?

I served for 3 years.

### Please state any committees you are/were a part of in the past and any positions you held.

I participated in the Promotions and Image Committee and held the Vice Chair position for a period of that time.

### What did you enjoy most about serving on the Board?

I thoroughly enjoyed serving on the Minnesota Pork Board for several reasons. First and foremost, it provided me with a unique opportunity to make a positive impact on the pork industry in our state. I was able to actively contribute to the promotion, research, and education efforts related to pork production and consumption, which is a crucial sector of agriculture in Minnesota.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my service on the board was the opportunity to work with a diverse group of individuals who shared a common passion for the pork industry. Collaborating with fellow board members, farmers, veterinarians and various stakeholders allowed me to gain valuable insights and build strong relationships within the industry. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose was truly inspiring.

### What was the most rewarding part about serving MPPA/MPB?

My time on the Minnesota Pork Board was a fulfilling experience. It allowed me to contribute to an industry that plays a vital role in our state's economy and provided a platform for networking, learning, and advocacy. I truly enjoyed being a part of this dynamic and dedicated community.

### What motivated you to serve on the Board of Directors?

Being both a pig farmer at heart and current day 'advocate' and communicator for this industry, I knew it would be a great opportunity to bring my areas of expertise and experiences to support the greater good of our pork community.

### What is your favorite pork product/dish?

America's cut pork chop (boneless) – but only when done correctly at 145 degrees!





## John Anderson

### **How long did you serve on the Board?**

I served for six years.

### **Please state any committees you are/were a part of in the past and any positions you held.**

The committees I was apart of included MN Pork Board Research, Herd Health and African Swine Fever (ASF) Preparation, US SHIP House of Delegates, Public Policy and MN Pork Political Action Committee (PAC). I also served as the Vice President and President.

### **What did you enjoy most about serving on the Board?**

I enjoyed getting to know all the people involved with the organization, especially watching the staff grow and respond to issues. The Board of Directors are exceptionally talented and diverse with everyone making contributions to the organization. The thing I enjoyed most is the new friendships I've been able to make across the industry.

### **What was the most rewarding part about serving MPPA/MPB?**

Over the past few years, we've gone through some challenging times as producers and as an industry. I remember the day I received a call from the government relations officer for JBS saying there was an agreement reached to restart the Worthington plant during COVID-19. He credited Dave Priesler for pushing the urgency of getting back to harvesting. I was fortunate to be able to go to Washington a few times. It was a great learning experience. I've gained a greater appreciation for the work the national organization does on our behalf. The highlights of the past couple years would be hiring Jill as the new CEO and the transition to a single board. Herd health has always been a priority, serving on the ASF task force has been rewarding and hope to continue with a state herd health task force.

### **What motivated you to serve on the Board of Directors?**

I felt it was my turn to serve. I'm thankful for all those who gave so much of their time to make MN Pork into an organization that represents all producers in Minnesota and many neighboring states as well.

### **What is your favorite pork product/dish?**

What I will usually grill for family or farm events are marinated pork chops. Cut a boneless loin into  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch chops. I have a secret recipe, but Lowery's teriyaki sauce works well. Heat a grill to 700 degrees and sear for 2 minutes on each side. Put in a roaster or slow cooker on low for about an hour.



## Brad Hennen

### **How long did you serve on the Board?**

I served for 10 years.

### **Please state any committees you are/were a part of in the past and any positions you held.**

I was the Chair of the Research Committee and a member of the Promotions Committee and Policy Committee.

### **What did you enjoy most about serving on the Board?**

I really developed a respect for the efforts and accomplishments that were being put forth by everyone involved; producer volunteers, staff, interns, officers - everyone!

### **What was the most rewarding part about serving MPPA/MPB?**

The most rewarding part of being on the board was getting to know some very talented, committed and wonderful people invested in the industry in so many ways.

### **What motivated you to serve on the Board of Directors?**

I wanted to see that our checkoff funds were being spent wisely.

### **What is your favorite pork product/dish?**

Boneless pork ribeye chops, grilled, with light seasoning.

# PRESIDENT'S WELCOME TO PORK CONGRESS

Amidst concerns over market volatility, foreign animal diseases, social tensions of production practices and ever evolving regulations, it is more evident than ever before that the greatest tools pig farmers can employ are a healthy dose of optimism, perseverance, and risk management. Through all the industry highs and lows, the Minnesota Pork Board (MPB) and Minnesota Pork Producers Association (MPPA) remain committed in the responsible and impactful investment of your checkoff and non-checkoff contributions.

We are excited for the opportunity to gather in Mankato again this year for the 2024 Minnesota Pork Congress. The MPB, funded through the mandatory pork checkoff, continues to develop programming in the areas of research, promotion, and education. These endeavors aim to elevate Minnesota consumer's confidence in pork and the families who raise it.

The MPPA, funded through voluntary enrollment in the Strategic Investment Program (SIP), continues to act with integrity to provide visionary leadership through advocacy for its members by having a strong voice in St. Paul and Washington, D.C., developing industry leaders and fostering a strong image for Minnesota pig farmers.

As President of the Minnesota Pork Board and the Minnesota Pork Producers Association, I feel it is important to stay up-to-date on what is happening in our industry. I encourage all Minnesota pig farmers to join their peers at the 2024 Minnesota Pork Congress and thank you for your support and investment in our organizations. I am proud to be a part of this industry and look forward to seeing many of you at Pork Congress!

Sincerely,



**Daryl Timmerman**

*2023 Minnesota Pork Board  
and Minnesota Pork Producers  
Association President*

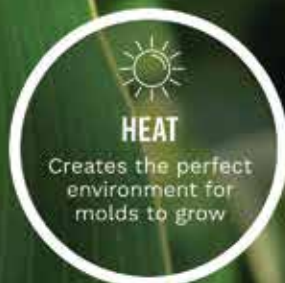




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**Monday, February 12, 2024**

**11:00 – 12:00 PM MPB Annual Meeting**

**12:00 PM Lunch**

**Reception Hall,  
Mayo Clinic Health Systems Event Center, Mankato**

## **AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order** – Daryl Timmerman, President
- II. Introductions**
- III. 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes** – Abbie Redalen, Secretary
- IV. 2023 MPB Financial Audit** – Jill Resler, CEO
- V. 2024 Advisements, Discussion and Action** – Todd Selvik, Vice President
- VI. 2025 Pork Act Delegate and Alternate Elections**
- VII. President's Remarks**
- VIII. Election Results**
- IX. Adjourn**

**LUNCH**

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **Public Notice by Minnesota Pork Board and the National Pork Board**

The election of pork producer delegate candidates for the 2025 National Pork Producers (Pork Act) Delegate Body will take place at 11:00 AM, Monday, February 12, 2024 in conjunction with a Board of Directors meeting of the Minnesota Pork Board. All Minnesota pork producers are invited to attend. This Annual Meeting will be held at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center, 1 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN 56001. To RSVP, please contact the Minnesota Pork Board office at (507) 345-8814 or email [mnppork@mnppork.com](mailto:mnppork@mnppork.com).

Any producer, age 18 or older, who is a resident of the state and has paid all assessments due may be considered as a delegate candidate and/or participate in the election. All eligible producers are encouraged to bring with them a sales receipt proving that hogs were sold in their name and the checkoff deducted. For more information, contact the Minnesota Pork Board Office, 151 St. Andrews Court, Suite 810, Mankato, Minnesota. (507) 345-8814 or (800) 537-7675.



**Monday, February 12, 2024**

**12:30 PM MPPA Annual Meeting**

**Joint Session with MPB – 2:00 PM**

**Reception Hall,**

**Mayo Clinic Health Systems Event Center, Mankato**



## **AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order** – Daryl Timmerman, President
- II. 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes** – Abbie Redalen, Secretary, MPPA
- III. 2023 MPPA Financial Audit** – Jill Resler, CEO, MPPA
- IV. 2024 Resolutions** – Todd Selvik, Vice-President
- V. 2024 MPPA State Legislative Priorities and Outlook** – AJ Duerr, MPPA Lobbyist
- VI. President's Remarks**
- VII. Adjourn**

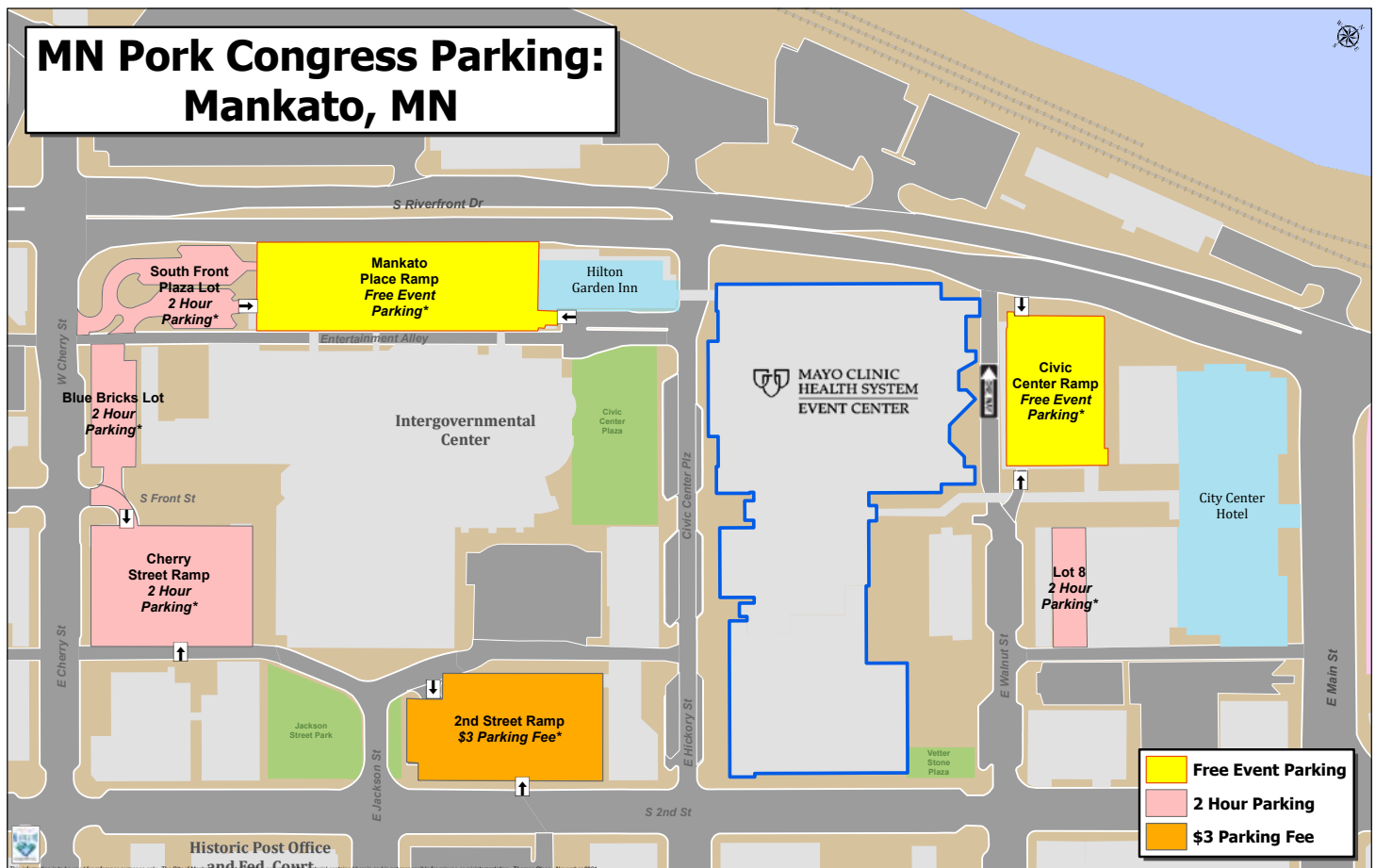
## **JOINT SESSION AGENDA**

- I. Convene Joint Session**
- II. Executive Board Election**
- III. Programmatic Update** – Jill Resler, CEO
- IV. NPB + NPPC Discussion** – Bryan Humphreys and Bill Even
- V. Adjourn**



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# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## Monday, February 12

### Trade Show Exhibitor Move-In

7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Arena and Grand Hall

### MPB Annual Meeting

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Reception Hall

### Lunch

12:00 – 12:30 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Reception Hall

### MPPA Annual Meeting

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Reception Hall

### Joint MBP/MPPA Annual Meeting

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Reception Hall

### Awards Reception

*Invitation Only, RSVP Required*

5:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Banquet Hall West  
*Sponsored by: Hormel and Boehringer Ingelheim*



## Tuesday, February 13

### Pork Congress Registration

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Main Entrance

### Pork Congress Trade Show

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Arena and Grand Hall

### Producer Seminars

9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Banquet Hall West

### Trade Show Social Hour

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Banquet Hall Lobby  
*Sponsored by: Rabo AgriFinance  
and Manitoba Pork Council*



## Wednesday, February 14

### SIP & Partner Breakfast

*Member-exclusive event*  
7:30 a.m. Breakfast  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Keynote Speaker  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Reception Hall  
*Sponsored by: Clifton-Larson-Allen*



### Pork Congress Registration

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Main Entrance

### Pork Congress Trade Show

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Arena, Banquet Hall East, and Grand Hall

### Complimentary Breakfast Sandwiches

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Arena and Grand Hall  
*Sponsored by: Manitoba Pork Council,  
Minnesota Corn Growers Association and Zoetis*



### Producer Seminars

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Banquet Hall West

### Agricultural Career Workshop

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  
Mayo Clinic Event Center  
Room 243  
*RSVP required*

FEBRUARY 13

4:30 – 6:30 PM



## GET SOCIAL WITH US! *Connect and Collaborate*

AT THE MINNESOTA PORK CONGRESS SOCIAL HOUR

Minnesota Pork looks forward to connecting with industry stakeholders, exhibitors, and attendees beginning at 4:30 p.m. for a few hours of fun! All those in attendance can enjoy light appetizers and drinks while browsing the more than 220 exhibition spaces and speaking with company representatives.

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California Prop 12 on-farm certifications have been occurring on farms across Minnesota. While the California Department of Forestry and Agriculture have outlined certification criteria, many questions remain. Take this opportunity learn from Jamee Eggers, a certifying agent, and Dr. Chris Sievers and Dr. Cara Haden about the certification process and lessons learned to-date.

## Tuesday, February 13

### Next Generation Biosecurity: Is the PRRS Reign of Terror Over?

9:00 AM

**Speaker: Dr. Scott Dee**, Emeritus Director, Discovery and Innovation, Pipestone Research

PRRS has been holding the global swine industry hostage for over 30 years, controlling the actions of producers and veterinarians. This needs to change. While the industry is eagerly awaiting the arrival of the PRRS resistant pig, the real secret to surviving PRRS is Next Generation Biosecurity. This seminar will share results from on-farm application of Next Generation Biosecurity protocols across a large segment of the US industry, as well as describe preliminary observations from a wean-to-market biosecurity plan designed to mitigate local PRRSV introduction and regional spread. Attendants will leave the seminar with a list of ideas on how reduce the effect of this disease on their farms.

### Technological Advancements in the Pork Industry – At the Intersection of Societal Pressures, Consumer Acceptance, and Industry Adoption

10:30 AM

**Speaker: Randy Riley**, Co-Owner, Golden Sun Insights

Drawing upon extensive experiences in gene editing within the produce industry, we are now applying our knowledge to uncover parallels in the pork industry. While gene-editing technology has been a longstanding presence in various agricultural sectors, from produce to field crops, it faces significant skepticism among consumers. This apprehension is rooted in the perceived changes made to the items they ingest, prompting a sense of unease regarding potential effects on their health and well-being. However, with comprehensive research, fortified with tangible examples from the produce industry, we are well-equipped to draw parallels and showcase a personalized value proposition to the consumer. Riley's Keynote Speech will go beyond the surface, delving into the intricacies and multifaceted advantages of gene editing. The keynote will provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits this technology brings to the forefront of modern agriculture.

### Prop 12 On-Farm Certification: What have we learned so far?

1:00 PM

**Speakers: Jamee Eggers** – Certifying Agent, Cloverleaf Animal Welfare Systems,  
**Dr. Chris Sievers** – Veterinarian, Swine Vet Center,  
**Dr. Cara Haden** – Veterinarian, Pipestone

### Domestic Demand: Your Checkoff Dollars at Work

2:30 PM

**Speakers: Dr. Brett Kaysen** – Senior Vice President Producer and State Engagement, National Pork Board,  
**Neal Hull** – Director of Domestic Market Development, National Pork Board, **Jose De Jesus** – Senior Director of Multicultural Marketing, National Pork Board,  
**Emily Krause** – Director of Health and Wellness Initiatives, National Pork Board

Domestic Demand of pork has remained at approximately 50 pounds per capita for decades. In this seminar hear how leaders at the National Pork Board are taking an innovative, multi-pronged approach to addressing both opportunities and challenges related to the domestic demand of pork.

## Wednesday, February 14

### 2024 Hog Market Outlook and Strategic Forum

9:00 AM

**Speaker: Jon Greteman**, Vice President of Hogs, Commodity, and Ingredient Hedging (CIH)

Learn from CIH's Jon Greteman about the key drivers that will influence producer profitability in 2024 and the hedging strategies to employ based on current market dynamics.

### Industry Evaluation of Traceability

10:30 AM

**Speaker: Dr. Anna Forseth**, Director of Animal Health, National Pork Producers Council

Traceability in the swine industry has been a topic of discussion for decades. Over the past fourteen months, US pork industry stakeholders have taken a more critical look at live swine traceability. Opportunities have been identified to improve the system and address the expectations of trading partners. Dr. Forseth will share current recommendations that will be considered by the delegate body at the 2024 National Pork Industry Forum. This is a proactive effort and producers are encouraged to learn and engage in the discussion.

### Sow Mortality – A Practitioner's Perspective on Causes & Opportunities

Noon

**Speaker: Dr. Brad Leuwerke** – Veterinarian, Swine Vet Center

Sow mortality continues to be a significant cost to swine producers. Dr. Leuwerke will give his perspective on the main causes of sow mortality and what he sees being done on-farm to successfully address this industry issue.



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A description of each membership level is found on the backside of this form.

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Membership
- ☐ Level 2      \$400 Annual Membership Fee  
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Communications, and NPPC SIP Membership
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## Congratulations to the 2024 Minnesota Pork Board Award Recipients!

On Monday, February 12, from 5:00 – 8:30 p.m., Minnesota Pork will recognize the 2024 award recipients. The invitation-only event will take place the Mayo Clinic Event Center. Attendees are welcome to enjoy refreshments and heavy appetizers while honoring these pork industry leaders. Please reference the following pages to learn about each recipient and their contributions to the pork community.

### 2024 Minnesota Pork Industry Award Recipients:

#### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE:

**Dave Preisler**

*Sponsored by Minnesota Farm Bureau*



#### SWINE MANAGER OF THE YEAR:

**Aaron Hoffmann**

*Sponsored by Purina Animal Nutrition*



#### PORK PROMOTER OF THE YEAR:

**Nancy Hovel**

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#### FAMILY OF THE YEAR:

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD:

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# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD OF THE YEAR

## Jay Moore

### Environmental Steward of the Year



Experience, dedication and commitment to the land help describe why Jay Moore is deserving of the 2024 Environmental Steward of the Year award. Being a good neighbor is of upmost importance to Moore and he has proven that throughout his career.

### Making Minnesota Home

Growing up in Austin, Texas, Moore found his way to Minnesota in 2003 to work as the Director of Environmental Services at New Fashion Pork. He earned his bachelor's degree in environmental science from East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma. He continued his education and obtained his master's degree in environmental health science from the University of Oklahoma. After graduating, Moore worked for some time in Texas, Oklahoma and Colorado doing everything from cattle ranching to teaching at a university.

In 1999, he began his career in the pork industry by taking the position as Air Quality Coordinator, conducting odor research, for Seaboard Farms located in Guymon, Oklahoma. He transferred to Colorado where Seaboard Farms was facing stringent environmental laws. In 2003, New Fashion Pork recruited him to fill their position as the Director of Environmental Services in Jackson, Minnesota, a state that he and his wife, Rhonda, had never visited before. After three visits to meet with owners Brad and Meg Freking, the Moore's realized Jackson was a great place to raise a family. They moved their seven children to Minnesota, where he has been working, coaching and serving as a member of the community ever since.

When Moore started his role, New Fashion Pork was in a building phase, making plans to expand further into other states apart from Minnesota and Iowa. This meant time spent writing permits, putting up new barns and complying with varying laws and regulations from state to state. Currently, New Fashion Pork spans from Minnesota and Iowa to across the Midwest including Wyoming, South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. Operating in seven states is not an easy task. Through Moore's work, along with longtime coworker longtime company agronomist, Sarah Withers, they have succeeded in meeting the compliance requirements with each state's environmental regulations despite the many challenges they sometimes faced.

*Photo by  
Mary Anne Andrei*





## Being a Good Neighbor

When asked about impactful career moments, Moore first and foremost reflects on others – from coworkers, contract growers and neighbors in the community.

*“One thing I try to do is to be a good neighbor and be supportive of our communities. Communication is so important, when we are going to build a new farm, I will visit the area neighbors. I get so many mixed responses, but it is necessary that our neighbors have an opportunity to speak directly to us,”* Moore said.

Moore works to ensure, for all involved including neighbors, that pig farmers continue making efforts to protect the land implementing sustainability practices in every way possible. Moore works on various projects including manure management plans, odor research and product development to create new tools that benefit both pig farmers and the environment.

“Jay prepares, implements and manages our manure management plans. He helps our growers and local farmers understand the nutrient value of the manure produced, utilizing every valuable aspect of swine production,” stated Brad Freking, New Fashion Pork owner.

Helping farmers, both those who grow for New Fashion Pork and those who do not, have access to a sustainable, valuable fertilizer is crucial. What drives expansion now is acquiring farmland with a pig barn nearby for efficient fertilizer use. State of the art farming practices such as GPS guided equipment is a major benefit while applying

manure. The technology is able to record exactly where manure is spread and incorporated into the soil in the fall. When spring planting begins, they can plant seed exactly where the manure was applied. Using a strategic application process not only preserves the amount of manure needed, but also reduces the possibility of surface runoff.

Odor research is especially important, and Moore has helped lead the way in finding significant and impactful solutions for the pork industry. Reducing farm odor is significant because it decreases most criticism by reducing the odor-impact on neighbors.

*“It is very evident as you work alongside Jay that he is passionate about our environment and how we as swine producers handle the sacred land we have been given,”* Freking noted.

Moore had the privilege of working with John Baumgartner of Olivia, Minnesota. Moore and Baumgartner worked together to develop the Electrostatic Particulate Ionization Fence (EPI). New Fashion Pork embraced the technology, which reduces barn odor by forcing an electrical charge unto the dust particles, which are then attracted to ground surfaces. In short, the EPI system consists of the EPI unit, corona point wire and the filter fabric fence. The fence is placed 10 to 12 feet outside the barn in front of the exhaust fans. The EPI fence acts as a barrier as the EPI unit emits trillions of ions interacting with the dust particles, which will be collected onto the fence or other ground surfaces. By capturing dust particles, odor will be reduced as well.



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD OF THE YEAR

## (Jay Moore Continued)

Moore has also worked with the environmental company, Bioverse, on developing environmental products, which are used in manure storage structures to reduce odor, to reduce solids, and to stabilize nutrients values. Recognizing the balance between the value and the drawbacks of handling manure takes a team effort. Starting with the scientific aspects to the actual field applications requires a committed team. Moore reiterates that part of being a good neighbor is knowing your neighbors and being mindful of their activities.

“Being a good neighbor is very important. We don’t apply on holidays and try our best to not apply on weekends. We don’t want to ruin someone’s Thanksgiving dinner!” Moore laughed.

Environmental management, in any capacity, is certainly not for the faint of heart. Through continual research to minimize odor, implementation of overall sustainability practices, and being the main contact for state and local regulatory agencies, Moore has successfully balanced his work and community involvement.

Moore shared, “I’ll always be available to help anybody in the industry. I have always liked the saying ‘good people

find each other’, and there are so many great people in the pork industry who are friends for life.”

## Diving All In to Pork Industry and Beyond

Being active in the industry and community are core values for Moore. He has been active with the Minnesota Pork Board and Minnesota Pork Producers Association, serving as a board member from 2009-2019. In 2016, Moore was elected as president of the Minnesota Pork Producers Association.

While serving on the board and in his career alike, Moore worked with past Minnesota Pork CEO, Dave Preisler, who speaks to Jay’s ‘be a good neighbor’ mindset. Preisler shared, *“If you have the ‘do the right thing attitude’ to drive you, it’s going to serve you really well. That is what I’ve always seen with Jay.”*

Moore has held positions on state and national committees including the air quality task force and the mortality task force. In addition, he has also been a member of the Pork Chop Open committee for the past decade, a local fundraising event. Aside from the pork industry, Moore is a volunteer coach for Jackson County Central Huskies Football. His desire to give back by coaching derives from the experience and success he had as an athlete.

The importance of sharing environmental stewardship that farmers pursue continues to grow in our ever-evolving world. Moore emphasized the importance of having a tactical team approach.





*"I think to have an effective environmental program in today's pork industry, the leadership begins at the top.*

Having the latitude that has been provided to me with New Fashion Pork has made our job a lot easier and we have leadership that is as concerned as I am about doing things right," Moore stated. "We are certainly not perfect, but *commitment and communication with each other to do the right thing are two components that create a solid base of whatever you're doing in life.*"

It is evident Moore has paved the way for environmental stewardship and research in not only Minnesota, but the pork industry as a whole. Moore shares his gratitude for the award, recognizing those who have been alongside him throughout his career.

"This award as Environmental Steward of the Year is important and I certainly appreciate it, but my satisfaction comes from working in the pork industry with great people and that's reward enough," Moore said. "It certainly is appreciated to be recognized by my peers and I don't take it lightly, but it has always been a team effort and it takes a team to get things accomplished."



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# SWINE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

## Aaron Hoffmann

### Swine Manager of the Year

Leading by example sets the standards on a team by building trust, creating a collaborative environment and forming a culture of accountability. This is exactly how Aaron Hoffmann of Schwartz Farms Inc. (SFI) shows up as a manager, employee and leader.

There's no question Hoffmann strives to do what is right for pigs, people and the planet. He embodies core values of the Minnesota pork industry, including the industry's ethical principles of food safety, animal well-being, our people, our community, public health and the environment. His willingness to grow through roles and rise to the challenge of being a successful part of the Minnesota pork industry showcases his well-earned title of 2024 Swine Manager of the Year.

### Growing with the Farm

Hoffmann grew up on his family's farm near Sleepy Eye. Going into college, Hoffmann was undecided on a career to pursue, but found his way into the pork industry and has never looked back.

Hoffmann earned a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management from South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota. Upon graduation in 1997, he pursued an opportunity to work on a sow farm. About four months into the job, Mark Schwartz called Hoffmann with a job opportunity as a Nursery Production Manager with SFI. Aware Hoffmann was working in the pork industry, the Schwartz family wanted to see if he would be interested in moving back home to work for their growing farm. Although Hoffmann enjoyed the work he was doing at the time, he ultimately decided working for SFI was something he wanted to pursue.

Starting in October 1997, Hoffmann was on the wean-finish team comprised of five or six individuals and 20 independent farm families in two states. Today, the wean-finish team is comprised of more than 80 individuals and more than 300 independent farm families in four states. 26 years later, Hoffmann has continued to grow his influence within SFI, currently serving as the director of wean finish production. His role includes leading the entire wean-finish team alongside the dedicated core of regional managers, supervisors and vendors.

***"One of Aaron's amazing qualities is his ability to adapt. Changes occur rapidly and unexpectedly in our industry, such as herd health, flow and scheduling; Aaron responds to these changes with expansive willingness and a calm demeanor,"*** said John Schwartz, CEO and President of Schwartz Farms, Inc.



Hoffmann values the tactical aspects of his work such as working to enforce biosecurity and managing pig flow, but he also emphasizes the importance of the family-like culture at SFI as well as promoting pork in the community.

## Thriving in the Role

With his experience over time, Hoffmann has been a true example of what it means to be a leader in both pork production and managing others.

*“Through my role, I try to get the most out of people by figuring out what their strengths and weaknesses are and put them in a position to succeed,”* Hoffmann said.

He also knows the value of leading by example and helping in whatever role, no matter the title. “I’ve done it all here, from loading hogs to receiving wean pigs to giving shots to pulling pigs,” he stated. “I don’t ask anybody to do anything that I haven’t done myself. We preach lead by example within this company, so when our supervisors and team leaders go to sites, they still do those things – walk pens, treat pigs, daily care, move pigs, load pigs. It’s a big team effort.”

Hoffmann and SFI have increased biosecurity measures to ensure the healthiest animals and best production practices. With all the illnesses pigs are susceptible to, keeping pigs healthy is core to what practices Hoffmann trains employees. This includes weekly reminders on the importance of strictly adhering to biosecurity for employees. There are several check-ins to ensure employees are where they were assigned in order to guarantee no pig was missed in getting checked on and receiving care.

“During one of his first performance reviews, Aaron was recognized for being a valuable asset to SFI by adapting well, being dependable and conscientious and taking pride in seeing results,” recalled Schwartz. “26 years later, Aaron has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to those same attributes.”

## Finding Joy in the Challenge

When asked what keeps him coming back after so many years, Hoffmann replied, “the challenge and the people. I have really enjoyed working for the Schwartz family, they have always treated employees with respect and fairness.”

“Our industry has experienced a lot in the past 25 years, and Aaron has championed these changes within Schwartz Farms, including but not limited to Pork Quality Assurance certifications, site assessments, premise IDs, outdoor housing, indoor housing, large pens, small pens, packer demands, COVID supply chain issues and the list goes on,” stated Schwartz.

Hoffmann welcomes the challenge of producing the highest quality product. Keeping the pigs healthy and improving production numbers are examples of his passion for continuing in this line of work. He also values how SFI as a company is competitive amongst themselves, striving to see improvement year after year.

In addition, Hoffmann meets with a peer group with other likeminded companies about twice a year to discuss production practices and any current or new events in the industry. Hoffmann said the group is helpful because it “provides insight into what others are seeing and doing, establishing a level of competition.”

Hoffmann notes how the atmosphere, values of the company and competition all inspire him to continue doing good work. He says he is motivated to, “Stay on top of our game, otherwise we could be beaten out by someone else.”

## Engaging Others in the Industry

Living in the community he grew up in, Hoffmann seizes every opportunity he can to promote pork. He has volunteered in various school agricultural events at both the high school and collegiate levels. He travels to recruitment events at colleges, including his alma mater South Dakota State University, to have conversations with potential interns, who are often being exposed to a pig production internship for the first time. Hoffmann takes the time to speak with the students about the opportunities at SFI and what a career in the pork industry looks like. Once summer interns are hired, he hosts summer outings for the interns to expose them to even more experiences.



# SWINE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

## (Aaron Hoffmann Continued)

*“Aaron has been an invaluable resource for our new professionals in the industry, coaching them, advocating for them, truly ensuring they are being engaged professionally and personally,” stated Schwartz. “Aaron is a true servant-leader and works diligently to retain the family feel in a growing company.”*



Hoffmann also engages the next generation by his willingness to have fun with promotion. He is one of the go-to people for dressing up as a pig for the town's parade. He also makes it a point to go to elementary schools, bringing baby piglets to expose children at

a young age to the knowledge of what goes into raising pigs.

In addition, he has spent time on the Brown County Pork Producers board, participating in grilling events. He also helps in the SFI booth at Sleepy Eye Summerfest, where he recently led the effort to ensure a live piglet would be available at the booth.

“He crucially advocated for youth accessibility to the pen so they could experience the animals firsthand,” explained Schwartz. “Even in our rural community of Sleepy Eye, one father expressed his gratitude sharing, “My kids would never have a chance to see a pig first-hand if it wasn't for you guys.”

Whether he is hands on in a barn, training an employee or promoting the industry at a community level, Hoffmann is a true testament to what management in the Minnesota pork industry is about. He understands there are many different positions and titles, but at the end of the day everyone works together to get the job done.







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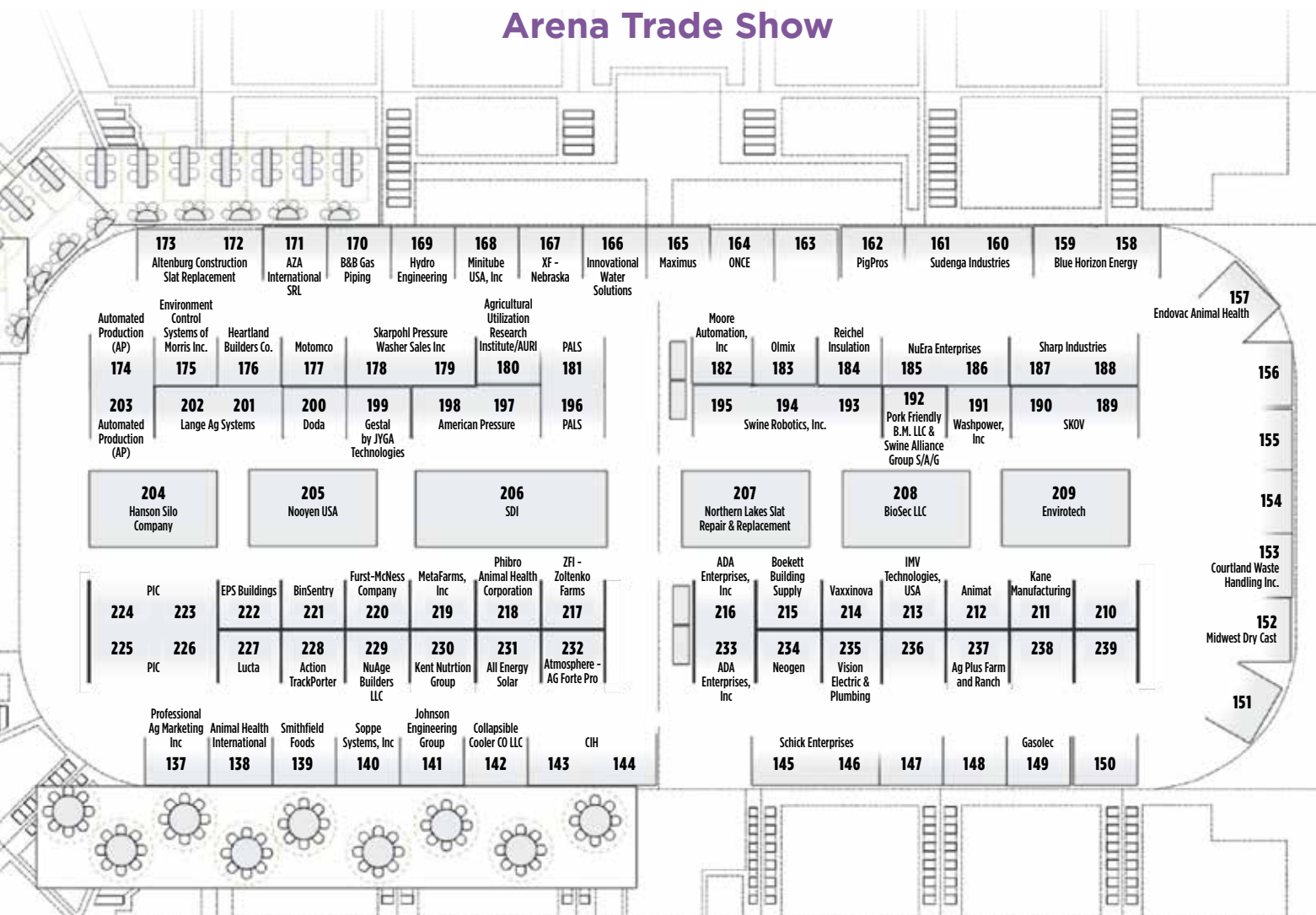
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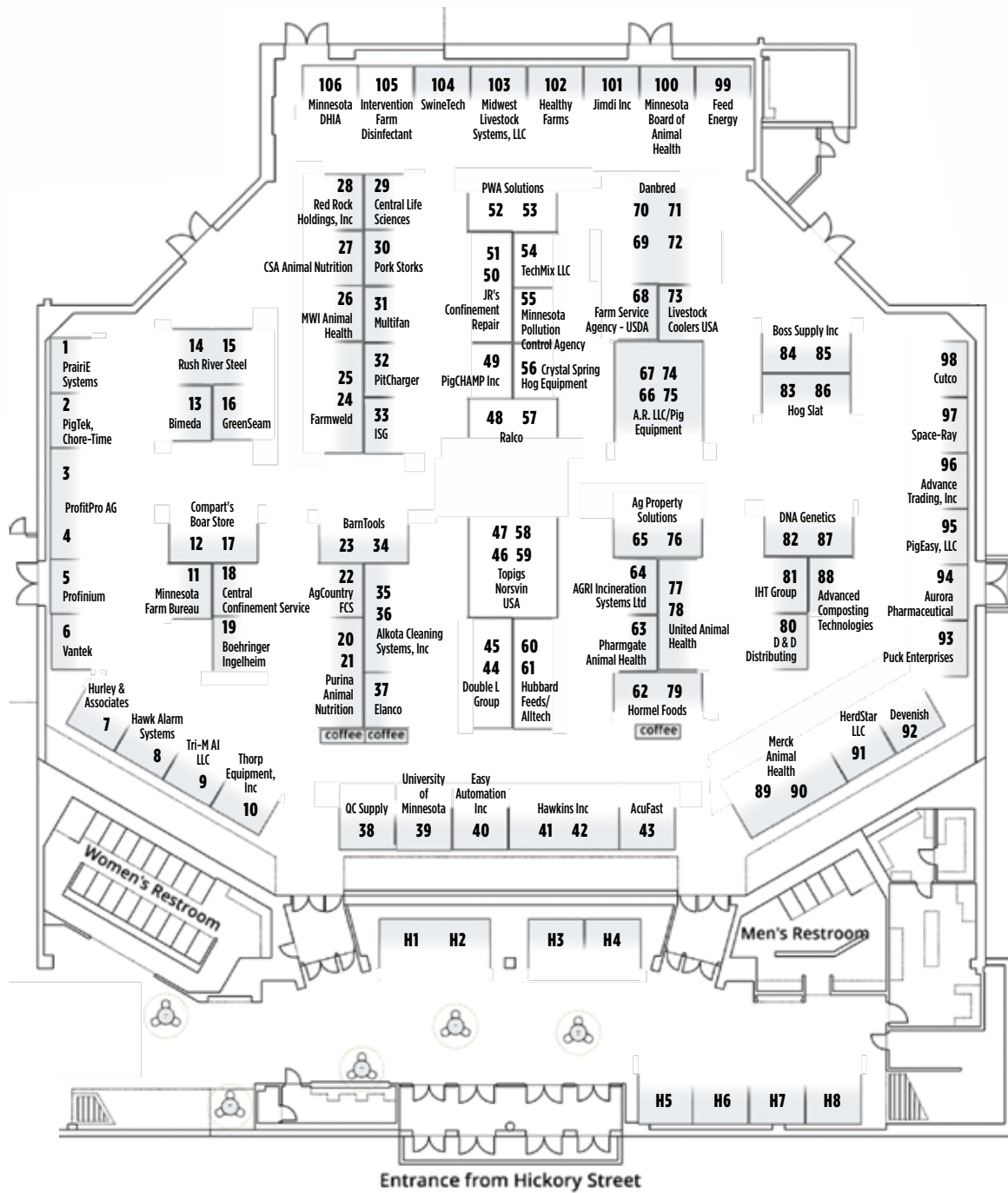
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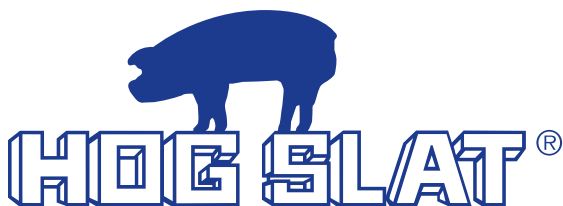


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### Family of the Year

Pride for what came before them and a desire to continue the legacy centers the work of the Anderson Family and Anderson Farms of Belgrade, Minnesota.

The fourth and fifth generations of the Anderson family. John and wife Shirley along with his late brother Jim and his wife Sue farm alongside Jim's sons Grant and wife Heidi, Isaac and wife Shannon and Noah and wife Amanda as well as John's daughter Erin and her husband Wyatt. The family works together to raise pigs, cattle and diversified crops in a variety of new and inventive ways. Like generations before them, the Andersons approach farming with a hunger for growth and efficiency, exploring niche markets and new ways of thinking, bettering themselves and those around them.

### From One Generation to the Next

In 1889, brothers August and Charlie Johanson immigrated from Sweden, taking the last name Anderson upon entering Ellis Island. Settling in Minnesota where the farm stands today, each brother bought 160 acres and farmed separately. The farms consisted of dairy cows and a few pigs and chickens. As the first generation of the farm, August and Charlie were pioneers from the very beginning, setting up future generations of Andersons for success.



August's son Carl, born 1903, and his wife Ethel marked the second generation, farming through the difficult years of the 'dirty thirties' and the Great Depression. With the farm located on sandy soils, Carl relied mostly on the beef cow herd for income. He was fortunate that most of his ground was in pasture or hay which helped preserve the soil during the dry years.

In 1929, Carl's son Jack was born. With his wife Viola, Jack was innovative, growing both the land and livestock



practices through the '50s and '60s. In 1968, Jack bought his grandfather Charlie's farm, expanding his farming operation. In 1969, he started irrigating with a labor intense traveling gun. Being a leader for irrigation practices, Jack helped organize the Irrigation Association of Minnesota and served as its Executive Director throughout the '80s. In 1990, at the age of 60, Jack died in a farm accident. Displaying leadership and passion for his farming practices, it's no surprise Jack passed the same values on to the next generation, who still farms the land today.

Brothers Jim and John led the fourth generation of Andersons on the farm. Jim graduated from South Dakota State University in 1975, marrying wife Sue in 1978 and moving onto Charlie's farm. John attended North Dakota State University in 1980, marrying his wife Shirley in 1985 and moving to the home farm, joining the partnership with his father and brother. With the passing of their father Jack in 1990, Jim and John, along with Sue and Shirley, shared a common goal of growing the farm. Recognizing they could not do this on their own, they started building a dedicated team of employees.



By this time, the family was farming crops, beef cattle and pigs. Jim and John decided to sell the beef herd to focus more on crop production. Eventually they brought the cattle back into the farm. During the '80s and early '90s, the Andersons expanded the pigs and cattle feeding to outside lots. In 1996, they built their sow unit that is still in operation today. On the crop side, the Andersons started raising navy and pinto beans in the early 1980s. They also started raising sugar beets in 2000.





Family of the Year Sponsor:



Following the ambition of their ancestors, the Andersons purchased the local grain elevator in 1998, which they still operate today.

Today, the fifth generation of Andersons includes four young farmers: Grant, Noah, Isaac and Erin. Since joining the farm, the sow unit has expanded to house 2,500 head. The cattle feeding has been moved inside, and land has expanded. Continuing the adaptable, innovative farming approach, the Andersons are keen to take advantage of emerging technology.

***“Everything we do, especially on the crops side, is driven by technology,”*** John said.

‘Never stop improving’ is a fitting phrase for the family, always looking for the next wise decision to improve their farm’s performance and health of the animals and land.

“We want to get more efficient and use less resources to grow more crops for more food for more people, that’s the bottom line, and be good stewards of the land and animals along the way,” Grant Anderson stated. “In order to preserve the farming legacy that we have go onto sixth, seventh, eighth generation here which I’d sure love to see happen, we need to stay in that top 30 – ***keep evolving, keep adopting the new technology, and new ways of doing things.”***

## Variety of Farm Enterprises

Throughout the generations, Anderson Farms has adapted with the times to be most efficient in their practices. With sows, research pigs, finishing pigs, cattle, a variety of crops and a feed mill, the family is passionate about constantly evolving and being skilled in all aspects of their farm.



***“Part of our philosophy is we probably aren’t going to be the biggest at anything, so we try to add value to everything we do. Whether that be hogs, cattle or land,”*** John said.

As many farmers can attest to, the 1980s were a difficult time in pig farming with challenges such as worms, mange and other disease outbreaks like PRRS.

“We decided we either needed to get out or do something different. We needed to make health a priority for raising pigs,” John stated.

With this decision came the building of the first sow barn in 1996 which held 1,000 head. Two years later, the barn increased to hold 1,600 sows. Nine years after that, the barn was increased further to house 2,500 sows. Later in 2014, the Andersons added a gilt developer unit (GDU) and increased farrowing even further.





## (Anderson Family Continued)

Genetics is another component the Andersons are involved in. For the first nine years, beginning in 2001, the family started partnering with the Thunderbird Colony in South Dakota to improve their genetics. In 2010 they realized they needed to be aligned with a bigger company in order to stay on top and be a nucleus herd. This was achieved in cooperation with the family-owned company DNA Genetics, who they still partner with today. Gilts from Anderson Farms have been exported to a variety of states as well as to Canada, Mexico and Europe for their high-quality purebred genetics.

Anderson Farms also specializes in medical research pigs. Starting with a Midwest research farm and now partnering with a number of companies such as Reprise Biomedical, pigs are utilized to help with innovative medical and research developments. For example, pigs' livers are used to make a mesh that helps pack a wound so the body doesn't reject the material, meaning it does not have to be removed. They also make 'derms' which are placed on injuries such as burns or deep cuts which become part of the body over time. Another research use of the Andersons' feeder pigs and isoweens are animal health trials.

***"Medical research is one of those things where it is high margin, but not many pigs involved,"*** John added.

On the finishing side, the Anderson family has made many strides to update their operation. They have the capacity to feed half of their production, with the other half being raised by contract partners. Valuing the improvement of biosecurity efforts is seen by restructuring barn layouts and supplying all sites with Secure Pork Supply plans. Improving equipment in the barns such as tube feeders and updating controllers also helps the family be as efficient as possible. All sites are now equipped with showers for employee use as well. In addition, all trucks are required to be washed and dried before they are allowed to go back to the barns for a new load.

The Andersons also feed non-hormone treated cattle (NHTC). They finish 2,200 head cattle per year, which all are exported to Europe. Most of the cattle are sourced from Scott Rach in Pryor, Montana, all having to be Sampson verified with an EID tag.

The Andersons farm about 9,500 acres of crops including corn, sugar beets and kidney beans as well as small grain including wheat, oats, dry hay and rye. Irrigating remains a continued practice with 90 center pivots using well water.

Finally, the feed mill that the Andersons operate has enough storage to feed all the livestock for one year. The feed mill is fully automated and can mix around 550 tons per week, delivering feed in a 60-mile radius for Anderson Farms.

## The Community and Beyond



Deeply rooted in their community, Anderson Farms values the gift of donating time and resources to help those around them. Each Christmas, pork is packaged and donated to local schools and essential workers. The family hosts school field trips of all ages, including hosting groups from colleges and universities as part of alumni support. Employee

appreciation gatherings, participation in local parades, and various donations and volunteering opportunities as well as church involvement all make up the Andersons' community outreach effort.

The Andersons contribute to not only the local community, but the state organization as well. John served on the Minnesota Pork Board of Directors for six years, including positions as vice president and president. Dave Preisler, past long-time CEO of Minnesota Pork, reflected on what comes to mind when he thinks of the Anderson family.

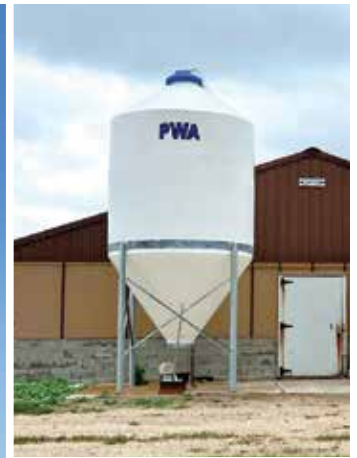
"First of all, John is an NDSU grad, which makes it to where you're going to be pretty good at whatever you do anyway," laughed Dave. On a more serious note, he stated "when I look at what they do farming wise, it is extremely evident family is first. I also think of innovation. Really being open to latching onto something new, whether that is new technology or business innovation. Their community reputation is really positive, they are thought of well."

It is apparent the Anderson families are deserving of the Farm Family of the Year award. Whether they are improving their farming practices, adding new technology or giving back to their community, the Andersons represent their values and commitment for future generations of family farms.



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# PORK PROMOTER OF THE YEAR

## Nancy Hovel

### Pork Promoter of the Year

Nancy Hovel's pork promotion efforts go back to the early 1990s when she first started to help organize the Goodhue County Pork Producers Food Stand at the Goodhue County Fair. Today, she has overseen the huge undertaking for nearly 30 years and is well-known around the county and surrounding areas for her countless hours of giving towards the pork industry and all of agriculture. Hovel's ability to advocate for pork and unify all, from those in her own community to the public alike, is what earned her this year's Pork Promoter of the Year award.

#### A Ripple Effect

Growing up in Hastings, Minnesota, Hovel did not have a background in agriculture. Her husband grew up helping his uncle on his dairy, and after marrying Gary in 1980, the couple purchased their farm in 1986 near Cannon Falls. While raising their three children on the farm, the Hovel family was and continues to be united by agriculture. Each child continues to live near the farm to raise their own children, with seven total grandchildren forming the next

generation. The Hovels farm pigs, cattle and crops as well as owning Hovel Farms Trucking.

Hovel became involved in 4-H when her children were of age, volunteering as the club's Cloverbud leader. From there, peers noticed her leadership and generosity, encouraging her to volunteer in more ways than she could have ever imagined. Hovel was approached by a founding member of the Cannon Valley Fair Board of Directors asking if she would be interested in serving on the board. She has now been an active board member for 25 years, coordinating all the open class exhibits including livestock shows, horticulture, baking and much more. She also creates and publishes the fair handbook.

Hovel was drawn to the county fair atmosphere because of her experience seeing youth and families grow, leading to her involvement at the pork producers stand. While her children grew more active in 4-H, Hovel spent many hours at the Goodhue County Fair during fair week. She began helping at the Goodhue County Pork Producers Stand nearly 30 years ago, which has grown into the ultimate destination for delicious pork and good company thanks to Hovel's leadership and passion for the pork industry and for others.

*"Though her name is really Nancy, most in Goodhue County just call her 'Ma,' and no other name could be more fitting to describe a woman who takes in all people, both young and old, and cares about them as if they were her own kids,"* commended Madison Hokanson, Goodhue County 4-H alumni and fellow pork producer.

#### A Community Affair

In the early years of the stand, the item offered was a sliced ham sandwich, which consisted of cooking and slicing ham for the sandwiches. Later, cheese was added, and items continued to be gradually added, expanding to a full menu of items today. The stand serves thousands of pounds of fresh pork to fairgoers each year.





## Pork Promoter of the Year Award Sponsor:



The stand features breakfast, lunch and dinner, opening at 7:00 a.m. and closing after the grandstand events conclude, usually around 10:30 p.m. Hovel supports local businesses as much as she can, ordering many of the items from businesses in and near Goodhue County. Something unique about the menu is the 'Big Oink' challenge, which features a pork burger, pork chop, barbeque pork and slice of ham all on one sandwich that one must finish to successfully win the challenge. Those who finish the sandwich are rewarded with a t-shirt, a sought-after prize for fairgoers and exhibitors at the fair. Participants in the challenge vary in age. When one may think this meal could be too much for a 4-H'er, Hovel assured there is an appetite for it.

"Kids at the fair work hard all day, they're ready for something to eat," Hovel stated.

Aside from food items, Hovel keeps the stand fully equipped with promotional materials for fairgoers to take home, and those working in the stand are encouraged to hand out the items to the stand's customers.

Many helping hands are needed to make the stand a success, and there is no shortage of community volunteers who step in to take shifts. The aim is to always have at least one pork producer at the grill and one serving customers, and from there many community members fill shifts.

***"Our motto is, if you are not a pork producer, all you have to do is know one," Hovel shared. "We welcome everyone."***

Those who volunteer include members on the Goodhue County Pork Producers Board of Directors, area bank employees, the Goodhue Lions Club, members of area FFA chapters, and of course, Goodhue County pork producing families and 4-H exhibitors.

"Many kids peer over to see if the stand needs help, and if it does, they step in. They are there anyway with their livestock, so they like to have something to do. And they get fed!" Hovel laughed.

Each person who works a shift wears a Goodhue County Pork Producers t-shirt they get to take home. Pork promotion happens in many forms, and proudly wearing a pork t-shirt, by people of all ages, makes an impact. Hovel shared she often sees people in the community representing by wearing shirts from over the years.

"I was told by one mother that all three of her kids wore their pork producers shirt to the first day of school," Hovel said.



Not only does this show the next generation is excited about the pork industry, but it also is a 'walking advertisement' for pork and the good work that is happening in Goodhue County.

Another way the stand involves community is the donations it provides. Whether it is funds or pork products, the list of sponsored events is long and impressive. Hovel and the Goodhue County Pork Producers aim to keep funds going to 4-H, FFA or similar organizations. This includes sponsoring animals at the 4-H auction and donating to the county 4-H hog roast fundraiser. In 2016, the organization also donated funds to update the penning in the fair's show barn to improve the show ring's functionality.

Other donations include the meal at area FFA chapter banquets, the Goodhue County American Dairy Association (ADA) Breakfast on the Farm, the Goodhue Soil and Water Conservation District dinner and providing pork at the county's tractor safety day camp.

For the past three years, the pork producers have also served the meal for the Goodhue County Coop Electric annual meeting. Starting in 2021 with a drive through meal including her famous dish, 'Ma Hovel's pork riblet patties', chips, bars, and malts from the ADA, the meal continues to be a hit.

New in 2023, the Goodhue County Pork Producers served the meal for the Minnesota FFA advisor yearly convention held in Red Wing. Here, Hovel and team served 268 meals, hauling the grill to again serve her famous pork riblets.

# PORK PROMOTER OF THE YEAR

## (Nancy Hovel Continued)

It's evident that with Hovel's efforts, the possibilities of sharing pork the product, pig farming and impacting young people are endless.

"Anytime there is an opportunity to work with 4-H and FFA, we'll try to do it!" Hovel added.

## Developing the Next Generation

In addition to donating to agriculture youth groups, Hovel has a passion for working with youth one-on-one and developing their leadership skills for future success.

Together with the county ADA, the local radio station KDHL broadcasts live from the Goodhue County Pork Producers Food Stand each morning from 7-9:00 a.m. Hovel recruits exhibitors and fair staff alike to take turns recording 10-minute radio interviews. She aims to highlight a variety of topics, including 4-H'ers speaking about their livestock and static projects, dairy princesses, extension staff and livestock and dairy judging teams.

"Even if it may be easier to go to the same 'go-to' kids each time or just skip the extra hassle all together, Nancy sees the potential in people of all ages and does all she can to help them grow in agriculture," stated Hokanson.

"If there's someone in the stand that just happens to come in, I'll say 'why don't you come over and try it once? See how you like it,'" Hovel explained.

When asked the value she sees watching people be interviewed, Hovel touched on the growth and pride seen after someone went outside of their comfort zone.

"The fear of public speaking is improved. The kids are talking on the interview, reaching out to how many people, and they are so proud of that," Hove recalled. "They'll call their grandma after or before their interview airs and excitedly say, 'turn on the radio because I'm going to be on!'"

She also noted how this experience opens the eyes of youth to understand this is one form of communication that reaches people. Hovel also helps lead the county's Pork Ambassador Program, a role she has been in for the past two decades.

Both the radio interviews and ambassador program are experiences that leave an impression at a young age. Developing skills of public speaking and professionalism set one up for success. Hovel has provided countless young people with experiences and skills that not only help set up the pork industry and agriculture for success, but the next generation as a whole.

***"Nancy is the kind of person who attracts and brings people to our industry," Hokanson said. "It's people like her who make me confident in our ability to continue growing and thriving as an industry for years to come because of the groundwork she is willing to do along the way."***





## Passion for Promotion

In her nearly three decades of involvement, Hovel has promoted pork in dozens of ways, including 'pop up' stands in the community. Prior to the 2020 pandemic, Hovel would hand out pork samples at local grocery stores. Each year after the 4th of July, Hovel sets up a stand at the local Merchant's bank in Cannon Falls ready to greet people with promotional items for all ages to enjoy such as resources from Minnesota Pork like pork recipes, pencils and coloring books.

Hovel spruces up local storefronts by rotating promotional signage for passersby to read and be reminded of the role farmers play in our daily lives. Promoting in the community allows people to learn the presence and importance of pork and agriculture.

The signs contain catchy phrases with a simple tagline. One of the signs is also found at the county fair stand reads, 'Once in your life you will need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman and a preacher, but every day, three times a day, you will need a farmer.' A second reads, 'Thank a farmer for your food, fiber and future.'

Both sayings speak to the purpose Hovel carries with her for her numerous efforts of pork promotion. Reaching people in their daily life within the community harnesses the message that pork is not only good to eat, but farmers care for and raise their pigs well.

Pig farming, sharing farmers' stories and instilling leadership in the next generation are Hovel's true passions, making her an exemplary recipient of the 2024 Pork Promoter award. When asked what keeps her coming back to manage the stand, and continuing to actively promote pork, her common theme is community.

*"I love to see and work with people, that's why I do it. It's a gathering of generations - which is really fun to watch and be a part of,"* Hovel reflected. *"Agriculture is a great way of life. It's very rewarding, it's hard work and we feed the world. We take pride in what we do."*

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(Polka Dot Dairy - Hastings, MN)
- **150 dozen eggs**  
(Polka Dot Dairy - Hastings, MN)
- **62 dozen donuts**  
(Hanisch Bakery - Red Wing, MN)
- **451 dozen buns**  
(Hanisch Bakery - Red Wing, MN)
- **750 lbs. of pork burger, served as a 1/3 patty** (Greg's Meats - Hampton, MN)
- **495 lbs. sliced ham**  
(Ye Old Butcher Shop - Rochester, MN)
- **85 lbs. sausage breakfast patty**  
(Ye Old Butcher Shop - Rochester, MN)
- **30 lbs. sausage links**  
(Ye Old Butcher Shop - Rochester, MN)
- **240 lbs. of 5 oz. boneless pork chop**  
(Ye Old Butcher Shop - Rochester, MN)
- **250 lbs. of sliced barbecue pork**  
(Ye Old Butcher Shop - Rochester, MN)
- **300 lbs. Mr. Rib sandwich**  
(Ye Old Butcher Shop - Rochester, MN)





# Dave Preisler

## Distinguished Service



The ability to connect people to each other and agriculture is a talent Dave Preisler used throughout his career working on behalf of Minnesota pig farmers. The ability to identify what needs to be thought about today that may be a challenge tomorrow is a quality that served the industry well under Preisler's leadership.

The Distinguished Service Award description simply states that it 'recognizes an individual who has contributed to the long-term success of the pork industry in Minnesota.' Beginning his time at Minnesota Pork Producers Association (MPPA) in 1994 and retiring in June of 2022, it is safe to say Preisler demonstrated long-term success throughout his nearly 28-year long career. From his ability to navigate crisis to his dedication to serving rural America, Minnesota Pork is pleased to honor Dave Preisler with this well-deserved award.

## Learning to Do, Doing to Learn

Growing up in northwest Minnesota near Mahanomen, Preisler was fortunate to have dedicated educators, his FFA advisor in particular, who inspired him to pursue an agricultural education degree. Upon graduating with this degree from North Dakota State University, Preisler spent two years as a high school agricultural teacher, helping foster young minds while building a strong network of peers.

Being a member of 4-H in his youth led Preisler to pursue a county extension agent position, moving his family to Le Sueur County to begin his new role. With experiences ranging from crop and environmental education to county planning and zoning, the job was a steppingstone to the adventure Preisler would later begin with MPPA. Working professionally in both FFA and agriculture created an invaluable network Preisler was able to draw on throughout his time working for pig farmers and bringing together the many sectors of agriculture in Minnesota.

After serving 7 years in extension, Preisler was hired as the executive director of the MPPA. Reflecting on his experiences and personal values of advocating for



agriculture and rural communities, Preisler was eager to apply for the position. This marked the beginning of a 28-year career journey with the pork industry changing and evolving throughout his time on staff.

With his calm demeanor and way of unifying others, Preisler was destined for success from the beginning. John Anderson, Minnesota pig farmer and past MPPA president, described Preisler's contributions that led to his achievements.

*"Dave is known for his ability to listen to farmer concerns and bring together the right groups of people to support and advocate for farmers while finding mutually beneficial solutions,"* stated Anderson.

## Navigating Through Challenges

Nearly impossible to summarize the many trying experiences faced in one's career, three notable times in particular to showcase how Preisler directed the pork industry through trials. Resilient in the face of adversity, Minnesota continues to consistently rank second in the United States for pork production, in both number and value, proving the tenacity of Minnesota pig farmers and Preisler.

The first challenge is the structural change farmers saw throughout the '90s into the early 2000s. The quantity of farms decreased, yet the farms who continued in the industry increased the amount of pork they produced. Experiencing the number of farms decrease during this time was difficult, but the structure of pig farming merged into something more nuanced: contract growing. Within this time of change, Preisler and farmer leadership fought against the state approving moratoriums which

## Distinguished Service Award Sponsor:



would have prevented this growth in the industry. This included changes within feedlot permitting. Without their work in the policy sector, pig farming today could look much different.

“There are few people who know Minnesota’s Chapter 7020 feedlot rules better than David Preisler. He was at the table when the rules were being revised, and regularly advocated for farmers, ensuring family farms had the potential to begin, grow and thrive in Minnesota.” Anderson continued, “Dave regularly supported farms in times of crises and often helped find resources or other forms of support for farmers in difficult situations. He was a trusted source of resources and information for farmers regardless of the difficult situations or circumstances.”

“Production has grown significantly, doubling in the last 30 years,” Preisler recalled. “Which is positive for many reasons. It creates jobs to support our communities, supplements corn and soybean production, helps ensure packers stay in the area with a high number of pigs to process and so on.”

A second challenge Preisler recalls is disease preparedness work, whether that was preparing for what was to come or dropping everything and actively working through a crisis, such as the H1N1 outbreak and COVID-19. The pork industry was forced to overcome challenges and evolve.

“As farmers, you hire someone to help you through challenges. And that’s the value proposition of having an association. Farmers should rightfully expect the association is going to help them. That is a fair expectation, and [the association] better deliver.

They’re paying for it so they better get a return on that investment,” Preisler stated.

Finally, an overarching challenge was the gradual addition of farmer image promotion alongside promoting pork the product. In the beginning of his career, almost all public outreach efforts had to do with educating consumers about eating pork, anywhere from how to cook to the nutritional benefits. While this side of promotion is still very evident, in the digitally connected world we live in today, working to communicate pig farmers’ values of raising safe pork continues to be a goal. Seeing the gradual rise in concern as media coverage grew was something Preisler, state and national leadership worked towards bridging.

Without the work Preisler championed in the years of uncertainty, the reputation of Minnesota pig farmers and future of their farms would not be in the state it is today.

“Dave’s steady leadership and cooperation with farmer leaders and the greater agricultural industry played an important role in assuring Minnesota’s pig farmers were positioned to be industry leaders,” shared Anderson.

During his time with the association, Preisler has certainly been led to success with the advice of those in his network. He recalled the many people who have impacted him.



## (Dave Preisler Continued)

“First and foremost, over the years we’ve had some tremendous Executive Boards of Directors. Really good thinkers, could see the big picture, and very steady in their leadership,” he shared.

In addition to board members, Preisler’s mentors have included past NPPC CEO, Neil Dierks; counterparts from other commodity organizations; Gene Hugoson, former legislator and commissioner of agriculture; among others. Preisler also credits the valuable MPPA staff he worked with over the years. The staff was instrumental in all the work Preisler was able to accomplish.

## Service Mindset

Since his retirement in June 2022, Preisler has stayed busy with numerous ventures – one in particular that proves his career truly was his passion. Just as he served Minnesota pig farmers, Preisler is now serving his local community as Le Sueur County Commissioner. Given his background in agriculture policy, service and teamwork, Preisler is a natural fit for the role.

***“Two things that are really near and dear to my heart are rural communities and agriculture, and the role as CEO seemed to be just a really good fit,”*** explained Preisler. “That experience is also what drew me to run for commissioner in a rural county. There are a lot of skills from my role at Minnesota Pork that are transferring to the commissioner role very well.”

It is apparent that Preisler continues to make an impact serving Minnesota. His ability to represent and serve Minnesota pig farmers has contributed to the ongoing success of the Minnesota pork industry. He has been recognized for his efforts by peers with many awards including the 2017 Ag Mafia Distinguished Service Award, the 2020 University of Minnesota College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences Outstanding Friend and the 2021 Minnesota AgriGrowth Distinguished Service Award.



“Dave approached his work with integrity and determination and above all else, prioritized doing what was best for Minnesota’s pig farmers,” Anderson applauded.

***“All of us have things that make us different. I’ve always had a passion for agriculture and rural communities. I think if you combine those two things up, pork production fit really well,”*** reflected Preisler. “You have the farmers in general who are really progressive, community minded, good business people and they want to do what is right for their communities. That is what really attracted me to stay for so long.”





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## Senator Bill Weber

### Legislator of Distinction



Representing agriculture has been a lifelong mission for Minnesota Senator Bill Weber. For decades, he has spent countless hours advocating for the community and state he grew up in. Senator Weber's passion for advocating for agriculture has been apparent and genuine throughout his time in office.

### Getting His Start

Rock county has always been home for Sen. Weber, growing up eight miles southwest of Luverne on his family farm. As the fourth generation on the farm, Sen. Weber was exposed at a young age to the role agriculture plays in our daily lives. His great-grandfather bought the farm in 1882, and today Sen. Weber's nephew is the fifth generation to farm the land. Saying he understands the significance of family and generational farming would be an understatement.

Involvement in leadership activities in his youth helped develop Sen. Weber's appetite for leadership later in life. He served as his school's FFA president and participated in public speaking events. Skills learned through these

activities had a direct correlation with what would follow. Throughout his childhood, Sen. Weber's grandfather lived with his family. Sen. Weber recalls his experience being exposed to politics at a young age.

"As a kid, my grandpa lived with us and I was always frustrated during the republican convention, in those days you only had one TV in the house and that's what it was on," Sen. Weber said. "Now I'm pretty much the same way."

Sen. Weber graduated from Nettleton Business College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota with a degree in professional accounting. He then returned to Luverne to work. Since 1976, he has worked in real estate sales and appraisal at Jensen Management Service, Inc.

### Path to Local and State Service

While settling down in his home community, Sen. Weber was encouraged by many to run for city council. At first, he was not interested in the position. However, the council had a vacancy that needed to be filled in order to meet quorum.

Sen. Weber explained, *"In politics, never say never."* A situation had arisen where the city budget had to be certified by a certain date in October and one of the members had passed away, and another was out of town on business, so that meant they wouldn't have a quorum by the time of the meeting."

Sen. Weber decided to fill the role, marking his first position in the local government. After being exposed





## Legislator of Distinction Award Sponsor:



to the role, Sen. Weber saw issues arise that he had an opinion on and continued to attend meetings. His boss at the time told him that if he is going to attend meetings, he might as well become an elected part of the council. So, two years after filling the void, Sen. Weber ran and was elected in 1984. He continued to serve on the city council for eight years.

Following his run as a member of the council, he continued to serve in the local government as mayor. After sixteen years of service, Sen. Weber left local office in January 2001.

After some years off, Sen. Weber decided to run at the state level to serve as a member of the Minnesota Senate. 2006 was not the best year to be a Republican challenger, and he was not elected. He continued to be active in his community and in his job helping others with real estate needs. At the end of 2011, Sen. Weber received a call from then Senator, Doug Magnus.

He encouraged Sen. Weber that now was the right time to run, saying, "I've been here for 10 years and I'm not going to run for office again. You have to run."

Sen. Weber listened and was elected in 2012. He has served consecutive four- and two-year terms since then, being re-elected in 2022 for his fourth term.

Minnesota pig farmer Don Buhl has had the opportunity to work with Sen. Weber over the years. Buhl has had first-hand experience seeing the passion Sen. Weber brings to the legislature.

"Senator Weber is a great example of a citizen-legislator! He has his own business, he has been a leader in his community and has chosen to represent the interests of his area by serving in the Legislature," Buhl stated.

### Committees and Their Impact

Over his terms, Sen. Weber has been a member of numerous committees advocating for agriculture. The committees range from environment and energy; jobs, agriculture and rural development; education; environment and natural resources policy and taxes; among several others.

Now in his fourth term, Sen. Weber is a member of two committees. The energy, utilities, environment and climate committee and as the Republican lead on the tax committee. With the thirty committees that the Senate operates, it is evident Sen. Weber cares deeply about improving conditions in rural communities.

Of his time on these committees, one of Sen. Weber's most notable stories occurred during planting season for many farmers while chairing the Agricultural Policy committee in the spring of 2017. One of the bills that he carried was to raise the animal unit capacity size before requiring an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). A person of the opposing party, and on the committee, started questioning the lack of supporters present from Sen. Weber's bill.

He pressed, "There are so many people here opposing your bill, where are those in favor of it?"

Sen. Weber had asked Minnesota Pork's CEO at the time, Dave Preisler, to be in attendance representing Minnesota pig farmers. Sen. Weber went on to explain to the questioning Senator that Minnesota is comprised of family farmers, most of whom were in the fields, and specifically told him about a certain young farmer.

He explained the significance of family farming and ended with, "Do you want to know why I know so much about this young farmer? Because he is my nephew farming on my family's fifth generation farm, and if you think I don't care about the family farm you \*\*\*\* well better be ready for a fight." Sen. Weber urged. His genuine passion for agriculture is evident in each interaction he has.

Sen. Weber's most recent win for agriculture was increasing the agriculture homestead valuation limit. This bill will expand the current valuation limit for an agricultural homestead from \$2.7 million to \$3.5 million. While it would vary across the state, the average homestead would increase by about 80 acres and farmers would pay the much lower .5% rate on those acres. The purpose of this legislation is to keep up with what a commercially-viable farm looks like. The bill was heard in the senate tax committee and made it in the final tax bill.



## (Bill Weber Continued)

He reflected on the importance of being present to pass these bills by explaining the lack of awareness as of late.

*“A lot of people don’t know what farming is about anymore. So many of the environmentalists think that the farming community is out there not caring about the environment or the quality of water, and there is nothing that is further from the truth,”* Sen. Weber urged. “It’s the farm families that are first exposed to farm wells. It’s the water they drink, so they are not out there trying to pollute anything that so readily affects them.”

His passion for doing what is best for not just agriculture, but all Minnesotans is obvious. Sen. Weber emphasizes how the practices that have been implemented have been designed around stewardship, both of soil and water quality.

“The steps that have been taken in recent years to produce a better water quality will take time,” Sen. Weber explained. “There is a genuine lack of understanding out there.”

## Instinctive Passion

Sen. Weber radiates a dedication to serving those he is representing well. Each day, he keeps in mind he is advocating for farmers to be able to operate for generations to come.

“Someone once asked me, being in the minority this year, how I get up and go to work every day,” Sen. Weber began. “I explained to them the reality is my constituents did not send me here to quit. They sent me here to state their values and beliefs and I will continue to do that. As

long as I do that, I take comfort in the fact that at least their position got to be represented.”

One of Sen. Weber’s proudest pieces of legislation came out of the education committee. The bill advocated for bringing career vocational training back to the high school level. Although not passed when Sen. Weber was a member, he played the vital role of introducing the bill. When it was first introduced, Sen. Weber came across a former state Senator who was a democratic-farmer-labor (DFL) majority leader for many years who had learned of Sen. Weber’s bill. The former Senator told Sen. Weber one of his biggest regrets was he allowed the state of Minnesota to back away from vocational education. He asked Sen. Weber if there was anything he could do to help the bill pass, to which Sen. Weber replied, “you could testify,” and he did.

As a freshman republican member, Sen. Weber bringing the former DFL majority leader to testify on behalf of his bill spoke volumes.

Supporting Minnesota pig farmers is second nature for Sen. Weber. He understands the critical dedication as there are constant challenges occurring within agriculture, proving the importance of Sen. Weber’s advocating on the industry’s behalf. Buhl can attest to this.

“Senator Weber understands the value that our family-owned hog farms bring to the state of Minnesota. He has done great work to ensure that state laws that affect our farms make sense and are fair. He is a true friend of family-owned businesses in Minnesota,” Buhl stated. “He has helped to ensure that the pork industry can continue to produce food here in Minnesota and be a major part of this state’s economy.”

*“Government typically looks for solutions as though it’s a one size fits all, but one size never fits all,”* Sen. Weber reflected. *“We need to be out there working with the different industries helping produce measures that are workable for all their members in order to achieve the maximum benefit.”*







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# 2023 PORK CHECKOFF YEAR IN REVIEW

Minnesota Pork's investments, events, and collaborations continue to be directed by the strategic imperatives laid out in its 2021 Strategic Plan under the pillars of Build Trust, Invest in People, Impact Through Influence, and Protect Our Freedom to Operate. The following activities and partnerships represent action-oriented ways Minnesota Pork has added value to producer investments and drove the organization forward in the past 12 months.

## Protect Our Freedom to Operate



### Minnesota Leadership in SHIP

Minnesota continues to be greatly involved in the Swine Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) – a partially Checkoff-funded pilot program developed and facilitated by a congress of industry professionals, including producers. It is built on a foundation of biosecurity, traceability, sampling, and testing using tools like AgView and Secure Pork Supply Plan. The objective of SHIP is to develop and implement an African Swine Fever (ASF)-Classical Swine Fever (CSF) Monitored Certification Program. This certification demonstrates evidence of disease freedom to resume international trade during the response and recovery period of a foreign animal disease outbreak. This year, Dr. Tom Wetzell began working as a consultant for U.S. SHIP in Minnesota to support Minnesota for enrolling in the program.

### Advancing U.S. Pork Sustainability; Climate-Smart Grant

The Advancing U.S. Pork Sustainability grant is a new opportunity for farmers in Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri to receive technical support and incentives for adopting climate-smart agriculture practices. The five-year, \$35 million grant program is administered by the National Pork Board (NPB) and six collaborating organizations through USDA's Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities program. The grant program will provide technical assistance and financial incentives for the adoption of the following practices:

- Cover crops.
- Livestock integration (in cover crops).
- Conservation tillage (no till).
- Manure management.
- Edge-of-field and perennial grass buffers.
- In-barn LED lighting.

Learn more about details of the program and request a Pork Cares Farm Impact Report for your farm by visiting the Pork Checkoff's website here: <https://porkcheckoff.org/pork-production-management/sustainability/#form>.

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## Build Trust

A major barrier for consumers who don't eat pork regularly, or who are considering eating less of it, is the perceived health of pork being fatty and non-nutritious. To address this health barrier and share about the benefits of nutritious, healthy pork in a wellness lifestyle, MPB positioned itself where many health-conscious individuals frequent, such as marathons, triathlons, and dietitian conferences.

### Minnesota State Fair Updated Oink Booth

A new and improved Oink Booth was unveiled in August for the 2023 Minnesota State Fair. The booth's location



inside the Robert A. Christensen Pavilion (Swine Barn) moved to the northeast corner to allow for a larger space as well as improve the flow of the barn. The new booth was a team effort with Romsdahl Companies providing labor and materials along with additional suppliers providing equipment for the displays. The booth was created with the idea of giving fairgoers an experience of stepping into a modern-day pig barn. Inside are the classic favorites such as the sow and litter, largest boar and paper pig ears, but new additions included educational signage and a wall temperature controller.

### Mankato Marathon



The Mankato Marathon consists of seven different races and challenges. This year, the weekend-long event took place October 20-21. The Minnesota Pork Board sponsored the Pork Power 5K – a fun event uniquely aimed to reach health-conscious consumers.

Pork Power 5K runners received delicious bacon mid-race at a bacon station, custom made all-pork snack sticks at the finish line, and pig medals following the race. Throughout the day, Minnesota pig farmers from around the area volunteered their time to connect with runners and other race-supporters to answer questions about pig farming and explain the nutritional benefits of eating pork.



### Grandma's Marathon

As one of the largest marathon races in the United States, Grandma's Marathon held in Duluth, Minnesota, brings together more than 18,000 runners from around the world. Three major races in June provide an opportunity for the Minnesota Pork Board and industry volunteers to have one-on-one interactions with health-conscious consumers about the power of pork protein and how it can fit into a healthy diet.

### Nourish, Move, Love

Nearly 300,000 individuals follow along with fitness trainer, Lindsey Bomgren, of Nourish, Move, Love (NML). MPB partnered with NML to create free, 30- and 45-minute workout videos while authentically discussing the health benefits of pork and why it's a great protein to refuel with following a workout. The 'June Workout Challenge' was a free, 4-week program featuring workouts with messages about the nutritional benefits of eating pork.



### The Real Food Dietitians

The Real Food Dietitians focus on healthful ways to cook and bring pork to the top of consumers' minds when preparing meals for the week. Throughout the year, MPB partnered with the digital influencers to create delicious dishes, along with a 30-day meal plan and coinciding grocery list. MPB-sponsored content focused on the simplicity, versatility, and health of pork, along with sharing top pig farming sustainability messages to help consumers feel more comfortable eating pork.

### Contracted Dietitian / MAND

MPB contracted dietitian, Renee Korczak, created several assets and spoke at several events in the last twelve months. She was seen cooking live segments on our social channels, speaking with university dietetic and nutrition students, presenting on refueling with high quality pork protein to sports dietitians, and providing written content on pork's role in a healthy diet.

# 2023 PORK CHECKOFF YEAR IN REVIEW

## Twin Cities Live Participation



Over the last 12 months, MPB partnered with Twin Cities Live in a variety of ways. During their daytime show hosted by Elizabeth Ries and Ben Leber,

MPB presented a variety of segments. These included one segment a month sharing a pork recipe relating to the time of year, a 12 Days of Grilling campaign in collaboration with the Minnesota Beef Council in July, and a week-long special of pork segments to celebrate National Pork Month in October. During each 6-minute segment, either a chef, pig farmer, veterinarian, or dietitian represented Minnesota Pork and showcased different ways to cook pork while talking about its nutritional value and farmer sustainability practices.

## Oink Outings

Oink Outings resumed this summer, appearing at community and fitness events around the state, primarily focused in the Metro area. The program provides consumers the opportunity to ask farmers questions about pigs, pig farming, pork, and sustainability practices. Oink Outings provide farmers the opportunity to connect with consumers face-to-face and tell their story, while also giving back to their communities. Every question asked at the events results in one pound of donated ground pork to Second Harvest Heartland.

## Start Tribune Display Ads

The Star Tribune is uniquely positioned to reach a highly targeted demographic within the Twin Cities Metro area. This capability to reach some of MPB's primary audiences led to the creation of digital display ads placed strategically on the media outlet's pages and steaming partners. The ads primarily focus on sustainability messaging and pork's diverse flavor profile.



## WCCO Radio

Jason DeRusha continues as the host of WCCO Radio, well-known for his previous role in the Twin Cities as

a WCCO-TV personality and food critic. DeRusha has been a resounding supporter of pig farming and pork for nearly two decades. His authentic voice can be heard over one dozen times each week sharing Minnesota pig farmer's sustainability story and simple, delicious, versatile ways to cook pork during his segment. In addition to his radio presence, he hosts a podcast title DeRusha Eats where he has also had segments based on pork's flavorful potential and nutritional benefits.

## NPB/Hy-Vee Partnership

MPB helped sponsor a partnership with National Pork Board and Hy-Vee promoting pork in stores and online. The partnership included seven monthly promotions throughout 2023 that featured a variety of pork items. The promotions included \$10 meal deals, coupons and weekly ads, display contests and more.



## Midwest Pork Summit

20 chefs from around the Midwest gathered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa for the annual Midwest Pork Summit. MPB



sponsored the participation fee for the three Minnesota chefs who attended. For the two and a half days of the summit, participants gained knowledge in pig farming, meat science, pork quality and unique pork utilizations.

## Coborn's Grocery & Cash Wise Foods Registered Dietitian Team

MPB partnered with the registered dietitian team at Coborn's Grocery and Cash Wise Foods to promote family meal options containing pork. Promotion included digital advertising via social media which reached over a combined 20,000 people in a single Facebook post.



## Invest in People

### Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference

110 college students gathered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in June to attend the Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference (YLAC), hosted by MPB. Various ages, majors, companies, and



backgrounds from across the country were represented. Speakers addressed topics such as leadership, personal well-being, career preparedness, and persevering through challenges throughout the three-day conference.

### Agriculture Scholarships Awarded

MPB awarded five \$1,000 scholarships to students pursuing careers within agriculture and related fields. The scholarship recipients ranged across different areas of study within agriculture, diverse backgrounds, and varied universities.

### Summer Intern Program

The Minnesota Pork Board employed two interns over the 2023 summer. The two University of Minnesota interns hail from Minnesota farms with a passion for sharing their agricultural story. They spent their summer talking with consumers about pork and pig farming at Oink Outings, writing and creating print and digital content, learning from and connecting with industry professionals, and better understanding MPPA's political efforts and the impact of lobbying.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark blue shirt, is smiling and holding a small white piglet. The background is dark and textured. The entire image is overlaid with a blue geometric pattern of lines and dots.

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## Minnesota Chamber Session Priorities

The Minnesota Pork Producers Association supported the Minnesota Chamber's largest annual event held on the eve of each state legislative session. The Minnesota Chamber Session Priorities event gathers business leaders from across sectors of Minnesota's economy and brings together elected officials to gain insights for the upcoming legislative session hearing directly from those in leadership. It's a celebration of the vibrant business community that has a profound impact on the lives of Minnesotans and presents a unique opportunity for meaningful interactions with elected officials and business peers. MPPA leaders were honored to host Commissioner of Agriculture Thom Petersen, House Agriculture committee Chairwoman, Rep. Samantha Vang (DFL- Brooklyn Center), and House Agriculture committee Republican Lead, Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck).

## Leadership Minnesota and Leaders Lab Tours

MPPA is proud to support two farm tours hosted by Minnesota pig farmers in conjunction with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Minnesota and Leaders Lab cohorts. Hugoson Pork and Christensen Farms each host a leadership cohort as part of the groups' experiences, meetings and tours within the food and agriculture sector of Minnesota. The tour participants represent business leaders from across Minnesota who get firsthand experience visiting the farms and learning about how pigs are raised and how their businesses operate in greater Minnesota. Always receiving high reviews, the farm tours are often a highlight for the year for each of the classes. Exposing other thought leaders from around Minnesota remains a key objective of Minnesota Pork as the organization continues to build connections and relevance with other key partners and influencers, including the Minnesota Chamber.

## Farm Bill Listening Session and Round Tables

Each five-year cycle around the Farm Bill brings a number of listening sessions and roundtable discussions hosted by Minnesota's congressional members. Farm Bill considerations for foreign animal disease preparedness and prevention were the focus of pork priorities in these discussions. Minnesota is well represented in Washington on the House and Senate agriculture committees including members Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Sen. Tina Smith, Rep. Brad Finstad, and Rep. Angie Craig. Reps. Emmer, Fischbach, and Stauber, while not on the agriculture

committee, also hosted producer roundtables and advisory sessions regarding the Farm Bill. MPPA had many farmer leaders participate in the sessions held throughout the year.

One particular highlight was the listening session hosted by Sen. Amy Klobuchar who invited the Ranking Member of the Senate committee for Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Sen. John Bozeman (R-Arkansas). MPPA



member Lori Stevermer attended the listening session and lunch held with key Farm Bill stakeholders in Minnesota. Sens. Klobuchar and Bozeman have a history of working together across party lines on the agriculture committee in the U.S. Senate and have both been a part of previous successful Farm Bills. Stevermer highlighted the importance of foreign animal disease preparedness funding and the significant impact a disease outbreak could have on the entire agricultural economy.

## USDA Undersecretary Moffitt Visits Minnesota Pig Farm and Board Members



In July, United States Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Jennifer Moffitt and Deputy Undersecretary Katie Zenk visited Minnesota in July and were hosted by partners

at Schwartz Farms for a farm tour of a finishing barn near Mankato. Later that same day, the Undersecretary and Deputy Undersecretary joined MPPA leaders for a sit-down discussion. Undersecretary Moffitt oversees Marketing and Regulatory programs at the USDA including the Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Key areas discussed with Moffitt and Zenk included the continued need for work and investment for foreign animal disease prevention and preparedness, expansion of the Foreign Market Development and Market Access Programs (key trade promotion programs at USDA), and the need for continued improvement for price discovery, mandatory price reporting, and overall competitive markets.



## Minnesota Farmfest

Minnesota Farmfest remains a significant political stumping ground for state and federal legislators alike. Minnesota Pork leaders hosted many elected officials and regulators for discussions about policy topics and to broadly build understanding about key issues impacting Minnesota's family farmers. Featured guests to the Minnesota Pork tent included Governor Tim Walz, House Agriculture Chairman G.T. Thompson (R-Pennsylvania), Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Reps. Craig, Fischbach, Emmer, Stauber, Finstad, from Minnesota, Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa), and Rep. Max Miller (R-Ohio). MPPA also hosted numerous Minnesota state Senators and Representatives.



## Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Visits Trials End Farm



Sen. Aric Putnam (DFL-St. Cloud) completed his first year as chairman of the Minnesota Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee. New to the chair position and committee, Sen. Putnam made many visits to farms and agri-business

throughout the state, including Dale and Lori Stevermer's farm, Trials End Farm, near Easton.

Sen. Putnam was joined by Sen. Gene Dornink (R- Brownsdale) and Senate committee staff who also visited a corn and soybean farm earlier in the day. The Stevermers highlighted key policies the Senate committee discussed during the session shared their on-farm sustainability report and highlighted practices they use including the precision application of manure, cover cropping, and reduced tillage. A professor by training, the always curious Sen. Putnam set out to learn as much as he could about the complex agricultural economy in the state throughout the summer.

## Ambassador Tai at the Minnesota State Fair

The "Great Minnesota Get-Together" brings many local and state officials together to connect with exhibitors and fair-goers alike. This year, Sen. Amy Klobuchar hosted a number of high-profile leaders including USDA Secretary, Tom Vilsack. During the middle days of the fair, Sen. Klobuchar welcomed U.S. Trade Ambassador, Katherine Tai, which included a visit to the newly renovated Oink Booth at the Minnesota State Fair where farmer leaders and volunteers got



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## 2023 MPPA YEAR IN REVIEW

to speak with the Ambassador regarding trade market development activities and opening up new trading partnerships.

Rep. Angie Craig also visited the Pork Promotion Booth in the Dairy Building and spoke with Brian Schwartz and Victor Martinez. (*Angie Craig*)

### Kluever Family Hosts POTUS

With short notice and in the middle of the fall harvest, the Kluever family opened their farm to host the President of the United States, Joe Biden. The President was announcing his plan to make \$5 billion in new investments for rural America highlighting the vibrant agricultural and rural economies. MPPA member Brad Kluever introduced the President and spoke about the legacy of family farming, his family's commitment



to the social, economic, and environmental sustainability, and the opportunities and challenges of rural America. Kluever also called attention to the administration's investment in Climate Smart Commodities and the grants that are allowing farmers to adopt new or innovative practices while strengthening climate resiliency.



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# NPPC LEGISLATIVE ACTION CONFERENCE

In partnership with the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), Minnesota farmer leaders and related industry advocates meet with Minnesota's congressional delegation to raise issues important to pig farmers and the pork industry during the Spring and Fall Legislative Action Conferences (LAC). These formal visits build on the long-term strategy and relationships developed with Senators, Representatives and their respective staff leads on agriculture. While these are two, regular trips made each year, many in-state and in-district meetings take place to continue strengthening the relationship with Minnesota's elected officials.

As part of NPPC and MPPA's investment in future organization leaders, participants in the Pork Leadership Institute (PLI), veterinary externs and swine veterinarians also join the delegation of Minnesota farmers in DC, attend the congressional meetings, the pork legislative reception, and get to hear from other agencies and offices as they learn more about NPPC and MPPA's work to influence and advocate for farmers in the legislative and regulatory activities in Washington, DC.

## Spring LAC

The Spring LAC event is always a highlight as attendees are often able to see the famous blooming cherry blossoms while in the district in early spring.



**Representing northeast Minnesota in the eighth congressional district, Rep. Pete Stauber (R-Minnesota) always makes time to meet with Minnesota Pork leaders.**

Minnesota was represented in the spring meetings by MPPA farmer leaders John Anderson, Mike Boerboom, Todd Selvik and Andy Cook. Andy was a member of the 2023 PLI class. Jill Resler and Lauren Servick with the MPPA staff were also joined by the Regional Director of Producer Service for Minnesota with NPPC, Brad Schmidt. NPPC Board members Steve Malakowsky, Todd Marotz,

Lori Stevermer and Terry Wolters and participated in legislative meetings.

Issue briefings for the entire U.S. pork delegation kick off each LAC and also include featured guest speakers. NPPC staff lead briefings to discuss the key points of each of the asks that farmer leaders take to their congressional visits.



**During the Spring LAC, farm leaders met with Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minnesota) to discuss key policy priorities including asking for the Representative's support to find a solution to California's Proposition 12.**

The morning began with a welcome and address from House Agriculture Committee chairman, Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pennsylvania). The Chairman outlined his goals for the next Farm Bill and the work he is doing to visit as many districts as possible hosting listening sessions, gathering as much input from farmers as he can. Rep. Greg Murphy (R-North Carolina) also spoke to the group about the importance of their meetings and how best to help members with little agriculture background understand the issues important to pig farmers and the pork supply chain.

After a full day of congressional visits, the entire group went to the Mexican Cultural Institute for an evening reception and meal. The Mexican Cultural Institute serves



**Minnesota is well positioned in the U.S. Senate with two strong democratic leaders in the majority. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota) met with MPPA leaders during the Spring LAC at her office in the U.S. Capitol Building. The Senator is a key leader for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.**



as a venue for the Embassy of Mexico to host events and receptions, including celebrating and continuing diplomatic relations. In a rare appearance, Ambassador Esteban Moctezuma, the Mexican ambassador to the United States, addressed the group and joined farmers for dinner. The Ambassador along with others spoke about the critical trade relationship between the United States and Mexico, especially agriculture and pork.

## Fall LAC

The Fall LAC came at an active point in the federal legislative calendar. Senators and Representatives were approaching many important deadlines, including one to fund the federal government and avoid a shutdown. At the same time they were also on the precipice of votes that ultimately led to Rep. Mike McCarthy (R-California) being ousted as Speaker of the House.



**It's always a pleasure to meet with Minnesota's First Congressional District Representative Brad Finstad (R-Minnesota). Rep. Finstad brings a true farmer's voice to Congress and represents the first district well in his key position on the House Agriculture Committee.**

The sessions began with featured speaker Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kansas) who spoke about his efforts to work on Prop 12 legislation to reduce harm to agricultural producers and the pork industry.

In early September, Minnesota farmer leaders Daryl Timmerman, Jay Fultz, and Dr. Gordon Spronk, along with NPPC board members Todd Marotz, Steve Malakowsky, Terry Wolters, and Lori Stevermer took to the hill for congressional meetings. The congressional meetings were followed by the much-renowned "Baconfest" reception held at the Library of Congress. Many elected officials and key staffers attended the event while also providing a unique opportunity to network with other government officials and fellow pork producers.

## Key Legislative Issues Lobbied on During LAC

### 2023 Farm Bill – Protect the U.S. Food Supply:

Pig farmers advocated for a 2023 Farm Bill that fully funds the programs that safeguard the nation's food supply against threats posed by foreign animal diseases, as well as key programs that expand foreign markets for U.S. agricultural products. Specifically, these include the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, the National Veterinary Stockpile and the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank.

The U.S. pork industry has faced significant headwinds since 2018, when the Farm Bill was last reauthorized, due to trade retaliation, supply chain issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and looming threats of foreign animal disease. U.S. pig farmers need solutions to sustain an industry that supports more than 610,000 American jobs and generates nearly \$36 billion in personal income annually in rural America.

Also in this next Farm Bill, the pork industry would like to see the Beagle Brigade Act included, which provides critical inspections at our nation's ports of entry that prevent FADs from entering the U.S. Additionally, it provides congressional authority to the USDA's National Detector Dog Training Center — allowing it to continue to operate.

The 2018 Farm Bill provided funding for the eradication and control of feral swine through the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program (FSCP). Farmers advocated for at least maintaining the funding for the program to help address the threat of feral swine, particularly after seeing the effects of feral swine on the outbreak of African Swine Fever across the globe.

Another key area of the Farm Bill relates to programs that expand and support export markets; the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD). Farmers requested funding MAP and FMD as these programs have a high rate of return on investment in export markets for agricultural goods, including pork.

The upcoming Farm Bill offers the opportunity to address the challenges, provide the industry with the tools to prevent further disruption, and keep the food system safe and reliable.

# NPPC LEGISLATIVE ACTION CONFERENCE

## **California Proposition 12 – Provide Producer Certainty:**

American pig farmers support including a federal solution in the Farm Bill for the sweeping issues posed by the Supreme Court's decision to uphold California Proposition 12.



**MPPA continues working with key democratic leaders to find a federal solution to California's Proposition 12, which was a key topic of discussion with Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minnesota) and her agriculture staff lead, Adam Schiff.**

Livestock farmers, veterinarians and animal scientists work hard to follow industry standards and best practices to protect the welfare and health of animals in their care. California Proposition 12 ignores scientific research and facts about animal husbandry and reverses decades of progress on farm management and animal welfare.

## **Agriculture Labor Needs – Ensure Fair Markets and Competitive Opportunities and Strengthen the H-2A Visa Program:**

Agriculture suffers from a severe labor shortage that negatively affects all links in the food supply chain, particularly in the pork industry. Pig farm employment has declined since 2021, despite higher wages and competitive benefits. Although historically dependent on foreign-born workers, current visa requirements fail to meet pork industry workforce needs.

## **Trade – Expand and Develop Market Access:**

The U.S. pork industry supports trade agreements and other initiatives that open new and expand existing export markets as well as eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to U.S. pork exports.

U.S. pig farmers have built a global reputation for providing domestic and foreign markets with high-quality, affordable products. In 2022, the U.S. exported \$7.6 billion worth of pork to more than 100 countries and increased the average value of each pig marketed by nearly \$61. U.S. pork exports also support over 100,000 jobs domestically.

To grow exports and support high-paying jobs in rural communities, the United States must open new and expand existing markets through trade agreements, trade and investment framework agreements, and market access deals.

Specifically, farmers asked the Minnesota delegation to urge the administration to use the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) to address ongoing technical barriers to trade that limit market access among the negotiating parties, which encompass 13 countries and more than 1.5 billion consumers. IPEF was set to close in November, but the pork market access issues had not been resolved, including sanitary and phytosanitary issues. MPPA wanted to see IPEF resolve barriers to white offal market access into Vietnam, ongoing restrictions for chilled pork into Australia, and new overly restrictive labeling requirements in South Korea that threaten to close the entire market for U.S. pork.



**A key member of the Minnesota delegation to Congress, Rep. Michelle Fischbach can provide great leadership on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee as well as the House Budget, Ethics, and Rules committees.**





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The Minnesota Pork Producers Association continues to actively represent the interests of Minnesota's pig farming families in St. Paul. Through grassroots engagements and direction provided by MPPA members and Minnesota Pork executive board leaders, MPPA lobbyist, AJ Duerr and staff work to move proactive legislation forward while also working to defend legislation that would become a detriment to farmers or the broader pork production supply chain.

## 2023 Session Dynamics

After the 2022 election, Minnesota saw a “democratic trifecta” at the state legislature which began its session on January 3, 2023. For the first time in a decade, the Governor's seat, House, and Senate were all led by members of the DFL. In the Minnesota House of Representatives, the DFL was led by Speaker Melissa Hortman (DFL- Brooklyn Park) and House Majority Leader Jamie Long (DFL- Minneapolis). The Minnesota Senate was led by Senate Majority Leader Kari Dziedzic (DFL - Minneapolis). Rep. Lisa Demuth (R- Cold Spring) and Sen. Mark Johnson (R- East Grand Forks) were minority leaders of the republican caucuses respectively.

In addition to the “trifecta,” there were a couple of other key dynamics that influenced the outcome of the legislative session. First, the state had a historic budget surplus. The session began with a projected budget surplus of \$17.6 billion, roughly 24% of the state biennial budget. This unprecedented amount of extra cash was a topic of debate amongst each legislative body, which at times was even at odds with the Governor, all of which had their ideas on how to utilize the money. Many expected the historic surplus to lead to some tax relief or one-time spending. However, the final state budget that was adopted included the budget surplus and an additional \$19.3 billion in increased spending. This was a general fund budget increase of 37%, for a historic state budget for FY 2024-2025 set at \$71.5 billion.

Another key dynamic was the wrinkle that a thin, 34-33 majority in the Minnesota Senate added to larger policy and funding bills including the bonding bill. Typically, a bonding bill requires a super majority, or 60% favorable vote to pass which would require GOP support to pass. An alternative approach includes using cash to fund the bonding projects which would not have the same requirements necessary to pass the House and Senate. Both a cash and bond bill were passed for capital investments across the state.

The final key factor was the need for the state to pass a balanced budget. Minnesota's legislature runs on a biennium, where in the first year of the session, the state must pass a balanced budget to avoid a government shutdown. Typically, the first year is known as the budget year, while the second year becomes a bonding year. DFL members saw their opportunity with majorities to move ahead on a number of their key priorities, including passing a state budget and a bonding bill.

The DFL capitalized on its trifecta of power, seeing many social priorities become law including codifying and expanding access to abortions, mandatory paid family and medical leave, expanding access to mail-in voting and voter registration, providing driver licenses to all people, mandating 100% of electricity generation comes from renewable sources by 2040, and providing for free school meals for all students, amongst other provisions. Democrats laid out an ambitious agenda at the beginning of the session and almost seemed to surprise themselves with how much they were able to accomplish.

## 2023 Legislative Session Review from MPPA's Perspective

MPPA was able to exclude the pork industry from many of the most burdensome regulations proposed this session and even provide some property tax relief in the Tax bill. Here is a run-down on some of the top issues that MPPA followed this session:

### Agriculture

**Soil Health Equipment Grants** - Established in the 2022 session, the Soil Health Equipment Grants were renewed this legislative session and saw an increase in funding available for the grant program at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). The grant provides cost-share dollars for farmers looking to purchase equipment, make retrofits to existing equipment, or



During the early days of the 2023 Session, House Agriculture Finance and Policy Chair, Rep. Samantha Vang (DFL- Brooklyn Center) invited farmer Mark Schwartz to testify before the committee regarding the preparedness and planning efforts of Minnesota's pig farmers related to African Swine Fever and other Foreign Animal Diseases. Schwartz informed the committee of the many efforts farmers are doing to prepare and prevent an outbreak on their farms.



purchase materials to expand their soil health practices. The program saw an overwhelming amount of applicants for the modest \$475,000 investment in the 2022 round of the grant. In the 2023 session, the agriculture budget that passed included \$2,375,000 dollars to continue expanding the popular program. This effort was supported and led by several agricultural commodity groups including corn, soybean, pork, and dairy, in addition to the Minnesota Farm Bureau, Minnesota Farmers Union, and The Nature Conservancy.

**Board of Animal Health (BOAH)** – The Board of Animal Health was a frequent topic of the 2023 legislative session. Legislation was introduced and heard in the House agriculture committee that would have completely transformed the make-up of the BOAH and taken away all expertise requirements. The bill also looked to make the State Veterinarian an appointee of the Governor instead of being hired by the board. There was no companion language introduced or heard in the Senate. The final language in the Omnibus Ag Bill added one additional licensed veterinarian to the Board and required that one of the three licensed veterinarians have expertise in companion animals.

There was also language included in the Omnibus Environment Bill that transfers the jurisdiction over regulating farmed white-tailed deer from the BOAH to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

**Companion Animal Board** – Legislation to create a new Companion Animal Board was once again introduced at the legislature. This new board could be made up mostly of people from animal rights groups and would have rulemaking authority. Language to exclude livestock was included, but concerns for livestock agriculture remained. This bill was not heard in the House or Senate and did not pass.

**Office of Animal Protection** – This bill would not create a new board or alter any regulations, but rather hire several new employees under an “Office of Animal Protection” in the Department of Public Safety to enforce animal cruelty laws pertaining to companion animals. This legislation was considered by some to be an alternative to the previously mentioned Companion Animal Board. The bill was not heard in the House or Senate and did not pass.

**“Crate Free” Livestock Investment Grants** – The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) sponsored legislation to add “crate-free swine facilities” to the list of things that the MDA can approve under the Livestock Investment Grant program. While the Department can already do this, there was concern this discussion would provide a platform to attack the industry. The bill was not heard in the House or Senate and did not pass.

**Alternative Protein Research Grants** – Another seemingly annual bill would provide \$3 million to organizations to research the production and marketability of plant-based protein. This legislation is being pushed by the D.C.-based organization “The Good Food Institute.” The bill was not heard in the House or Senate and did not pass.

## Environment

**Financial Assurances for Feedlot Permits** – This bill would require that any feedlot project over 1,000 animal units provide the “financial assurances” for abandonment upfront before the permit could be approved. This would



**MPPA President, Daryl Timmerman testified in the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee in opposition to H.F. 955 which would require feedlots over 1000 animal units to carry financial assurance for abandonment. Timmerman was among other agriculture and livestock groups that testified in opposition to the bill authored by committee chairman, Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul).**

cause significant financial hardship for livestock producers across the state for a problem that doesn't exist. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MCPA) has stated that there are no abandoned feedlots over 1,000 animal units. This bill was included in the House Environment Budget bill but was removed by an amendment on the House Floor due to objections from rural DFL members. It was not heard in the Senate or included in the Senate Environment bill and did not pass.

**Recreation of the MPCA Citizens Board** – A proposal to bring back the MPCA Citizen Board moved through the legislature this session. This bill would recreate the board and give them final authority to approve or not approve all permitting at the MPCA. The Citizen Board was abolished after the 2015 session when many legislators felt the Citizen's Board was overstepping by denying permits based on activism rather than the merits of the application. This bill was included in the House Environment Budget bill but was removed by an amendment on the House Floor due to objections from rural DFL members.

# 2023 MN LEGISLATIVE SESSION YEAR IN REVIEW



**MPPA representatives met with Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls) in St. Paul during MPPA's Hill Visits on March 1. Left to Right: Josh Anderson, Brad Hennen, Sen. Dahms, Jill Resler, and Mike Boerboom.**

It was heard in the Senate State Government Committee but was not included in the Senate Environment bill. This bill is opposed by nearly all groups that receive permits through the MPCA. This legislation did not pass.

**Cumulative Effects** – A large portion of the various bills dealing with “environmental justice” have to do with measuring and regulating the cumulative effects of pollution in environmental justice areas. These bills are not new but have been greatly expanded during the 2023 session. The MPCA Commissioner would have to consider these cumulative effects before issuing a permit, but many questions remain as to what that exactly means. This bill was heard and included in both the House and Senate Environment bills but with some significant differences. The final version of this legislation included in the Omnibus Environment bill only applies to major air permits and permits located in the seven-county metro area.

**Odor Regulation** – This legislation looked to regulate “offensive odor” and was heard in the House Environment committee and included in the House Environment Bill. This language will require the MPCA and a permit holder to take extensive action to mitigate odor if ten people submit a complaint to the MPCA. The final language in the Omnibus Environment bill exempts farms and only applies to permits in the seven-county metro area.

## Taxes

**Ag Homestead Expansion** – This bill expanded the current valuation limit for an agricultural homestead from \$2.7 million to \$3.5 million and allowed for future inflationary adjustments. While it would vary widely across the state, the average homestead would increase by about 80 acres and farmers would pay the much lower .5% rate on those acres. The purpose of this legislation is to try to keep up with what a commercially viable farm

looks like. The bill was heard in the Senate Tax committee, led by Sen. Bill Weber (R-Luverne), and was included in the final Tax Bill.

**Capital Gains Tax** – Governor Walz proposed a new tax on investment income over \$1 million when he released his budget recommendations in January, but neither the House nor Senate discussed the topic until the final days of the Tax Conference committee. When the Senate said they were dropping their proposal on the World-Wide Reporting tax, this Walz provision was brought back to fill the revenue hole in the target. Agricultural land sales were excluded from this tax at the last minute.

## Human Services

**Center for Rural Behavioral Health** – MPPA actively supported an appropriation from the Human Services committee awarding a grant through the Department of Human Services for the Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University, Mankato. This funding is to establish a community behavioral health center and training clinic to provide these services to the Blue Earth County area while also serving as a training clinic and workforce development opportunity for students enrolled in social work, counseling, alcohol and drug studies, psychology, and nursing. This effort is complementary to investments made by the Minnesota Pork Board through a checkoff investment to continue addressing the dire need for rural mental health professionals and resources.

While the 2023 legislative session was a fast and furious one, efforts by agriculture and farmer leaders helped to



communicate how these issues would impact farms and rural communities. Building relationships with elected officials is a key aspect of effective advocacy and MPPA encourages all members to get involved and communicate with their elected officials. This will be especially important as the next session is set to begin on February 12, 2024.

**MPPA Board member and Belgrade, Minn. farmer, John Anderson, met with Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck) during the MPPA St. Paul Hill visit day on March 1, 2023. Rep. Anderson is the Republican Lead on the House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee.**





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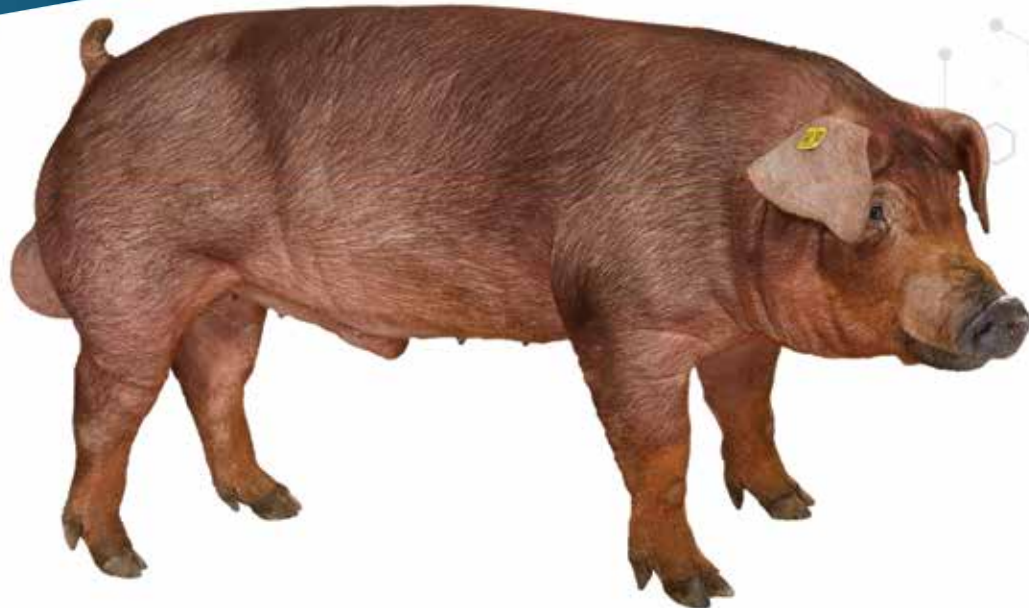


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