

National Pork Board

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Update on Pork Checkoff Activities for NichePORK

July 2004

To help keep you informed of the latest happenings and upcoming events related to Checkoff funded NichePORK marketing and the NichePORK website, we will send occasional updates.

Promotion of *nichepork.org* Website Kicks Off Next Month

A national NichePORK print ad targeting professional chefs will start running in August 2004. The goal of the ad is to create awareness of and drive traffic to nichepork.org and plays on the fact that chefs are always looking for unique menu ideas that will appeal to their customers' distinct tastes. The ad showcases an upscale menu board with various niche pork "Spécialités du jour" such as *organic free-range pork sirloin with tomato eggplant risotto* with the message "to source unique niche pork products for your menu visit www.nichepork.org." Ads have been placed in Food Arts, CHEF, Plate, and The National Culinary Review through December 2004. A brochure, that doubles as a direct mail piece, was also created to build awareness of and drive traffic to nichepork.org. It has been designed for use with chefs as well as specialty/upscale retailers and consumers looking for niche products.

New on the NichePORK Website

- The niche producer database continues to expand and now includes 120 producers from 27 states. Please check your website listing. If you'd like to update or change it, just let us know. If you know of other producers involved in niche pork production that may be interested in being listed, please call (or have them call) the Pork Checkoff Service Center at 800-456-PORK (800-456-7675).
- The niche packer database has been further developed and now includes 35 packers/processors from 16 states. If you know of any other packers/processors that may be interested in being part of the niche database, please call (or have them call) the Pork Checkoff Service Center at 800-456-PORK (800-456-7675).
- The home page features a niche producer each month. Producers featured in 2nd quarter 2004 included Carousel Farms of Iowa and the Bright Farm in Virginia. If you're interested in being the featured niche producer, call 800-456-PORK (800-456-7675).
- New Hot Topics articles currently featured include "High on the Hog" from the National Culinary Review February 2004 issue. An archive of past Hot Topics articles now exists on the site.
- The next NichePORK Conference sponsored by the National Pork Board and the Iowa Pork Producers Association is now listed under "Calendar of Events". See details below.

NichePORK Research Being Conducted

- A research study was just completed in June 2004 with professional chefs to explore their attitudes, demands, and willingness to pay a premium for niche pork products and other niche proteins. Fifty telephone interviews were conducted with chefs from all over the country.
- A focus group with a different set of professional chefs will follow at the American Culinary Federation (ACF) Annual Convention in Orlando later this month.
- A report of these studies will be made available on nichepork.org in 3rd quarter 2004. These are the first formal research efforts conducted as part of the NichePORK Checkoff program and represent a starting place for better understanding the total potential marketplace for niche pork products in foodservice, retail and with consumers.

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- In addition to these efforts, media monitoring – better known as a clipping service – was put in place in May 2004 to help the National Pork Board keep a finger on the pulse of niche pork happenings appearing in print nationwide. Articles will be collected, reviewed, and possibly posted under Hot Topics on nichepork.org.

NichePORK at World Pork Expo 2004

This year's World Pork Expo was held June 10-12 in Des Moines, Iowa. NichePORK had a presence there with a booth/exhibit in the main Pork Checkoff area plus staff and a display in the Swine Barn during the complimentary producer breakfasts and lunches.

- A niche producer mentor program kicked off informally at Expo with a "Meet the Mentor" activity in the booth. Niche producers on hand to visit with other producers interested in niche pork production included Bob Uphoff of Uphoff Ham & Bacon, Carol Mueller of Prairie Grove Farms, and Dane Bourquin of Salmon Creek Farms.
- The nichepork.org website was available on computer(s) for producers to browse through, look up information, etc.
- Additional sign-ups for the niche producer and packer website databases were taken at the booth as well as sign-ups to receive the November 30 NichePORK Conference registration information.
- Materials made available/on display at Expo included the new NichePORK print ad and brochure/direct mail piece plus reprints of the Wall Street Journal article and the Pork Report Consumer Connections media coverage on niche pork.

NichePORK was also included as one of the on-stage program presentations at the Pork Checkoff Café and sampling area on Friday afternoon, June 11.

Upcoming NichePORK Conference

The next NichePORK Conference for producers currently involved in or considering niche pork production is coming up on November 30, 2004 at Iowa State Center in Ames, Iowa. Topics at this NichePORK Conference will focus on marketing niche products. More details about conference speakers and topics will be available late summer/early fall. If you would like to receive registration information please contact Joyce Hoppes of the Iowa Pork Producers Association at 515-225-7675 or Larry Cizek of the National Pork Board at 515-223-2639. Information and presentations from previous NichePORK Conferences are available on the NichePORK website by going to the "Calendar of Events" section and clicking on "Niche Conferences".

NichePORK Marketing Producer Committee Starts 2005 Planning

The producer committee formed in December of 2003 to provide direction and oversight of the NichePORK program plan of work will meet for the second time in 2004 on July 12-13 to provide input and guidance on 2005 strategies and activities to expand niche marketing into new areas and gain interest from producers and the industry.

