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THOUGHTS FROM 109 KILDEE

New paper on “dry sow” welfare

The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) has released a new issue paper, “Scientific Assessment of the Welfare of Dry Sows Kept in Individual Accommodations.” The paper’s abstract explains the need for the paper and for additional research before regulations are put in place that may be more costly but not necessarily better for sow welfare: “In determining whether or not the welfare of sows is compromised (by using individual gestation accommodations for dry sows in commercial pork production), individuals and lawmakers may act emotively and without factual scientific information. Too few statistically adequate, scientifically controlled trials on industry farms have been conducted; many reports are not useful for critical evaluation, let alone for developing public policy,” and “The authors indicate that more large-scale, on-farm, multidisciplinary, scientifically robust research and development is needed before rigid regulations—which would increase production costs but not necessarily sow welfare—should be imposed.”

This paper was authored and reviewed by a nine-member international task force, chaired by Stanley Curtis, Animal Sciences, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Other team members are Butch Baker, Veterinary Diagnostic and Production Animal Medicine, Iowa State University; Mark Estienne of Virginia Tech Tidewater Agricultural Research and Extension Center; P. Brendan Lynch, Pig Production Development Unit, Moorepark Research Centre, Ireland; John McGlone, Animal and Food Sciences, Texas Tech University; Bjarne Pedersen, Danish Farm Design A/S, Denmark; Jerome Geiger, PIC-North America, Tennessee; Don Levis, Animal Sciences, University of Nebraska; and Janeen Salak-Johnson, Animal Sciences, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

The 20-page paper is available as a free pdf download from the CAST Web site here <http://sn.im/dzv8z>

NEWS

Less loading stress, more live pigs

Lessening movement stress can pay big dividends for the conscientious pork producer. A study by two folks with ISU ties showed that stress effects for groups of four hogs were lower and the number of live and ambulatory hogs at the packing plant was higher than for similar groups of eight hogs. Nick Berry (Ph.D. in animal science with a focus on animal handling from ISU in 2007 who now works for Cargill) and Matt Ritter (as ELANCO Animal Health swine technical consultant with expertise in pig handling and transportation, he spoke on the subject at our 2007 Iowa Pork Regional Conferences) measured load and unload times, open-mouth breathing, skin discoloration and other physical signs of stress of 265-pound pigs. They compared groups of 8 with those half that size, and found noticeable differences with the more

desirable results weighing in on the smaller groups. Table for four, please? You can read more about the study and results on the PORK magazine Web site here <http://sn.im/ees28>

Why (not) study pig odor?

The state of Iowa made national headlines, again, when an earmark for studying swine odor in Iowa was publicized. The earmark was for USDA's ARS in Ames, and Iowa senator Tom Harkin said there's a very good reason why it should remain. In an article on the Scientific American Web site, he said, "This item is only included as an earmark now because the last Bush budget proposed to terminate a number of agricultural research projects in order to come in at a lower budget number, knowing full well that this needed research was likely to be restored by Congress." In an interview with Scientific American, ISU agricultural and biosystems engineering associate professor Jacek Koziel explained why it's a good idea to study pig odor. Information from Harkin and an edited transcript of Koziel's interview are on the SA Web site here <http://sn.im/dxf9h>

Want to go into business with ISU?

The name of Iowa State's Office of Intellectual Property & Technology Transfer is a mouthful, but the office helps move research results "from the laboratory to the marketplace" according to its Web site <http://sn.im/e5fbg> What's that got to do with swine? Earlier this month, it announced ISU researchers have developed a diagnostic test that can distinguish animals vaccinated for protection against the porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV) from those infected with the virus. This has the potential to help producers and their vets trying to determine whether a herd is infected or has been vaccinated. The technology now is available for licensing to those in private business. Take a look here <http://sn.im/e5ed3>.

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IT'S A DATE

Continuing. PQAPlus certification sessions. See the IPIC web site here <http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/PQAPlus.html> for date, location and contact information.

Continuing. FSQA training and testing sessions for Iowa 4-H'ers. See the IPIC web site here <http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/FSQA09.html> for date, location and contact information

March 30. Marketing and Food Systems Initiative & Value Chain Partnerships Workshop. Sponsored by Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Gateway Conference Center, Ames. 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. No cost, but you must register by today, March 23 to ensure a lunch ticket. Look under "Marketing Workshop" on the Center's homepage here <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/events.htm>

March 31. Pork Niche Market Working Group. Iowa Institute for Co-ops, Ames. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. See more about the group here <http://valuechains.org/pnmwg/>

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DID YOU KNOW?

Free online Webinars from DTN/Progressive Farmer

Many farmers likely keep up with pertinent market news via DTN. The Web site, www.dtnprogressivefarmer.com offers a quick look at many topics with segments of news, markets, weather, blogs and forums. Here's another reason why you might want to give the site another look: DTN and Progressive Farmer offer free Webinars, Web-based programs you access using any of three media player programs. Not only that, but past programs also are posted on the site so they're available for viewing at any time after their live date. (You do need to register for this option.) The final program for this month is set for this Thursday, March 26, on "How to negotiate a wind energy contract." Featured presenters include Iowa State's agricultural law expert Roger McEowen and Kathy Lusk, consultant with a

decade of experience in negotiating wind energy contracts throughout North America. To learn more, register for live programs and ensure you have the appropriate media player to see the live broadcasts, go to the site's home page <http://sn.im/dzw8t> and click on "Seminars & Events" under the DTN heading in the left hand column.

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FOR THE RECORD

Honors for Iowa folks

Iowa pork producer Sam Carney is the new president-elect of the National Pork Producers Council. The Adair farmer just finished a term as vice president. He's joined by Howard Hill, DVM, from Cambridge on the NPPC board. Hill was re-elected to a three-year term. The elections were held during the NPPC annual business meeting, the National Pork Industry Forum, in Dallas, TX. Read more in a news release from NPPC <http://sn.im/dj35b>

Iowa State University student Paul Keppy was awarded a \$2,500 Chicago Mercantile Exchange scholarship at the National Pork Industry Forum. Keppy, a senior from Davenport, was one of four students who earned the scholarship for college students who intend to pursue careers in the pork industry. Read more in this NPPC release <http://sn.im/dj3k5>

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