2003 Pork Month Story Ideas
Iowa Pork Industry Center
Iowa State University, Ames, IA

These lists of Iowa State University Web sites and pork-related story ideas are provided for your use. The story ideas list is not an inclusive list of projects, research and programs coordinated or led by Iowa State University and ISU Extension specialists, but rather it offers a brief look at the wide range of activities in which our specialists are involved. You may contact any of the listed specialists using the numbers and addresses provided, or contact me for more information. Thanks in advance for the opportunity to help you provide your audiences with the latest pork-related information.

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ISU Web sites to bookmark for news and story ideas
Iowa Pork Industry Center <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ipic/>
IPIC news releases <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ipic/newsreleases.html>
MidWest Plan Service <http://www.mwpshq.org/>
ISU Extension, Ag & Natural Resources <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/>
ISU Extension news releases <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/newsrel/>
ISU College of Agriculture news releases <http://www.ag.iastate.edu/aginfo/news/home.html>
ISU Ag & Biosystems Eng. <http://www.abe.iastate.edu/>
ISU Food Science & Human Nutrition <http://www.fcs.iastate.edu/fshn/>

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MidWest Plan Service turns 75 in 2004! MidWest Plan Service has been supplying educational resources to farmers since 1929. Starting as a way for people to have proper designs for farmer-built chicken houses and dairy barns, MWPS now produces handbooks with management and design information on a variety of topics. MWPS is a cooperative effort of 12 land-grant universities and is based in the Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering Department at Iowa State University.
For more information, contact Jay Harmon, Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, 202 Davidson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; (515) 294-0554; <jharmon@iastate.edu>

Emergency carcass composting research is under way at ISU. Carcass composting of large animals is being done with various on-farm materials to simulate a large-scale disease outbreak. Researchers are investigating biosecurity as well as water quality and air quality associated with the composting site.
For more information, contact Jay Harmon, Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, 202 Davidson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; (515) 294-0554; <jharmon@iastate.edu>; or Tom Glanville, Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, 201 Davidson Hall, (515) 294-0463, <tglanvil@iastate.edu>; or Donald Reynolds, Veterinary Medical Research Institute, 2520 Vet Med, ISU, (515) 294-9348, <dlr@iastate.edu>
Study looks at improving weaning rates when winter farrowing in a cold climate. One of the weak areas in outdoor pig production is winter farrowing. This study is looking at ways to improve weaning rates in a cold barn while maintaining low costs and niche market requirements.

For more information, contact Jay Harmon, Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, 202 Davidson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; (515) 294-0554; <jharmon@iastate.edu> or Mark Honeyman, Animal Science, B1 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University, (515) 294-4621, <honeyman@iastate.edu>

Iowa State University Extension hosts manure digester conference. The Iowa Manure Digester Conference, held Aug. 20 in Oelwein, provided the latest information on methods, materials and facilities involved in the manure digestion process. Livestock producers interested in setting up such a system on their farm heard from 13 speakers who discussed the operation, maintenance, design, economics and power supplier's role in digesters with engines and with micro turbines to generate electricity. ISU Extension ag engineer field specialist Dan Meyer coordinated the conference and has been involved with the creation and installation of a digester on a northeast Iowa dairy operation. Program videotapes, CD or paper copies of the presentations, and speaker and exhibitor listings are available for a charge.

For more information, contact Dan Meyer, Fayette County Extension, P.O. Box 700, Fayette, IA 52142; (563) 425-3331; <djmeyer@iastate.edu>

U.S. trichinellosis numbers are among the lowest in the world. Thanks in large part to effective management practices by American pork producers, the reported incidence of this parasitic disease has continued a steady decline since record keeping began in 1947. In fact, during the most recent surveillance period (1997-2001) the Centers for Disease Control reports that just 72 people were infected in the entire country. Sam Beattie, Iowa State University Extension specialist in food science, says most of those cases were linked to wild game rather than commercially produced pork. The increased emphasis on good biosecurity practices at all pork production sites, including rodent control, minimal exposure to live wildlife and good hygiene, is a major factor in virtually eliminating this parasitic roundworm from commercially produced U.S. pork.

For more information, contact Sam Beattie, Food Science and Human Nutrition, 133 Mackay, Iowa State University, Ames, IA; (515) 294-3357; <beatties@iastate.edu>

Ammonia emission reduction studies may provide recommendations for dietary and management strategies. In studies where initial research was just completed, ISU scientists looked at management and dietary strategies for reducing ammonia emissions from manure. In the first study using a control diet, the effects of three post-excretion strategies, plus temperature and stirring effects on ammonia loss were measured. In the second study, separate feeding trials looked at ammonia emissions when 1) diets with varying protein contents were fed and 2) diets containing dietary additives reported to bind ammonia were fed. Data analyses for both studies are under way. Strategies that effectively inhibit or limit the formation of ammonia or that help reduce excess nitrogen excretion may be identified for use by producers as tools to maintain air emission compliance.

For more information, contact Dr. Wendy Powers, Animal Science, 109 Kildee, Iowa State University, Ames, IA; (515) 294-1635; <wpowers@iastate.edu> Check out her research Web site at <http://www.ans.iastate.edu/research/nutrientlab.html>

Knowing how watersheds function is key to Iowa’s agricultural future. Matt Helmers has been studying Nebraska watersheds, including their hydrology, since 1999. Now that he's on the ISU agricultural and biosystems engineering faculty, he plans to continue that work in Iowa. Determining the effects of various factors that contribute to watershed functions and minimizing the environmental impacts of agriculture and society on
watersheds are his ultimate goals. He's particularly interested in vegetative filters and their effectiveness as a tool in reducing downstream movement of sediment, phosphorus and other potential contaminants to the state's waterways. He also will be working with related projects, including ongoing drainage projects in Iowa.

For more information, contact Matt Helmers, Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, 209 Davidson, Iowa State University, Ames, IA; (515) 294-6717; <mhelmers@iastate.edu>

Iowa Pork Industry Center offers first certification program for National Swine Welfare ProgramSM. Iowa State University was the location of the first-ever certification program for the National Pork Board's Swine Welfare Assurance ProgramSM (SWAPSM) in August 2003. Approximately 70 persons from 11 states qualified to attend one of three training sessions for the program held on the ISU campus. SWAPSM was designed by an international team of producers and welfare experts to objectively benchmark and track welfare on swine farms, and was conducted by three ISU faculty members who are certified as SWAPSM educator training instructors. Although this is a voluntary program, attendees who passed the SWAPSM certification exam are expected to be in demand from producers of all sizes who want to show that their operations include animal welfare as a primary goal. The certification program was coordinated and taught by ISU faculty members from the College of Agriculture and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

For more information, contact James McKean, Iowa Pork Industry Center, Iowa State University, Ames, IA; (515) 294-8792; <x2mckean@iastate.edu>

Study Shows Barley adds Little Advantage to Hog Diets
As the number of Canadian hog imports continues to grow, members of the U.S. hog industry are determined to keep domestic pork quality at a high level. Many Canadian hog operations use barley as a major energy source because of its availability and relatively low price, and researchers wondered whether the use of barley was responsible for adding positive quality attributes to imported pork. A study involving more than 1,000 hogs at Iowa State University showed that using barley as a partial or complete protein source in the grow-finish phase does not necessarily create an economic advantage for producers. Five different diets were used in the study to provide comparison opportunities in meat quality analysis. Of the five, none showed distinct advantages in any of several areas including average daily gain, backfat thickness or percent fat-free lean, or in meat eating quality traits as measured by trained sensory panel analysis. Because the study showed no economic advantage for either type of corn or barley as a protein source, researchers say producers who want to use barley as a primary energy source should consider its availability and relative cost when making that decision.

For more information, contact Jay Lampe, Animal Science, Iowa State University, Ames, IA; (515) 294-4103; <lampej@iastate.edu> or John Mabry, Iowa Pork Industry Center, Iowa State University, Ames, IA; (515) 294-6325; <jmabry@iastate.edu>