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THOUGHTS FROM 109 KILDEE
See you at the Iowa State Fair
State fair aficionados are counting down the last few days, and then hours, before the 2011 Iowa State Fair officially gets under way this Thursday, Aug. 11. There are those who can’t wait to try the latest food on a stick, and those who are ready to demonstrate their learning and skills in the livestock rings, and those whose exhibits will be on display in the 4-H, FFA and open class shows in the various buildings on the grounds. From watching the family-oriented contests at Pioneer Hall, to being part of what’s hoped to the largest “stop, drop and roll” event on the grand concourse, to simply strolling around the approximately 435 total acres of the grounds, there’s never a dull moment at the fair. It sounds like great fair weather through at least the first weekend, with day temps in the low 80s and evening temps dipping to the 60s (cue the “Is this heaven?” line.) Of course no matter what you like to do, you’ll want to check out the swine and pork related opportunities while you’re there. 4-H, FFA and open class shows, the swine premier exhibitor competition for older 4-H members, pork chop on a stick, the pork tent, the biggest boar and more await you. The Paul R. Knapp Animal Learning Center features live births of various species including pigs, Pig Place in the Swine Barn is an interactive display for all things swine, and Ask a Farmer in the John Deere Agriculture Building features daily sessions with Iowa farmers where audience members are encouraged to ask questions and learn more about the people and the farming profession in Iowa. We’ll see you at the Fair!

NEWS
Swine Feed Efficiency Conference
A new conference designed to bring together anyone involved in the technical aspects of pork production as it relates to feed efficiency is scheduled for early November. The International Conference on Feed Efficiency in Swine is a forum that will present the “full breadth of knowledge on swine feed efficiency.” Topics range from the influence of feed processing on efficiency, to the role of dietary amino acids on feed efficiency, to the role of genetic selection on feed efficiency. Producers, nutritionists, veterinarians, geneticists, all could benefit from attending this conference. Fee for the Nov. 8-9 event, to be held in Omaha, is $175 per person ($50 per student) when registered by Oct. 5, and $275 and $100 respectively after that date. The conference is sponsored by ISU and Kansas State University. See more information and registration details here http://www.ans.iastate.edu/ICFES/

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New look for CAST website
You might remember reading here of the availability of any of a number of white papers written and provided by CAST (Council for Agricultural Science and Technology.) The Ames, Iowa based entity recently announced news of a different sort: a redesigned website. The main URL remains the same: http://www.cast-science.org/ but with
the addition of four segments just below a changing main article, it’s much easier to find what you’re looking for on this content-rich site. News, awards, financial support, and a search function all help lead the viewer more directly to desired information. And one cool feature in the lower right corner: an updated map (with a link to a larger version) showing visitors to the website by geographical location.

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Closeouts provide valuable information
When a group of pigs is sold and the room or barn is emptied, the records are "closed out." Compiling accurate records is a constant effort, but it’s essential to accurately monitor performance. Completing the records for each group of pigs is key to helping recognize variations among groups. It’s important to not only to have complete data, but to analyze closeouts to account for explainable sources of variation from group to group. Learning what can and should be changed for future groups makes good economic sense. IPIC has software that can assist producers with these financial tasks. See offerings here www.ipic.iastate.edu/softwarepurchase.html

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IT'S A DATE
Continuing, PQA Plus® and TQA® producer certification sessions. See the IPIC web site here http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/PQAPlus.html for date, location and contact information.

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Aug. 14. Premier 4-H Swine Exhibitor Contest. Iowa State Fair Grounds, Des Moines. This contest is for 4-H Iowa State Fair swine exhibitors who have completed 11th or 12th grade. It begins at 4:30 p.m. in the swine barn. New this year: cash prizes will be paid from 1st thru 5th place ($1500, $1000, $500, $300, $200) a lucky participant will win a free iPad. Choose “Swine” and “SampleQuestions.pdf” under “Premier Exhibitor Info” on the right side of the page for more information about this specific contest.

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DID YOU KNOW?
Summer slump and outdoors animals
Recent research findings from the University of Leeds (UK) on outdoor production seems to indicate that cooling facilities should be provided to outdoor sows when the average daily temperature is higher than 18 degrees C. (That’s roughly 64 degrees F.) The data was analyzed relative to weather data and geographical location, which has shown that several days of warm weather (ave. temp of 18 C) results in lower and more variable farrowing rates. A BPEX (British Pig Executive) representative said that sow heat production increases as lactation progresses, so heat production and correspondingly the susceptibility to developing heat stress is greater just before weaning. A new factsheet of management guidelines for producers includes these: provide wallows early in the year as well as summer, or sprinklers for sows to cool down in; monitor sow feed intake and if sows are not eating, provide more energy-dense feed or take steps to cool them; and paint farrowing arcs white to reflect sunlight and reduce temperatures inside. You can read more in this article on the Pig Progress website http://sn.im/coolsowsnn080811 and you can download the factsheet from the BPEX website http://www.bpex.org.uk/2TS/breeding/resources.aspx.

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FOR THE RECORD
Food-related pathogen outbreaks at a glance
A database that provides summaries of significant pathogen outbreaks that are food and water related is provided by the Marler Clark Network, and includes outbreaks since 1984. The database http://www.outbreakdatabase.com/ is simple to use, with search sections of keywords, food/beverage, month, state, organism, year and country. Select as many or as few as you wish. This specific URL is part of a group of related sites (see more at the bottom of the page) associated with Bill Marler, a personal injury and product liability attorney who also writes the Marler Blog (http://www.marlerblog.com/)