NEWS NOW from the Iowa Pork Industry Center
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THOUGHTS FROM 109 KILDEE
Approval ratings remain high
Of nearly 600 respondents, 87 percent said they want to pursue an ag-related career, including farming. (That's up 11 percentage points from the initial survey two years ago.) Of this number, 84 percent want livestock to be part of their farming career. Ninety-seven percent said they're optimistic about the future of agriculture and more than three-fourths said they plan to get at least a four-year college education. Who am I talking about, and why are these numbers important? The 586 Iowa FFA members who completed a survey from the Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers in April of this year represent what's positive about Iowa's agriculture and livestock industries. We all know that plans can change and that 14 to 18-year-olds can't always see the future, but I think the survey findings are good news for Iowa agriculture. While the numbers themselves should be reassuring, keep in mind that about one-third of those surveyed (and about half of Iowa's FFA members in general) do NOT live on a farm. And that "brain drain" that seems to make the news on a dismally regular basis? It's not necessarily happening with FFA members. Three-fourths said they will live and work in their home state after finishing their college education, and 16 percent said that while they'd leave for a few years, they do plan to return to Iowa for career and family. That means less than 10 percent plan to leave the state for good. For many of the questions, positive responses actually increased compared with the initial survey two years ago. And that's truly good news.

NEWS
Cheap double cheeseburgers on the way out?
Whatever the name: “Dollar menu” or “99-cent Stack Attack” or “Value Menu”, the idea is the same. Spark interest in a cheaply-priced entrée at a fast food restaurant, and hope that the customer eventually tries (and continues to buy) premium offerings. One such marketing tool, the dollar (or 99-cent) double cheeseburger, is one I can speak about with authority. Given the opportunity, I will always buy a double cheeseburger from McDonald's, rather than two separate cheeseburgers. First is the cost itself, but second is the idea of just half as much bun in my sandwich. But industry consultants are urging quick-service restaurants (QSR) like McDonald's to more aggressively market their higher-end products. And the nation's QSRs seem to be getting the message. According to an article in the April Meatingplace magazine, nearly 10 percent of McDonald's franchises don't carry the double cheeseburger on their menu. In fact, one consultant said the item could be gone from the dollar menu at all McDonald's by the end of this year. You can read the article here http://snipr.com/29n32
Honors for spring IPIC Science with Practice students
You might recall that two students (Samantha Morine and Cindy Walter) from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at ISU worked here in the IPIC office as part of the college's Science with Practice program. As part of that program (which also includes course credit) the students are required to make a poster about their experience and then exhibit it at a special SWP poster session at the end of the semester. I also ask my students to display their posters along with others from the animal science department during that same week. Both of my students did quite well with those tasks: both were recognized with certificates as part of the top three undergraduate animal science poster creators, and Cindy received a second place award in the Science with Practice poster competition. Our congratulations to both for their fine work.

You'll want to watch these videos
Electronic media (read that the Internet) is fast becoming the choice of many for keeping current on news, market trends, weather forecasts and the like. Like it or not, it's where much of today's younger generations get their information. So, it's with great pleasure that I learned and viewed some very recent video postings on YouTube.com, that ubiquitous online video source, and I'm sure you'll want to watch these as well. First, the Special Collections Department at the Iowa State University Library has digitized more than 40 films produced by ISU and WOI-TV. These films originally were 16 mm, and now are able to be viewed by anyone online. You'll want to take special note of a series of three made in 1956. The theme: As a farmer goes through his day, he listens to other people in the various places of business talk about what consumers want. Issues described include marketing pigs at the proper weight, multiple farrowings, amount of fat on cuts, waste from the trimmings, what to look for in good meat type of hogs, and costs versus hog values. Watch The Pig and the Public (parts 1-3) starting at this URL http://snipr.com/29l52. Each runs about 10 minutes. Also, the Pork Checkoff has posted three short videos that feature experts in the areas of swine transportation, handling and diet, with each running from about 1:20 to 2:20 in length. Check them out here http://www.youtube.com/PorkCheckoff

It's a date
Continuing. PQA Plus™ certification sessions. A two-hour training session for pork producers or individuals who need PQA Plus™ certification. Cost is $25 and preregistration is encouraged. See IPIC Web site for locations, times and specific contact information http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/PQAPlus.html

Continuing. Food Safety Quality Assurance Training and Testing sessions. See IPIC Web site for locations, times and specific contact information http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/FSQA08.html

May 19-21. Mitigating Air Emissions conference. Des Moines. Coordinated by ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and ISU Extension; IPIC is among the sponsoring partners. See more at this URL http://www.abe.iastate.edu/wastemgmt/mitigation.html

June 5-7. World Pork Expo. See what’s planned during this 20th anniversary event online at http://www.worldpork.org/

June 9-11. Midwest Composting School. Field Extension Education Laboratory, Ames. Program cost is $375 per person when registered by May 27, or $425 after that date. See the ISU Agribusiness Education Program Web site for more info, including the registration form, at this URL http://www.aep.iastate.edu/compost/
DID YOU KNOW?
Save these dates: July 15-16
Mark your calendar and make plans now to attend the Transportation Biosecurity Summit, organized by Iowa State University and the National Pork Board, and designed for members of the swine industry. Attendees will learn about the existing science on biosecurity and transport biosecurity practice, and discuss identification of areas during transport where additional efforts are necessary to strengthen disease organism movement. Producers, swine practitioners, transport company representatives, packers, equipment suppliers and others from the industry are encouraged to take part. Registration is $25 per person when registered no later than June 15. After that date, cost increases to $50 per person. See the agenda, speaker list and more at this URL http://snipr.com/29mhp Online registration is available on the National Pork Board Web site http://www.pork.org/EventRegistration.aspx?id=2

FOR THE RECORD
It's not too late for the 2007 Census of Agriculture
Even though it's well past the original deadline of Feb. 4, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schaefer says farmers who haven't already done so should still complete and submit their 2007 Census of Agriculture form. Not only is a response required by law, but the number and answers supplied will help create a more accurate picture of the current American agriculture scene. In addition to a second mailing to those who haven't responded, representatives from the National Agriculture Statistics Service's field offices are now calling and visiting those folks. You can complete your form on paper or online. If you have questions or need assistance, call NASS toll free at 888-424-7828 or go to the specific Web site here www.agcensus.usda.gov

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