NPPC Perspective on Food Safety

Beth Lautner, DVM, MS
National Pork Producers Council
Des Moines, IA 50306

U.S. consumers expect to be able to buy safe, high quality food at a reasonable cost. Consumer confidence in the safety and wholesomeness of pork products is critical to reaching the industry's goal of being "The Meat of Choice™."

National Pork Producers Council's Food Safety Activities

NPPC formed a Pork Safety Task Force in 1994 with the mission of assuring the safety of U.S. pork through coordinated, science-based efforts throughout the pork chain. The long term goals of this Task Force are to decrease the potential for foodborne illness from pork products and to improve product image with regard to safety among consumers world-wide. The Pork Safety Task Force recognized the need for more on-farm food safety research to determine the points in the food chain where interventions will result in enhanced food safety.

Areas identified as needing research included:

- Identification and estimation of the potential impact of microbiological and parasitic on-farm hazards that can pose risks to public health
- Identification of critical control points to prevent, eliminate, control, or reduce on-farm hazards under various pig management systems
- Economics of implementation of HACCP models
- Investigation of the effect of pig handling prior to and during transportation on the potential for transmission of pathogens and carcass contamination
- Effect of feed withdrawal prior to slaughter on fecal contamination of swine carcasses
- Identification of the relationship between prevalence of potential pathogens in swine herds, in swine during and after transport, and on swine carcasses

In 1994, NPPC with several state associations funded nine animal production food safety projects. In 1995, NPPC funded six projects. The majority of the funded projects included Salmonella as the focus.

We hope one of the outcomes of this symposium will be to develop a more definitive research agenda for Salmonella and to facilitate the coordination of research efforts of the private and public sectors.