

National Pork Board Set To Tackle Tough Budget

The National Pork Board will meet in Des Moines on the afternoon of Sept. 9, the day before more than 50 producers from across the country arrive in Des Moines to begin work on budget recommendations for 2010.

Lower than anticipated pork prices for 2009 as well as projections that producers may not return to profitability until spring 2010 have reduced revenues from the Pork Checkoff and already have prompted board members to tighten spending for the remainder of 2009. The board earlier this summer authorized a 2010 spending limit of \$46.2 million, roughly 20 percent lower than authorized 2009 spending.

"This will be a budget that recognizes that pork producers are hurting and need whatever help they can get from the Pork Checkoff to market their product," said Tim Bierman, a pork producer from Larrabee, Iowa, and president of the National Pork Board. "I hesitate to call this new budget a crisis budget, but that's what it is," he said.

"The producers who will be here Sept. 10 and 11 to produce a balanced budget for the board's consideration in November have their work cut out for them," Bierman said. "There are going to be some very difficult choices and decisions."

Also on the board's agenda the afternoon of Sept. 9 is a review of new consumer research on the effectiveness of the National Pork Board's 22-year-old The Other White Meat® brand.

Board members also are expected to get an update from its task force working on a new strategic plan for the National Pork Board. The producer-led task force has met twice and will meet again later this month before making its recommendation to the board in November. The task force also has participated in listening sessions in Nebraska, Indiana and North Carolina and has conducted an online survey available to all producers.

National Pork Board meetings are open to the public. Those wishing to attend are asked to contact Lorraine Garner at lgarner@pork.org or 515-223-2600.

The National Pork Board has responsibility for Checkoff-funded research, promotion and consumer information projects and for communicating with pork producers and the public. Through a legislative national Pork Checkoff, pork producers invest \$0.40 for each \$100 value of hogs sold. The Pork Checkoff funds national and state programs in advertising, consumer information, retail and foodservice marketing, export market promotion, production improvement, technology, swine health, pork safety and environmental management. For information on Checkoff-funded programs, pork producers can call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800)

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Published on Food Manufacturing (<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com>)

456-PORK or check the Internet at www.pork.org [1].

Source URL (retrieved on 01/31/2015 - 6:08pm):

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