

Managing Pigs In Tough Times

URBANA, ILL.

Pork producers have a place to turn for advice and information in tough economic times thanks to a joint project of the Illinois Pork Producers Association (IPPA) and University of Illinois Extension. "Managing Pig Production in Tough Times" is an online program that covers a number of key decision areas for producers.

"Pork producers in the United States now face economic hardships so serious that many will leave the business," said James Pettigrew, a U of I professor of animal sciences who prepared the program with checkoff funding from the IPPA. "At the U of I, we cannot change the very difficult conditions, but we can offer information on this site to help producers manage their business."

At the website (<http://ippa.ansci.uiuc.edu/>), users will find seven presentations by experts on the respective topics. Among the presenters and topics are: Chris Hurt, Purdue University Extension, price risk; and from the University of Illinois, Rob Knox on reproduction, Larry Firkins on health and employees, Mike Ellis on management, Ted Funk on engineering, Hans Stein on nutrition, and Pettigrew on feeding programs.

"Each of the seven specialists will offer three recommendations carefully chosen to be helpful to producers," Pettigrew explained.

Additionally, a special call-in program has been scheduled to deal with questions. The program will be from 7 to 8 p.m. on August 19.

Those with questions may dial-in at 1-800-347-8268. The meeting's identification number is 6455 and the password is 0819.

"If you'd like to submit questions in advance of the meeting, you can click on the address of the appropriate specialist on the website or, if you don't know who is most appropriate, just e-mail me at jepettig@uiuc.edu," he said.

Pettigrew said the genesis of the meeting was a tour he took of Australia last winter and the difficulties he found pork producers were facing in that country.

"Sometimes you see things at home more clearly when you get away, and this experience focused my attention on how the university could help our own producers during these tough times. I contacted the IPPA and they agreed to sponsor this program," he said.

The program should prove of great assistance to producers, according to one industry leader.

"We realize that these have been and continue to be very rough times for pork producers dealing with escalating input costs," said Phil Borgic, a pork producer from Nokomis and current IPPA president.

"IPPA continues to look for ways to provide information that helps pork producers through these difficult financial times. This program has assembled a diverse group of experts who have focused in on some specific items that pork producers can do on their operations. These online seminars will allow producers to access the information when it works best for them." Δ