



PORK CHECKOFF REPORT

SUMMER 2025



Taste What Pork Can Do™ through Gopher Football!



Taste What Pork Can Do™ is the campaign we won't stop talking about, and we're putting it front and center with Gopher Football. Our partnership with Gopher Athletics has three unique plays all designed to bring pork to the people in new ways, while also giving us the chance to track real results.



Play One: 'Pick for Pork'

Our featured promotion is 'Pick for Pork'. We've teamed up with Gopher Sports Properties, Cub Foods, and Wholestone Foods to create an effective product push: a retailer who sells the goods, a brand who produces the goods, a platform to reach consumers, and Minnesota Pork to bring all the pieces together through education and promotion.

Here's how it works: each time the Gophers snag an interception at a home game, fans have the opportunity to go to Cub Foods for \$2 off any Wholestone Farms pork product. All they need to do is show their game ticket at checkout, and the discount is good for 48 hours after the game.

It's a fun way to turn game-day excitement into real pork purchases, while giving us tangible metrics to measure success. Beyond traditional promotion, 'Pick for Pork' ties fan enthusiasm directly to retail movement of pork products, which is a win for consumers, retailers, and farmers as a whole.

Play Two: Celebrate Ag and Food Day

We'll be back at Celebrate Ag and Food Day on September 27. After a few events away, we're reintroducing this event with a fresh approach. To drive product promotion as much as possible, we will be passing out pork snack sticks in the tailgate lots,

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MN PORK CALENDAR

OCTOBER 1-31
National Pork Month

NOVEMBER 11
PQA + TQA - Mankato

Minnesota Pork Office
151 St. Andrews Ct., Ste 810
Mankato, Minnesota
PQA+ 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
TQA 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
*Pre-register: jordan@mnppork.com
or 507-345-8814*

NOVEMBER 18
PQA Plus Advisor Training

Minnesota Pork Office
151 St. Andrews Ct., Ste 810
Mankato, Minnesota
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
*Pre-register: jordan@mnppork.com
or 507-345-8814*

DECEMBER 1-3
Activate Session 2

FEBRUARY 9
MPB + MPPA Annual Meetings
Award Reception
(Invitation Only)
Mayo Clinic Health System
Event Center
Mankato, MN

FEBRUARY 10-11
Pork Congress Tradeshow
Industry Seminars
Mayo Clinic Health System
Event Center
Mankato, MN



Taste What Pork Can Do™ through Gopher Football! (continued)

putting pork directly in the hands of fans. It's a perfect way to make pork relevant in a space where excitement is already high, and free pork only adds to the experience!

In addition, we're also showcasing the **Taste What Pork Can Do™** campaign front and center, rather than using the Minnesota Pork Board name. We're emphasizing pork the product louder than ever to drive demand and build awareness, reminding fans bacon is just the beginning of what pork can do!

Play Three: Influencing Game Day

To round it out, we've teamed up with Gopher Football's Tony Nelson, an offensive lineman, track and field thrower, and farm kid from Tracy, MN. He's sharing pork meals on his personal Instagram. His agricultural background and student-athlete platform bring credibility and authenticity to our message, while extending the campaign digitally.

Why It Matters

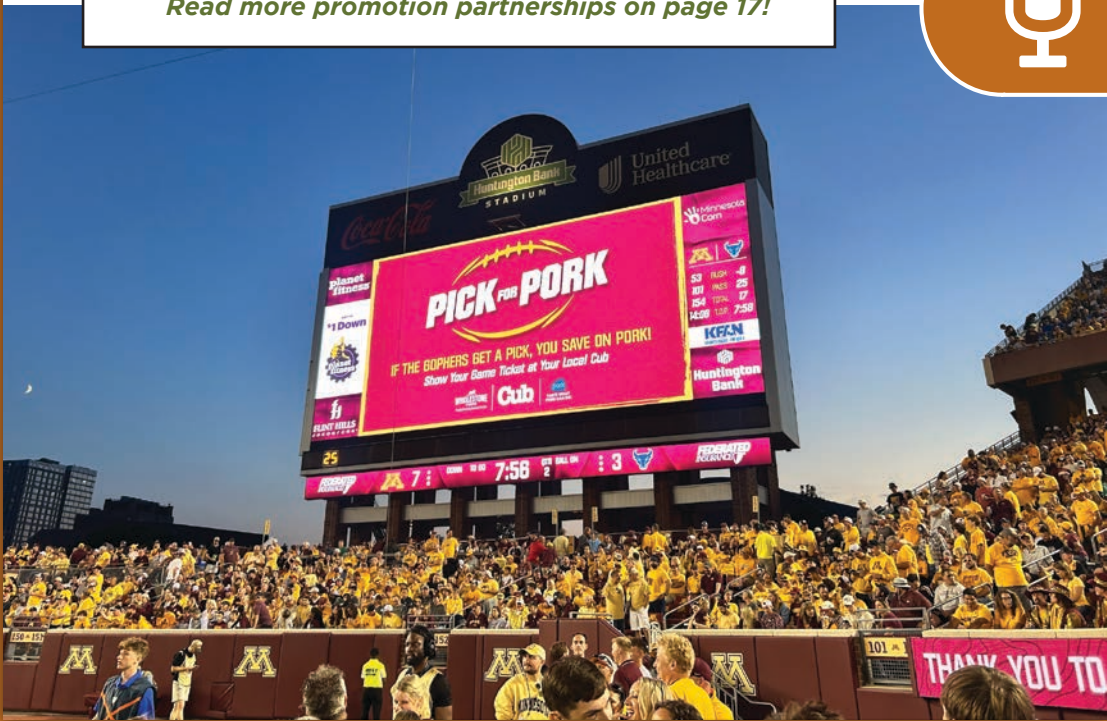
Together, these three plays connect retail sales, in-person experiences, and digital engagement. By meeting consumers where they already are,



we're making pork relevant, cool, and craveable.

We're proud to bring pork into the spotlight through this partnership and will share performance highlights in our next print newsletter. When the Gophers pick, pork wins too!

Read more promotion partnerships on page 17!





12 DAYS OF FUN

in the Oink and Promotion Booths!

The 2025 Minnesota State Fair brought new consumer questions, sparked curiosity, and even had the best weather in recent years!

OINK BOOTH

The Oink Booth was a hit again this year. Fairgoers head straight to see the sow and piglets, grab their paper pig ear hats, and check out the largest boar. Children are able to color pig coloring sheets, and its a great family friendly atmosphere!

Heard at the Oink Booth:

"Where is the largest boar?" - it never fails!

"I've never touched a pig before! They're so soft and cute!"

"Pigs are my favorite animal! This is my favorite booth every year!"

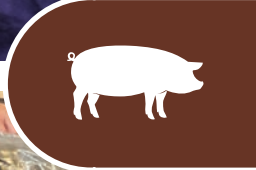
Beyond the smiles and squeals, volunteers answered thousands of questions about pig care, farming, and Minnesota's role as a leader in pork production.

What does a shift in the Oink Booth look like?

We love our volunteers! From holding piglets (and hoping one falls asleep in your arms), applying temporary tattoos, quizzing fairgoers knowledge of Minnesota pig facts in 'Baconator Pinball', and keeping the booth clean and stocked with giveaways, the booth cannot go on without the people who volunteer with us.

Giveaway items this year included:

- Squishy pigs
- Sunglasses
- Coloring books about the life of a pig
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Temporary tattoos
- Of course, paper pig ears!



12 DAYS OF FUN in the Oink and Promotion Booths! (continued)



PROMOTION BOOTH

The dairy building where our booth is located houses the Princess Kay of the Milky Way Butter Sculptures, so we are in a fantastic location with a constant flow of fairgoers walking by. This year's booth was fully branded in the **Taste What Pork Can Do™** efforts. Boasting bright colors, engaging recipe content, and smiling volunteers to hand consumers cooking-themed freebies, the Promotion Booth offers the opportunity to teach consumers more details about pork.

Some of our favorite consumer comments:

"Your booth taught me how to cook pork properly. Perfect at 145°!"

"I come to this booth every year to get your seasoning!"

"Minnesota ranks second in pork production? That's awesome!"

"Your booth colors are so vibrant! Sweet, savory, citrus - I could work for you to promote pork!"



What does a shift in the Promotion Booth look like?

Fairgoers are asked a trivia question before they can grab their share of goodies. We focus the conversation around nutrition, cooking education, and general pork facts. Items we gave away this year included:

- 1 ounce Martin County Magic seasoning
- Meat thermometers
- Pan scrapers
- Chip clip magnets
- Recipe Cards

We're so grateful to our volunteers and supervisors who give their time to educate and advocate for pork. Keep us in mind for next summer, you'll leave fulfilled, proud, and knowing you helped share the story of the farmers and pigs we love.



ACTIVATE: Minnesota Pork's Inaugural Leadership Cohort Kicks Off



Front row, left to right: Scott Walter (Wakefield Pork, New Ulm); Brad Kluver (Dutch Creek Farms, Lakeville); Olivia Wolle (Wolle Pork, St. James); Sydney Rosenstengel (Schwartz Farms, Comfrey); Jayme Enamorado (Christensen Farms, New Ulm); Travis Brown (Brookfield Pork/Legacy Ag, Prinsburg); Kate Maddock - Activate Program Lead and Director of Farmer Outreach for Minnesota Pork.

Back row, left to right: Erin Krug (Anderson Farms, Belgrade); Logan Tesch (New Fashion Pork, Round Lake); Jordan Wiesen (Boerboom Ag Resources, Hendricks); Lance Goettl (TLP of Lake Crystal LLC, Lake Crystal); Guilherme Preis (Topigs Norsvin, Bloomington); Dusty Compart (Compeer Financial, Nicollet).

Minnesota Pork is proud to launch Activate: Minnesota Pork Leadership Cohort, a new 18-month program created to empower the next generation of advocates for Minnesota pig farmers. Activate provides immersive training in leadership, advocacy, communications, relationship management, and industry knowledge.

"Minnesota Pork is excited to invest in the future of our state's pork industry by supporting leaders who are passionate, knowledgeable, and ready to advocate on behalf of Minnesota pig farmers," said Kate Maddock, Director of Farmer Outreach. "This inaugural class reflects the energy, insight, and leadership our industry needs, and we are excited to see all they will accomplish."

Session One: Building Foundations in Mankato

In July, twelve emerging leaders from across Minnesota gathered in Mankato for the inaugural session. The two-day kickoff featured orientation, networking, and a dynamic workshop on advocacy and relationship management. Participants also explored personal and professional growth through a

"Working Genius" session and goal-setting discussions tied to Minnesota Pork's strategic priorities.

A highlight of the session was the "Voices from the Field" panel, featuring industry leaders Gary Thome, Dr. Gordon Spronk, Dr. Paul Yeske, and John Schwartz. Their reflections on leadership, career growth, and the future of pork production provided valuable perspective for the cohort.

"The first Activate session was a great experience," said Dusty Compart, Class 1 participant. "A highlight was having the opportunity to learn from a panel discussion of industry leaders. Their perspective is invaluable to our group of young professionals, as they provided us with a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the pork industry."

When asked to describe session one in one word, participants described the experience as igniting, motivating, grounding, and beneficial.

"Activate is investing in future leaders in the pork industry by giving them a platform centered around the tools needed to be effective advocates and



Participants engage in the advocacy conversation exercise.

communicators,” said Brad Kluver, Minnesota Pork board member and Class 1 participant. “Activate provides an opportunity to network and be surrounded by experts in every facet of the pork industry. As both a board member and participant, I see how this program encourages each of us to reinvest in themselves and build upon their unique skillsets, benefiting not only the individual, but the entire industry beyond the 18-month program.”

The Activate class will continue meeting through early 2027 with future sessions planned in Des Moines,



Brad Kluver - Brad grew up on a family farm just outside of Northfield, MN and still actively farms there alongside his parents, brother, and family. Growing up they had indoor and outdoor

lots, farrowed continuous flow with around 120 sows and sold feeder pigs each week. Now their farm operates as more wean to finish production and they own shares in some sow farms. He has a bachelor's and master's degree in education and spent 4 years teaching 1st grade and kindergarten before getting back into agriculture full-time. For the past 8 years he has worked in swine nutrition and feed sales through a coop in Southern Minnesota.

and furthering her work experience she returned home to her family's diversified farming business. Her family owns a farrow-to-finish hog operation, beef cattle feedlot and raises corn, sugar beets and edible kidney beans. As a farmer she has been involved in the pork industry for many years and is passionate that this industry remains strong, creates opportunities and stands with farmers for many generations to come.



Guilherme Preis - Guilherme Preis, DVM, PhD, is a veterinarian-epidemiologist specializing in swine health and productivity. Raised in a pork-producing family in Brazil, he earned his

DVM and worked nearly five years for a major integrator before relocating to the U.S. in 2018 to pursue a PhD in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota. As Product Performance Manager at Topigs Norsvin, he supports statistical analysis, product benchmarking, and research initiatives to help pork producers improve key performance indicators.



Jayme Enamorado - Jayme is the Training and Development Supervisor at Christensen Farms, specializing in technical upskilling and leadership development for

internal teams. Since 2022, she has led the design and implementation of training programs that equip employees with the skills needed to grow into technical and supervisory

roles. Her work focuses on building structured pathways for advancement, aligning workforce capabilities with operational goals, and strengthening the internal talent pipeline across all levels of pork production.



Jordan Wiesen - Jordan grew up on a farm in Lincoln County, Minnesota. He and his wife Ashley are now the third generation on that family farm. Along with their two kids, they raise cattle,

row crops, and alfalfa. Upon graduating from South Dakota State, he began working at Boerboom Ag Resources as a caretaker and hauling feeder pigs. Over the years, he has taken on several roles for the business such as a grow/finish service manager. In Jordan's current role, he directly manages the marketing, pig flow, and trucking logistics for Boerboom Ag. When he's not at work Jordan enjoys working with his cattle, going to sporting events, and chasing his kids around the farm.



Lance Goettl - Lance is a third-generation crop farmer and first-generation hog producer who entered the livestock side of agriculture in 2007 with an entrepreneurial spirit

and a commitment to long-term sustainability. Starting with a modest operation, Lance has steadily expanded his business and today manages a thriving hog operation with 5,500 sows. His growth reflects not only his dedication and work ethic, but also his ability to innovate and adapt within a



Dusty Compart - Dusty is both a current Nicollet County pork producer and a team member at Compeer Financial. Dusty grew up on his Family's farm near Nicollet MN and his passion for

the Swine Industry led him to obtain a degree in Agriculture from SDSU. Currently, Dusty is a Swine Lending Specialist at Compeer Financial. In this role, he helps support MN Pork Producers by providing financing tools and his perspective to their operation.



Erin Krug - Erin is a 5th generation farmer from central Minnesota. After getting her degree in Animal Science from North Dakota State University



Voices From The Field panel - left to right: Kate Maddock, Dr. Paul Yeske, John Schwartz, Dr. Gordon Spronk, and Gary Thome.

St. Paul, and Washington, D.C., and will wrap up with a graduation ceremony at 2027 Minnesota Pork Congress.

Activate session two is scheduled for December 1-3 in Des Moines, Iowa, where participants will meet at the National Pork Board office. This session will build on the foundation established during session one and continue to expand participants' leadership skills, industry knowledge, and professional networks.

Learn more about Activate on our website, mnpork.com/activate.

constantly evolving industry. In 2012, Lance established a feed mill to create a more efficient, vertically integrated system that strengthened biosecurity and ensured a consistent feed source. His success is rooted in strong family involvement, with his wife and father playing key roles on the farm, and in the early support of landlords, mentors, and industry partners. Today, Lance is a dedicated advocate for agriculture and works to support the next generation of producers through mentorship and leadership.



Logan Tesch -

Logan grew up on a diversified farming operation with hogs, cattle, corn & soybeans in Henderson, MN. In college he was active in the SDSU Swine Club & Swine Unit.

He was the MN Pork Ambassador from '19-'20. After graduation he started working for New Fashion Pork as a Feedmill Trainee, and within a year he was promoted to manager of their feed mill in Round Lake, MN. In the mill, Logan oversees the manufacture & delivery of over 3,000 tons of feed a week.



Olivia Wolle -

Olivia grew up on a small farm near St. James, MN. While in college she interned for a local Minnesota pork integrator where her passion for the industry began. During

Olivia's career she has held multiple positions including Wean to Finish Herd Technician, Animal Welfare Specialist, and most recently joining her husband

and his family on their farm where they raise corn, soybeans, and hogs. Olivia stays involved in her community by volunteering for 4-H and various board positions.



Scott Walter -

Scott grew up on a crop and cattle farm in Sleepy Eye, Mn. After graduating from Sleepy Eye High School, Scott went straight into farming raising dairy

cattle and working on a dairy by Leavenworth, MN. In 2017 start his career at Wakefield Pork as a herdsman and since advanced into the role as a Sow Farm Manager. From 2018-2024 Scott served on the Nicollet County Pork Producers Board. Serving 2 years as Vice-president and 2 years as President. Scott has also served on the Redwood Area Cattlemen's Board. Scott currently resides in New Ulm, with his wife Emily and two daughters Wynn, and Ruby.



Sydney Rosenstengel -

Sydney is a Production Technology Specialist at Schwartz Farms, a family-owned, MN based pork producer. She holds a B.S. and M.S. in Agricultural Engineering from Iowa

State University where she focused her studies on commercial swine facilities and ventilation systems. Passionate about the future of agriculture, Sydney brings a practical and innovative approach to utilizing and advancing production technologies. She is also an active member of the Brown County Pork Producers Board, contributing to local industry support and advocacy.



Travis Brown -

Travis is the Director of Operations for Brookfield Pork and Legacy Ag, a progressive, integrated pork production company.

A first-generation pork producer, he holds dual degrees in Livestock & Poultry Management and Agribusiness Management from North Carolina State University. Travis brings over a decade of leadership experience across multiple production systems, including roles with Murphy-Brown, HD3 Farms, Professional Swine Management, and Prestage Farms. Known for his focus on operational excellence and strategic growth, he now oversees more than 9,000 sows and expanding partnerships across company-owned and managed service partnerships. As a first-generation professional in agriculture, he brings fresh perspective, tireless energy, and a deep respect for the land and animals under his care. Travis is driven by a passion for innovation, performance, and building a strong future for the swine industry.

New Board Member - Maddie Hokanson



1. Tell us about yourself and how you became involved in the pork industry.

My name is Maddie Hokanson, and I live near Cannon Falls, MN with my husband, Eric, and our two sons, Brent (5) and Scott (2). I am part of the 7th generation of my family's pig and cattle farm, Schafer Farms, where

I currently serve as the CFO. Schafer Farms focuses primarily on value-added and service-driven parts of the pork industry, such as raising replacement females and providing bio-secure transportation, with a goal of helping producers be more effective and successful. Eric and I are also part of his family's farm, Hokanson Family Farms, where we raise corn and soybeans with his parents. The remainder of my time is spent raising the future generation of our farms, working to instill values of faith, family, and farming into both Brent and Scott. I enjoy staying engaged in our community in various ways, including serving as a livestock judging team coach for Goodhue County 4-H and volunteering with our local FFA chapter as an alumni member.



The pork industry has been part of my life for as long as I can remember, and I've worked to stay involved at a local, state, and national level since high school. I began my first term on the MN Pork



Executive Board of Directors in February of 2025. Prior to that, I spent 2024 being part of the Pork Leadership Institute (PLI), a joint leadership and learning program with the National Pork Board and National Pork Producers Council. Beyond that, I enjoy advocating on behalf of our industry through media interviews and in-person events, volunteering at the Oink Booth at the MN State Fair, lobbying in St. Paul and Washington D.C., and serving delicious pork dishes to fairgoers at the Goodhue County Fair Pork Producers Stand.

2. Why did you decide to run on the Board of Directors?

Coming out of college and returning to my family's farm, I knew I wanted to get more involved at an industry-level. However, I also knew I needed to spend some time learning more of the ins and outs of each sector of the pork industry since my background and upbringing had predominantly been in the sow farm space. After several years of learning experiences and some great mentors along the way, I was eager to play a more active role in creating and carrying out the vision for the Minnesota Pork Industry. Many of Minnesota



Pork's current and former board members are people that I look up to and have great respect for, and I hope that my time of service will be spent representing our members well, just as they did.

3. What do you hope to accomplish during your time on the executive board?

With this opportunity to serve the Minnesota Pork Industry, I am looking to work collaboratively with my fellow board members and others in our state to protect our freedom to operate, take steps to increase domestic demand for the pork products we produce, and ensure our industry is one that continues to attract the best talent so that we can overcome today's and tomorrow's challenges to be a thriving industry for generations to come. Currently, some of those actionable steps look like lobbying for a Prop 12 fix, remaining active in the conversation about potential revisions to the 7020 Feedlot Rules, supporting the *Taste What Pork Can Do* campaign at a state and national level, and interacting with current and future members of our industry to ensure we continue doing the things that make us an industry that people desire to be a part of.

4. In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge facing today's pig farmers in Minnesota?

Many issues face our industry daily, but I see our labor and workforce needs rising to the top of the list. The nationwide domestic labor shortage the United States faces significantly impacts our ability in the pork industry to produce safe, wholesome food in a responsible manner that is still affordable for the consumer. Work visa programs certainly are an option to help alleviate labor shortages, but the reliability of those programs has not always been steady, causing us as an industry to continue seeking new ways to fill our labor needs. This strain in labor availability and affordability also adds to the issue of disease pressure since the biosecurity practices we put in place to keep our pigs healthy are only as effective as the people choosing to execute those practices every single day. Ultimately, we can only thrive as an industry



with the right people on our teams to help make it happen.

5. What are you most hopeful about for the future of Minnesota Pork?

When I think about the future of the pork industry in Minnesota, I am most hopeful and energized when I think about the people that surround it. Minnesota's pork industry has worked to position itself as an industry with a multitude of strong independently owned farms, and that has certainly fostered innovation and collaboration in a way that I don't often see elsewhere. As a result of that unique structure, it's exciting to see great young industry talent be attracted to the Minnesota Pork Industry, and it's also why I am confident that pig farming in Minnesota will continue to thrive both today and in the future.

6. What is your favorite pork product/dish?

There are so many good dishes to pick from, and I like different ones depending on the season. However, a simple grilled pork tenderloin seasoned with Martin County Magic is a hard one to beat and often a go-to in our household!



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Growing Ag SCHOLARSHIP

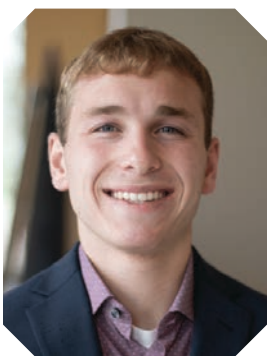
The Growing Ag Scholarship recognizes students committed to shaping the future of agriculture through innovation, leadership, and practical solutions. Whether pursuing animal science, ag business, veterinary medicine, farm management, public policy, or ag law, recipients are forward-thinking individuals dedicated to tackling the industry's toughest challenges. This scholarship supports those who are passionate about advancing agriculture's growth and sustainability through creative problem-solving and impactful ideas.



*Bryn
Anderson:*

Bryn is a veterinary student at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine with a strong focus on swine health and production. Her

passion for agriculture began in 4-H and grew through internships with organizations such as Christensen Farms and the Swine Veterinary Internship Program. Bryn has also gained global perspective through a study abroad trip to Vietnam, where she explored swine production practices and sustainability. Her goal is to become a veterinarian who supports pork producers with practical solutions that prioritize animal welfare, production outcomes, and long-term sustainability. Bryn is driven to give back to the industry that gave her a sense of purpose and community.



*Carson
Ruen:*

Carson is a student at Iowa State University pursuing a double major in Agricultural Business with an emphasis in Finance and International Agriculture. Originally

from a crop and livestock farm near Lanesboro, Minnesota, Carson's passion for agriculture

was shaped by years of hands-on experience and leadership through 4-H, FFA, and various internships. On campus, he is active in the Iowa Corn Growers Collegiate Club and the Agricultural Business Club. With a strong interest in agricultural finance, Carson hopes to work in credit or risk management for an ag-based institution or potentially return to his family's farming operation. His goal is to help producers make informed financial decisions that ensure long-term sustainability for the pork industry and beyond.



*Kendra
Blaschko:*

Kendra is a veterinary student at the University of Minnesota, with plans to specialize in food animal medicine. Raised on a multigenerational farm, she gained early

experience working with meat goats and beef cattle, which sparked her long-term goal of becoming a food animal veterinarian. Kendra has worked at the Swine Vet Center in St. Peter, Minnesota, where she assisted with research, diagnostics, and trial preparation. She has also presented her own swine research at national conferences, highlighting her dedication to innovation and animal health. Kendra hopes to continue contributing to swine medicine through both veterinary care and research that advances production practices across the industry.

Voice of Pork SCHOLARSHIP



The Voice of Pork Scholarship celebrates creative, forward-thinking students who are passionate about telling the story of pork and agriculture. Designed for students pursuing interests in communications, marketing, public relations, or education, this scholarship recognizes innovative minds. Recipients are future leaders, equipped to promote pork, connect with consumers, and elevate the industry's brand through modern platforms like social media, video, and digital content.



Brielle Ruen:

Brielle is a student at South Dakota State University majoring in Agricultural Communications. Raised on a wean-to-finish pig farm in Lanesboro,

Minnesota, Brielle developed a passion for agriculture through her experiences in 4-H, FFA, and working closely with her family's livestock operation. On campus, she is active in Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, Block and Bridle, and Swine Club. Brielle hopes to pursue a career in communications or public relations where she can bridge the gap between producers and the public, advocate for animal agriculture, and empower the next generation of ag leaders through outreach and education.

events and agricultural programs have inspired a deep interest in marketing, public relations, and education, especially as they relate to the pork industry. After college, Mackenzie hopes to pursue a career that combines her love of agriculture with communication, helping consumers better understand how pork is produced and why it's a part of a nutritious, sustainable food system.



Lilli Lewandowski:

Lilli is a graduate student at Minnesota State University, Mankato, where she is pursuing her Master of Business Administration. She earned her

undergraduate degree in Public Relations with a minor in Agricultural Communication from Southwest Minnesota State University. Lilli currently serves as the Graduate Advisor for the Student Events Team and continues to intern with Christensen Farms. Her past experiences include leading communication campaigns, managing internal content and newsletters, and working in both corporate and international communication settings. Passionate about bridging the gap between agriculture and consumers, Lilli hopes to pursue a career in public relations or communications that helps tell the story of agriculture with clarity and purpose.



Mackenzie Moline:

Mackenzie is a student at Minnesota State University, Mankato, studying marketing within the College of Business. A passionate advocate for agriculture,

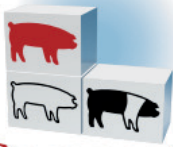
Mackenzie has been involved in both FFA and 4-H, where she developed a strong foundation in leadership, community service, and public outreach. Her experiences organizing educational

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THE CHOICE IS CLEAR



SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS



Summer Marketing Intern

This summer, our team welcomed Kenzie Moline as our summer marketing intern! Kenzie grew up on a hobby farm outside of St. Peter, MN, and is currently studying marketing at Minnesota State University – Mankato.

With a passion for helping consumers understand where their food comes from and how pork fits into a nutritious, balanced lifestyle, Kenzie's energy and creativity is evident in every project she took on.

Her work focused on content creation and event support. She played a key role in helping the Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference and the Minnesota State Fair booths run smoothly. She also used her content creation skills to make innovative and engaging consumer-focused social media content.

Kenzie is continuing with our team this fall to continue her work in social media and content creation, including creating our brand-new October Pork Month recipe challenge. Thanks, Kenzie, for all you've done to promote the work of Minnesota pig farmers!

Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference Celebrates 10 Years

In June, we held the 10th annual Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference. This year, more than 85 college-aged students joined us in Mankato for three days of inspiration, growth, and connection. We heard from speakers like Hunter Pinke, who reminded us that "there are no bad days," and Mitch Matthews, who challenged students to dream big, ask big questions, and form connections at the event and beyond.

We hosted panels with HR experts, legislative staff, and ag industry leaders who offered honest insights about careers, policy, and innovation. Students also gave back by packing snack bags for the Ronald McDonald House - Upper Midwest (featured photo) and relaxed from sessions by enjoying pizza and bowling at the Wow Zone.

We look forward to continuing to evolve the conference each year to meet students where they're at and help them take their next steps in agriculture. For more information about YLAC, visit mnpork.com/ylac or contact Jill Resler at jill@mnpork.com.



SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS (CONTINUED)



MS 150

In June, Minnesota Pork was part of the Bike MS: MS 150, Minnesota's largest cycling fundraiser with more than 3,000 riders and volunteers. Our booth added some fun to the ride with pork-themed props and giveaways, while riders fueled up with pork snack sticks. It was a great way to cheer on participants and showcase the power of pork in our communities.



Twelve Days of Grilling

This past summer, Minnesota Pork once again joined Twin Cities Live's popular 12 Days of Grilling series. Viewers across the state tuned in for recipe inspiration and grilling tips, with pork taking center stage as a versatile, flavorful protein. It was a fun way to celebrate summer and share new ideas with consumers right from the grill.



GLOBAL REACH. LOCAL EXPERTISE.

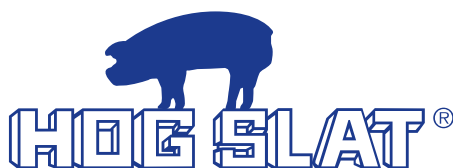
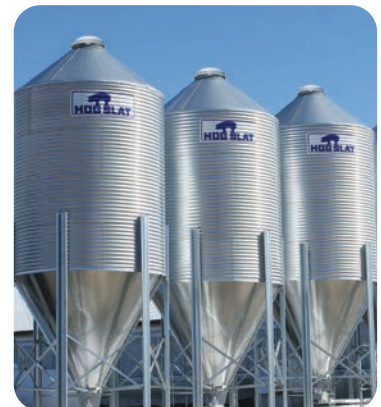
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*Bohr et al., Effect of antioxidant supplementation in sows pre-farrow and during lactation on sow and piglet performance. Abstract presented at 36th Annual AAEP Meeting, March 1-4, 2025, San Francisco, CA.

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INTERNS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Karmen Sperr

Q: Where are you from and what college did you attend?

A: I grew up in Donnelly, MN but now live in St. Paul, MN. I attended South Dakota State University where I majored in agriculture communications and leadership with minors in animal science, public relations and agriculture business.

Q: What year were you an intern for MN Pork?

A: I interned with MN Pork in 2022.



Q: Please share your background in agriculture.

A: Growing up on my family's farm in west central Minnesota, my background is rooted in the grain and swine industries which I learned a lot about from my dad. I became involved with 4-H at a very young age where I showed pigs, competed in livestock knowledge bowl, and participated in many leadership experiences. I was also involved with FFA at Morris Area High School. Through FFA and my agriculture classes in high school, I expanded my knowledge of agriculture, learned about the many career opportunities in agriculture, and made so many friends with the same passion as me. This all led me to attend SDSU and pursue a degree that would help me achieve my goal of being an agriculture communicator and storyteller in my future career.

Q: How did working for MN Pork contribute to your professional development?

A: The experiences I had during my internship with MN Pork taught me how to have thoughtful conversations with consumers and producers and how to be an effective communicator in agriculture which helped me succeed in many ways. When I look back at my internship, I am incredibly thankful for the experiences I had during events, especially during Oink Outings. I was able to speak with so many people and gain a wide and diverse perspective on how people view agriculture and those who work in it. This

understanding has helped me learn how to promote agriculture and teach others about where their food comes from. I was also able to expand my network immensely and still to this day have great relationships with people I met because of the internship.



Q: Please share what other professional experiences you have had and where you are now in your career and personal life.

A: After my internship with MN Pork, I completed internships with Christensen Farms and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and attended many professional leadership conferences like the Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference, hosted by MN Pork, and Agriculture Future of America Leaders Conference and institutes. In May 2024, I graduated from South Dakota State University and began working as the Agriculture Communications Specialist at the Minnesota State Fair where I coordinate communications for agricultural and competitive events and competitions for the Minnesota State Fair and Minnesota Beef Expo. My time as a supervisor at the MN Pork Oink Booth gave me an inside look at the MN State Fair and is part of the reason why I chose and enjoy my job so much.

Q: What is one piece of advice that you have for young professionals that want to obtain a career in agriculture?

A: Grow your network and build meaningful relationships. As young professionals, there are so many ways we can meet new people like by attending conferences and conventions, joining clubs or organizations, or just striking up a conversation with the people around us. These relationships can help us learn about innovations and differing perspectives and give us support to help progress and improve the agriculture industry. Especially when you are looking for jobs or internships, these relationships can be incredibly important as they can give you access to opportunities and experiences you may have never imagined.

Q: What is your favorite pork product/dish?

A: Deep fried pork chops!



BRINGING Taste What Pork Can Do™ TO LIFE *through Social Influencers*



With the launch of the digitally focused **Taste What Pork Can Do™** campaign, Minnesota Pork Board has gone all in - not only updating current partnerships to reflect the campaign goals, but also creating new ones to bring the message to life. These efforts make sure pork is present where today's consumers are making decisions: on their phones, in their feeds, and influenced by voices they already trust.

BUILDING NEW

Teaming up with Minnesota Women Athletes

Who remembers last summer's Cook 'n Bacon campaign? We've continued the momentum by partnering with a marketing agency that represents more than 80 female sports properties. Why does this matter? Female athletes bring credibility in health, performance, and everyday life balance. When they share pork recipes or showcase pork as a protein they rely on, it shifts perceptions of pork as not just tasty, but smart fuel for active lifestyles. This summer's reels featured Minnesota Frost professional hockey players Taylor Heise and Marlène Boissonnault and Minnesota Lynx professional basketball player Alanna Smith.



Gopher Football

Football and pork are a natural fit. Highlighting Tony Nelson, a football player, track-and-field thrower, and farm kid from Tracy, MN, connects pork with two powerful themes: athletic performance and farm credibility. When Tony shares pork recipes as part of his fueling routine, it reaches young, fitness-minded consumers while also reinforcing pride in the farm-to-fork connection.



EVOLVING EXISTING

Nourish, Move, Love

We've worked with this wellness brand for years, but this year, we infused the partnership with new campaign touches, from **Taste What Pork Can Do™** aprons to fresh pork facts. The marketing value here is in consistency: when consumers see pork tied into wellness messaging repeatedly over time, it builds trust and familiarity.



The Real Food Dietitians

This partnership continues to pay off by blending pork into highly visible, trusted recipe content. By layering in **Taste What Pork Can Do™** language, we expand the campaign's reach and give it repeated impressions in front of families looking for healthy, quick meal solutions. Why? Dietitians have influence. When they show pork as a nutritious choice, it adds credibility far beyond a paid ad.

Why This Matters

Meeting consumers where they are: Social media is today's "word of mouth." These partnerships ensure pork is represented in spaces where buying habits are shaped.

Trusted voices: Athletes, wellness brands, and dietitians carry credibility that advertising alone can't buy.

Campaign reinforcement: Whether it's an apron, recipe reel, or slogan mentioned, layering in **Taste What Pork Can Do™** creates repetition and memorability which are key drivers in brand-building.

Farmer ROI: Every dollar invested connects pork to audiences who care about nutrition, performance, and flavor in an effort to expand demand and build long-term loyalty.

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2026 Minnesota Pork Awards Nominations Open



Each year, Minnesota Pork offers awards to honor the hard work of leaders who have dedicated time and energy to bettering the Minnesota pork industry.

Without your nominations, we are not able to highlight people who have given so much to our industry. Please take time to fill out their nomination, due October 10.

AWARD CATEGORIES:

Distinguished Service

An individual who has gone above and beyond to ensure the success of pig farming and pork production in Minnesota. They may be directly involved in pork production or a member of a related industry or business.

Environmental Steward

An individual who demonstrates the positive contributions the pork industry makes to the natural environment.

Family of the Year

A pig-farming family that has demonstrated values of leadership and pork promotion on the local and state levels.

Pork Promoter

An individual, couple, family, or business that has done an outstanding job promoting pork and/or pig farming on a local, regional, or state level. Candidates do not need to be pork producers.

Swine Manager

An employee (non-owner) who excels in leadership and management of a swine production operation.

Visit mnpork.com/awards to view and complete
nomination forms, due October 10.
Completed forms should be sent to kate@mnpork.com.

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SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 9

MPB Annual Meeting
MPPA Annual Meeting
Joint Annual Meeting

FEBRUARY 10

Awards Reception
Trade Show
Producer Seminars
Social Hour

FEBRUARY 11

Trade Show
Producer Seminars





Join the Movement to Strengthen Swine Health in Minnesota


Dear Minnesota Pork Producers and Veterinarians,

The Minnesota Pork Producers Association Animal Health Task Force Mhp subcommittee is launching an exciting new effort to improve herd health and elevate the entire swine industry in our state: the Minnesota Mhp Eradication Initiative. This collaborative program, led by the Minnesota Pork Board's Animal Health Task Force composed of producers, practitioners and UMN swine health experts, is a science-based, voluntary, and industry-driven approach to reduce and eventually eliminate Mhp from Minnesota swine herds. The Animal Health Task Force was established by the Minnesota Pork Board to develop programs as part of a new strategic imperative to lead the nation in herd health improvement.

The Mhp eradication initiative will help participants:

- Improve herd health and productivity
- Reduce antibiotic usage and overall medication costs
- Enhance marketability of pigs through improved health status
- Collaborate with experts and fellow producers for regional disease control

**To learn more, visit our website
mnpork.com under the
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HUMAN NUTRITION RESEARCH FUELS Taste What Pork Can Do™ MOMENTUM



Recent studies—from military cadets to older consumers—demonstrate pork is a whole food that delivers superior meal satisfaction, flavor complexity and nutrition, reinforcing pork's everyday value.

Pork Means Proven Meal Satisfaction in Military Cadets & Consumer Trials

A new NPB-funded study done with the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets found that pork-based military-style meals led to less muscle soreness, lower fatigue and higher appetite satisfaction after three days—compared to plant-based meals—underscoring pork's role as a flavor-first, high-quality protein that also supports cadets' performance and recovery under intense mental and physical training conditions.

Ongoing human nutrition research continues to complement the **Taste What Pork Can Do™** campaign, positioning pork as a nutrient-dense and versatile protein. Findings from early 2024 describe pork's flavor profile as rich in over 110 distinct flavor nuances—from umami to hazelnut to floral. Flavor isn't just a sensory bonus—it's a key driver of nutrition

With his presentation time, he highlighted how pork can help diverse populations meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and reinforced that pork's



flavor flexibility allows it to serve as a “carrier food,” helping Americans enjoy more balanced, inclusive meals. Key takeaways included leveraging pork's umami intensity to elevate traditional dishes and its role in making nutrition both enjoyable and actionable.

Nutrition scientists responded extremely well to the new **Taste What Pork Can Do™** messaging. Over 90% found the session, speakers and information presented enjoyable, and 71% indicated they plan to share information about pork and recommend pork to their primary audience.

Human Nutrition Delivers Recent Wins in Market Relevance and Media Visibility

The **Taste What Pork Can Do™** campaign is purpose-built for global flavor and cultural connection. Through chef partnerships, culinary influencers, and registered dietitian collaborations, pork's sensory story is being brought to life for consumers.

More than 140 million people have been reached with NPB research this year.

For example, NPB is securing coverage in the very media sources that Millennials and Gen Z audiences read like Prevention, which reaches 6.3 million people each month. A recent feature by a known registered dietitian influencer named pork as one of the top 24 foods to build muscle, even including **Taste What Pork Can Do™** core messaging.

Read full article and learn more about nutrition efforts at the national level by visiting www.porkcheckoff.org/news.



adherence and keeps consumers coming back for more. As Dr. Kristen Hicks-Roof, director of human nutrition at NPB, emphasizes, “Flavor drives behavior. When food tastes good, people stick with it.”

Connecting Flavor to Dietary Guidelines and Consumer Health

NPB brought **Taste What Pork Can Do™** messaging to over 2,600 scientists and key opinion leaders in nutrition with a sponsored session at Nutrition 2025, the world's leading nutrition science meeting. “Rethinking the Plate: Leveraging Food Traditions and Flavor for Dietary Guidelines Adherence” included speakers like Chef Via Yang, who has appeared on shows like Iron Chef, hosts his own show on PBS called Relish, and who has won three James Beard awards.

THE POWER OF PORK



HOW PORK FUELS EVERY KIND OF ATHLETE

Whether you're hitting the gym, pounding the pavement, cycling through spin class or just getting your steps in — **what you eat before and after exercise matters.** Pork is a powerhouse protein that helps you recover, rebuild and come back stronger.

WHY PORK?

Because it's a nutrient-dense choice for performance and recovery.*

HIGH-QUALITY PROTEIN

Packed with complete protein, pork contains all nine essential amino acids. That's key for muscle repair, growth and recovery after exercise — especially after strength training or high-intensity workouts.¹

B VITAMINS = ENERGY METABOLISM

Pork is a source of thiamin, niacin, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12 — crucial for turning carbs into energy and supporting brain and nerve function under physical stress.²

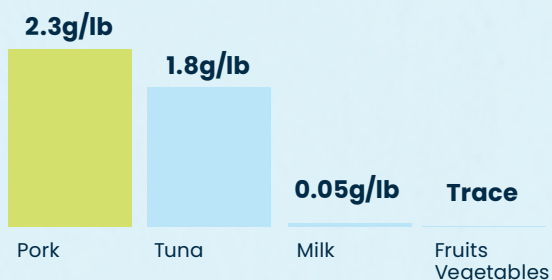
JUST AS LEAN AS CHICKEN BREAST

Just as lean as chicken breast and packed with flavor. Think of pork tenderloin as your blank canvas for flavor — perfect for quick, crave-worthy pre- or post-workout meals.*³

CREATINE (Yes, it's naturally in pork!)

Pork is a whole food source of creatine.*⁴ Creatine helps with short bursts of power and strength — think lifting, sprinting or HIIT.⁵

AMOUNT OF CREATINE IN COMMON FOODS



ZINC + IRON

These essential minerals support oxygen transport, immune strength and muscle function. Iron also helps reduce fatigue, which is especially important for endurance athletes like runners and cyclists.⁶

PORK VS. CHICKEN

	Pork Tenderloin (3oz Cooked)+	Chicken Breast (3oz Cooked)+
Total Fat	2.98g	2.69g
Protein	22.3g	25.9g





BACKED BY SCIENCE. BUILT FOR RECOVERY.

Researchers at Texas A&M University found when testing pork-based versus plant-protein meals, pork-based meals had a more positive impact on recovery and performance in college-aged athletes:^{†7}

- Faster recovery from exercise, less muscle soreness
- Lower oxidative stress and better hormonal balance
- Less inflammation and protein breakdown after exercise
- Lower depression scores
- More appetite satisfaction and better perceptions of restful sleep

PORK IS BUILT FOR ALL TYPES OF EXERCISE

- Runners
- Weightlifters
- Spin and HIIT fans
- Weekend warriors
- Everyday movers

No matter your fitness level, **pork delivers the nutrition your body needs to perform and recover without sacrificing flavor.**

POST-WORKOUT PORK POWERHOUSE MEALS

Fuel your recovery with these easy ideas:

PORK TENDERLOIN + SWEET POTATO MASH

Complex carbs + protein = recovery magic.

WHOLE GRAIN WRAP WITH SHREDDED PORK, SPINACH AND HUMMUS

Great on-the-go option after any workout.

STIR-FRY WITH PORK STRIPS, BELL PEPPERS AND BROWN RICE

Replenishes energy and supports muscle repair.

COBB SALAD

Toss in crispy pork belly or tender pork loin for a next-level protein upgrade.

GROUND PORK AND EGG BREAKFAST BURRITO

Ideal after an early morning spin or run.

PORK + VEGGIE SKEWERS

Perfect for a protein-rich lunch or dinner.

KOREAN PORK LETTUCE WRAPS

Pork + plants = bold flavor with performance benefits.

AIR FRYER HAM, VEGGIE AND CHEESE FRITTATA

Using an air fryer speeds up the cooking time, making it a practical breakfast choice for busy mornings before a workout.

BYO CHARCUTERIE BOARD

Do some post-workout recovery grazing with a purpose. Build a balanced board with sliced pork tenderloin, prosciutto, salami, ham—paired with colorful produce like grapes, bell peppers, cucumbers and apple slices.



^{*} Pork, fresh, loin, tenderloin, separable lean only, cooked, roasted. FDC ID:168250 NDB Number:10061. <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/food-details/168250/nutrients%25201+Comparison+of+Pork,+fresh,+loin,+tenderloin,+separable+lean+only,+cooked,+roasted>. FDC ID:168250 NDB Number:10061 with Chicken, broiler or fryers, breast, skinless, boneless, meat only, cooked, grilled FDC ID:171534 NDB Number:5747 <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/> [†]Findings from this study are applicable to those involved in military-style training. The duration of consuming the pork meals was only three days. There were only six women involved in the study. ¹ Protein. FDA website. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/InteractiveNutritionFactsLabel/assets/InteractiveNFL_Protein_October2021.pdf. Accessed April 22, 2025. ² What Are B Vitamins? Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website. www.eatright.org/health/essential-nutrients/vitamins/what-are-b-vitamins-and-folate. Updated April 3, 2025. Accessed April 22, 2025. ³ Comprehensive Sensory and Flavor Nuances of Pork Protein and Fat. Porkcheckoff.org website. <https://www.porkcheckoff.org/research/comprehensive-sensory-and-flavor-nuances-of-pork-protein-and-fat/>. Accessed July 30, 2025. ⁴ Nutritional Supplements for Endurance Athletes. Springer Nature website. link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-59745-231-1_11. Accessed July 10, 2025. ⁵ Dietary Supplements for Exercise and Athletic Performance. Office of Dietary Supplements website. ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/ExerciseAndAthleticPerformance-Consumer/. Accessed April 22, 2025. ⁶ Solberg A, Reikvam H. Iron status and physical performance in athletes. *Life*. 2023;13(10):2007. ⁷ Gonzalez DE, et al. Effects of pork protein ingestion prior to and following performing the army combat fitness test on markers of catabolism, inflammation, and recovery. *Nutrients*. 2025;17(12):1995.



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