

Nov 1, 2023

Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture

702 Capital Ave.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Committee member,

The last twelve months have been the most trying for the swine industry in recorded history. The obstacles are input costs and extreme labor shortages. Kentucky’s 1,805 hog farming families are resilient and have shown growth in operations and herd size, as shown in our attached 2021 Kentucky Pork Economic Importance report. Our large to medium-sized producers are sharing plans to continue expanding while we see the addition of pork to many direct-to-consumer production models. With the major challenges of the industry being vast, we in Kentucky want to focus our efforts on areas where we can help farm families continue to grow and market wholesome, safe pork products to consumers here in the Commonwealth.

First, to have a robust and qualified Office of the State Veterinarian. Kentucky’s pork producers need the OSV to be the strongest office in terms of qualified staff, access to resources, and funding for program deployment. Kentucky’s pig farmers continue to identify disease response and preparedness as the top priority. The pork industry is designed to be prevention first and reaction second, meaning to have plans and protocols in place when action is needed. The swine industry is a unique one needing qualified individuals in roles working directly with producers; professionals who have a strong background in swine or certification that enables them to meet the challenges that are so different from the rest of animal agriculture.

Second, to keep the regulatory environment friendly to growth in Kentucky’s pork industry. Many farmers are choosing to expand growing operations within our state, giving opportunities for existing farms to diversify or for new farmers to begin. The Commonwealth is quickly becoming a hub for meat processing. Keeping regulations friendly to existing businesses as well as new processing and further processing companies that are choosing Kentucky as their location to invest.

Lastly, for focus to be placed on opportunities that can create success and longevity for Kentucky’s pig farming families. Training opportunities, market development, and network building are needed to ensure that all producers are capturing the full value of their products. The Kentucky Pork Producers Association supports the concept of the Kentucky Livestock Innovation Center. A hub for the innovation of the production of livestock and the business practices surrounding, as well as food animal products, is needed to sustain Kentucky farm families.

Kentucky’s pork industry is important, impacting over 8,800 jobs with an economic impact of $646+Million. KPP’s leadership is eager to meet to answer further questions.

Sincerely,

Niki Ellis

Executive Director
Kentucky Pork Producers Association