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UNL's Livestock

Environmental Issues

Committee Includes

representation from UNL, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Natural Resources Districts, Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska Cattlemen, USDA Ag Research Services, and Nebraska Pork Producers Association.

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Rural Development Through Pork Production The Nebraska Model

By Mike Brumm, Al Prosch & Rod Johnson

Nebraska's producers of pork are striving to create systems of production that are environmentally, economically & socially acceptable.

This is no small challenge. While attempting to comply with environmental rules, producers are faced with the rules changing as they implement adoption. Social acceptance varies with locale but is generally less positive than in the past. And, fewer operations have livestock and fewer people in the rural population rely on livestock for their livelihoods—which makes any livestock production operation less acceptable.

The issues facing all agricultural producers today are more complex and difficult than in the past. Producers of pork face changes in consumer preference that impact the genetics they apply, the animal safety practices they employ and the animal welfare standards they use. Beyond that, as a part of the American agriculture system, they face issues involving a changing agricultural structure, globalization and regulation that are interwoven into our society.

Producers want to produce pork in systems that allow opportunities in rural areas. Systems that invite broader participation and more individuals to create added income from the same land base are needed. Pork production that provides economic opportunity to new participants, while supporting the need for greater teamwork to meet the requirements of increased complexity is critical.

The Nebraska Pork Producers Association and Pork Central at the University of Nebraska are modeling a socially—and environmentally—friendly system of pork production. It allows a family to become involved and invest in animal agriculture. It allows the family to return to the rural community, with an economic return large enough for their futures.

The Nebraska Model is not intended as an endorsement of a specific model of production and/or ownership. Rather, as

shown in the Environmental Section, it is intended to serve as an example of how pork production can occur in rural communities in a manner that complies with local zoning regulations, complies with state DEQ regulations and addresses the rural community's concerns regarding size and odor issues, while still having a large enough economic return to support a family.

The Nebraska Model is divided into three focus areas:

Family Farm Value

Demonstrates an example of an existing farm and how the operation might be expanded. The alternatives are compared to enable a decision maker in evaluating these alternatives.

Environmental Value

Examines the required regulations for such expansions. The Nebraska Model encourages going beyond regulatory requirements and applying the best solutions available for the proposed operation.

Community Value

Reviews the potential that newly added families present to the social and economic health of local and regional communities. Development of any kind needs to add to the social well-being of a community.

Contact the Nebraska Pork Producers Association or Pork Central for a complete presentation of The Nebraska Model. This information is available to all producers, communities and people interested in promoting opportunities for rural development through pork production.

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