



## Pork Quality Assurance™\*

The National Pork Board's Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Program emphasizes good management practices in the handling and use of animal health products, leading to a higher quality, safe pork product free of violative drug residues. The advantages to the individual producer of participating in the Program are improvement of management practices, decreased production costs, avoidance of drug residues, and an increased awareness of food safety concerns.

The USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) collected data on swine health and management practices from a stratified random sample of swine production sites in 17 States<sup>1</sup> as part of the Swine 2000 study. These sites represented 94 percent of the U.S. pig inventory and 92 percent of U.S. pork producers with 100 or more pigs. Overall, 2,499 swine production sites participated in the first interview from June 1, 2000, through July 14, 2000. A second interview was completed by 895 of these sites between August 21, 2000, and November 3, 2000. A final interview was completed by 799 of these sites between December 1, 2000, and February 28, 2001. For estimates in this report, small, medium, and large sites refer to sites with less than 2,000, 2,000 to 9,999, and 10,000 or more pigs in total inventory, respectively.

The Pork Checkoff created the PQA Program in 1989 to encourage producers to review their herd health programs and consider good production practices. Over three-quarters (77.5 percent) of Swine 2000 study participants indicated that they had completed the PQA Program (Level III). These sites had 87.5 percent of all pigs.

Good production practices include keeping accurate records on drug administration so that treated animals can be identified and tracked and proper withdrawal times can be observed. The Swine 2000 survey indicated that over two-thirds (68.1 percent) of all sites kept records on drug usage. Many more large sites (98.6 percent) and medium sites (89.3 percent) kept records on drug usage than small sites (63.6 percent).

For large sites that used antibiotics to treat disease conditions in grower/finisher pigs, about three-quarters recorded drug names, treatment dates, and doses. Pen ID was recorded more often than individual animal ID following the use of antibiotics in grower/finisher pigs, regardless of site size (Table 1).

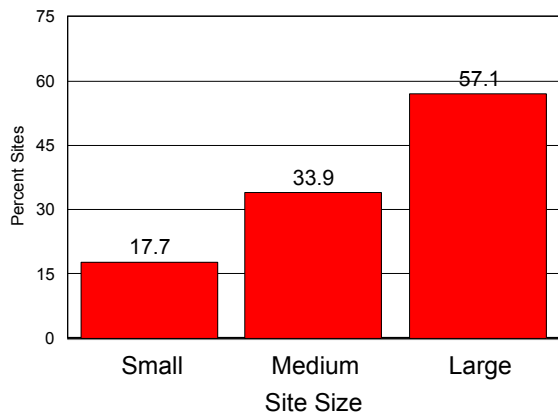
**Table 1. Percent of Sites that Recorded Information for Antibiotics Given to Grower/Finisher Pigs.**

Information Recorded	Percent Sites			
	Size of Site (Total Inventory)			
	Small	Medium	Large	All Sites
Drug name	41.7	66.0	77.9	47.8
Treatment date	40.2	67.7	77.9	47.0
Dose	25.4	50.7	73.7	32.0
Withdrawal time	21.9	39.2	49.8	26.3
Site ID	17.0	40.4	64.4	23.1
Pen ID	28.0	43.0	59.5	31.9
Animal ID	13.0	18.9	6.1	14.2
Route used	20.3	38.9	61.9	25.2
Who administered drug	13.3	39.4	52.3	19.8
Any data	57.5	82.7	82.5	63.6

Feed equipment failure may cause improper mixing or cleaning which can lead to antibiotic residues in pork. Although only 21.2 percent of all sites that fed antibiotics to grower/finisher pigs kept records on feed equipment maintenance, this percentage increased with site size (Figure 1).

<sup>1</sup>Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin.

**Figure 1. Percent of Sites that Kept Feed Equipment Maintenance Records\*.**



\*For sites that fed antibiotics to grower/finisher pigs

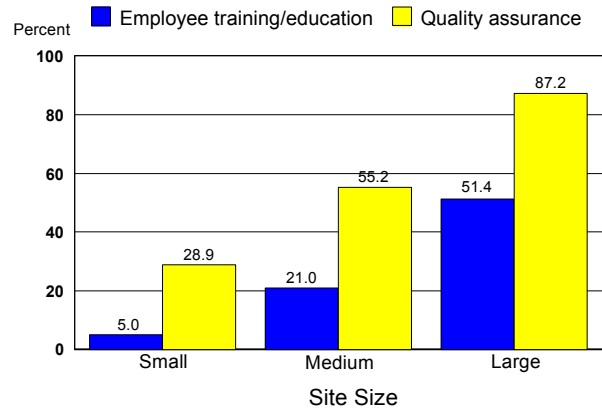
The primary decision maker for deciding which antibiotics were selected to treat sick grower/finisher pigs on the operation varied by site size. The owner of the operation was the primary decision maker on nearly 80 percent of small operations, compared to only 10.8 percent of large operations. The company veterinarian or nutritionist was most commonly the decision maker on large sites (45.8 percent). The local veterinary practitioner was the primary decision maker on 11.0 percent of all sites, with little difference among the different sized sites. However, the services of veterinarians were used on more than 75 percent of small sites and more than 90 percent of medium and large sites. The reason cited most frequently for using a veterinarian's service was to provide medications/vaccines.

Employee education and training are not only important to the success of any quality assurance program but are areas where a veterinarian can play a vital role. Site size greatly influenced whether a veterinarian's services were used to assist with employee education and training as well as for quality assurance purposes. As site size increased, so did the use of a veterinarian's services (Figure 2).

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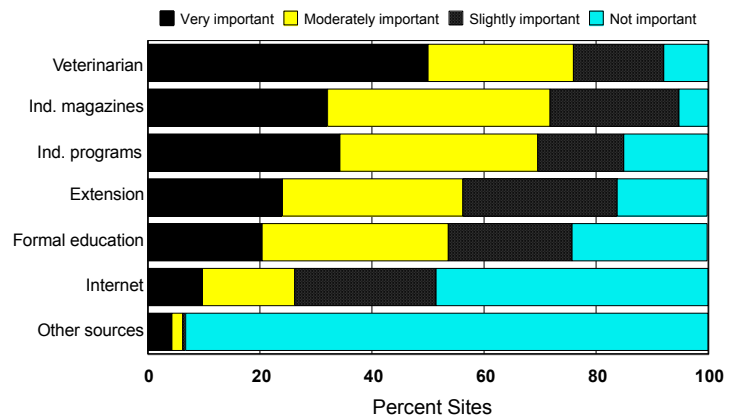
**Figure 2. Percent of Sites that Used a Veterinarian's Services for Training or Quality Assurance\*.**



\*For sites that had at least one veterinarian visit during the previous 12 months

Information regarding food safety in pork is available from many sources. Seventy-six percent of producers indicated that a veterinarian was either a very or moderately important source of information for food safety in pork, followed by pork industry magazines (71.9 percent) and pork industry programs and/or information (69.7 percent) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Percent of Sites by Importance of Information Sources Related to Food Safety in Pork.**



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