

# TRUCKER QUALITY ASSURANCE



## Dr. David Meisinger

The National Pork Board has given a lot of attention to fresh pork quality over the past seven or eight years. Their Pork Quality Solutions Team is comprised of representatives from production, genetics, packing, academia, and government. Through their guidance and oversight, checkoff funds have been devoted to research, education and technology transfer. Many of these efforts have been targeted towards producers and packers. A great deal of effort has been applied to genetics, nutrition and handling of hogs on farms. Likewise, there have been many research projects, workshops, facts sheets, and modules developed to help the packing industry understand the importance of what they do and how it affects pork quality. But in this entire process, it became readily apparent that little or no attention had been paid to those transporting our nation's hogs.

The National Pork Board developed the new Trucker Quality Assurance (TQA) program and introduced it at an instructor training session in December, 2001. The first trucker workshops were held in February, 2002. By the end of April, 2002, over 1200 truckers have been certified as Certified Quality Truckers. Many packers have announced that they will require all hogs entering their plants to be hauled by Certified Quality Truckers.

The program is intended to train carriers in the impact of their actions on pork quality, animal welfare, and biosecurity. It is necessary to handle today's market hogs different than we have in the past for several reasons. Today's high lean market hogs have a temperament which is more prone to stress which affects ultimate pork quality. In addition many of this country's retailers and foodservice companies have taken a position of interest in how pigs are handled on the farm, in transport, and in the plant. Finally, there are new concerns relating to the prevention of the spread of disease.

To become certified, truckers must attend a two-hour workshop for which a PowerPoint presentation, a video, and an instructor's guide has been developed. Each trucker taking the course is provided with a participant's guide which is full of information about loading, transporting and unloading, truck sanitation and biosecurity, and the effects of aggressive handling on pork quality. At the conclusion of the course, truckers are given an exam which they must pass with a score of 90% or greater. Once passed, the trucker enters a database and is sent a certificate, a card, and a trailer sticker announcing that the carrier is a Certified Quality Trucker.

This checkoff developed TQA program has been well accepted by the pork production, packing, and trucking industries and has been praised by the retail and foodservice industries.

## **David Meisinger, Ph.D.**

David Meisinger is Assistant Vice President of Pork Quality for the National Pork Board. He provides technical support to solve marketing problems for fresh and processed pork products. Meisinger also recommends scientific and technical direction to producer committees and coordinates technical activities leading to increased consumer demand for pork and pork products.

Prior to becoming part of the National Pork Board staff on July 1, 2001, Meisinger was Assistant Vice President of Pork Quality for the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC). Prior to joining NPPC in 1995, Meisinger served in various capacities with Pitman-Moore, Indiana Packers and Fetterman Farms. He previously served on the NPPC staff from 1979 to 1985 as Director of Research and Education.

Meisinger is a graduate of Iowa State University with a doctorate degree in animal nutrition. He is a member of many professional organizations including the American Society of Animal Science, the American Meat Science Association and the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists. He resides in Earlham with his wife, Vickie, and their three children.

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