

porkline

The official publication of the South Dakota Pork Producers Council

October
November
December
2026



South Dakota
PORK
PRODUCERS COUNCIL

FROM START TO FINISH

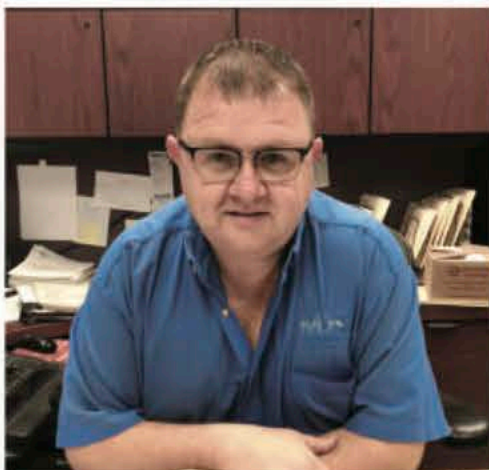
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The *Porkline* is a quarterly publication of the SDPPC. Editorial content and advertisements are screened, but publisher assumes no responsibility for accuracy or validity of claims.

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Ava Saxe - Director of Membership, Outreach, and Engagement
Mary Duvall - Editor

Mission Statement

The South Dakota Pork Producers Council is a unified and engaged advocate that promotes, with integrity, the image and growth of the South Dakota pork industry through education, research, marketing, and responsible policy.

Vision Statement

South Dakota Pork Producers Council is a respected leader advocating for sustainable, responsible growth of the South Dakota Pork Industry that benefits our producers, consumers, and communities.

Follow us on:



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Calendar of Events

October

October Pork Month!
Downtown Sioux Falls Pork Showdown – all month
October 10 – Store promotion Hy-Vee 26th & Marion, Sioux Falls
October 12 – SDPPC Office Closed
October 13-15 – Oktoberfest (office closed)
October 28 – Swine & Dine, Rapid City

November

November 5 – Swine & Dine, Brookings
November 26-27 – SDPPC Office Closed

December

December 24-25 – SDPPC Office Closed



Throughout the month of October, 26 Downtown restaurants in Sioux Falls will go head-to-head in a delicious culinary competition, showcasing a unique pork-focused entrée. After trying a dish, guests can scan the provided QR code or use the DTSF Passport App to rate the dish and submit their vote. Entries will be judged on flavor, presentation, and originality, with diners helping crown the 2026 People's Choice Champion.

Board of Directors

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President's Message

SDPPC President Jason Foster

Hello Fellow Hog Producers!

Wow! Where has the summer gone? As I sit here writing to you on this busy September day, all I can think about is how fast this summer has flown by. It's starting to feel like fall, with the cool nights and mornings. The soybeans are starting to turn, and farmers are getting busy with harvest preparations, with some already starting to cut silage.

First, welcome to our newest team member, Ava Saxe. She is taking over the duties previously handled by Tina Erickson and is now SDPPC's new Director of Membership, Outreach and Engagement. If you haven't already, please stop by and introduce yourself to Ava and welcome her to the team. We're excited to have her on board!

SDPPC staff and producers have been busy with promotional events all across the state this summer and into early fall. We held three Hog Wild events in the Black Hills, and once again, they were very well attended. Our staff and volunteers have also been busy at the Brown County Fair, Sioux Empire Fair, Turner County Fair and the State Fair, working both informational booths and food booths.

I can't say thank you enough to all of our staff and volunteers who help make these fairs and promotional events possible. It truly takes an army to get all of this done, and time after time everyone steps up without hesitation. Your hard work and dedication to promoting pork and telling our story does not go unnoticed!

In June, we held our Swine Summit at the SDSU Swine Education and Research Facility, SDSU Meat Lab, and SDSU Animal Science Arena, along with a tour of a local swine operation. The event was designed for youth ages 13–18 who are interested in the swine industry. They spent the day with industry professionals and producers learning more about the opportunities within the pork industry. It was a great day filled with discussion, fun, and learning for these future pork leaders. It's exciting to see young people interested in our industry and to think

about what they may bring to it in the years ahead.

In July, Executive Director Tina Erickson and I attended NPIC in Wisconsin Dells. Breakout sessions covered a wide range of topics including herd health and performance, driving demand, PEDV elimination, leveraging artificial intelligence, risk management, and the market outlook. We also heard from NPPC CEO Bryan Humphreys and NPB CEO Dr. David Newman, who discussed some of the current issues facing our industry.

It was a great conference with plenty of good information, but just as importantly, it provided a great opportunity to network with other producers and industry leaders from across the country. There is always something to learn when you get a group of pork producers together!

Board Member and Producer Brent Greenway, Executive Director Tina Erickson, Producer Rodney Foster, and I attended a legislative discussion at Dakotafest in Mitchell. Senator John Thune, Senator Mike Rounds, and Congressman Dusty Johnson were in attendance. One of the issues discussed was Prop 12 and the possibility of including a fix in the new Farm Bill. The panel indicated that we may have a better idea of the direction things are headed after the November elections, once we see how the House and Senate shake out.

Thank You, Dr. Bob Thaler

On behalf of the SDPPC and pork producers across our state, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank **Dr. Bob Thaler** as he prepares to retire from SDSU Extension.

For nearly four decades, Bob has been a tremendous resource for South Dakota's pork industry. His knowledge, experience, and willingness to work alongside producers have made a lasting impact on our industry. Whether it was answering a producer's phone call, conducting research, teaching students, or helping move SDSU's

swine program forward, Bob has always been willing to lend a hand and share his knowledge.

Bob, thank you for your friendship, your leadership, and your many years of service to SDSU and South Dakota pork producers. We wish you and Karen all the best in retirement. You've certainly earned it — but knowing Bob, I'm sure retirement will still include plenty of pigs, projects, and probably a few phone calls from producers!



As We Head Into Harvest

As I close, I wish everyone a blessed and safe harvest. With farm machinery running up and down the roads and long hours spent bringing that crop in from the field, we can't forget about safety.

It's easy to get caught up in the long days and the pressure to get everything done, but at the end of the day, your family expects to see you walk through that door—and they want to see you walk through it every night. So please slow down, stay alert, and take the extra time to make sure you and those around you get home safely.

And don't forget that **October is Pork Month!** Let's take every opportunity we can to promote our product, tell our story and educate consumers about the safe, nutritious and delicious pork we produce right here in South Dakota.

From all of us at the South Dakota Pork Producers Council, have a safe and successful harvest. May the combines stay running, the grain carts stay moving, the weather cooperate—and may we all make it home safely at the end of the day!

Stay safe and keep raising great pork!

*Jason Foster, President
South Dakota Pork Producers Council*

Building a Strong Foundation

Tina Erickson

Congratulations, Jeff!



It is an incredible honor to write my first segment as Executive Director of the South Dakota Pork Producers Council. I want to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to our producers, board members, industry partners, and staff for the encouragement and support you've shown me as I step into this role.

Having served our organization over the past four years in membership, outreach, and engagement, I've had the privilege of getting to know many of you personally. I've seen firsthand the dedication and resilience that define South

Dakota's pork producers. Those relationships have strengthened my commitment to serving this industry and advocating on your behalf.

Thank you to our former Executive Director Glenn Muller for his leadership and unwavering commitment to South Dakota Pork Producers Council.

Please join Stephanie, Abbey, and me in welcoming Ava Saxe to the SDPPC team! We're excited to have Ava come on board as our new Director of Membership, Outreach, and Engagement. We look forward to working with her and the professionalism, energy, and passion for the industry she brings to SDPPC. Be sure to introduce yourself when you see Ava at upcoming events.

As our industry continues to evolve, the Council remains focused on the priorities that matter most to producers: protecting your freedom to operate, promoting consumer confidence in pork, supporting youth and leadership development, strengthening animal health and biosecurity, and ensuring that the next generation sees a future in pork production.

While challenges will always exist in our industry, I believe our greatest strength is our willingness to work together. South Dakota's pork producers have consistently demonstrated strength, adaptability, and a commitment to excellence. Those qualities will continue to move our industry forward.

In the coming months, our team and I look forward remaining focused on delivering value to every producer.

Thank you for your continued support of the South Dakota Pork Producers Council. It is a privilege to serve this industry, and I am excited for what lies ahead. Together, we will continue promoting, protecting, and advancing South Dakota pork.

Tina Erickson

Executive Director



Please join us in congratulating SDPPC Board member Jeff Wolff on his selection to be a member of the National Pork Board's Domestic Marketing Committee. Jeff's term begins October 1.

The NPB Domestic Marketing Advisory Committee offers guidance on domestic marketing strategies and demand-building initiatives that strengthen demand for pork in the U.S. market. The committee helps ensure Pork Checkoff investments align with opportunities to drive growth and deliver value across the industry.



Welcome to the Team, Ava!



As of August 25, SDPPC is officially a full office again! Ava Saxe joined the team as the Director of Membership, Outreach, and Engagement.

Ava is a recent graduate of Southern Illinois University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Agribusiness Economics with minors in Communications and Animal Science. She was raised on a small hobby farm in Illinois where her passion for agriculture began. She spent two summers working in hog barns with The Maschhoffs during her high school years, so she is well versed in commercial production.

In her free time, you will find Ava enjoying the outdoors, going to the gym, writing, and spending time with friends. "I am a people person at heart, so I love meeting new people, hearing their stories, and never passing up a good conversation."

She adds, "I'm excited to give back to an industry that has given me so much, while getting to know and build relationships with the producers who make it so special. I'm looking forward to learning from the people around me, becoming more involved in the South Dakota pork industry, and finding ways to make a positive impact along the way!"

SDPPC at Dakotafest



South Dakota Pork Producers Council Board members Jason Foster and Brent Greenway were in Mitchell on August 19 for Dakotafest, taking the opportunity to hear directly from South Dakota's congressional delegation and make sure pork producers' concerns were part of the conversation.

Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, along with Congressman Dusty Johnson, addressed producers on issues affecting agriculture, including the farm bill, prop 12, livestock markets, biofuels and energy policy.



South Dakota Trade Summit Highlights Global Opportunities

SDPPC Board Vice President Mark Fuoss, Board Member Brent Greenway, and Executive Director Tina Erickson recently attended the South Dakota Trade's 2026 Midwest Agricultural Export Summit. The Summit brought together 240 producers, business leaders, policymakers, trade organizations and international representatives in Sioux Falls to explore opportunities for expanding South Dakota's presence in global markets.

Focusing on the theme **"Forging Forward: New Markets, More Sales,"** the summit highlighted market diversification, trade policy, and the importance of building strong international relationships.

A key takeaway was the value of collaboration. Industry leaders and producers shared their experiences navigating international markets, while discussions on federal trade policy highlighted how decisions in Washington can impact agricultural exporters here at home.

The summit featured international perspectives from **Taiwan and Kenya**, offering attendees insight into potential markets and the importance of developing relationships with international buyers and partners.

Sessions on trade missions and export opportunities reinforced the practical steps businesses can take to expand beyond domestic markets.

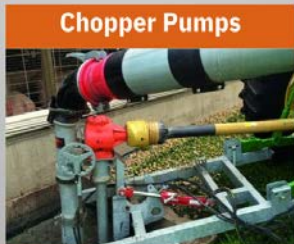
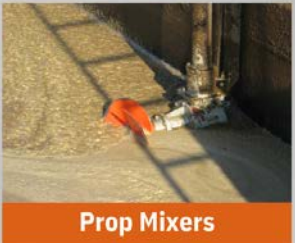
The message throughout the day was clear: **South Dakota has tremendous potential to grow its global footprint.** By connecting businesses with new markets and strengthening relationships around the world, South Dakota Trade is helping create opportunities for more South Dakota products to be **grown here and sold globally.**

South Dakota Trade is a non-profit association working to promote partnerships between foreign buyers or investors and South Dakota businesses in key industries including agriculture, bioscience, manufacturing, and more.



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A Leg Up for Pork's Next Generation: NPIF Scholarships Open

Applications due in December

The National Pork Industry Foundation (NPIF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing research and education in the pork industry, is now accepting applications for two scholarship programs supporting students pursuing careers that will strengthen the future of the U.S. pork industry.

Applications are open for the **Neil Dierks Scholarship** and the **U.S. Pork Center of Excellence Swine Legacy Scholarship**, which together will provide scholarships to under-graduate, graduate, and professional-track students pursuing studies related to the pork and swine industries.

"We know the future of our industry is in good hands when we invest in the people who will carry it forward," said NPIF president Barb Determan. "These scholarships honor people who believed in education and in the future of pork production. We are proud to play a part in helping the next generation get their start."

The **Neil Dierks Scholarship** honors longtime CEO of the National Pork Producers Council, Neil Dierks, and recognizes his remarkable leadership and dedication to the pork industry throughout his career.

The \$5,000 scholarship is awarded annually to a graduate student enrolled at a land-grant university and pursuing

studies that directly support the pork industry.

"Neil Dierks understood the importance of investing in people and in the future of pork production," said John Anderson, pork producer from Minnesota and NPPC representative on the NPIF board. "This scholarship helps us do the same by giving students with a passion for our industry an opportunity to take the next step."

Applications for the 2027 Neil Dierks Scholarship are due **Friday, December 18**. The recipient will be announced during the National Pork Industry Forum, March 3-5, 2027, in Arlington, Texas.

The **USPCE Swine Legacy Scholarship** was established by NPIF to carry forward the legacy of the U.S. Pork Center of Excellence, which served for 20 years as a public-private partnership bringing together academic expertise, industry resources, and collaboration to strengthen the U.S. pork sector.

Following the decision to sunset USPCE, its remaining financial assets were awarded to NPIF through a competitive proposal process. In recognition of USPCE's contributions to the pork industry, NPIF established the endowed Swine Legacy Scholarship to continue its impact through support for future generations of industry leaders.

The program awards three \$5,000 scholarships annually, including two scholarships for undergraduate students and one for a graduate or professional-track student. Students pursuing studies in research, education, veterinary science, or related fields supporting the swine industry are eligible for consideration.

The scholarship program is expected to continue for approximately 40 years, providing a lasting investment in students and the future of the pork industry.

Applications for the 2027 USPCE Swine Legacy Scholarship are due by **Friday, December 4**. Eligible applicants include third- or fourth-year undergraduate students and from current or accepted graduate or veterinary science students who are U.S. citizens pursuing careers in the pork industry.

Together, these two scholarships complement NPIF's commitment to education and leadership development, including the Lois Britt Memorial Pork Industry Scholarship, sponsored by NPIF in partnership with CME Group. The Lois Britt program awards scholarships to undergraduate students pursuing careers in the pork industry.

For full eligibility requirements and to apply, visit nppc.org.

Pork Chop Open

Thank you to Craig Andersen and Daniel Fuoss for grilling the pork loins for the Pork Chop Open hosted by South Dakota Master Pork Association. The 52nd annual event was held August 7 in Hartford. Pork producers, allied industry members, and friends from all over our Tri-State area enjoyed a beautiful day of golf.



Hog Wild in the Black Hills!



July 11th Hog Wild, from left: Ronda Snyder, Krista Prouty, and Martin Prouty. This crew served over 500 sandwiches.

August 15th Hog Wild at the West Side Baken Park Family Fare in Rapid City. From left: Abbey Riemenschneider, Jeff Menkes, Kristen and Rafe Royall,



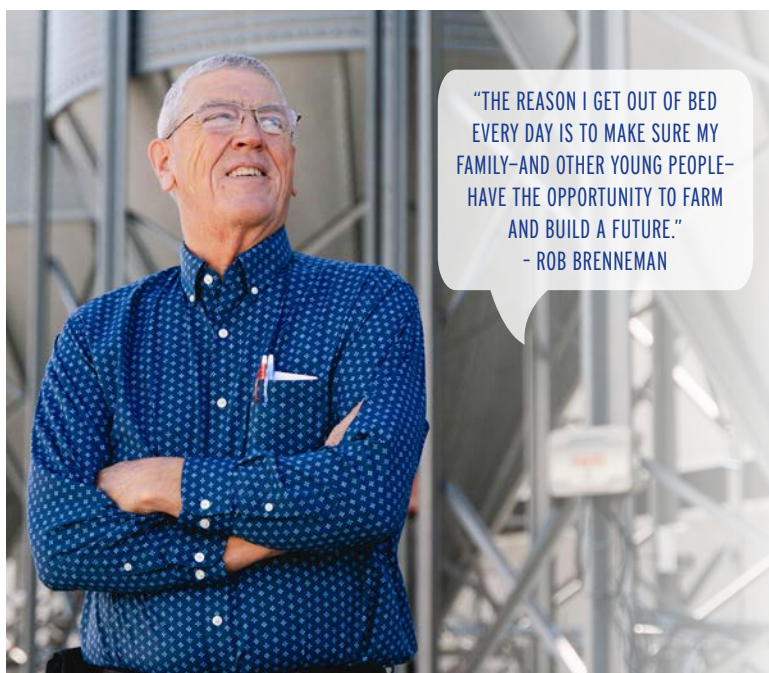
County Fairs!



On August 13th Stephanie Fox and Makayla Fuoss attended the Brown County Fair in Aberdeen.



SDPPC at the Turner County Fair on August 19, with Abbey Riemenschneider and Lacie Weber

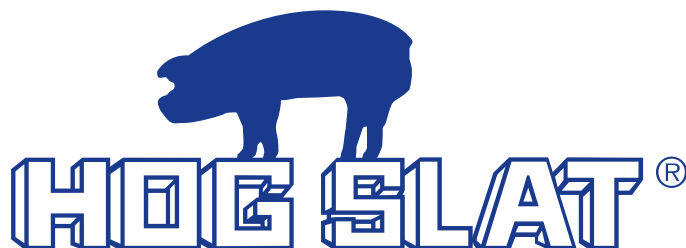


"THE REASON I GET OUT OF BED EVERY DAY IS TO MAKE SURE MY FAMILY-AND OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE-HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FARM AND BUILD A FUTURE."
- ROB BRENNEMAN

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Looking Forward to the 2027 Legislative Session

By Mary Duvall

The current legislative interim is largely a quiet one for South Dakota agriculture. However, we are already looking forward to the 2027 Legislative Session and the new and returning legislators who will be part of the 102nd Session.

One of the issues that is starting to come up more often in conversation is the need for maintenance and repair funding for SDSU's Ag Experiment Station (AES). While other buildings within the state's regental system are funded through student fees and general fund appropriations, the AES maintenance and repair funding comes from a portion of the annual pesticide registration fee. The fee is \$165 per registered pesticide; of that, \$15 goes to the AES.

Current maintenance and repair needs are estimated at \$2 million annually; the pesticide registration fee provides about \$175,000.

The Ag Unity Group, which includes SDPPC, has appointed a work group to dig into this topic and develop proposals for policymakers to consider. If you have ideas, comments, or suggestions, please let Tina know.

South Dakota voters will have four proposed constitutional amendments to consider at the upcoming General Election in November. All four were placed on the ballot by the Legislature.

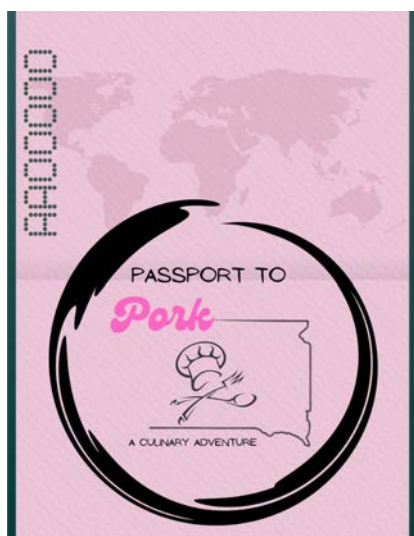
Amendment I would end expanded Medicaid coverage if the federal funding for expansion drops below 90%. In the 2022 General Election, voters approved a Constitutional amendment to expand Medicaid eligibility to anyone between the ages of 18 and 65 whose income is at or below 133% of the federal poverty level. The federal government is currently funding 90% of the expenses for this expanded eligibility. If Amendment I passes and federal funding for expansion drops below 90%, Medicaid coverage would once again apply only to low-income children, pregnant women, disabled individuals, and the elderly.

Amendment J would clarify that an individual who is not a citizen of the United States is disqualified from voting in state elections. South Dakota's Constitution defines the qualifications of those who are eligible in state elections, including age, residency, and U.S. citizenship. Amendment J would add language disqualifying non-citizens from voting.

Amendment K would establish a trust fund for unclaimed property. Under state law, intangible property (money orders, bank deposits, refunds, stocks, etc.) is presumed to be abandoned if it remains unclaimed by the owner for more than three years after it became payable. Abandoned intangible property is transferred to the State Treasurer to hold while waiting for the owner to claim it. Amendment K would establish a trust fund for unclaimed property, to be invested by the State Investment Council. Some of the interest and income from this fund would be distributed to the State's general fund, as determined by the Legislature.

Amendment L would increase the threshold of voter approval for amending our Constitution, from a simple majority to a sixty percent. Proponents argue that our state constitution is the foundational political document for South Dakota, and it should be hard to change. They point to the US Constitution, which requires three-fourths of the states to ratify any proposed amendment. Opponents argue that it goes counter to our long-held tradition of majority rule (fifty percent plus one) and gives power to a minority (forty percent plus one). In both 2018 and 2022, South Dakota voters rejected proposals to increase the vote required to amend our State Constitution.

You can find a more complete explanation about each of these proposals on the Secretary of State's website at sdsos.gov under the "Elections and Voting" tab.



Passport to Pork applications are open for educators who are interested in having their students immersed in a two-day PORK experience.

The SDPPC believes that by educating culinary students about pork production practices, proper handling, and preparation of pork products, we are setting them up to be well-rounded and knowledgeable chefs who can go into the industry and create innovative and unique dishes that utilize the products our producers are so proud of.

Applications can be found on our sdpork.org website. Spaces are limited.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact Abbey Riemenschneider, Director of Programs and Communications, by calling the SDPPC office at 605-332-1600 or email abbeyr@sdppc.org.

South Dakota's 58th Annual Pork Congress

2027 Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship opportunities are available for the 2027 South Dakota Pork Congress. If you are unable to have a booth at our show or are looking for additional ways to support the SDPPC, please consider a sponsorship.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Sponsorship Levels

Platinum Sponsor - \$1500

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Contact Tina Erickson at 605-332-1600 or terickson@sdppc.org for any questions.

58th Annual Pork Congress

January 13 & 14, 2027 ~ Sioux Falls Ramkota Hotel & Exhibit Hall

Tuesday, January 12, 2027

Trade Show Set Up 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM
SDPPC Executive Board Meeting
6:00 PM

Wednesday, January 13, 2027

Trade Show Set Up 7:00 AM – 9:30 AM
Checkoff Annual Meeting 9:00 AM
Trade Show Open 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM
2028 Pork Act Delegate Election 10:30 AM
TQA Certification 10:30 AM
Lunch 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Seminar I 1:00 PM
PQA Plus® Certification 3:00 PM

MPPC Recognition Banquet & SDPPC Awards

Social Hour-Cash Bar-Popcorn 5:00 PM
Dinner 6:00 PM
“Sold! What’s Next?” Auction After the banquet

Thursday, January 14, 2027

Trade Show Open 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Seminar II 10:00 AM
Lunch 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
**Non-Checkoff Annual Meeting
of Members (SIP Investors)** 2:00 PM
**SIP Membership Reception &
Pork PAC Silent Auction** 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM
All SIP investors & interested producers welcome
SDPPC Executive Board Meeting 7:00 PM

You can find more information on the SDPPC website (sdppc.org) under the “Programs and Events” tab.



SDPPC Award Nominations for 2027

SDPPC’s Producer Education & Outreach Committee is searching for producers, allied industry representative, or a restaurant to receive pork industry recognition.

Nominations are due by December 9, 2026.

Recipients will be recognized during the MPPA Awards Banquet on Wednesday, January 13, 2027.

Award Categories

SD Pork All-American: Recognition of a SD pork farmer for leadership and involvement.

Dedicated/Distinguished Leadership: Recognition of an individual who provides outstanding and dedicated service to South Dakota’s pork industry.

Pork Promoter of the Year: Recognition of an individual/family, organization, company, or county group who has done an outstanding job promoting pork and/or the pork industry on a local, regional, or state level.

Family of the Year: Honors a pork-producing family who has contributed to the long-term success of the industry through leadership and pork promotion on the local, state, and/or national level.

Friends of the Industry: Recognition of a pork industry leader whose principle occupation is not pork production, for their willing and outstanding contribution to the swine industry.

*For more information, please contact Tina Erickson
terickson@sdppc.org*

Support Your Land, Secure Your Future

Advancing U.S. Pork Sustainability and Market Value grant program

Take the lead in protecting your land and strengthening your farm's future. This grant is designed to drive results for pork producers who are committed to the longevity of their farms and want to increase their market opportunities.



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- **Attract supply chain partners:** Gain visibility as a preferred partner for companies prioritizing ethical and responsible practices.
- **Protect your freedom to operate:** Secure your ability to make farm decisions that benefit your business and the longevity of your land.

How it works

- **Complete the Pork Cares Farm Impact Report:** Confidentially and securely capture the sustainable practices already in place on your farm.
- **Receive financial and technical support:** Unlock direct incentives and expert advice for implementing sustainability initiatives.
- **Stand out to stakeholders and contribute to a positive industry story:** Use your report to demonstrate your farm's commitment to sustainability, boosting your market presence.

Ready to reap the benefits?

Request your Pork Cares Farm Impact Report today and unlock support for your farm.

Get started at porkcheckoff.org/pork-production-management/sustainability



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This work is supported by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through its Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) funding.



National Pork Industry Conference

Celebrating 30 years



The 30th Annual National Pork Industry Conference (NPIC) brought pork producers, industry leaders and allied partners together July 12–15 in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

With more than 900 attendees, including SDPPC President Jason Foster, the conference consisted of education, discussion, and networking, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities shaping the next generation of pork production.

This year's theme, **"Honoring 30 Years of Progress, Rewriting the Playbook for the Next 30,"** provided a fitting look at how the industry has evolved — and where producers need to go next. Sessions addressed issues impacting profitability, production decisions, and the overall competitiveness of the U.S. pork industry, including use of artificial intelligence in pork production.

Keynote speaker Ryan Lavarney, a former Major League Baseball catcher, gave a presentation on "Why Not? Thinking Big and Accomplishing the Impossible." His message focused on leadership, mindset and pursuing bold goals.

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Hog Wild for a Better Barn

SDPPC makes \$30,000 donation

The South Dakota State Fair Foundation has launched the “Hog Wild for a Better Barn” fundraising campaign, a major initiative to purchase 450 new hog pens for the Swine Barn at the State Fairgrounds.

The fundraising goal for the project is \$240,000. The Swine Barn serves as a central home for 4-H, FFA, and Open Class exhibitors, and updated pens will greatly improve safety, comfort and usability for both exhibitors and animals.



The campaign is boosted by generous support from industry partners. Both the SDPPC and State Fair Foundation have offered \$30,000 matching challenges for 4-H exhibitors and Open Class exhibitors. Together, these matching funds provide \$60,000 in combined matching opportunities for the project.

“South Dakota Pork Producers Council recognizes the importance of improving the Swine Barn,” said SDPPC Executive Director Tina Erickson. “We are happy to provide this donation to ensure future generations have an upgraded venue to showcase their pigs.”

A variety of donor levels and recognition opportunities are available through the campaign, making it easy for individuals, families, businesses, and organizations to participate. Donors may also choose to spread pledge payments over two years, offering flexibility for those who wish to contribute over time. All donations are tax-deductible.

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State Fair Highlights

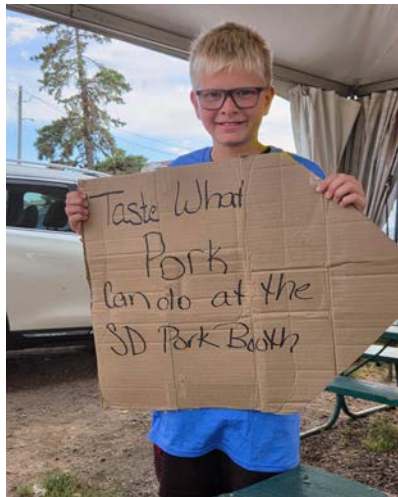


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Finding New Perspectives in a Familiar Place

By Madison Weishaar, SDSU

From Germany, Chelsea Cordsen spent some time at SDSU and Odegard Family Farms near Lake Preston learning more about swine production in the United States. Thank you to the SDSU College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences for sharing this blog post with us.

You can find a video with Chelsea on their Facebook page.

Growing up on a row crop and swine operation in Süderbrarup, Germany, Chelsea Cordsen developed an early interest in agriculture. Now finishing her bachelor's degree in sustainable agriculture at Kiel University of Applied Sciences in Kiel, Germany, Cordsen completed a 16-week internship that took her to three countries to learn about swine production around the world — including some time at South Dakota State University.

First, she spent 10 weeks with Schweine Spezial Beratung Schleswig-Holstein, which is a swine consulting company based in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. There, she accompanied consultants on farm visits where they conducted animal welfare checks, among other tasks.

She then spent three weeks on a 120-head sow farm in Switzerland, where she experienced free farrowing and group nursing — production practices that differ from those she is used to.

The final three weeks of her internship brought her to SDSU.

"I wanted to do three weeks in the U.S. to get an insight into the swine industry and see how the barns and systems work here," she said.

The three weeks Cordsen spent at SDSU expanded her understanding of U.S. swine production. She got to see inside SDSU's swine facilities, where she was able to help breed gilts for a research trial and assist with daily chores. She also spent a few days at the SDSU Feed Processing Research Unit, where she learned about feed mill operations and helped prepare diets for research trials. During her final week, Cordsen worked at Odegard Family Farms near Lake Preston.

Through these hands-on experiences, Cordsen was able to compare swine production practices in the U.S. with those she has seen in Germany and Switzerland.

"The farms here (U.S.) are much more precise with how they formulate rations," she said. "They mix in their own amino acids and adjust diets on-site. In Germany, we usually buy one premix that already contains the minerals, amino acids and everything else."



While SDSU gave Cordsen the opportunity to see swine production from a new perspective, it also brought her back to a place that had long been part of her family's story.

Her grandparents, Doug and Mary Pettigrew of Wetonka, and her uncle are SDSU alumni. Her mother, Erin Cordsen (Pettigrew), also graduated from SDSU in 1995 with degrees in animal science and agricultural journalism.

Through her animal science coursework, Cordsen's mother (Erin) was taught by Bob Thaler, distinguished professor and SDSU Extension swine specialist. Nearly 30 years later, that connection allowed Cordsen to complete her internship at SDSU while learning from the same professor who once taught her mother.

"Dr. Thaler was good at setting this up and getting me some of the opportunities to see a few different production systems," she said. "I am very grateful to have gained insight into the many aspects of U.S. swine production through the mix of experiences I had."

As she prepares to return home and finish her degree, Cordsen looks forward to applying what she learned through her internship to her future career. She plans to pursue a master's degree before eventually returning to her family's farm or exploring other opportunities within the swine industry.



SDPPC sponsored the Third Annual SDSU Jacks Classic on September 20. Tina and Ava attended and helped serve the delicious pork loin grilled by board member Terry Wolters. Thank you to the Jacks Classic committee and the SDSU Swine Club for organizing yet another successful event for the youth of our industry. Congratulations to all the participants and winners!

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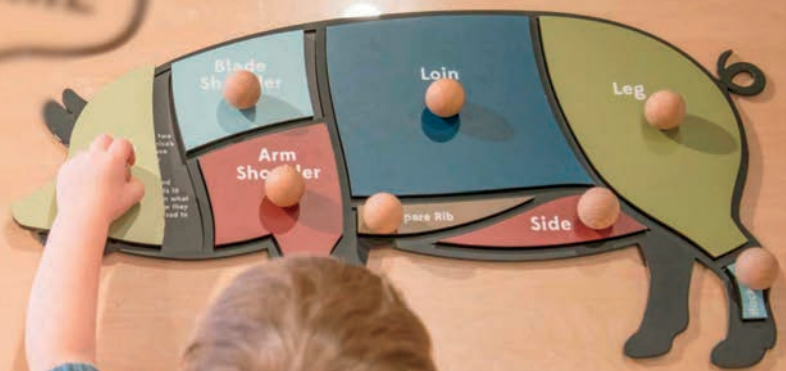
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SDSU Swine Unit Expansion Grand Opening

September 8th marked the Grand Opening of the Swine Education and Research Facility Expansion at South Dakota State University. The \$1.8 million expansion will increase its wean-to-finish capacity by fifty percent. The expansion will increase the number of wean-to-finish rooms to six, allowing all pigs born at the facility to be raised through market weight on site.

Honored Speakers included SDPPC board member and Vice President Mark Fuoss. Mark spoke of how monuments are built to honor and to be looked at, but that is not the case with this swine expansion barn. "It's to be utilized in research, teaching and producing quality education as well as a high-quality product." Fuoss also stated how important it is for the pork industry to "Keep pushing On" and continue to

drive to be the best. "To have such a facility right here in South Dakota is remarkable."

Also in attendance at the ceremony was SDPPC's 2nd Vice President Dan Howell, Executive Director Tina Erickson, past Executive Director Glenn Muller, and Master of Ceremonies and SDPPC Board Member and Farm Credit Services Endowed Chair in Swine Production, Dr. Bob Thaler.

Crystal Levesque named inaugural Rick Wahlstrom Endowed Chair in Swine Production at SDSU

Crystal Levesque, professor of monogastric nutrition at South Dakota State University, has been named the inaugural Rick Wahlstrom Endowed Chair in Swine Production. The appointment recognizes her strong research program and commitment to student success.

"Dr. Levesque's research bridges the gap between basic and applied swine research. She integrates the teaching and research missions of SDSU well," said interim department head of animal science, Michael Gonda. "Thanks to Dr. Levesque's work, our undergraduate and graduate students are included in impactful research projects that not only benefit the swine industry but also improve our students' preparedness to enter the workforce."

The endowed chair position honors the late Rick Wahlstrom, whose 36-year career at SDSU helped establish the university as a leading academic and research hub for swine production.

Levesque was born and raised on a broiler and mixed small grain farm in central Saskatchewan, Canada. Growing up, she developed an appreciation for livestock production and the role research plays in improving animal agriculture. She earned her doctorate at the University of Alberta, where her research focused on amino acid metabolism during pregnancy, before

completing postdoctoral training at the Prairie Swine Center at the University of Guelph. Those experiences helped shape a fulfilling career centered on improving the health and productivity of swine and poultry.

Throughout her time at SDSU, Levesque has built a nationally recognized research program focused on three primary areas: understanding maternal nutrient use and requirements during pregnancy and lactation to improve piglet development; evaluating alternative feed ingredients and dietary additives to improve piglet health after weaning; and using advanced feed technologies to improve efficient growth in broilers and turkeys.

For Levesque, her appointment represents an opportunity to carry forward Wahlstrom's legacy. "It is his desire and skill for engaging interaction that I strive to bring to my teaching and research," she says. "Active engagement with the students and active listening with the farmers is what ensures our training and research have relevance to commercial swine production and produce well-trained, engaged students to become the next leaders of the swine industry — leaders with influence like Dr. Wahlstrom had."



When Pigs Fly



Another great team effort for SDPPC! The fifth annual When Pigs Fly clay shooting event was held September 8 at Hunters Pointe in Humboldt and despite LOTS of rain it was a fun day of competition and socializing among our producers and allied industries!

Pig Farmers Press Lawmakers for Prop. 12 Solutions

Nearly 150 pork producers from California to New York joined forces in Washington to advocate for their farms and livelihoods as the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry passed the Agricultural Act of 2026 out of Committee.

“Our message to Congress is clear: Stop the patchwork nightmare that California Proposition 12 has created for pork producers across the country. Our family farms cannot afford the uncertainty these conflicting state laws is creating,” said National Pork Producers Council President Rob Brennehan, a pork producer from Washington County, Iowa. “We’re not backing down from this fight for rural America. I’m proud of my fellow pork producers for taking precious time away from their farms to travel to Washington, D.C., and meet face to face with their elected officials. They are advocating for reasonable legislation that allows us to continue farming and pass down our farms to the next generation.”

During NPPC’s biannual Legislative Action Conference, pork producers from across the country were briefed by a bipartisan group of legislators, including U.S. Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA), House Agriculture Committee Chairman G.T. Thompson (R-PA), and Agriculture Committee member Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH). NPPC officers also visited with U.S. Department of Agriculture officials responsible for administering federal programs on which producers depend.

Spreading out across Capitol Hill, pork producers took their message to approximately 175 congressional offices, advocating on behalf of their fellow American 60,000+ producers. Among their asks were including a fix to California Proposition 12 in the final farm bill, funding the U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan, supporting the “Securing Agriculture’s Workforce Act” for year-round labor support, and urging the Trump administration to quickly complete the review to renew the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

NPPC also presented Sen. Ernst and Chairman Thompson with the inaugural “Bringing Home the Bacon” congressional award. To top off the conference, NPPC hosted its annual Baconfest congressional reception where more than 1,100 guests, including members of Congress and their staff, embassy officials, and industry stakeholders, gathered to discuss pork industry priorities and enjoy a variety of delicious pork-centric snacks—including the famous



NPPC CEO Bryan Humphreys brought the 2026 Fall Legislative Action Conference to a close with a reminder of why bringing producers to Washington matters. Over two days, producers dug into the issues shaping U.S. pork production from animal health and MAHA to trade, the farm bill, and Prop. 12. Those meetings put firsthand producer experience into the policy conversation, sharing what decisions made in Washington can mean on the farm, for the families behind those farms, and across rural communities.



State Executives Meet in D.C.

SDPPC's executive director Tina Erickson traveled to Washington, D.C., June 22-24 to participate in a States Executive Directors meeting with pork industry leaders from across the country.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the Executive Directors to share perspectives, discuss issues affecting producers, and coordinate on priorities for the U.S. pork industry.

For South Dakota producers, participation in these national meetings helps ensure that the challenges and opportunities facing our state's pork industry remain part of the broader conversation.



Congratulations to SDSU's Eminent Leaders

South Dakota State University colleges of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences and Education and Human Sciences recently honored Patty DeZeeuw, Elkton; Mary Duvall, Pierre; Jerry Schmitz, Vermillion; and Kevin Scott, Valley Springs; with the 2026 Eminent Leaders in Agriculture, Family and Community Award.

Established in 1927, the annual award formerly known as the Eminent Farmer/Rancher and Homemaker Award has a legacy of more than 370 recipients.

"It's important for us to recognize these members of the agriculture community who have gone above and beyond in sharing their time, talent and treasure for the good of others," said Joseph Cassady, South Dakota Corn Endowed Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. "Their actions serve as an inspiration to all. And today, we are in need of strong leaders in agriculture more than ever before. As the number of individuals directly engaged in production agriculture continues to decline, it is critical that our voices be heard."

SDPPC *PorkLine* editor Mary Duvall is pictured here with her husband, Ron, and their daughter and son-in-law Layne and Jon Manson.



SDPPC'S Pork Leadership Institute participant Tanya Torguson got a night tour of our Nation's Capitol by Congressman Dusty Johnson

Thanks to SDPPC's Alliance Members!





Vietnamese Inspired Grilled Lemongrass Pork Chops

Ingredients

2 lb ribeye pork chop, bone-in, thin cut (about 4 chops)
2 stalks lemongrass, bottom halves only, minced (substitute
2 Tbsp lemongrass paste)
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 shallot, minced
¼ cup brown sugar
2 Tbsp fish sauce
2 Tbsp soy sauce, low sodium
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
4 cups cooked short grain rice
1 seedless cucumber, sliced

Nuoc cham dip (optional)

1/3 cup hot water
2 Tbsp fish sauce
2 Tbsp brown sugar
2 Tbsp lime juice
1 clove garlic, minced
2 Tbsp carrots, shredded (optional)
1 tsp birds eye chili (optional)

Directions

In a bowl combine lemongrass, garlic, shallots, brown sugar, fish sauce, and soy sauce. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Place pork chops in a gallon-sized resealable bag. Pour over with lemongrass marinade. Refrigerate for at least an hour, preferably overnight.

Preheat grill to 350-400°F. Remove pork chops from marinade, making sure to remove as much marinade as possible. Discard remaining marinade. Grill chops about 3-5 minutes per side until well charred and internal temperature reaches 145°F. Remove from grill and rest 3-10 minutes.

Serve hot with rice, cucumber, and nuoc cham if desired.

For nuoc cham dip if making, combine hot water, fish sauce, brown sugar, lime juice, and garlic. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Add carrots and bird chilis if using. Set aside.

Ham, Egg, and Cheese Croissant Bake

Ingredients

8 oz honey baked ham, thinly sliced
6 eggs
8 day-old croissants, cut into 1" cubes
8 oz Swiss cheese, shredded
3 cups half and half
2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
Pinch nutmeg
To taste salt and black pepper
As needed cooking spray
2 Tbsp chives, minced (optional)

Directions:

Grease a 9"x13" with cooking spray.

Arrange cubes of day-old croissants in prepared dish. Tuck slices of ham between pieces of croissant and sprinkle with shredded cheese.

In a bowl whisk together eggs, half and half, mustard, and nutmeg. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour custard over croissants and allow to soak for 30 minutes or up to overnight.

Bake in preheated 350°F oven until custard is set and cheese is golden brown and bubbling, about 40-45 minutes.

Cool 5-10 minutes before serving. Garnish with chives if desired

*Whole muscle pork cuts are safe to eat when cooked to 145 degrees and allowed to rest for three minutes.



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