

Kentucky Pork Industry is Growing

This article was provided by Kentucky Farm Bureau

While the swine industry represents a small percentage of the overall agricultural cash receipts in the state, the number is still significant. The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture estimates 2015 totals to reach \$129 million.

Of the top five swine producing counties in Kentucky, two of those are located in Congressman Brett Guthrie's (KY-02) district. He said the revenue hog operations produce is significant to the rural communities in which they are located.

"My district has a rich agricultural history and is home to top swine-producing counties, including Warren and Nelson counties that contribute greatly to our agriculture industry and local economy," he said. "These operations are generating revenue that not only benefit farmers, but also businesses and organizations in Kentucky's second district."

Dr. Dennis Liptrap, board president of the Kentucky Pork Producers (KPP) said, while there is sustainability and growth among larger producers, the smaller operations are also seeing their numbers expand.

"I see a lot of growth in smaller producers who are marketing directly to consumers," he said. "That side of the industry is finding resurgence and growth which is good to see because we see young people entering the business."

Much of that smaller direct market surge can be attributed to the local food movement seen here and across the country, noted Liptrap.

As for commercial growers, Liptrap said many are building new structures and adding sows to their operations as that segment of the industry continues its expansion.

He also said that as the industry has grown it has become more efficient from a production standpoint as well as an environmental perspective.

"All Kentucky swine producers are regulated from an animal waste standpoint at standards more stringent than those at the federal level," he said. "They're also more efficient. We're producing a pound of



pork with less inputs and a smaller carbon footprint on the overall environment."

As with many forms of agriculture, educating a public that is becoming more and more generationally removed from the farm is an important task of the KPP.

"We represent pork producers but we also strive to be a source of information for the general public," he said. "Even if they are only one generation away from the farm, today's operations are much different than in the old days."

Using that efficiency pork producers have obtained is key as farmers work to meet a growing challenge of feeding an ever increasing world population, emphasized Liptrap; something that will lend itself to more growth in the industry.

In addition to it being a very lean form of meat, Liptrap pointed out it is a good buy in the grocery store.

He added, it's reasonable to think there will be continued positive growth in the swine industry, one that is dominated by family owned and operated entities.

"I think that is one of the unique things about Kentucky in that even our large producers are still family operations, owned by Kentucky folks that were born and raised right here," he said.

Questions

1. What is the main idea of this article?
2. Using examples from the article compare and contrast commercial hog farmers and small hog farmers.
3. How are hog producers more environmentally efficient than in the past?
4. What are two issues facing the pork industry?

