



Youth PQA Plus[®] State Program Equivalency Process

The Pork Checkoff's Youth Pork Quality Assurance Plus[®] program is modeled after the Pork Quality Assurance Plus[®] program. Both programs emphasize the 10 good production practices that allow pork producers to demonstrate their commitment to 'quality assured' pork production through food safety, responsible antibiotic use and animal well-being training and education.

Pork producers worked together through the Pork Checkoff to create the Pork Quality Assurance[™] Level III (PQA[™]) program in 1989. Youth participated in PQA until official youth certification became available in 2003. Youth PQA[™] allowed youth to be presented materials at the appropriate educational level.

During and prior to the implementation of the first Youth PQA certification, some states chose to take a proactive approach to youth quality assurance education. Some of the state programs include other livestock species in addition to swine and supplemental material deemed valuable at the individual state level, such as ethics and character training. These state programs provide a state database of youth participants.

After introduction of Youth PQA, an equivalency process that allowed the National Pork Board to verify that these multispecies state quality assurance programs addressed all of the minimum standards and key learning objectives of the Youth PQA program was developed. With this in place, PQA principles were taught in addition to other materials covered, making the individual states programs more streamlined. To date, five states including Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Texas have taken advantage of this process.

In 2007, Youth PQA became Youth PQA Plus[®]. The states with programs previously deemed equivalent to Youth PQA were granted until June 2009 to review and update their programs to continue to remain equivalent.

The Pork Checkoff officially acknowledges that the following state programs meet and exceed the minimum standards and key learning objectives of the Youth PQA Plus program:

Iowa: The Iowa 4-H Food Safety and Quality Assurance (FSQA) program has been recognized by the National Pork Board as meeting the quality assurance training requirements of Youth PQA. The Iowa FSQA program is a curriculum consisting of a member's manual, trainer's reference guide, teaching outlines designed for four rotations, activities, and a Current Issues in Animal Agriculture section that will be updated annually. It is designed to be coordinated by local staff and taught by local volunteers who are trained through a train-the-trainer approach. A statewide "staff only" Web-based database has been developed to record and track all participants. *State Program contact: Mike Anderson, (515) 294-8617, mikeande@iastate.edu*

Missouri: The Missouri Show Me Quality Assurance (SMQA) program emphasizes good management practices in the handling and use of animal health products and encourages producers to review their approach to their herds' health programs. SMQA utilizes an activity box, which includes twelve hands-on learning objectives, that is used during the face-to-face program. SMQA also utilizes a Web-based course that participants complete along with an online quiz that must be passed in order for youth to be certified in SMQA. After they have completed the online course and quiz, youth must obtain verification from an Extension agent or agricultural educator. A database of certified youth is maintained to record and track all participants. *State Program contact: Marcia Shannon, (573) 882-7859, CarlsonM@missouri.edu*

Nebraska: The Nebraska Assuring Quality program includes all of the content of the Youth PQA program in addition to content relating to other livestock species. The program content and curriculum is reviewed and then released to instructors each year by the University of Nebraska's Animal Science department, and includes information specifically relating to Japanese Maximum Residue Limits. It is taught by Extension educators and FFA advisors who train youth in a face-to-face setting and then submit names of completed individuals to the state program. All educators are also certified as Youth PQA Advisors. Identification sheets are issued by the state 4-H and FFA programs, respectively to members. The identification sheet includes a field which indicates that the youth received certification in Youth PQA. *State Program contact: Don Levis, (402) 584-3816, dlevis1@unl.edu*



Ohio: The Ohio Youth Food Animal Quality Assurance Program was introduced in December 2005. This program has met the minimum standards of the Pork Checkoff's Youth Pork Quality Assurance (YPQA) program and youth certified under this program automatically receive YPQA certification. This program also meets the requirements set forth by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. A curriculum guide was developed for educators to conduct the program. Educators must attend a certification conducted by the Ohio State University Department of Animal Science once every three years. A database of certified youth is maintained. *State Program contact: Paul Kuber, (614) 247-8305, kuber.2@osu.edu*

Texas: Texas Quality Counts is a program that has a two-fold mission: to teach youth livestock exhibitors character education and to impart in youth the importance of quality assurance. Quality Counts is divided into four chapters with lessons and supporting activities for each lesson. From the curriculum, there are eight core concepts that should be emphasized relating to production of beef cattle, lambs, goats and swine. It is taught by Extension educators and agricultural educators/FFA advisors who train youth and then submit names to a statewide database that may be used to verify completion by youth for exhibition in state and local fairs. *State program contact: Jodi Sterle, (979) 218-4816, j-sterle@tamu.edu*

These state programs have undergone a thorough equivalency review in which they proved that:

- The program met or exceeded all of the minimum standards (attached) addressed by the Youth PQA program.
- The program addressed each of the key learning objectives (attached) identified by the Youth PQA program within the content of their multi-specie curriculum.
- The state has developed and implemented a system for training advisors responsible for delivering program content that ensures the integrity of curriculum and instructional methods.
- The state has developed and implemented a curriculum for youth that ensures that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to produce safe, wholesome pork in a manner that is consistent with industry standards and that they understand practices important for animal well-being.
- The program assesses student learning in a manner consistent with that of the Youth PQA program. Students are given the opportunity to participate in an instructor-led course. They also are given the option to take and pass an approved exam for certification, given that they have reached the appropriate age bracket, based on standards also consistent with that of the Youth PQA program.

State programs that have been approved are granted the Pork Checkoff's Seal of Approval (shown below) for use on their state-specific certificates or identification materials.



For more information, call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-PORK or check the Internet at www.pork.org.