SowBridge

How do you conduct needs assessment to plan the activity? Periodically survey participants. Additionally, the organizing committee works closely with producers themselves plus we get input from other specialists from around the country.

How is the educational material developed? Who develops it? How is it presented, archived, etc? A PowerPoint is developed ahead of the “meeting” and the presentation is burned onto CDs plus any supporting material is also included on the CDs. The CDs are sent to participants approximately 1 week ahead of the meeting. The day of the meeting, participants put the CD in their computer and the presenter opens the PowerPoint on his/her computer. The participants and the presenter call into a centralized conference call number and the meeting begins.

How is promotion and recruitment handled? We have advertised in the National popular press pork production magazines plus local agricultural papers like Iowa Farmer Today and others. The specialists from around the country tell producers about the program plus the producers talk to other producers and the program is promoted that way.

Are there partners? Who? Specialists from all of the major pork producing states. State pork producer organizations also have been key partners over time. The Iowa Pork Industry Center has played a very major roll in delivering the program on a national basis. Without the IPIC help, it would be very difficult to have reached the success that we have.

Are there additional resources needed? Grants, sponsors, registration, etc? Always could use additional funds. That said we are reaching a sizeable audience at a very reasonable cost thereby delivering the very latest information to pork producers.

How many people are reached? Seventy producer sites are signed up and usually there are from 3-5 other people listening at each producer site. Assuming 2500 sows per site = 175,000 sows x 20 pigs marketed = 3,500,000 market pigs at a weight of 270 lbs (203.5 carcass weight) which equals about 153 lbs of retail product. Assuming each meal = 8 ounces of pork. The SowBridge program is influencing 17,136,000,000 or over 17 billion meals. I think that we need to look at what we as specialists really influence as it is extremely profound to me to think that we are impacting this much food in this process.

How is the activity evaluated? We have surveyed the group periodically to evaluate the program and ask participants for topic ideas and ways to improve the program.

What are the outcomes? Short-term? Longer-term? The outcomes are the adoption of new ideas, management practices, techniques, etc. that are adopted at the slat level. The short-term outcome would be to improve productivity, increase worker satisfaction with their job and ensure that animal needs are met. Long term outcomes is to help the operations involved in the program improve net income whereby the producers way of life is positively impacted.