

Canadian Quality Assurance[®] Program

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As of December, 2005, more than 2,500 Ontario farms were registered (approved) under the Canadian Quality Assurance[®] (CQA) program. The estimated number of hogs shipped annually from these CQA[®] farms represents about 84% of the market. Currently, all actively shipping producers in Ontario are enrolled in the program.

Question 2b of the Assessment Form has been updated, which previously required that source farms be enrolled in the CQA[®] program. As of October 1st 2005, all source farms must now be registered on the CQA[®] program, in other words, they must have completed the validation process and have a valid certificate. What this means is that if a producer is introducing any new stock to their farm, whether for breeding purposes or to feed for further growth, it must be verified that the supplier is a registered CQA[®] producer. Program validators will verify this when a producer is due for their next scheduled validation by requesting to see proof of who their suppliers are and their CQA[®] status. With this new requirement, sow and nursery barns have been contacting Ontario Pork to enrol their farms and are now working on becoming CQA[®] registered.

Quality Meat Packers, Conestoga Meats, and Maple Leaf Pork continue to encourage their contract producers to ensure they are CQA[®] registered. Ontario Pork provides processors with monthly program reports, and processors follow up with any producers whose CQA[®] registration has expired. Pool Plus producers must be CQA[®] registered to join and remain on this contract.

Phase 2 of the CQA[®] Drug Use Policy was scheduled to be implemented on October 1st, 2005, which would require that all medications on CQA[®] registered farms carry a Drug Identification Number (DIN). The policy is currently under review and a new policy proposal is being developed with a proposed time of completion targeted for the end of March 2006. Phase 1 was implemented over two years ago and requires that all medications used on CQA[®] farms be licensed for use in food-producing animals only.

The National CQA[®] website was launched in 2005 and includes all of the CQA[®] materials found in the manual. Producers can find information, updates, blank record forms, or use the interactive manual online at www.cqa-aqc.com.

For more information, please contact Christine Orton, CQA[®] Coordinator for Ontario Pork, at 1-877-668-7675 or christine.orton@ontariopork.on.ca.

Animal Care Assessment Tool

The Canadian Pork Council has recently launched its new Animal Care Assessment (ACA) tool for hog producers. The ACA tool is a proactive, industry led program that was developed to provide producers with a means to evaluate and improve animal care practices on farm. This tool also allows us to demonstrate to our customers that Canadian hog producers are providing excellent care to our hogs and that animal care is important to us. The ACA tool will examine areas of a farm that are critical to the well-being of hogs, including stockmanship, feeding and watering, equipment, and housing.

Developed by a team of hog producers, producer organizations, animal care researchers, and government, the program has been reviewed and supported by the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Meat Council, the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

The ACA tool will begin as a voluntary component of the Canadian Quality Assurance Program (CQA[®]) and will be available for certification starting in early 2006. As with the pork industry's CQA[®] on-farm food safety program, the ACA tool requires written records to be kept on animal care practices, has specific program requirements, and can be reviewed on farm by a CQA[®] program Validator.

An advanced copy of the ACA is available by contacting Ontario Pork or by going to the national CQA[®] website at www.cqa-afc.com. In the coming months, Ontario Pork will begin delivering the new ACA tool to all producers currently part of the CQA[®] program.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Christine Orton, CQA[®] Coordinator for Ontario Pork, at 1-877-668-7675 or christine.orton@ontariopork.on.ca.