

## **Animal Care Assessment Program**

Christine Orton, Ontario Pork

Ontario Pork has begun offering the Animal Care Assessment program (ACA) on a voluntary basis. The ACA is a national program that provides an evaluation tool for Canadian pork producers to demonstrate that industry approved standards of animal care is being met on farm.

Keeping pace internationally with other countries such as the U.S., U.K., Denmark and Australia is important to maintain Canada's export markets. These countries currently have programs in place to meet consumer demand for assurances of humane conditions in the production of their food. Now Canadian pork producers have access to a program as well to help keep them competitive.

The ACA program allows producers to demonstrate that Canadian hog producers are providing excellent care to their pigs and that animal care is important to our industry. The ACA examines areas on farm that are critical to the well-being of the pigs, 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 program reflects an industry standard that incorporates all previous animal care standards, such as the existing Codes of Practice.

The ACA tool is similar in structure to the Canadian Quality Assurance<sup>®</sup> program (CQA<sup>®</sup>) and CQA<sup>®</sup> registration is a prerequisite for the ACA program. The ACA consists of a series of questions that producers use to evaluate and verify animal care practices on farm. Initial ACA registration will require a farm visit by a qualified ACA Validator, after which subsequent Partial and Full Validation anniversary dates for both CQA<sup>®</sup> and ACA will be merged.

ACA booklets, CD's and additional program information is available by contacting Christine Orton, CQA<sup>®</sup> Coordinator for Ontario Pork, at 1-877-668-7675 or by visiting Ontario Pork's website at [www.ontariopork.on.ca](http://www.ontariopork.on.ca).