

USDA To Meet With Iowa Producers On Hog Procurement Practices

WASHINGTON, (Jan. 22, 1999) -- U.S. Department of Agriculture officials will host a meeting in Indianola, Iowa, with hog producers to discuss the department's recent hog procurement investigation, its potential implications for producers, and changes in USDA's market news reports.

"We at USDA want to ensure that producers--particularly smaller ones--are fully aware of the findings of this investigation and we want to make sure producers have the best available information in order to maximize their returns," said Michael V. Dunn, under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs.

USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration is hosting the meeting for hog producers and other interested parties at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, on Feb. 3. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and is open to the public. Representatives of USDA's Farm Service Agency and Rural Business-Cooperative Services also will participate in the meeting to discuss restructuring credit programs, direct payments, and alternative marketing opportunities for hog producers.

The findings of the hog procurement investigation were announced October 8, 1998, and are available at GIPSA's website: <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/newsinfo/back/hogback.htm>

The scheduled meetings are part of USDA's ongoing efforts to address price and competition concerns in the livestock industry. Among other recent actions, Vice President Al Gore announced that hard-hit hog producers will receive direct payments totaling \$50 million to compensate for a plunge in prices that has already driven some producers out of business. He also announced that the government will transfer \$80 million to USDA's voluntary hog pseudorabies eradication program. The money is earmarked to compensate hog producers with infected hogs and could remove approximately 1.7 million hogs from the market.

For further information on the meeting and on GIPSA's hog procurement investigation, contact Jay A. Johnson at (515) 323-2579, email Jay_A.Johnson@usda.gov. For information regarding AMS' market news reporting for hogs, contact John Van Dyke at (202) 720-6231, email John_E_Vandyke@usda.gov.

GIPSA Release #03-99

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