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2010 Indiana State Fair to be “Year of Pigs”

ISF also launches “Blue Ribbon Blog”

INDIANAPOLIS – Mark York had a dream. When he graduated from [Purdue University](#), he wanted to raise pork and provide jobs in his native Indiana. And that’s exactly what he’s done for the past 15 years.

He and his wife, Chris, run Riverbend Farms in Roann, Ind., where they produce about 25,000 hogs each year. They comprise one of Indiana’s 3,000 pork farming families that help make Indiana the fifth largest pork producing state in the country. These family farms marketed roughly 8 million pigs last year and annually contribute \$3 billion to the state’s economy. Many of these families, however, are finding it harder and harder to stay in business as the industry suffers through one of the worst markets it has ever seen.

“It’s tough,” York said. “There will be a lot of consolidating going on. Some producers won’t be around in another year.”

The industry is dealing with what has been called the “perfect storm” of economic factors: global recession, record high feed prices (corn and soybeans) and the misperception that pigs can pass on the H1N1 virus, originally called swine flu, to humans. Foreign exports are down dramatically, and some countries have banned U.S. pork products altogether.

That’s where the [Indiana State Fair](#) comes in. For the fourth consecutive year, the fair will feature one of the state’s important agricultural products, and 2010 will be the “Year of Pigs” presented by Indiana Pork Farmers. The state’s pork producers are hoping the campaign will do for them what last year’s “Year of Tomatoes” theme did for Red Gold®.

“Indiana’s pork farmers recognize this unique opportunity to directly connect with consumers at the State Fair, and are excited about sharing with them the truly impressive story of producing pork in our state,” Mike Platt, executive director for the [Indiana Pork Producers](#), said. “It’s a story of innovation, ingenuity, strong family values, commitment to quality and dedication in the service of our fellow Hoosiers.”

Indiana Pork Producers will have much greater visibility at the fair than in years past through numerous events, exhibits and displays focusing on hogs and pork products. The 17-day event runs August 6 – 22.

“This is very exciting,” York said. “This will put pork in Indiana into the limelight and show many people that our industry plays a large economic role in Indiana.”

“Blue Ribbon Blog” gives readers “inside scoop”

Many State Fairgrounds visitors are accustomed to visiting www.indianastatefair.com for information about the State Fair and other year-round events, and now the [Blue Ribbon Blog](#) offers a different perspective on fairgrounds happenings with first-person accounts, behind-the-scenes details, photos, videos and more.

A team of four fairgrounds staffers will offer regular posts designed to inform and entertain on a variety of fairgrounds events and issues. They will even seek input on a number of fair-related topics so readers can have a direct pipeline to decision makers on what they would like to see at the State Fair. Recent posts include an up-close look at a [Naptown Roller Girls](#) bout and some of the “off-season” duties required to prepare for the next State Fair.

People can access the blog through the link on the Indiana State Fair Web site or by logging on directly to www.instatefair.blogspot.com.

About Indiana State Fair

The Indiana State Fair is the state’s largest multi-day event attracting more than 900,000 people annually. Known nationally for its livestock shows, Pioneer Village, Little Hands on the Farm™ and a variety of unique, fun foods, the Indiana State Fair offers tremendous family entertainment for a gate admission of \$8, \$7 in advance (kids 5 and younger are free). For more information, please visit www.indianastatefair.com.

About Indiana Pork

Indiana Pork is a not-for-profit association representing Indiana’s 3,000 pork farmers. For more information, visit www.indianapork.com.

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