



Sustainability of Wisconsin Beef and Pork Producers

What's being done on the farm?

HIGHLIGHTS FROM A BASELINE ASSESSMENT: 2014-2015

The Wisconsin pork and beef industries are being proactive in documenting the sustainability of their producers. These industries partnered with the National Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture and the University of WI-Extension on this ground-breaking program to measure on-farm sustainability success, encourage continual improvements and help farmers, food buyers and consumers learn about sustainability of Wisconsin beef and pork operations.

In total, 90 producers filled out an entry level, baseline-approach assessment with species-specific data from 65 beef and 18 pork operations. The assessment represented producers from all across Wisconsin. These were family operations, with an average of two generations actively working on the farm and whose operations had been in business for an average of more than 27 years.

Highlighted Results: The data below shown demonstrates the percentage of producers using practices that encourage sustainable agricultural advancements. Individual species data are highlighted separately.

Animal Production Management and Well-being:

- 95% of participants maintain records for their animals, with 69% of those having records by individual animal
- 89% of farms had employees trained in various programs from quality assurance to animal handling and confined worker safety
- 99% use nutritionally balance diets and clean water sources for all animals on the farm
- 86% treat diseased or injured animals promptly, and ensure veterinary care
- Cleanliness is stressed on the vast majority of farms (98%) as measure are taken to reduce dust, flies and odors
- 97% of farm workers follow strict animal care and handling practices.

Farm Economics and Community Outreach:

- Only 20% of producers have a farm succession plan, something that would need to be implemented to maintain farmlands in agriculture. 92% of all participants are involved in their communities at a local level, including 26% who are member of local boards, 32% who are involved in local service organizations, and 32% who invite school and other community members to the farm to learn about agriculture
- 54% of participants support their rural economies by buying their inputs from local sources

Manure and waste management:

- Over 65% of farms use buffer strips with proper setback when applying manure
- 73% of growers use one or more tactics to prevent manure dilution, spills or other concerns

Pork producer highlights:

- 56% of producers have had a pork quality assurance plus site assessment on their farms within the last three years
- 88% of pork producers employ good management practices to ensure proper air quality
- 67% of producers have trained truck drivers in Transport Quality Assurance (TQA) to ensure swine comfort and safety



Beef producer highlights:

- 68% have participated in a beef quality assurance training program
- 95% of producers beef have access to quality pasture for grazing, and on farms, the pastures are manage properly (e.g. proper forage compositions, prevent invasive/noxious weeds)
- 95% have proper animal handling facilities that allow cattle to be safe, healthy and non-stressed

