Testimony of the
National Pork Producers Council

On the
U.S. Pork Industry Economic Crisis

Before the
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
Subcommittee on
Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry

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Introduction

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) is an association of 43 state pork producer organizations and serves as the voice in Washington, D.C., of America's 67,000 pork producers.

The U.S. pork industry represents a significant value-added activity in the agriculture economy and the overall U.S. economy. In 2008, it harvested more than 116 million hogs, and those animals provided total gross receipts of $16 billion. Overall, an estimated $21 billion of personal income from sales of more than $97 billion and $34.5 billion of gross national product are supported by the U.S. hog industry. Iowa State University economists Dan Otto and John Lawrence estimate that the U.S. pork industry is directly responsible for the creation of nearly 35,000 full-time equivalent jobs and helps generate an additional 515,000 indirect, mostly rural, jobs.

The U.S. pork industry today provides about 20 billion pounds of safe, wholesome and nutritious meat protein to consumers worldwide.

U.S. Pork Industry Economic Crisis

The U.S. pork industry is in the midst of the most severe economic crisis in its history. Over the past 24 months, U.S. pork producers have lost an average of nearly $23 on each hog marketed. Since September 2007, the industry has lost more than $5.3 billion or more than 66 percent of its equity as of Oct. 14, 2009.

And things look bleak going forward. October 13 closing Chicago Mercantile Exchange lean hogs, corn and soybean meal futures prices suggest that producer losses will exceed $30 a head for pigs sold for the remainder of this year and will be nearly $40 a head in November.

Based on lower lean hogs futures prices, cash hog prices will be below the cost of production in all but four months through the end of 2010, according to economist Steve Meyer, president of Paragon Economics in Adel, Iowa.

Origins of the Crisis

Several factors have contributed to the U.S. pork industry's profit crisis, but primary among them is a surge in production costs due to higher feed prices. While corn and soybean meal prices have fallen from their record levels of 2008, they remain significantly higher than they were before 2007. (Figure 1 shows that corn prices have moved from a historical level of near $2 per bushel to a new "normal" range of $3 to $4.20 per bushel.)

These higher prices for feed, which accounts for 60 percent of the cost of raising a hog, are mostly the result of a significant increase in the production of corn-based ethanol, which has driven up corn demand and, thus, prices. (The price of soybean meal also has risen dramatically as the price of corn has increased.) The use of corn for ethanol production has more than tripled since 2004, and ethanol production is the only usage of corn that has grown significantly during that time period.

NPPC has policy approved by delegates at its recent annual meetings – the National Pork Industry Forum – that calls for not renewing when they expire at the end of 2010 the tariff on imported ethanol and the federal tax credit that the ethanol industry receives for blending ethanol into gasoline.

U.S. biofuels policy, which provides tax incentives for the use of corn-based ethanol and mandates minimum usage levels for ethanol, has created a strong link between corn and crude oil prices (see Figure 2). That link was particularly strong in 2008 when corn rose almost in lock-step with record-high oil prices. Financial difficulties for ethanol producers and the prospects of an exceptionally large crop allowed corn prices to fall relative to oil this summer, but the recent rise in oil prices to their highest level in nearly a year has been accompanied by another jump up in corn prices – even as a record-large corn crop is being harvested. Oil prices will continue to be a major driver of corn prices, with ethanol plants increasing production because of higher ethanol prices – just under the price of oil – and with U.S. policy encouraging the use of corn-based ethanol.

Higher feed prices have had a huge negative impact on animal protein sectors, all of which are shrinking this year. For the U.S. pork industry, the result is breakeven hog

production costs that are now in the low- to mid-$60s on a carcass basis – roughly 20 to 30 percent higher than during the period from 1999-2007 (see Figure 3). While these cost levels now are much lower than the $80 per carcass hundredweight cost of the summer of 2008, the 28 percent increase in costs from now through 2010 over the 1999-2006 period must at some point be covered by the price of market hogs to return the pork industry to profitability.

It is important to note that this year's hog prices, which have been disappointing since the 2009 novel H1N1 influenza outbreak began in late April, had they been what they averaged between 1999 and 2006, would not have been low enough to cause producers to lose money until September. The biggest reason pork producers have lost money in 22 of the past 24 months is that production costs have been higher. And futures markets indicate they will remain so through the end of 2010.

The current economic crisis is *not* the result of overexpansion driven by selfishness or overconfidence, and it is fundamentally different from the economic catastrophe of 1998-1999. That situation was caused by rapid expansion of the U.S. breeding herd in the mid-1990s and a rationalization of excess U.S. packing capacity in the 1980s and early 1990s. The closure of a major packer in July 1998 that fall caused a processing capacity restriction that, when combined with significantly higher hog numbers, drove prices to record-low levels.

Once the industry emerged from that crisis, U.S. pork producers from February 2004 through September 2007 increased the size of their breeding herd by only 3.1 percent while enjoying the longest period of profits on record. That rate of breeding herd increase (0.8 percent per year) did not even keep pace with the growth of the U.S. population. Further, U.S. producers began reducing the size of the breeding herd in June 2008 – after less than one year of losses – in response to the prospects of long-term higher production costs.

The ultimate irony of the current crisis is that even producers' efforts to take better care of their animals and increase their operating efficiencies have worked against them. Technology, disease control and better diagnostics have improved the overall health of

the U.S. hog herd and have increased productivity. The best example of this is the impact of circovirus vaccines on productivity.

Porcine circovirus contributed to the poor performance and/or death of millions of pigs during the decade prior to 2007. The disease took a terrible toll on animal well-being and the morale of owners and workers as well as the financial performance of hog production enterprises. Animal health companies responded to this challenge, introducing effective circovirus vaccines in late 2006. By mid-2007 these vaccines were available to all producers, and their adoption improved pig survival rates so dramatically that hog slaughter in the fourth quarter of 2007 was nearly 8 percent higher than one year earlier – from a sow herd only 2 percent bigger.

Since late 2008, productivity increases have slowed (because year-over-year changes involved comparisons to a vaccinated, healthier population) but have remained significant. Preventing the immune-suppressing impacts of porcine circovirus has enabled pigs to more effectively fight other diseases, improving growth rates and, most importantly, driving average litter sizes higher by 2 percent or more for each quarter of the past two years. The productivity increases have resulted in enough market-weight pigs to nearly offset the 4.8 percent decrease in the U.S. sow herd since December 2007.

Certainly, the global economic slowdown that began in the fall of 2007 and the resulting "recession," which dramatically increased the value of the dollar and reduced foreign demand for U.S. products, also have had a negative effect on the U.S. pork industry, as well as on many other sectors of the economy.

More recent factors contributing to the industry's economic crisis have been higher-than-expected U.S. hog slaughter numbers, especially since late July, and, most importantly, higher slaughter weights, which have been as much as 6 pounds per head higher this past summer due to unusually cool temperatures that caused pigs to eat more and grow faster.

2009 Novel H1N1 Influenza

While higher production costs have been the main culprit for the U.S. pork industry's losses over the past two years, they have been only part of the problem since late spring.

Hog prices have been disappointing relative to the levels expected back in late April just prior to reports on the 2009 novel H1N1 flu, which the media insisted on calling "swine" flu. In fact, actual prices since then have resulted in a $1.3 billion reduction in producer revenues – and an average loss of nearly $23 per market hog – from the level they would have been had prices been what were suggested by the Chicago Mercantile Exchange lean hogs futures prices in late April.

The 2009 novel H1N1 influenza caused a short-term reduction in domestic pork demand that hurt prices in May. While this demand decline was short-lived, according to research conducted by the National Pork Board, the negative publicity generated by "swine" flu stories has had a lasting effect on some consumers.

Additionally, 2009 novel H1N1 caused some significant disruptions in exports, most notably to Mexico – the No. 3 market for U.S. pork – in May and June due to lower pork demand as Mexican consumers shied away from pork from any source. Exports also fell when some U.S. trading partners implemented H1N1-related bans on pork imports from North America.

At the peak on May 5, official and unofficial bans on pork from the United States were in place in 27 countries, including China – the No. 2 export market for U.S. pork in 2008 – and Russia – the No. 5 market. (Currently, seven countries, including China, maintain an H1N1-related ban on U.S. pork imports.) The prohibitions were put in place despite statements issued by the World Health Organization, the World Animal Health Organization and the World Trade Organization that import bans on pork due to 2009 novel H1N1 would be unjustified in light of the fact there was no evidence to indicate the virus could be transmitted by handling or consuming pork.

NPPC is appreciative of the efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and other agencies to keep export markets open to U.S. pork. Many of the countries that had H1N1-related bans rescinded their prohibitions within a few weeks of instituting them.

The industry again will be counting on USDA, USTR and other agencies to reassure U.S. trading partners that pork is safe to eat and handle and that the 2009 novel H1N1 flu is not transmitted through pork now that some pigs in Minnesota have tested positive for the 2009 novel H1N1 virus.

The unwarranted bans on U.S. pork imports have left 2 to 3 percent more pork on the U.S. market, and the extra supply has driven domestic prices downward.

Export Issues

Until the H1N1-related bans were imposed, exports for some time had been a bright spot for the U.S. pork industry. Indeed, 2008 was the 17th consecutive record year of U.S. pork exports and, in fact, exports saved the U.S. pork industry's bacon (pardon the pun) last year, when producers exported more than 2 million metric tons of pork – about 20 percent of total U.S. production – worth nearly $5 billion. That added about $48 to the value of each hog marketed and significantly tempered producer losses in 2008.

That said, exports of U.S. pork could have been even higher except for some nagging issues – in addition to the H1N1-related bans – with several U.S. trading partners.

China, which accounts for 47 percent of world pork consumption, serves as a good example. The Asian nation has a ban on imports of U.S. pork produced with ractopamine hydrochloride, a protein synthesis compound that significantly improves efficiency in pork production. In recent years, China has "delisted" or placed under review numerous U.S. pork plants because of the detection in U.S. pork imports of ractopamine hydrochloride. But ractopamine was approved for use in U.S. pork production after an extensive review by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and is approved for use in 25 countries around the world, including several countries in Asia. As a further indication of the safety of the product, the U.N. Codex Alimentarius is in the final stages of an eight-step process for establishing a recommended maximum residue level (MRL) for ractopamine in pork production.

China began delisting U.S. pork plants because of the detection of ractopamine in 2006. In addition to the loss of exports from those U.S. plants that have been delisted due to

ractopamine, China's arbitrary delisting policies throw a great deal of uncertainty into trade for plants that remain eligible to export to China.

China's delisting of U.S. pork plants due to ractopamine use is without health or scientific justification. In fact, its ractopamine policy reflects the Chinese government's interest in strictly controlling imports to help support domestic pork prices.

Additionally, to curb imported pork products, Chinese authorities have over the past two years introduced a number of new subsidy programs aimed specifically at its pork producers. The most recent program is the National Hog Price Alert System, which is designed to ensure profitability and expansion of China's hog production. In addition, the Chinese pork industry derives significant benefits from a full exemption from the corporate income tax and a partial exemption from the country's value-added tax.

The United States is able to produce pork at a much lower cost than China. In mid-2008, it cost about 55 cents a pound to produce a live hog in the United States compared with 84 cents in China. With its competitive cost advantage – even with the recent rise in hog production costs – the United States would be a huge supplier of pork to China in the absence of the Chinese import restrictions and subsidy programs.

How big? China's pork imports in 2008 accounted for about 1 percent of total domestic consumption. (This compares with, for example, Japan's 50 percent, South Korea's 30 percent and Australia's 22 percent.) If China were to open its market to allow imports to account for 25 percent of total consumption, pork imports to the country would be 11.6 million metric tons. Even if the United States captured just a 25 percent share of that – compared to the 60 percent share it had in 2008 – this would translate into U.S. pork exports to China of 2.9 million metric tons, an amount equivalent to 27 percent of total U.S. pork production. (Remember, in 2008 the U.S. pork industry exported to *all* countries 20 percent of production; it exported about 5 percent of production to China.) This would represent more than a doubling of U.S. pork exports to the entire world in 2008. A surge in U.S. pork exports of this magnitude would generate enormous benefits not only for the U.S. pork economy but for the U.S. rural economy.

The U.S. pork industry also has dealt with over the past two years a number of other trade issues that have dampened exports, including, for example, the arbitrary and non-science-based "delisting" of U.S. pork facilities by Russia and a change in that country's quota system for imported pork. Government officials in the country publicly have stated that they want to limit the amount of imported pork as a way to protect their domestic pork industry.

From 2005 – the year the U.S. and Russia signed a meat agreement -- through 2008, U.S. pork exports to Russia grew at an explosive pace, increasing in volume terms by more than 400 percent and in value by nearly 600 percent.

But over the past year and a half, Russia has "delisted" or failed to relist more than 30 U.S. pork production, processing and storage facilities, meaning more than 50 percent of U.S. pork production is ineligible for export to the country.

Russia did not identify any health or sanitary reasons for its actions, which are contrary to obligations contained in a 2006 side agreement that is part of World Trade Organization bilateral negotiations between Russia and the United States. The agreement established specific criteria and methods for Russian approval of U.S. pork plants. The actions also are inconsistent with the WTO's Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, which requires WTO trading partners to recognize the SPS measures of other countries as equivalent to their own. (Russia does not adhere to the WTO principle of equivalence and approves U.S. meat facilities on a plant-by-plant basis.) The U.S. government and the U.S. pork industry have demonstrated to Russian government officials the effectiveness of the U.S. pork plant inspection system in ensuring a high level of product safety.

On the quota issue, last year the Russians demanded that the "out-of-quota" tariff on pork imports be raised. Consequently, in December 2008 the U.S. and Russia renegotiated the 2005 meat agreement, with Russia increasing the 2009 out-of-quota tariff from 40 percent to 75 percent. In return, the U.S. pork "in-quota" amount – the quantity of pork subject to a lower tariff – was raised.

Russia currently is insisting on another renegotiation of the pork quotas with the intention of further reducing the U.S. quota and restricting U.S. pork imports. These demands are unacceptable to U.S. pork producers. It is ironic that a country that seeks U.S. support for its WTO accession and that wants Congress to grant it Permanent Normal Trade Relations status is restricting rather than expanding access to its market.

The plant delistings coupled with its limited H1N1-related ban and the uncertainty surrounding the quotas have resulted in a 39 percent decline in U.S. pork exports to Russia in the first eight months of 2009.

The result of all of the restrictions on U.S. pork exports – and undoubtedly of the global economic slowdown – has been a drop of 11 percent in U.S. pork exports from January through August 2009 compared with the same period in 2008. U.S. pork exports to China are down 50 percent through August and to Russia 39 percent.

NPPC urges Congress and the Obama administration to pressure China to lift its H1N1-related ban on U.S. pork, to drop its objections to ractopamine and to eliminate its hog and pork subsidies; and it urges the U.S. government to maintain the current U.S. country allocation for pork under Russia's global pork tariff rate quota at a level of market access equal or greater to that in 2008, to insist that Russia relist all U.S. pork facilities and to pressure Russia to agree to accept the U.S. meat inspection system as equivalent to its system and accept pork from all USDA-approved facilities. Russia should not be given special treatment but rather should be required, like China and Vietnam when they were joining the World Trade Organization, to memorialize with the U.S. the WTO principle of equivalence.

NPPC was heartened to hear that the Obama administration's trade agenda has as a top priority enforcement of existing trade agreements, and it asks Congress to support the administration on this. China and Russia should be at the top of the list.

While enforcement is important, exports have increased dramatically because of free trade agreements, starting in 1994 with implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and in 1995 with the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of the then-

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. As a result of those and subsequent trade deals, U.S. pork exports have grown by more than 750 percent in value terms since then.

Given that result and the U.S. pork industry's current economic crisis, it is imperative that Congress approve as soon as possible the pending free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea, which would add greatly to U.S. pork producers' bottom line. The U.S.-Korea FTA alone would add $10 to the price producers receive for each hog marketed, according to Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes.

Regional Effects

Obviously, the effects of the current economic crisis are somewhat regionalized, affecting the pork-producing states clustered in the Midwest and those in the mid-Atlantic (mostly North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia) more than other states.

North Carolina, for example, is one of the nation's leading pork-producing states. Its pork industry provides jobs, pays taxes and supports civic and social groups. The pork industry's economic impact is widely felt in local communities, especially rural communities, across the state. The state's farm families and production companies operate some 2,200 farms.

The income from these farms was North Carolina's second leading source of gross farm income in 2007 (the most recent year for which data is available). Hogs generated slightly more than 22 percent of all North Carolina farm receipts. Looking beyond cash farm receipts, the combined effects of swine production and pork packing and processing in North Carolina in 2007 were estimated at more than $7.2 billion in sales, $2.25 billion in value-added income and 46,657 jobs – more full-time jobs than North Carolina's entire Research Triangle Park provides.

Simply put, the pork industry is important to *all* of North Carolina and most especially, eastern North Carolina. But the industry is facing a crisis that could cause large-scale output reductions with a resulting loss of farm family producers and associated businesses and jobs.

At least three North Carolina hog producers have filed for bankruptcy or are in the process of doing so (*Triangle Business Journal*). The extended period of deep losses has drained the equity of all hog producers. As producers try to cut supply to increase pork prices, barns are being left empty. Similar events have been occurring over the past year in the broiler and turkey sectors in North Carolina. Some farmers faced foreclosure on broiler houses when a major producer went bankrupt. The implications extend throughout the rural communities in North Carolina, which are supported by these farming and meat-processing operations. Reduced production means lost income, lost employment, lost capital investment, lost tax base and lost economic activity throughout the local and state economy. Hog production represented 22.1 percent of North Carolina cash receipts from agriculture in 2007. Broilers (28.5 percent) and turkeys (5.9 percent) along with pigs account for 56.5 percent of North Carolina cash receipts from agriculture, so losses in these sectors have major effects in the state.

North Carolina has marketed about 18 million pigs or more per year over the last decade. National average losses of nearly $23 per head marketed mean about $828 million of equity lost in North Carolina over the past two years. Each dollar of lost income in hog production is estimated to result in 80 cents lost elsewhere in the North Carolina economy, so the state has lost an estimated $662 million in additional income. The combined effects of the pork sector crisis are estimated at $1.5 billion in lost income in North Carolina over the past 24 months with further losses anticipated over the next several months. State and local taxes based on income and sales are directly affected.

Job losses also result from reduced hog production. An estimated 8,000 full-time jobs existed in hog production in North Carolina in 2007. With an estimated 5 percent reduction in hog production in the state, about 400 full-time jobs have been lost. Each job in hog production is estimated to support 2.43 jobs elsewhere in the North Carolina economy. The loss of 400 jobs in hog production resulted in an estimated 970 jobs lost elsewhere in North Carolina, for a combined loss of 1,370 jobs in the state.

Capital losses due to reduced hog production include the loss of capital invested in buildings, land improvements and equipment. Buildings and equipment dedicated to hog production were estimated to have a depreciated value of $500 million in 2007.

Abandoning 5 percent of that capacity resulted in a loss of $25 million in capital and property tax base.

Reduced hog production also reduced pork packing and processing. North Carolina experienced reductions in pork processing capacity over the past year. Further reductions are possible if hog production is further reduced in the state and regionally. The North Carolina pork processing sector was estimated to employ 11,686 people and generate $450 million per year in (value-added) income in 2007. The 5 percent reduction in pork packing and processing is estimated to have caused a loss of 584 fulltime jobs and $22.5 million in annual income in North Carolina. Each job and $1 of income in pork processing are estimated to support 0.565 jobs and 59 cents of income, respectively, elsewhere in the North Carolina economy. So the 5 percent reduction in pork processing is estimated to have cost the rest of the state's economy 330 full-time equivalent jobs and $13.3 million of income.

Suffice to say, when added to the losses imposed on the state's broiler and turkey industries by higher feed prices, the effects of the current economic disaster in the U.S. pork industry are particularly severe in North Carolina. But North Carolina is by no means unique. The economic crisis is being felt by producers in Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, and, in fact, in all pork-producing states, with some hog farmers going out of business and others on the brink of bankruptcy.

Pork Industry Efforts

For its part, the U.S. pork industry has been working over the past two years to help pork producers deal with the economic crisis. NPPC has worked closely with the previous and with the present administration to keep export markets open.

NPPC officers and staff, for example, have worked with their counterparts in Canada and Mexico to keep pork trade flowing to those important U.S. markets and have collaborated with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representatives (USTR) to resolve trade issues with Australia, Mexico and the Philippines.

Of course, the organization has been a strong and consistent supporter of additional free trade agreements – including the pending FTAs with Colombia, Panama and South Korea – which historically have boosted U.S. pork exports.

When the 2009 novel H1N1 flu outbreak occurred in late April, NPPC worked closely with the National Pork Board and the Obama administration to communicate to the media, the public and U.S. trading partners that pork is safe to eat and that the 2009 novel H1N1 virus is not transmitted through food, including pork.

NPPC also has asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide assistance to struggling producers.

In April 2008, with no signs of the then-6-month-old crisis abating, NPPC officers met with then-Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer to ask that the department make a supplemental purchase of pork. (USDA annually buys pork and other products for various federal food programs. It bought $62.6 million of pork in 2008, for example.) They also asked that the secretary implement emergency programs and loan guarantees to help producers purchase feed, consider allowing early release without penalty of non-environmentally sensitive Conservation Reserve Program acres back into crop production and support pork exports through USDA's Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program. The Bush administration May 1, 2008, agreed to purchase up to $50 million of pork products.

At the beginning of 2009 and once more just after the 2009 novel H1N1 flu outbreak in late April, NPPC again asked USDA to lend assistance to the U.S. pork industry, each time urging Secretary Tom Vilsack to make additional supplemental purchases of pork. USDA in late March agreed to buy $25 million of pork.

Finally, in August of this year, NPPC yet again urged USDA to take immediate action to address the continuing pork industry economic crisis, asking that the agency to:

- Purchase immediately an additional $50 million of pork for various federal food programs, using fiscal 2009 funds.

- Use Section 32 funds to purchase pork. Section 32 uses customs receipts to buy non-price-supported commodities for food-assistance programs.
- Buy on Oct. 1 a minimum of $50 million of pork, using fiscal 2010 funds.
- Use $100 million of the $1 billion appropriated for addressing the 2009 novel H1N1 virus for the swine industry, including $70 million for swine disease surveillance, $10 million for diagnostics and 2009 novel H1N1 vaccine development and $20 million for industry support.
- Work with USTR to open export markets to U.S. pork, focusing on the countries, including China, that continue to impose unwarranted H1N1-related bans on U.S. pork.
- Study the economic impact on the livestock industry of an expansion of corn-ethanol production and usage. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed raising the cap on blending ethanol into gasoline to 15 percent from its current 10 percent.

In early September, USDA agreed to purchase $30 million of pork, using fiscal 2009 funds.

NPPC is grateful to USDA for its assistance and strongly urges the department to make additional pork purchases. It also is grateful to the members of Congress who signed onto a letter circulated by Congressmen Tim Walz, D-Minn., and Steve King, R-Iowa, to Sec. Vilsack, asking that USDA make additional purchases of pork.

NPPC now asks that Congress reexamine the spending cap placed on Section 32 funds as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. NPPC believes such action is warranted given that economic conditions in the livestock, dairy and poultry industries now are materially different than they were during most of the Farm Bill debate. While it understands that lifting the Section 32 cap is a long-term goal, the U.S. pork industry is prepared to work with Congress to achieve this outcome.

Conclusion

The U.S. pork industry is an integral part of the U.S. economy, generating more than half a million jobs, adding nearly $35 billion to the gross national product, contributing to a

positive agriculture balance of trade and providing consumers around the globe with the safest, most nutritious meat protein in the world.

The industry, so far, has weathered the now 2-year-old economic crisis, which is not of its own making but is the result of forces mostly beyond its control, through the perseverance of the producers who every day provide the best care possible to their hogs, use animal health products judiciously and responsibly, protect the environment, watch out for the safety of their workers and contribute to the communities in which they live and work.

As it did a decade ago when pork prices plunged to record lows, the U.S. pork industry will survive the current economic crisis – though, no doubt, as a much smaller sector. But U.S. pork producers are in need of lawmakers' continued assistance, and that means:

- Making additional purchases of pork for federal food-assistance programs.
- Working with U.S. trading partners to get them to keep open or, if they've closed them, re-open their export markets.
- Passing free trade agreements, including the pending ones with Colombia, Panama and South Korea.
- Allowing the ethanol import tariff and federal blenders' tax credit to expire.
- Studying the economic effects on the livestock industry of an increase in the amount of ethanol blended into gasoline to 15 percent from the current 10 percent.
- Approving regulations and legislation that promote pork producers' ability to run their operations.
- Opposing regulations and legislation that would place an undue burden and higher costs on U.S. pork producers such as a ban on certain antibiotics.

With a little help, the U.S. pork industry will bounce back and continue to provide safe, nutritious pork products to consumers worldwide.

Figure 1

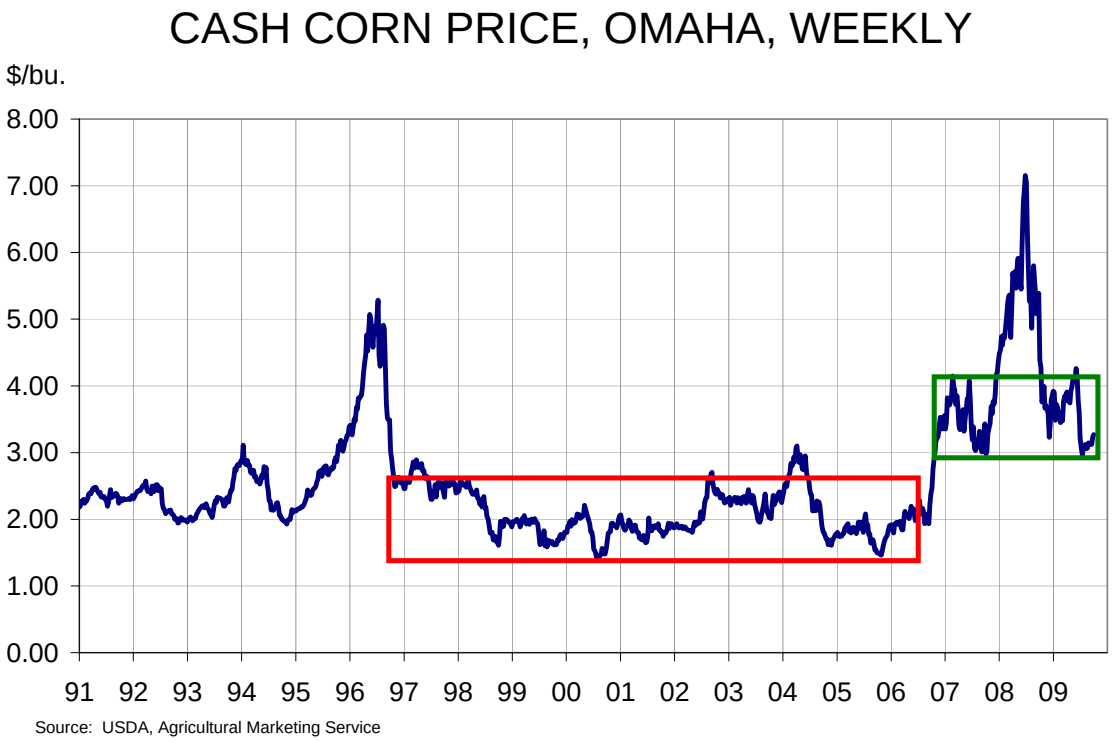


Figure 2

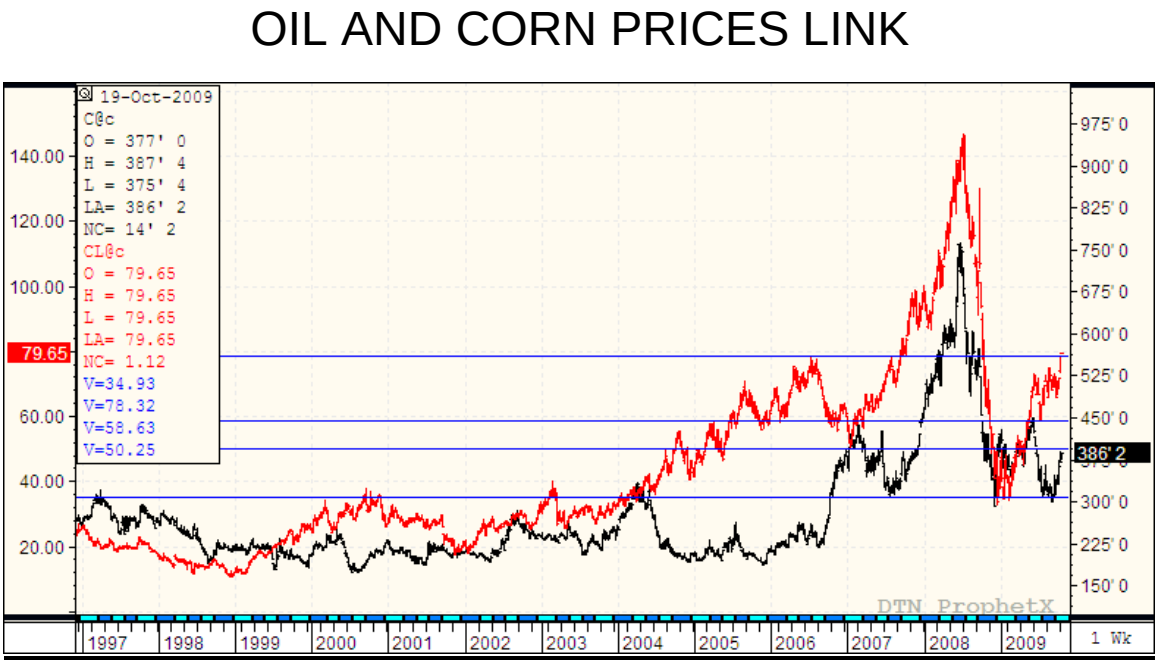
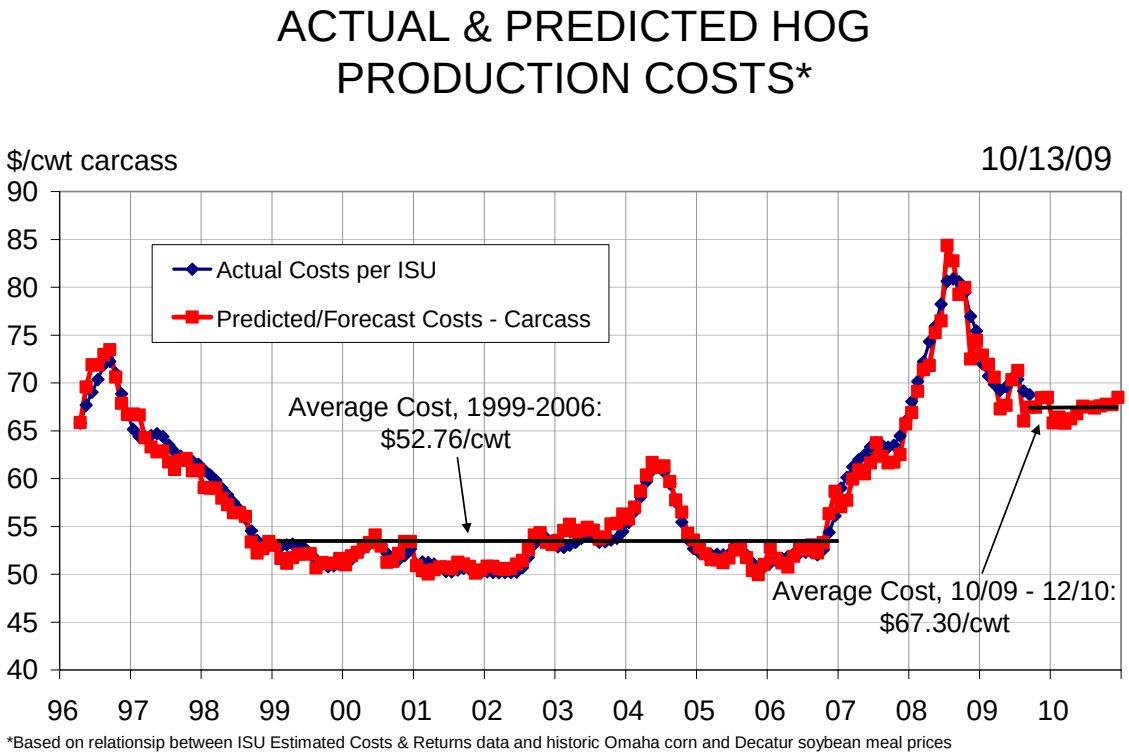


Figure 3


ACTUAL & PREDICTED HOG PRODUCTION COSTS*
$/cwt carcass
10/13/09
90
85
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Actual Costs per ISU
Predicted/Forecast Costs - Carcass
Average Cost, 1999-2006: $52.76/cwt
Average Cost, 10/09 - 12/10: $67.30/cwt
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*Based on relationsip between ISU Estimated Costs & Returns data and historic Omaha corn and Decatur soybean meal prices