

COMMUNITY RELATIONS MODULE

TOPIC 1: THE CHANGING SCENE FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Desired Outcomes

1. Understand current attitudes toward pork production and the forces shaping those attitudes.
2. Develop an appreciation for the importance of community relations in successful swine enterprise management.

Procedural Outline

- I. Strengthen producer awareness of the importance of sound community relations.
- II. Identify strategies for making livestock operations compatible with neighbors and the community.

Key Words (see Appendix for definitions)

None

Transparency/Slide Masters (17)

Pages 9-14 (NPPC Community Relations Module Slides #1-17)

Equipment/Supplies

Overhead Projector & Screen OR 35 mm Carousel Slide Projector & Screen
Participant Notebooks



Background and Support

The need for livestock producers to behave in a responsible manner toward the environment has always been a legitimate ethical concern. In recent years, understanding of how livestock production might negatively impact the environment has grown. At the same time, society has taken a much greater interest in how food is produced. It also appears society is becoming more sensitive to perceived intrusions on quality of life from business activities. As a result, environmental concerns and public image are demanding more attention and skills from livestock producers.

The long term success of pork production will in large part be influenced by how successful producers are in developing production systems that are environmentally friendly and perceived to be consistent with societal values for food production. Pork producers must first "walk the walk" in terms of reducing negative environmental impact, avoid creation of "nuisance" situations, and contribute to societies' social and economic goals and then "talk the talk" to tell their story and positively position their products and production systems in the public mind.

This reality is being driven by the following factors:

1. The public has more interest in and influence on livestock operations than was true in the past. Many see consumers as an integral part of the production system. This situation is driven by:
 - Increased livestock industry visibility, communications, and media attention.
 - Attention from activist and consumer movements.
 - Development of holistic philosophies.
 - Increased public hearing and notice requirements.
2. Urbanization is resulting in a public that has little or no tie to production agriculture. With no close up experience in production agriculture, many attitudes are developed from sources like movies and television where treatment of agriculture is seldom accurate and realistic. Producers face a significant challenge in helping the public understand modern pork production so public attitudes that shape policies and regulations will be realistic.
3. As population grows food demands will continue to increase. Continued urbanization has lead to more sophisticated and organized food delivery systems. As a result, production systems will be more systematic and likely larger, and therefore have more visibility and impact in specific locations. While the consuming public is driving these changes with their purchasing habits, they may also find the resulting systems in conflict with some of their values about food production.
4. With continued population growth and current lifestyle choices, there will be greater demands for personal living space and basic resources like water and fresh air. This will increase the potential for conflict over land access and use and increase the likelihood of situations where livestock production might be perceived as a nuisance.



PRODUCER AWARENESS - THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Even though most livestock producers are conscientious and responsible, the need still exists for producers to continue to improve environmental management and to develop trust with the public. Motives for these efforts will be two fold.

- ***Ethical and/or Stewardship Reasons***

In agricultural circles farmers are often called the original environmentalists. This view is usually attributed to the environmental ethic that says we have obligations to future generations. With a tradition or value in agriculture for passing on the farm to children, present operators feel a responsibility to leave the farm in no worse condition than they assumed it. This concept can be expanded to expect that collectively we leave our planet in no worse shape than we found it. These values are reinforced by the fact that farmers usually express a great deal of pride in the physical appearance and condition of their farms. Most farmers hold a value that they need to respect the environment and the rights of future generations. The cost of actually reaching that goal is sometimes challenging in a competitive economy. The promise of future advancements in technology that will help solve environmental problems may in the best case be the cure we seek for problems we may have created, or an excuse to shirk responsibility now.

When faced with ethical/stewardship issues in their operations, producers might ponder the following question: Would this action be OK if everyone did it?

- ***Self Interest***

Voluntary compliance is preferable to regulation. In the past several years many state and local governments have adopted regulations and ordinances designed to control and direct livestock production. Some of this effort is necessary and positive for the long term interests of the industry and society. However, it is also becoming apparent that there is great risk that many provisions that are adopted can result in situations that create undue hardships and challenges to producers and to those charged with administration and enforcement. Since there is considerable variety in production units based on site, size, technology, and management, it is very difficult to design regulations that make sense for all operations. It is common for local ordinances to differ widely on key standards. This creates differing and artificially induced economic conditions for producers based on their location. The pork industry and society/government will enjoy better results and lower costs if producers can effectively regulate themselves with best management practices and facilitate effective communication and trust building with the public. In this way, both producers and the public can avoid some of the costs and inefficiencies inherent in regulation and more effectively reach their goals.

Negative images are detrimental to pork sales and counteract promotion expenditures. Pork can only be the "meat of choice" if it is perceived to be produced in a socially acceptable manner. Farmsteads, livestock buildings, and lots must project a clean and wholesome



appearance. Increasingly, consumers will avoid products that they associate with dirty conditions. For instance, open cattle and swine lots along roadways where animals are seen in muddy, smelly, and dirty conditions result in negative images for meat products. Likewise, when the public encounters odors from confinement facilities and manure storage structures, many will associate this with meat products and be repulsed. Producers and the industry should put a high priority on reducing these occurrences through development and selection of systems and technologies, as well as siting and facility design and layout.



PRODUCER AWARENESS - DEALING WITH PUBLIC OUTRAGE

In the past several years many pork producers have encountered reaction from the public that might be characterized as “outrage.” Most often this occurs when new facilities that are perceived as large are proposed. Similar responses have been observed from incidents labeled as manure spills, and as a general reaction to structural changes in the livestock industry. Usually this public alarm confuses producers who feel the reaction greatly overemphasizes the risk that their actions will produce. The difference in how risk is perceived by the risk assessment profession and the public has been addressed in work by Peter M. Sandman. Following is a summary of this phenomenon as presented by Sandman:

Risk = Hazard + Outrage

A Summary

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If you make a list of environmental health risks in order of how many people they kill each year, then list them again in order of how alarming they are to the general public, the two lists will be very different. Risk managers in industry and government often deduce from this that the public perception of risk is ignorant or irrational. But a better way to conceptualize the problem is that the public defines “risk” more broadly than the risk assessment profession. It helps to stipulate new definitions. Call the death rate “hazard”; call everything else that the public considers part of risk, collectively, “outrage.” Risk, properly conceived, includes both hazard and outrage.

Sandman identifies twelve components of outrage, among them: voluntary/coerced; familiar/exotic; not memorable/memorable; controlled by the individual/controlled by others; fair/unfair; and imposed by institutions that are trustworthy/untrustworthy. Risks that are high in these factors are high risks, even if they are not especially hazardous. Efforts to explain the hazard are unlikely to succeed as long as the outrage is high. To decrease public concern about small hazards, therefore, risk managers must work to diminish the outrage.

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The following information provides insight into approaches for diminishing outrage or finding “A New Answer to an Old Problem.”

Risk = Hazard + Outrage
A New Answer to an Old Problem

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The Problem: The risks that do damage according to the experts are not usually the risks that upset people. Correlations between public concern and actual harm (mortality, morbidity, ecosystem damage) hover around +.2- accounting for a mere four percent of the variance.

Traditional Answers:

1. *The conservative’s answer:* The public is stupid, irredeemably irrational on risk issues. So protect public health, but ignore public opinion.
2. *The liberal’s answer:* The public is educable but ignorant. So explain the data better.
3. *The corporation’s answer:* The public is manipulated by sensational mass media or radical activist groups. So fight the propaganda better.
4. *The activist’s answer:* The public is right; the experts have been misled or bought off. So base public policy on public opinion.

A New Answer:

The experts respond to hazard; the public responds to outrage. When hazard is high and outrage is low, the experts will be concerned and the public will be apathetic. When hazard is low and outrage is high, the public will be concerned and the experts will be apathetic.

So, if you wonder why the public is responding as it is to some risk issue, and what you should do about it: “It’s the outrage stupid.”

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An overview of actions for reducing outrage is presented in the section, “Details on Implementing Effective Community Relations-Tools for Effective Community Relations.” Additional information on the concepts involved in dealing with public outrage can be found in *Responding to Community*



Outrage: Strategies for Effective Risk Communication, Peter M. Sandman, (Fairfax, VA: American Industrial Hygiene Association, 1993).



STRATEGIES FOR MAKING LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS COMPATIBLE WITH NEIGHBORS AND THE COMMUNITY - AN OVERVIEW

The first step in achieving and maintaining a positive relationship with the public is to **behave in a responsible manner**. Comply with all regulations and, where possible, exceed environmental standards. Respect and appreciate neighbors' concerns about how your operation affects their quality of life and property values.

The second step is to **emphasize your positive behaviors and actions and improve the public's understanding of the swine industry**.

Many of the following actions and behaviors will have a place in an effective environmental and public relations plan. Location, size, image, and type of operation will determine which actions should be included and emphasized.

1. Consider location and visibility when planning new facilities or modifying existing sites.
 - a) Consider distance from:
 - Roads
 - Neighbors
 - Public areas
 - Parks
 - Streams
 - Schools
 - Churches
 - Lakes, etc.
 - b) Study prevailing wind patterns and topography and consider how neighbors might be affected by odors. With existing facilities, consider fences and trees to “stack” odors.
 - c) Develop a landscape plan that keeps production facilities and manure storage units from becoming an eyesore and blends facilities into the landscape. Use landscaping techniques that project a positive image to viewers of your operation. Consider use of:
 - Screening
 - Hills
 - Berms
 - Earth tone colors and colors perceived as “clean” and “healthy”
 - Low noise fans
 - Shrubs, flowers
 - Decorative fences



2. Comply with all regulations.
 - a) Go beyond the minimum standards required, if feasible.
 - b) Exceed set-back distances if possible when building new facilities.. Some added cost at construction may be money well invested in the long term.

3. Practice a “good neighbor” policy.
 - a) Demonstrate through actions and words your respect for neighbors, community, and the environment.
 - b) Develop a manure management plan that takes into account neighbors as well as the environment while maximizing the nutrient value of the manure.
 - c) Support the local community with your business. Buy inputs locally if feasible; use local services such as veterinarians and builders.
 - d) Support local events such as local charities, school programs, community celebrations, and scholarship programs.

4. Communicate.
 - a) Keep neighbors informed of pending changes and actions.
 - b) Conduct tours for officials and regulatory staff, tours or similar events for neighbors.
 - c) Communicate manure management plans, including times and potential locations for spreading. Determine dates or locations that should be avoided.
 - d) Evaluate the success of your public relations efforts with neighbors.
 - e) Establish a complaint system. Encourage them to contact you first before taking other actions.
 - f) When mistakes happen, take responsibility and appropriate corrective actions.
 - g) Recognize the importance of good neighbors to the long term success of your operation.

5. Use available resources and inform yourself. Consultants in the private and public sectors can help you with both technical and human relations information necessary to achieve effective community relations.

Probably the most important concept is to realize that environmental responsible behavior and good public relations will be necessary to operate successfully in the future. By careful attention to these principles it may be possible to avoid situations that could threaten the existence of your operation. It is also necessary to realize that even with the best intentions and plans, your treatment may not always be fair or as you want.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS MODULE

TOPIC 2: DETAILS ON IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Desired Outcomes

1. Learn skills necessary for effective community relations.

Procedural Outline

- I. Explore issues to be addressed prior to expansion of a hog operation.
- II. Learn skills which will allow producers to deal with media in a positive manner.
- III. Identify positive ways of dealing with conflict as well as effective listening and communicating skills.

Key Words (see Appendix for definitions)

None

Transparency/Slide Masters (36)

Pages check (NPPC Community Relations Module Slides #18-53)

Equipment/Supplies

Overhead Projector & Screen OR 35 mm Carousel Slide Projector & Screen
Participant Notebooks



TIPS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU EXPAND YOUR OPERATION

Regardless of the size or type of operation you have, a quality public relations plan will help to ensure your long-term viability. The bullet statements below refer to an operation which might be updating buildings or expanding. But the same “good neighbor” plan can be applied to the pork industry in your county, as a whole.

- Be sure your location is a “best” choice and have other options available. No operation is so small that no one will care. “Location, location, location.” Be prepared to defend your selection of site other than just convenience.
- Research local weather records to determine wind direction and micro climates.
- Utilize trees as a screen for odor and aesthetics. Notify your neighbors of any changes you propose. Explain the change in detail. Never assume they “understand.” This includes other farmers.
- Design storage facilities and plan application equipment and spreading areas in such a way that neighbors can be notified before you spread manure so they can plan around it. It may also modify your plans.
- Demonstrate the environmental safeguards you have in your operation. Recent spills have raised the awareness of what can happen. Plan for the worst.
- Show by your actions that you are environmentally responsible. Take advantage of the pork producers’ Environmental Assurance Program.
- Start your permit process well in advance (6-10 months in some areas) of anticipated construction. Begin your communication plan to neighbors and the community at the same time.
- Discuss your plan with your state and county pork producers’ association. They may help you avoid problems. If you aren’t active in your association, start now.
- Be prepared should your project require a public hearing. Decision makers and the public will question your ability to manage if you aren’t prepared.
- Be honest and up-front in all communications. Not being able to follow up on promises will hurt your future.
- Expect that not everyone will be in favor of your project. Even the most sound plans won’t satisfy everyone.
- Arrange for tours of facilities that are similar to what you are planning. Strive to turn the fear of the unknown into the knowledge of the known.
- Do business locally when possible. Make local businesses spokesmen for your operation. Demonstrate the benefits of your business to the community.
- Join the local Chamber of Commerce, local service organizations and advertise in the local newspaper’s holiday and business editions just as other businesses do, if you want to be considered a business. Or, depending on your situation, you may wish to be perceived as a “family farm.” If so, engage in activities that support that image and role. If you have employees, encourage them to be active in the community.



- Keep your operation neat and clean. People also smell with their eyes.
- Know your rights - but don't flaunt them. Cooperation and communication will go much further than confrontation in most situations.
- Recognize that people don't forget. It takes years to overcome bad experiences. Some opposition to your project may have nothing to do with hogs, odor or the environment. Identify what the true challenges are and address them. Be ready to change if it will make a difference.
- Keep the cooperation of regulators by complying with all regulations.
- Remember: actions speak louder than words.

If you think these guidelines are only for large producers, you are mistaken. Although the larger units hit the regional press, there are many examples of small to medium size farms which are receiving scrutiny. Being a community-minded, environmentally responsible producer will help ensure your acceptance as an asset to the community.



ORGANIZING PORK PRODUCERS BEFORE THE OPPOSITION ARISES

It can be quite disheartening to learn that you and your hog operation are considered a nuisance to your surrounding neighbors and community. But, as we've seen from history dating back to the beginning of our country, a well-organized grassroots effort can create or stop a movement in its tracks. The key to building a successful pork industry begins at the grassroots level. Local producers and people who believe a strong agriculture is essential to our state's economic success and quality of life must work together for such goals. Here's a list of basic steps to take at the local level when community members oppose the existence or expansion of the pork industry in your community:

- Contact your state pork producers association for assistance.
- Call your neighbors, pork producers, farmers, and elected officials to see how they feel about this local opposition.
- Try to determine the real reasons for the opposition and where it is originating.
- Organize a local meeting of people in general proximity to a proposed new facility along with other farmers, pork producers, allied industry representatives, elected officials, local businesses, and non-farm neighbors who share your concerns.
- Consider having a producer at your meeting who has been involved in this type of controversy somewhere else in your state.
- List your reasons why the pork facility is positive for the community - environmental, social, economic, health, land use, property values, and taxes.
- Get a list of county names, addresses and phone numbers of county commissioners and the county planning and zoning commission members. Talk with these members about why pork production is important to the community.
- Circulate a petition listing the reason you're in support of a pork expansion facility in your community. By itself, the petition will probably not get the facility built, but it is a good tool for making people aware while gathering names, addresses, and phone numbers of supporters.
- Be prepared for the opposition to attempt to make new local regulations to stop livestock expansion in your county.
- Develop a plan for presenting your case to the appropriate governmental body (planning and zoning, county board, etc.). The drafting of this plan should involve a variety of individuals with diverse backgrounds. For example, non-farmers and farmers working together on this issue.
- Generate phone calls to members of the planning and zoning commission, as well as the county board of commissioners, expressing your support of livestock production in your county.
- Avoid personal verbal attacks directed toward public officials or the opposition.
- Once you've met as a group, select a couple of well-spoken individuals to talk with the opposition to express your concerns and to learn more about their concerns. Treat them with respect and honestly address their concerns.
- Work to get your message out to the public. Write letters to the editors, talk with the local news reporters, talk with local leaders, etc.
- Consider the principles outlined in the section "Dealing With Conflict" in this module.

COUNTY ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST



County pork producer organizations in the past may have tended to focus on product promotion. In the future local organizations can serve their members and industry well by helping organize producers to present a positive image and presence for pork production. Following are some suggested activities:

Easy to do . . .

- ⇒ Invite a DNR officer or Feedlot Officer to your annual meeting.
- ⇒ Join your area Chamber of Commerce.
- ⇒ Provide a scholarship for a non-producer in your local leadership program.
- ⇒ Find out the dates of monthly Planning Commission meetings.
- ⇒ Invite all Planning Commission members to your annual meeting.
- ⇒ Invite all county commission members to your annual meeting.
- ⇒ Invite state legislators to your annual meeting.
- ⇒ Meet and communicate with other livestock organizations.
- ⇒ Support and promote the Environmental Assurance Program.

A little bit of effort . . .

- ⇒ Write a letter to the editor.
- ⇒ Identify and enroll a producer in a leadership development program.
- ⇒ Identify a producer to serve on your Planning Commission.
- ⇒ Identify a producer to serve on the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- ⇒ Arrange to have a representative at every Planning Commission meeting.
- ⇒ Take several producers to planning commission meetings when livestock issues are on the agenda.
- ⇒ Identify and encourage pork producers to run for township office.

A little more time, but big payoff . . .

- ⇒ Identify and prepare a spokesperson to talk with the media.
- ⇒ Study your county ordinances language on confined feeding.
- ⇒ Submit language to your planning commission that protects livestock production in your county.
- ⇒ Arrange a farm tour for your local media representatives.
- ⇒ Nominate a producer to serve on the planning commission and county health board. Keep abreast of when appointments are made.



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Effective media relations can play an important role in how the public perceives the pork industry. By being prepared and available and honest. You can make the most of contacts with the media. Producers and industry leaders should view media questions as an opportunity to tell the positive story about pork and the swine industry. If you know the facts and can state them clearly, you can make a positive impact for the pork industry.

Tips for interviews or news conferences:

Be Prepared.

Gather information from reading and listening to news reports. Keep yourself updated on industry/association activities and positions. Imagine the most difficult or objectionable question that could be asked and then draft an answer that you'd be prepared to respond with. Practice your answers out loud before the interview.

Get To The Point Fast!

State your main message or a "yes" or "no" to questions first - then elaborate. Bring out the one or two main points you feel are important and reinforce these points throughout the interview. Turn negative questions into positive answers by returning to these main messages.

Always Be Honest and Accurate.

Don't guess on the facts. Research your topic and support your points with facts. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't say "no comment." Instead, say "I don't know" and refer the reporter to other sources.

Know The Audience.

Are your comments going into a general circulation publication or a farm-related magazine? Think about how your comments will be perceived by a particular reporter's readers or listeners. Start with a comment that emphasizes common ground with your potential audiences.

Be Human.

Be open, likable and concerned. Relax. Be part of the community, and guided by more than just self interest.

Remember Your Rights.

Just as a reporter can ask questions, you too should be prepared to ask the reporter for information which can put his or her story in context. What type of story is being written? What other people are being interviewed? What's the angle and in what segment of the publication or broadcast will this story appear? If you believe the premise of a question is wrong, you may begin your answer with a qualifying statement. If you have questions about the story, ask them at the initial contact. Don't wait until the reporter is at your farm for the interview to get clarification.



Be Consistent.

Talk to the media during bad times as well as good times - it is essential to establish your credibility. Credibility with the media is especially important when editors and broadcasters decide how much weight to give your version of a controversial situation.

Don't Over-answer.

You may confuse, rather than enlighten the interviewer. Or, you may inadvertently disclose information that you did not intend to reveal.

Nothing Is "Off The Record."

Don't make a statement if you don't want it quoted. Assume there is no such thing as "off the record" unless you have a long-established relationship with a reporter.

You Can't Control the Outcome of a Story . . .

But you can influence the outcome by being prepared and professional.

Maintain Control.

Relax. Speak in friendly, conversational manner. Establish a cooperative atmosphere and speak in as personal a manner as possible. Don't lose your temper. Set your own pace, don't be afraid to pause. Only use gestures if you naturally do. In a TV interview, always look eye-to-eye with the person interviewing you.

Respect Deadlines.

Especially when dealing with print media, find out their deadlines and do your best to work with reporters and editors to get them the information they need on time.

Know Local News Reporters Personally.

Reporters deal with sources they trust. Be on a first name basis with them if possible. Keep in touch with them regularly, not just when you have a story.

Find Out a Reporter's Background.

Before beginning an interview ask in a friendly manner about the reporter's background and experience. If he or she doesn't have a farm background you may want to provide detailed information. Also, remember journalism is a job. With the exception of a few highly paid and "well-known journalists" being an editor or reporter is an occupation, not a lifestyle. Reporters have bosses and bills and families just like you.

Say "Thanks."

Compliment the media when you see positive and accurate stories on agriculture. The media receive very few positive letters - a sincere positive note from you could make a difference in the future.



HOW TO TALK PORK WITH THE PUBLIC

My mom always said there are good words and there are bad words. She wouldn't tell me what the bad words were, but did let me know when I figured them out! In the world of pig production, there are also good words and bad words. The terminology we use to describe day-to-day activities communicates a strong message to the public about our stewardship of the pig. The following lists are meant to stimulate thought regarding the perceptions we create with our language.

Paul D. Ruen, DVM, Fairmont Vet Clinic

GOOD PHRASES.....BAD PHRASES

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| baby pig care | piglet processing |
| sanitary flooring..... | slats, gutters, pits |
| individual sow housing..... | crates, stalls, decks |
| segregated weaning..... | early weaning |
| community nursery | co-mingled |
| prescription medicine..... | drugs |
| pen space | pig density |
| health status/monitor..... | slaughter deck |
| pork producers | factory farms |
| networking/alliances | industry |
| environmentally controlled housing..... | confinement |
| productive..... | throughput |
| health control | disease control |
| nutrient management..... | waste removal |
| market pork..... | load hogs |
| deliver pigs..... | haul pigs |

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When possible, use such terms as “farm” and “family farm” over words such as “operation” or “industry.” We may be proud that pork production is a sophisticated business, but the public responds more favorably to terms and labels that are traditional and romantic.



HOW TO CONDUCT A MEDIA TOUR

What Can a Media Tour Accomplish?

The influence of public relations on the news media is extensive. Half the news in many newspapers, radio and television programs originates with formal statements, news releases or one-on-one media visits by organizations. Media tours can help local pork producers do a number of things. *Consider the fact that most local media representatives in your community have never been on a hog farm.* If that's the case, how can we expect them to provide accurate coverage. It's our job as pork producers to keep the local media informed about industry. Among the ways a media tour can be used include:

- building positive public attitudes toward the pork industry
- positioning the organization as a leader and expert
- interpreting the impact of emerging issues in the industry and marketplace
- promoting the benefits of the pork industry
- telling industry stories and issues in greater depth
- opening communication channels between organizations and external publics who could negatively affect the growth of the pork industry

The most commonly desired outcome of one-on-one media visits is positive articles, sound bites or programs on the pork industry. However, fostering relationships with the media is just as important. Establishing local pork producers as an authoritative source of information on issues is critical. Doing so positions the organization as a reliable source that the media can rely on when working on future assignments. It's better to have the opportunity to express the organization's position than be totally excluded from a story.

Arranging Media Tours

If your county has never had a media tour of the local pork industry, then it's time to have one. We can't blame the media for inaccurate coverage if the industry doesn't take the time to teach them about the industry. Here are a few steps in organizing a local media tour in areas that have organized county or regional pork producer groups. If that is not the case for you, consider working with other livestock and agricultural groups..

1. Call the state pork producers association office for assistance in organizing the tour.
2. Establish a strong central message that you want to publicize. Make sure everyone participating in your media tour is aware of this message and knows how to incorporate a version of it into their remarks. (To maximize a strong pro-pork or pro-livestock message, establish the message first, then invite other ag groups to participate. If you do it the other way around you'll end up with a watered-down message.) Examples of a central message/theme:



“Modern pork operations produce a healthy, safe food product in an environmentally responsible manner.”

“Local pork production (or livestock production) is a vital component of the local economy.”

“Local pork production (or livestock production) adds value to the feed grain crops grown in the region.”

“Manure enables farmers to complete a renewable, sustainable, crop production system.”

“Pork producers are adopting new technologies to fulfill consumer demands and protect the environment.”

3. Determine who will best represent the industry. The spokespersons should be knowledgeable on the topic to be discussed, have an understanding of the organization’s overall objectives and strategies, be respected community leaders, and be comfortable talking in public. Typically limit the number of spokespersons to four or less
4. Prepare your spokespersons. Tell participants what the media has indicated they are specifically interested in discussing and provide participants with background on reporters. Provide suggestions of one or two key points you think the spokespersons should stress in the interview. Always get together to review anticipated questions and possible answers before the actual interviews. The person who arranged the media tour should attend the in-person interviews to take notes on any follow-up information needed by the media.
5. Include diversity as a criteria in selecting spokespersons. Include women and young people. Your spokespeople should be able to “connect” with our intended audience.
6. If necessary, tie into a special event like National Ag Week, National Farm City Day, or a local ag event. However, don’t overlook the idea of making your pork media tour a yearly event that people don’t want to miss.
7. Involve a celebrity such as the Commissioner of Agriculture or other well-known agricultural experts to lend credibility to the event.
8. Recognize the involvement of other ag groups to increase credibility.
9. Choose a first-class, local pork operation but portray this producer as representative of the many quality operations in the area. Review the NPPC brochure, *When Company Comes to the Farm: A Guide for Successful Farm Tours*, when preparing for the farm visit.
10. Involve your local businesses and allied industry in the event. Make certain the media understands that the pork industry affects many businesses in the community.



11. Prepare a press kit of written materials to leave behind for the media to read: short biographies of the participants, names and telephone numbers of persons to contact for additional information, a news release on the pork industry in your community, a brochure or a basic fact sheet on your organization and the pork industry. Remember that reporters are often unable to spend a lot of time researching or studying issues and that they are on tight deadlines. Your state pork producers association may be able to help assemble needed information.
12. Write a thank-you note, promptly after the meeting, expressing hope that the recipient can use the information you discussed and left behind. It subtly reminds the person to read the material. Any additional information that the reporter requested should also be sent promptly.
13. Watch for news clips and listen for radio and television coverage. Merchandise any coverage back to the organization to show the value of the time and money spent on the media tours.



HOW TO HANDLE NEGATIVE PUBLICITY ABOUT PORK PRODUCTION

As a pork producer you have the responsibility to keep abreast of the attitudes of non-farm residents toward pork production in your community. Occasionally, pork producers are caught off guard when a negative story about pork shows up in the local news media. Here is a checklist of things to do when a story does appear that casts a negative perception on the pork industry: This checklist assumes you have an active state organization as a resource. If that is not the case you will need to identify other sources of advice.

- Call the state pork producers association as soon as you know of a story that's going to be printed or if a negative story shows up in your local media.
- Talk with the state staff about whether you think the negative story will go away on its own, or whether it is the beginning of a grassroots effort to move pork production out of your community.
- Contact the state pork producers association and your attorney before you talk to the media if the story is about you and your pork business.
- Find out what the focus of the interview will be if you receive a call and the types of questions to be asked. If you don't feel comfortable doing a spontaneous interview, ask the reporter if you can call back after you have collected some important material. Then contact your attorney or the state association to talk through how to conduct the interview. Once you are comfortable, contact the reporter to conduct the interview. Remember, you don't have to do the interview. That is a judgment call that must be made by you and the people you want to serve as your advisors.
- Contact the editor or radio/TV manager and reporter of the negative story that is published and ask for a meeting with the two people to discuss your concerns. Make a list of your concerns about the reporting and support your concerns with facts.
- Talk openly and honestly about the pork industry in your community.
- Organize letters to the editors.
- Offer reporters a farm tour of local pork operations.
- Talk to your local elected officials and influencers to explain the importance of the pork industry to the community.
- Stick to the facts, but make certain that reporters understand that pork production is your livelihood.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR (SAMPLE)

Letters to the editor are one of the most widely read sections of the print media. Getting a letter published in your local newspaper is one of the most effective ways to voice your opinion and clearly state facts on a subject. Listed below are some guidelines for writing a letter to an editor.

1. Address your letter to “Dear Editor.”
2. Write a letter that is short (3 to 5 paragraphs), concise, and to the point. Try to cover only one major point in your letter.
3. Organize your letter about controversial issues in the following way:
 - a. State your organization’s name and the purpose of your letter.
 - b. Convey some background material in the second paragraph.
 - c. Express your opinion clearly in the third paragraph.
 - d. Tell your readers in the final paragraph what action you want them to take.
4. Use letters to the editor to clarify misconceptions about inaccurate information about your business. Focus on the correct information and then draw a conclusion.
5. Use the opportunity to get letters positive to pork production printed during theme weeks/months such as Farm/City Day.



TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Projecting A Positive Visual Image

The appearance of your livestock production facilities and farmstead is a vital component in projecting a positive image of your operation and of the industry in general. Joan Nassauer, Morse Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, suggests that to be perceived in a positive manner, livestock facilities and farmsteads need to portray an "ecologically healthy landscape." An ecologically healthy landscape visually communicates such things as non-polluting, balanced, and in harmony with surroundings.

Viewers will connect what they feel to be good, attractive, and well cared for to ecological health. If you ask passers-by what constitutes an attractive, well cared for farmstead you might receive answers such as neat, clean, painted (white may be associated with good care), balanced, productive (as evidenced by dark green color in plants and crops), appropriate for and blended into local surroundings. To project an image of ecological health, incorporate those factors considered "good" by your viewers. In this way facilities will look "good" in a way people understand.

Ethical responsibility implies that an operation should in fact attempt to be what it appears to be. If an attempt to project a positive image is accompanied by irresponsible behavior, public trust will be destroyed.

Appearance may also be enhanced by such things as capturing heterogeneity in the landscape where possible, making non-productive areas larger, and connecting them where possible.

The actions suggested here are similar to the ways the appearance of modern manufacturing plants have been designed and landscaped to make them attractive and consistent with a variety of attractive settings.

Understanding the Impacts of Appearance

It makes sense that the public would be more likely to be favorably impressed by neat and clean facilities that are aesthetically pleasing and that they would have more confidence in food products produced in such surroundings. Also it appears that much of the public feels more attached to "family farms" than to "factory farms". Therefore, given these public attitudes, facilities that are neat and clean, and that project a "family farm" image, will most likely be broadly accepted. The following drawings depict these concepts.



Figure 1. Facilities that are messy and not consistent with common values about food production are a detriment to the industry.

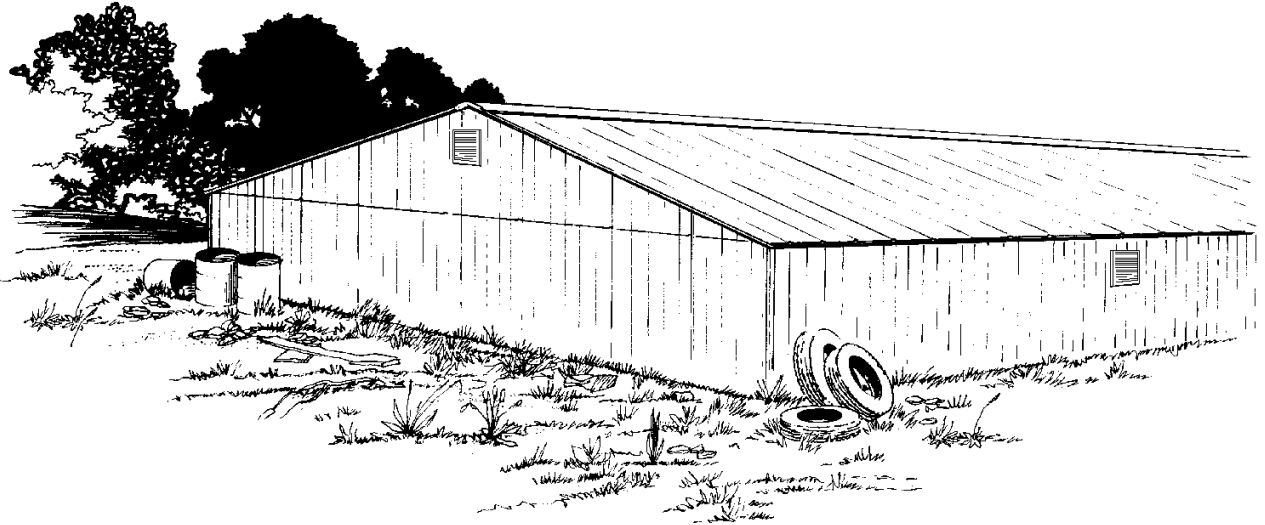


Figure 2. A neat and clean facility, but one that does not blend into the surrounding environment, projects a "factory" image.

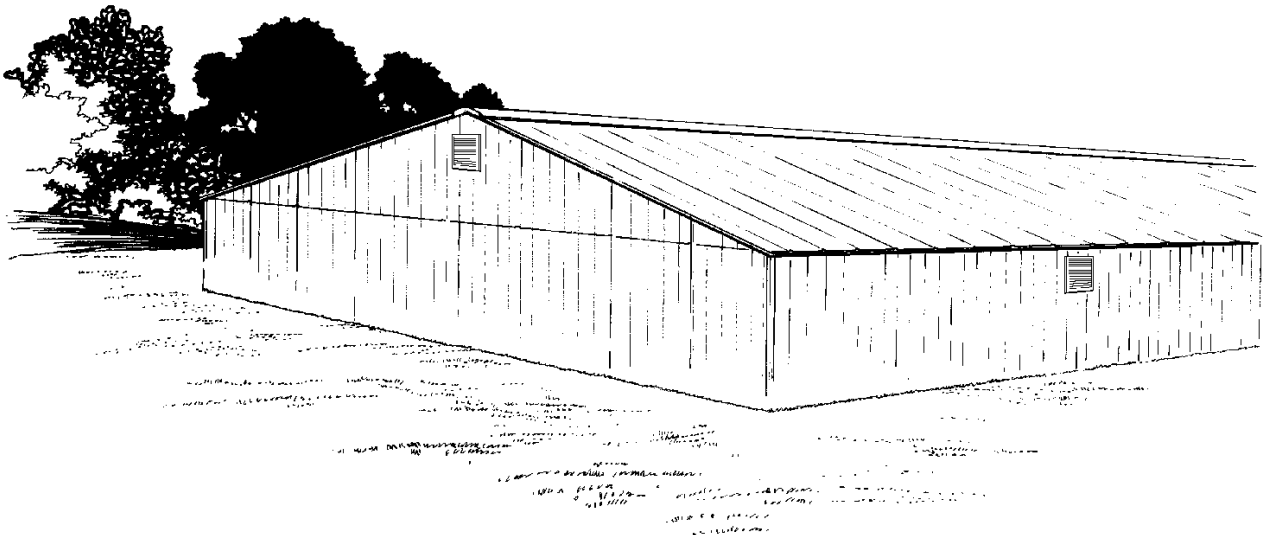


Figure 3. Landscaping improves the aesthetics swine facilities.

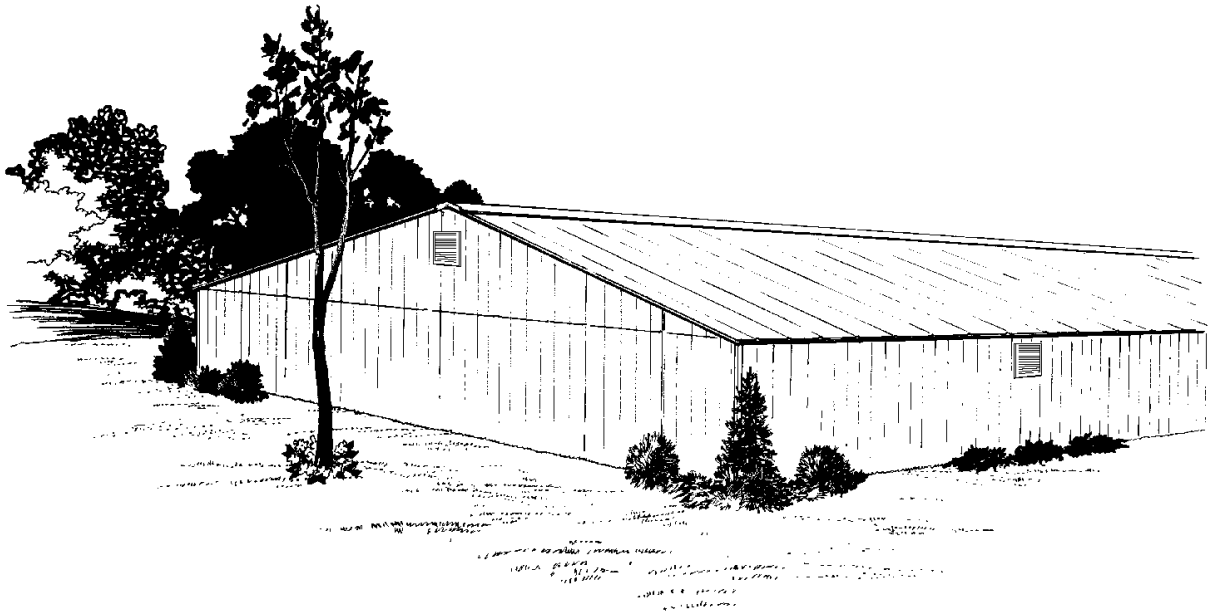
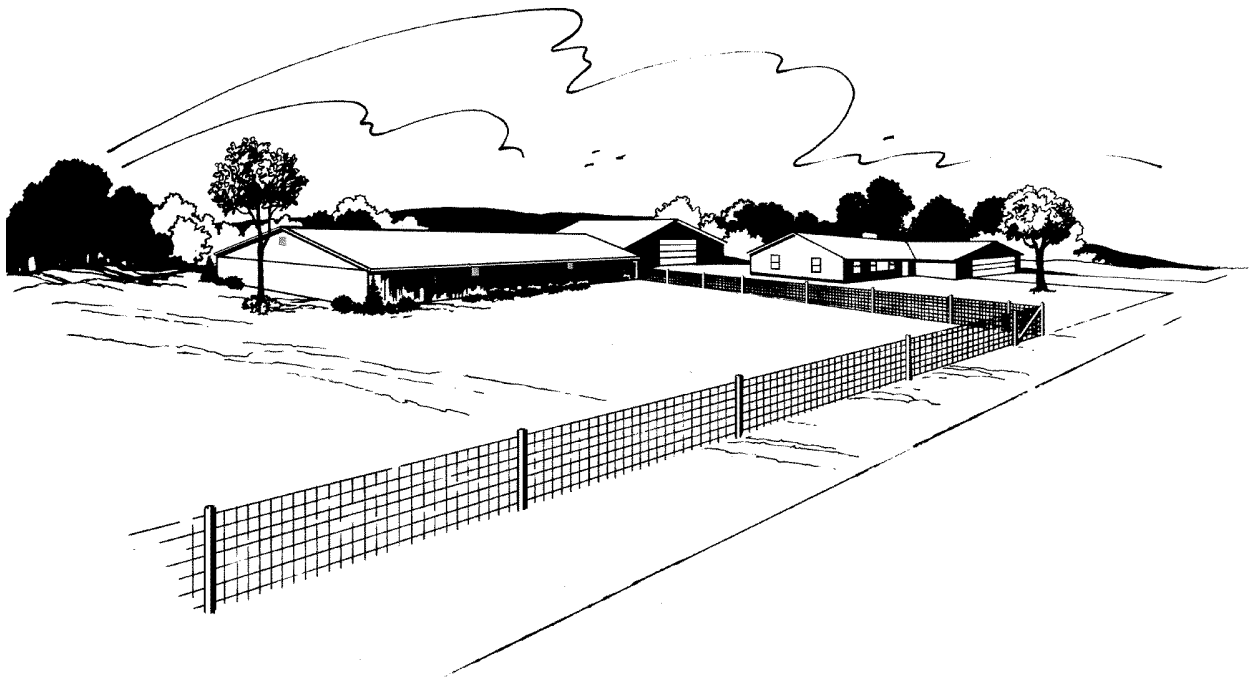


Figure 4. The same barn in a setting that is neat and clean is an environment that is consistent with the values of much of the public.



Dealing with Conflict

Even producers who have an environmentally friendly production system and a well designed public relations plan may at sometime find themselves in conflict with individuals or communities.

Experience would suggest that some producers may have brought on conflict with their actions, while others operating within accepted standards and practices may feel "unfairly" judged and attacked. Conflict arising from differing interests, values, and perceptions is very challenging but not impossible to overcome. Producers should develop an appreciation for and some skills in dealing with conflict.

The Iowa Peace Institute suggests the following core values to guide those seeking positive outcomes in conflict situations:

1. *Resolving conflict on the basis of all parties' interests is preferable to resolving conflict through rights or power based approaches.*

When decisions on issues that involve conflict are made through power based approaches such as litigation and court decisions, the way may be cleared for an action to occur, such as the construction of a livestock facility. However, conflict most likely has not been eliminated, and it will likely manifest itself vigorously in other ways that may continue to plague the producer.

2. *Decisions made by consensus are preferred over decisions made by voting, deference to authority, unilateral power plays or default.*

Decisions that all parties can support will reduce or eliminate the basis for further conflict on the issue in question.

3. *Effective group processes require that all members participate by sharing relevant information and by raising questions and concerns in a manner that contributes to understanding.*

Parties involved must reach a point where trust occurs and each is honestly seeking some new agreement or situation that protects their interests to a degree that they find acceptable. Each party needs to actively seek agreement that is "win-win" rather than seeking to "defeat" the other and impose their will.

The concept of moving out of polarized conflict to some new understanding and view of the situation, or "peace," has been referred to as "transforming conflict." Louise Diamond, Ph.D., Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, in a paper, *Beyond Win/Win: The Heroic Journey of Conflict Transformation*, defines deep rooted conflict situations as:

"conflict-habituated systems . . . (and transforming conflict) as different from managing or resolving conflict. To transform conflict is to work systemically to change the very assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions of the parties in the conflict, as well as open doors to creative solutions and new behaviors. To transform conflict is to deal with the needs and relationship issues being expressed in the conflict situation, not just bridge different positions. To transform conflict is to release the energy bound in the intellectual,



emotional, physical, and spiritual patterns of thought and action that have built up over time, and reshape that energy into new and more positive patterns of relationship. To transform conflict is to build peace."

Most livestock producers might find bringing such commitment and energy to a conflict situation warranted in order to save a valued relationship such as a marriage, or an institution such as a church or community. The suggestion that a disagreeable neighbor should be engaged with this approach might at first be viewed as a bit extreme.

However, in some communities, the conflict between livestock producers, especially those labeled as representing a form of new, non-traditional production, and those opposed to this change, has evolved to one of a conflict-habituated system. The principles of transforming conflict should serve well in these situations. Some suggestions to consider in these situations are:

1. Even though it is difficult, move to get all parties to define and recognize their "real" interests.
2. Create awareness of, and recognize yourself, that there has to be a better way for everyone involved than continuing the conflict.
3. Recognize that conflict resolution/transformation is about relationships. Seek to create a new relationship other than what currently exists in the conflict-habituated system.
4. Understand that the move to transform the conflict requires a counter intuitive action. Continuing the fight and resistance is the intuitive response to conflict. Transforming the conflict requires moving **toward** or **with** the perceived adversary.
5. The parties need to consider what each other sees and feels, avoid hurting each other, and join their energies and efforts to seek the new solution.

Efforts to deal with conflict that include these principles will be most successful in achieving lasting results satisfactory to all parties.



Reducing Public Outrage

The **concept** of “public outrage” is discussed in the first section of this module. Peter M. Sandman offers the following **strategies for reducing** public outrage:

Reducing Outrage

Six Principle Strategies

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1. Stake out the middle, not the extreme. In a fight between “terribly dangerous” and “perfectly safe,” the winner will be “terribly dangerous.” But “modestly dangerous” is a contender. Activists can afford to exaggerate, but industry and government cannot. Move to the middle of the seesaw.
2. Acknowledge prior misbehavior -- repeatedly. The prerogative of deciding when we can put our mistakes behind us belongs to our stakeholders, not ourselves. The more often and apologetically we acknowledge the sins of the past, the more quickly others decide it’s time to move on.
3. Acknowledge current problems -- dramatically. Omissions, distortions, and “spin control” damage credibility nearly as much as outright lies. The only way to build credibility is to acknowledge the problems, going beyond mere honesty to “transparency.” And since people don’t expect such acknowledgments, they have to be dramatic or no one will notice.
4. Discuss achievements with humility. Odds are you resisted change until regulators or activists forced your hand. Now have the grace to say so. Attributing your good behavior to your own natural goodness triggers skepticism; attributing it to pressure greatly increases the likelihood that we’ll believe you actually did it.
5. Share control and be accountable. The higher the outrage, the less willing people are to leave control in your hands or to accept your assurances that all is well. Look for ways to put the control elsewhere (or to show that it is already elsewhere). Let others -- regulators, neighbors, activists -- keep you honest and certify your good performance.
6. Bring concerns to the surface. It’s the concerns that stakeholders are not voicing that make the most trouble. Bring them to the surface subtly: “I wonder if anybody is worried about...” “I talked last week with a neighbor who was worried about...” This is a technique borrowed from psychiatry, where it is sometimes called counterprojection.

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Listening and Communicating Effectively

Communication is essential to working out differences and becomes even more important during times of uncertainty. Listening is necessary for good communication. During times of conflict and anger it is common to become a very poor listener. This greatly reduces your chances of solving the conflict situation. Here are some ways to become a more efficient listener:

1. Stop talking.
2. Show that you are paying attention.
3. Try to put yourself in the other person's place.
4. Encourage the other person to express their feelings.
5. Ask questions and listen to the answers.
6. Don't guess what the other person will say.
7. Avoid judging the other person.

There are several patterns of miscommunication that can be identified. These following four are not meant to be inclusive, but are illustrations of the kinds of blocks we sometimes encounter which limit our effectiveness, either as the sender of a message, or as a receiver.

1. "Allness"

In this form of miscommunication, the listener or speaker has a tendency to block communication through the appearance of "knowing it all." This "allness" may also take the appearance of being "one-up," having received an insight long before the other said it. Another form has the person constantly putting down or discounting what is said as irrelevant, unimportant, or stupid.

In trying to communicate with "allness," the temptation is to prove them wrong. Instead of resolving the problem, this tends to reinforce the very problem it was meant to solve. When "allness" realizes it's OK not to know everything, progress can be made toward greater understanding by both parties in a discussion.

2. Indiscrimination

Here persons tend to forget individual differences of persons within a category of people. Stereotyping is an obvious example of indiscrimination. In communications, indiscrimination becomes more obvious when a person describes a category of people in generalizations that don't allow for individual differences. "All city people who move out here are alike" might be an example of indiscrimination.

Unfortunately, when we openly label people in this way, some negative characteristics attributed to a group become a self-fulfilling prophecy because we are more sensitive to those behaviors and because we anger people and challenge them to behave negatively. Because indiscrimination can provide many blocks to effective communication, it should be minimized.



3. Bypassing

This type of miscommunication is common and refers to the situation where a word or idea means different things to two different people. A simple example is the word “dinner” which might be a noon meal to one and an evening meal to another. There are many instances in pork production where terminology common to pork producers might be taken as something else by someone not familiar with the industry. Bypassing becomes more complex when terms have emotional appeal or communicate values.

One way to communicate more effectively is to avoid assuming that the other person “knows” what you mean (from your perspective) by a term or concept. By clarifying ideas and terms, communications becomes more precise and effective.

4. Listening Lapses

Lapses in listening or attention are very common in communication. People can listen to many more words per minute than most people can speak. The speaker may be effectively sharing something with the listener until that listener is stimulated to think of something else. The listener follows that new thought for a while, while the speaker continues talking, unaware that the listener’s attention has lapsed. During the time that the listener was stimulated into another thought the speaker assumes that what was expressed was heard and understood. Often important information can be missed by the listener. Sometimes that competing thought might be the listener forming a response to something that was said. In part this situation can be dealt with by avoiding long stretches of one way communication and seeking interaction and questions.

When we become emotional it is common to fall victim to poor listening and communication techniques. Chances for a satisfactory outcome to most discussions and disagreements will be much more likely if effective communications takes place.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS MODULE

TOPIC 3: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Desired Outcomes

1. Share experiences and reinforce learnings on community relations issues through group discussions.
2. Understand what constitutes a positive community relations plan for a hog operation.

Procedural Outline

- I. Explore issues and potential ways of resolving community relations situations involving hog operations.
- II. Assist producers in the development of a community relations plan for their hog operations.

Key Words (see Appendix for definitions)

None

Transparency/Slide Masters (5)

Pages check (NPPC Community Relations Module Slides #54-58)

Equipment/Supplies

Overhead Projector & Screen OR 35 mm Carousel Slide Projector & Screen
Participant Notebooks



DISCUSSION SCENARIOS

These scenarios may contain references to procedures and regulations not common to all states and counties. You may need to edit some content to create situations realistic for your audience.

Divide participants into groups of up to 4 or 5 for discussion on one or both of the scenarios. Have each group give a brief report on their responses to the questions and other observations about these situations.

Discussion Scenario One

Five farmers in the county have joined together and requested a permit to build a 1250 sow breeding/gestation/farrowing complex on a 10 acre site that one of them owns. They also are proposing to build nurseries on another site, plus two of these farmers each plan to build three finishing barns on their home farms and the other three each plan to build a finishing barn on their farms. They will finish all the pigs in these facilities. They have adequate land area to utilize the manure for crop production. They have spent a lot of time developing a business plan and have secured financing from a coalition of several banks in the region. They also have had competent legal help in setting up their business arrangement.

Since they have applied for a county building permit there has been an uproar in the community. There have been many rumors about outside investors, fears about odors from the facilities, and concerns about how small operations can compete with the new technologies and specialized management these farmers will employ.

The state permitting agency has given approval to the project. The county planning commission will be holding a hearing soon and then will have to make a recommendation to the county board. The county board will have to make a final ruling on the request. There is a lot of emotion, fear, and anger in the community. The five farmers are bewildered and hurt by the reaction of their neighbors. The planning commission members and county board members are receiving a lot of political pressure and don't know how to react either.

What could have been done to avoid the stress and potential damage of this situation: By the five farmers? By the county board and planning commission? By the community citizens?



Discussion Scenario Two

A pork producer has a neighboring family that lives 1/4 mile southeast of his site. His finisher and nursery manure is stored in an earthen storage basin. The 500 head finisher has a scraper under the partial slat portion of the barn and the manure is pumped into the basin. The nursery holds 250 head and has shallow pull plug pits under the wire mesh pen floors.

He empties the basin about every two years depending on it's level and the availability of fields for spreading. He knifes some of it in but has also surface applied.

The producer doesn't feel the odor from the basin is bad except for a period of time in the spring, and again in the fall, and on some hot, humid summer days. The producer's home is also on the site just northeast of the swine facilities.

The neighbor's wife has complained of the odor a couple of times in the past several years. On one occasion the neighbors called the state pollution control office about the odor but the state staff person investigating agreed with the producer that the source of the prolonged odor was from another neighbor who had emptied a pit on a recently cut alfalfa field.

The producer is concerned that the problem with this neighbor will become more serious in the future. He has talked to them at some length on one occasion but the conversation was quite tense and little was accomplished.

What actions do you think the producer should take: Regarding the neighbors complaints and his relationship with them? Regarding his manure handling system? Regarding his application techniques? Regarding future developments on his production site?



Group Discussions/Sharing Session

Divide participants into groups of up to 4 or 5 for discussion and sharing on community relations activities. The following questions may help guide the discussion. Have each group give a brief report on their responses to the questions and other observations about these situations.

- What community relations challenges have you faced?
- What resources were available to you to help with the situation?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- What types of community relations actions have you employed for your operation?
- What other actions do you plan to take in the future?



DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN FOR YOUR OPERATION

Steps to help you strategically approach community relations:

1. Complete the Environmental Assessment (page 57-72) in the Environmental Assurance Program Notebook.
Considering these environmental factors will help you avoid situations where you risk endangering the rights of others. Seek the help of a consultant if you have difficulty implementing these practices.
2. Have you received any complaints about your operation in the past year? What actions have you taken as a result?
3. List future activities to be carried out.
Improvements to be made in your operation:

Personal communication plans with neighbors:

Activities you will carry out with public to build the image of the pork industry and create better understanding of the industry:

County organization activities in which you will participate that will improve the image of the local pork industry:



