

## **Pork roundtable refines vision for the future**

Members of Canada's pork industry national value chain roundtable refined their strategy for strengthening the sector when they met in Vancouver July 12-13, 2004.

The roundtable brings together key leaders from across the pork industry – producers, processors, traders and others – to work together to improve the sector's overall competitive position. The Vancouver meeting capped a process that started more than a year ago when the roundtable agreed the hog/pork sector needed a universal strategy to set common goals and drive the kind of improvements that would help Canada better compete in key markets.

As a first step toward this, the group commissioned detailed market research and benchmarking studies to determine the most important markets for the future and measure Canada's performance on key factors in these markets versus the United States and Denmark – our top competitors. Roundtable members built a strategy based on these studies, working together to nail down the points where Canada has a competitive advantage as well as identify key areas to strive for improvement. The goal throughout this process has been to improve our competitiveness and make gains in key markets.

The strategy includes a list of specific action items for improvements in five areas – traceability, animal health, food safety, meat quality and public concerns – that together will form a platform on which industry can build its marketing efforts.

Roundtable members spent the majority of their meeting in Vancouver discussing the input provided on this strategy by key stakeholders during outreach sessions held across the country in May and June. Revisions based on these comments were discussed and roundtable members agreed in principle on a refined version of the pork strategy.

As a next step, a committee of roundtable members will meet by conference call to determine how best to cost-out and prioritize action items in the strategy, how to map-out and coordinate the work already being done by industry, how to assign responsibility for work that needs to be done, and how to develop implementation plans in each of the five areas.

Roundtable members also discussed countervail and anti-dumping investigations by the United States Department of Commerce. Members agreed that a sub-group of the roundtable will be formed to investigate possibilities in terms of contingency planning.

An update on the WTO agriculture talks was provided and members discussed possible implications for the pork industry. Members agreed that a sub-group of the roundtable would meet to develop recommendations and advice on the talks for the federal government.

The pork industry roundtable was first established in April 2003. It is industry-led and government is a partner in the process -- facilitating discussions and supporting the development and implementation of roundtable strategies and action plans.

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