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**OHIO HOG FARMERS GIVE BACK TO HUNGRY OHIOANS DURING
TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES, REACH NEW MILESTONE**

Hog farmers have provided nearly 65,000 pounds of pork, or 325,000 meals, to Ohio families

COLUMBUS – Ohio’s hog farmers recently reached a new milestone in their statewide effort to combat hunger in Ohio. However, after the results of a new USDA study were released this week, it is clear there is still a long way to go to ensure that no Ohioan has to worry where their next meal will come from.

Since September 2009, 12 Ohio hog farmers have donated nearly 65,000 pounds, or 325,000 meals, valued at more than \$174,000. The effort, *Pork Power: Partnering to Fight Hunger in Ohio*, is a partnership between the Ohio Pork Producers Council (OPPC), the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF), the Ohio Association of Meat Processors (OAMP) and the Ohio Corn Marketing Program.

According to the USDA study, one in seven Ohio households struggled or did not have enough money to buy food. In 2009, nearly 680,000 families, or 14.8 percent, were found to be "food insecure". These numbers have increased from 13.3 percent the previous year.

“In a state where agriculture is the number-one economic contributor, I am saddened that so many Ohioans go hungry on a regular basis,” said Dick Isler, OPPC executive vice president. “Food is a basic need that should be readily available to all Ohioans. Through the Pork Power program, Ohio’s hog farmers are committed to making that a reality by giving back to those who are less fortunate.” Isler said that Ohio’s hog farmers hope to provide 100,000 pounds of pork, or 500,000 meals, through the program for distribution to OASHF’s network of 12 foodbanks.

Ohio hog farmers and companies who have participated in the program include: Mercer Landmark of Celina, Advanced Agri-Solutions of Wapakoneta, Heimerl Farms of Johnstown, Cooper Farms of Oakwood, Kalmbach Swine Management of Upper Sandusky, Pork Champ of Waldo, Vaubel Swine Genetics of Botkins, Rushwood Farms of Kenton, Archbold Elevator of Archbold, Surber family of Sabina, Hord Livestock of Bucyrus and Maken Bacon Farm of Morral.

Members of OAMP are processing the meat at a reduced rate to support the program's efforts. Participating processors include: Brookview Farms Meats & BBQ of Archbold, Tucker Packing Co. of Marshallville, Perfect's Meat Market of Johnstown, Kelble Brothers of Berlin Heights, J & K Angus & Meat Processing of Cambridge, Kah Meats of Wapakoneta, Turf Care Supply Corp. of Brunswick, Border's Market of Plymouth, Curly's Custom Meats of Jackson Center, Dee Jays of Fredericktown, D&H of Vanlue, House's of Versailles, Hoffman Meats of Cardington, House's Custom Butchering of Versailles, Mt. Victory Meats of Mount Victory.

Ohio ranks ninth in the nation for pork production and is third in the country for the total number of hog farms per state, with 3,700 hog farms, the majority of which are family owned and operated.

For more information about the Pork Power program or Ohio's pork sector, please call 614/882-5887 or visit www.OhioPork.org.

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****EDITOR'S NOTE:** Interview and photo opportunities for future donations are available upon request.