

PRESS RELEASE

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US Swine Health Improvement Plan

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U.S. SWINE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN DELEGATES MOVE PROGRAM FORWARD AT THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

Delegates pass program standards and resolutions and recognize the first elected general conference committee.

BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA, Sept. 7, 2023 — The U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan (US SHIP) concluded its third annual House of Delegates meeting in Bloomington, Minnesota, recently. Nearly 300 US SHIP stakeholders including producers, veterinarians, state animal health officials, state pork association officials, and USDA personnel discussed and approved program standards and resolutions that further clarify and define the requirements of this national certification program being developed for safeguarding and protecting swine health.

The US Swine Health Improvement Plan is an industry, state, and federal partnership for improving preparedness across the US pork industry. Based on producer-developed technical standards, US SHIP participants achieve ASF/CSF Monitored Certification that aims to provide certified sites a means to demonstrate freedom of disease outside of control areas in support of animal health, commerce, and trade. Support is provided by USDA, National Pork Board, and National Pork Producers Council.

The US SHIP program has seen increased participation in the past year, with Dr. Tyler Holck, Sr Program Coordinator for US SHIP announcing in the opening session that enrollment has exceeded 68% of the U.S. breeding pig herd and 61% of the U.S. growing pig herd. "The rapid adoption by swine producers is very encouraging, especially given that US SHIP was started less than three years ago" stated Holck, "and the high level of engagement by all facets of our industry speaks to the potential value of a health certification program similar to what the poultry industry has had for 88 years". " Further developing and transitioning US SHIP from the current start-up phase into a USDA APHIS Swine Health Program is essential for establishing credibility and recognition across states and ultimately U.S. trading partners."

Speakers and delegates representing 30 states discussed traceability, surveillance, feed biosafety, site biosecurity, feral pig risk mitigation, and live-haul sanitation. These discussions all move the US SHIP program forward to mitigate risks of disease introduction and provide a practical means for demonstrating evidence of freedom of disease (outside of foreign animal disease control areas). This supports ongoing interstate commerce and a pathway towards the resumption of international trade in the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak.

Voting delegates approved five program standards that bring formality to the technical subcommittees and delegate voting processes, clarify minimally required information for movement records and incorporating the current US Department of Agriculture (USDA) African Swine Fever/Classical Swine Fever (ASF/CSF) active surveillance program.

In addition, five resolutions were passed that direct further assessment of repositories for movement records to strengthen national traceability standards, the integration of a feral pig mitigation plan into Secure Pork Supply Plans, the establishment of an exhibition swine working group, further exploration of a site status verification database, and further processes around incorporation of the USDA ASF/CSF active surveillance program. Working groups and/or pilot projects will begin in the coming months with findings and recommendations to be presented at the 2024 US SHIP House of Delegates meeting.

DELEGATES VOTE ON THE FIRST ELECTED GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Along with growth in US SHIP enrollment, the delegates moved the program forward by electing six regional and three at-large representatives to their first terms on the US SHIP General Conference Committee (GCC). These GCC members will serve in an advisory capacity to the US SHIP program administrators and represent the points of view of all types of swine producers, livestock marketing operations, and slaughter facilities. "I am very encouraged by the number of individuals that were nominated and that those individuals were willing to run for the GCC elections at this year's House of Delegates. The delegates have elected an excellent set of representatives to help be stewards for US SHIP. Each of the elected GCC members will play a critical role as US SHIP transitions from a pilot program towards a codified USDA program" shared Mike Walker, Chairman of Interim GCC and Director of Business Development at Christensen Farms.

Participation in US SHIP is for all pork producers and pig owners no matter their size—from large production and packing facilities to small farms and show pig owners. Enrollment in US SHIP is simple and easy. Access enrollment information on the website www.usswinehealthimprovement.com.

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