



Oink Outings - Building Trust from Farm to Fork

Weber Shandwick and Minnesota Pork Board and Minnesota Pork Producers Association, Jan 1, 2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award Winner — Community Relations — Associations / Nonprofit Organizations

This summer, Minnesota Pork continued to take action in the Twin Cities – building relationships and fostering trust with those in the state who tend to be far removed from today's farms. The pilot campaign was launched in 2011 and was expanded in 2012. This was a proactive approach to reach out to consumers and build confidence in pork production. The campaign included in-depth relationship building through farm tours and grassroots outreach with farmers at booth events. The result: a 50-57 percent increase in trust and 5,000 pounds of pork donated to help feed area families in need.

< BR>Community relations includes programs that aim to improve relations with, or seek to win the support or cooperation of, people or organizations in communities in which the sponsoring organization has an interest, need or opportunity.

Full Text: **SUMMARY**

What happens when you bring suburbanites to a pig farm? The same thing that happens when you bring pig farmers to the suburbs... people talk.

And that is exactly what Minnesota Pork (MN Pork) and Weber Shandwick had in mind when developing the Oink Outings campaign: Create environments that encourage conversations between today's pig farmers and consumers in order to build trust.

The result? At least a 50% increase in trust and 5,000 pounds of pork to help feed families in need.

RESEARCH

In September 2010, MN Pork worked with other local agriculture organizations to conduct a public opinion survey that explored perceptions about the industry, treatment of animals, messages on both sides of the issues and those who are likely to engage in a discussion on these issues.

While these findings were very positive, the survey also showed that those who support a "pro-regulation" agenda fit an activist profile. The opposition's base and those inclined to be persuaded included people who tend to be more actively engaged in their communities and political process.

Therefore, MN Pork was starting from a strong position, but the opposition's base could be quickly elevated with a loud voice.

PLANNING

Objectives

- **Increase trust and consumer confidence in Minnesota pig farmers with tour participants by 30%.**
- **Foster relationships within suburban communities by helping to feed at least 4,000 local families in need.**

Audience

Research shows 60% of the population could go either way on the issue of farm animal regulation. This is the “moveable middle” as they can be influenced with the proper messaging.

MN Pork identified suburban moms who are well educated with higher than average incomes and pets as an important audience.

By combining these two groups, **a more focused target audience was recognized.** One that could be reached and had the greatest opportunity for success: **Minnesota Moveable Middle Moms (4Moms).**

Strategic Platform

The strongest connection between pork producers and 4Moms is through shared values, including providing healthy, nutritious food. This guided the direction for our strategic platform: **Food to Foster Trust.**

Strategies

Based on the campaign objectives and the strategic platform, the following strategies were developed:

1. **Provide targeted consumers with a firsthand look at how pigs are raised today to spark conversations about animal care practices.**
2. **Bring pig farmers into communities to answer consumers’ questions about raising pigs and eating pork.**
3. **Make an impact in the community by providing pork to families in need.**

EXECUTION

The campaign is titled **Oink Outings** as a fun way to engage our audience and spark curiosity. It includes three approaches: in-depth relationship building events, grassroots outreach events and online support.

In-Depth Relationship Building: Farm Tours

During the summer, **5 tours** were scheduled with a total of **22 influential consumers (nearly a 24% increase in participation from 2011)** to visit a local pig farm with **5 different chefs** from popular restaurants.

- The experience begins with a cooking class where the chef provides preparation tips and helps the group understand the versatility of pork.
- The group travels to the producer’s farm for a full-access tour, learning how animals are cared for today
- Tours take full bio-security measures (even showering in and out at one location).
- 50 pounds of ground pork was donated to Second Harvest Heartland for every participant.
- Participants completed pre- and post-tour surveys to measure the impact against the objectives.

Grassroots Outreach: Booth Events

Booth events bring pork producers to our target audience by setting up an information booth at **23 community events (up from 7 events in 2011)** to provide suburban families an opportunity to meet producers and ask questions.

- Utilized a simple, inviting, family-friendly booth design.
- Chose locations with strong built-in audiences for the booth.
- Due to high levels of engagement in 2011, farmer's markets were a primary focus for 2012.
- Two on-site activities included:
 1. **Ask a Farmer. Feed a Family.**
 - Encourages participation by making a one pound ground pork donation for every question submitted.
 - Questions spark great conversations and lead to opportunities to share how producers care for the pigs.
 - Allows MN Pork to keep a pulse on what topics are top of mind for consumers.
 - Rewards participants with an Oink Outings reusable tote, including a coupon, recipe ideas and other pork information.
 2. **Get O-inked**
 - Reaches kids by providing temporary tattoos, pig erasers, pencils and branded sun glasses.
 - Formed a strategic partnership with the MN Zoo in order to exhibit at seasonal farm exhibit and farmer's market.

Online Support

- Oink Outings online presence serves as a hub for the campaign.
 - Objective is to primarily drive consumers to the **Facebook page** with a **blog** to supplement content.
 - Daily Facebook page updates during the summer kept consumers informed about events, provided recipes and answered questions.
 - Before tours, the chef and producer were featured in a blog post along with a photo.
 - Events tab included information about all of the booth events, along with status updates to promote upcoming events.
 - Facebook ads helped drive traffic to the page.
- Launched **@OinkOutings** on Twitter for the 2012 campaign to further consumer engagement.
 - Shared blog posts from tour participants.
 - Hosted pork trivia contests.

EVALUATION

Objective 1: Increase trust and consumer confidence in Minnesota pig farmers with tour participants by 30%.

Result: Based on pre-and post-tour survey results, **tours achieved a 50–57% increase in trust** – exceeding expectations and proving the impact of the tours.

- Tour participants completed anonymous pre-and post-tour surveys online.
- All completed a pre-tour survey and 16 completed the post-tour survey.
- Tour participants were asked to rate their feelings on the following statements:
 - I trust Minnesota pig farmers to provide the highest level of care for their animals.
 - **Pre-tour: 18% strongly agree.**
 - **Post-tour: 68% strongly agree.**
 - I believe Minnesota pig farmers are committed to providing safe and nutritious pork for my family when raising pigs.
 - **Pre-tour: 18% strongly agree.**
 - **Post-tour: 75% strongly agree.**
 - I'm confident in my decision to purchase pork products for my family.
 - **Pre-tour: 18% strongly agree.**

- **Post-tour: 68% strongly agree.**
- I trust Minnesota pig farmers are taking the necessary steps to raise and produce quality pork products.
 - **Pre-tour: 18% strongly agree.**
 - **Post-tour: 75% strongly agree.**
- 100% of tour participants who completed a post-tour survey indicated that they would share what they learned.

Objective 2: Foster relationships with suburban communities and help feed at least 4,000 families.

Result: Through “Ask a Farmer. Feed a Family.” at the booths and tour participation, **participants activated enough ground pork to feed 5,000 families – that’s 20,000 people!**

- **3,550 question cards were collected** at booth events through “Ask a Farmer. Feed a Family.” – each card activated a one pound ground pork donation .
- **Tour participation activated 1,450 pounds** of ground pork.
- The ground pork donation was made to Second Harvest Heartland in October 2012 in celebration of National Pork Month.

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