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Excel Hogs Inc. - Letter to the University

Excel Hogs Inc.

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Please read this entire letter and give it your deepest consideration. The subject matter is extremely important to the future and the economy of the entire western plains area.

In 1972 I purchased 25 acres of land and began looking for partners to go into the hog business with me. I found my partners and we built a 150 sow farrow to finish unit, all in total confinement. Later I bought out both of their interests and expanded the operation to 1,000 sows which produce approximately 16,000 hogs per year. This has not been an easy task. I have encountered many set-backs and problems. At times, I seriously wondered if any of it was worth all the hassle. The single greatest problem I have encountered has been LABOR and experienced people that understand the needs of this animal. The universities and some private industries have made my job easier, but there is room for improvement.

After years of asking why we don't have more qualified people, I have decided to do something about it--at least for our area, and I don't intend to stop until this is accomplished. Between the grain farm and this hog operation, it takes 14 people to keep it all running. I am told that the money it generates circulates 7 times within our area before leaving. Fantastic!! There are also accountants, veterinarians, salesmen, etc. that are involved too.

It makes me proud to train people and see them go home and be successful with their own units, but I also get very



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frustrated with training all the time. I wonder if this could be the responsibility of someone else as well as mine. There are people who don't have farms to go home to. These students are the greatest asset we have. I want to be able to hire them, give them security and a retirement program, but first they must be trained and give our industry their best.

We have a very complicated industry. In order to determine ways to simplify it, you first must understand some of our problems. These problem areas always need aggressive, deep-thinking people. Here are a few of the problems:

1. Pork has been under heavy fire because of nitrites and the thinking that it was high in cholesterol content. The industry is waging an intensive campaign to convince doctors, weight-watching groups and others that today's new pork is no fatter, no higher in cholesterol than beef and highly digestible. There is still considerable research going on regarding its' nitrite issue. The producer will pay at least part of the bill for this.

2. Packing plants that become obsolete with 10 years, complicated by union problems, regulations and marketing.

3. Universities that send out students that been taught theory with little actual experience in the "real world" of production. This leaves so much to be desired to the hog producer and other enterprises. This can be much improved upon with the help from private industry.

4. Government regulatory agencies whose only real purpose seems to be to complicate and confuse, thereby keeping us awake at night trying to figure out whether or not we can afford their next regulation.

5. Text books and research facts that are not current. There doesn't seem to be a week go by that research doesn't add to or take away.

6. Government knowing that our most powerful weapon is our cheap food. So, the producer is used to fight international affairs with embargoes. An example of the minority footing the bill for the majority. Good thinking if you are running the country.



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The list could go on and on, but this is just a sample. What does our industry need? We need the support of schools (colleges and universities and trade schools) to educate and supply us with students that understand the technical and practical aspects of pork production. Where there are hogs in large numbers, you will find much support and testing from the universities that serve the area. They can be invaluable to the producers who need the schools' expertise for genetics, veterinary medicine, nutrition, ventilation, marketing, promotion, engineering, manure usages as fertilizer for crops or possible alternate sources of energy, agri-businesses, helping family farms in diversifying their income, and testing for private industry. The job potential for students is absolutely unlimited. Our industry is crying for the young graduates and particularly in the areas mentioned.

In order for the students to be educated in all these fields, they need facilities in which to be trained that are up-to-date and workable. The economics of producing hogs on dirt lots is rapidly slipping into the past. Producers are turning to confinement for better controls, and in doing so, need to have guidelines from institutes that understand their situations and problems.

Many students end up working in private business. The bottom line seems to be get the student trained and educated. Let businessmen from private business invade the classroom occasionally to be sure that training is based on our most current situations. At the same time, bring the professors out to our units to get the same insight. It will be successful if we work together.

Being a hog producer and an irrigated feed grain farmer, I feel that I have a good insight into what the needs of western Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Colorado will be for the future. We are running short or in some instances running out of irrigation water, which in turn will reduce corn production and increase milo production. This will bring changes in our economy. This change is taking place every day and will cause more hogs to come into our area because the hog is an animal that is ideal to use with milo. The hog's feed conversion is twice as good as that of beef. This animal has been very good for the U. S. economy as it is second only to poultry in consuming the most amount of feed grain with beef being third.



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Pork is now leading in poundage of red meat sold through retail outlets (excluding the sales of sausage). Beef is second and poultry third. The amounts sold are all close to 30% each of the total market. In two years time beef has fallen from 40%, poultry risen from 25% and pork has risen most sharply from less than 25%. The pork industry has worked very hard to accomplish this and soon you will hear Paul Harvey on the radio working with us.

Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas, is located perfectly to fit into our situation and to do something about it. It has been stated many times that we in Kansas produce excellent quality hogs. Western Kansas also has a very desirable climate in which to raise hogs. This has already been proven by the cattle industry.

My proposal is to build facilities that are modern and very practical in which to work at Fort Hays State University. I want these facilities as close as possible to those in which a student out on the job or would be building should they go into business for themselves. I recommend building a new Gestation Barn, Nursery, Grower and Finisher. Fort Hays has just completed building a new 20 crate Farrowing House. Based on today's prices, which can fluctuate wildly, an estimated cost to erect these buildings is approximately \$175,000.

Fort Hays State University is prepared to offer a 2-year Associate Degree for the student who wants to get through the program, learn as much as possible as quickly as possible and get back on the farm.

Expected results from my proposed program would be training for the students in the following fields:

1. Managerial jobs for graduates who not only have classroom knowledge but who also have been involved in the working programs such as this unit would provide.
2. Education for sales in the areas of feed and pharmaceutical firms who always need good people to represent their products and who understand the field.
3. Consultants who can set up programs for the family farm and be aware of the clients' needs. This is a much needed service.



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4. Careers for agi-business minded women. We are seeing more and more women come into this occupation. They are doing an excellent job in this field. This is the pattern seen in Europe.

5. Research for better production and dealing with economic trends and pressures. For example, here are a few more businesses that need qualified personnel: breeding stock producers, government, construction and engineering, marketing and agri-businesses.

A FEW FACTS: It takes a 100 to 150 sow unit to generate enough income to support one family. This would be the size of the unit at Fort Hays.

The farrow to finish operation has been the most practical unit to support the family farm, however, with proper planning, either phase, farrowing or finishing, can be incorporated at a later date.

Confinement is taking over the pasture method and takes much more management and capital to operate. This method allows fewer "ins and outs" in the business due to the cost of confinement hog raising.

More industries are needed to compliment the pork industry in our forgotten area. This can mean more jobs and a healthier economy for the western plains towns.

In closing, I'd like to say that pork production, or "this old hog", is now a new breed and needs our support. With the way the world is today when it comes to food, grain and red meat, we can see the day not too far off when beef will be a luxury to Americans because of the high production cost, just like it has been for a very long time to the rest of the world. Pork gives us all the nutrition and quality we have come to expect from our red meats and can be produced economically for our people. Europe has been doing this all along.

We see successful businessmen who spend their whole lives working to support their families and build up a financial estate. But when the time comes to probate an estate, it is often found that the estate belongs largely to the government instead of those it was intended to benefit. That is not to say that we don't need the government, we do. We need both



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government and private industry, but they seem to be growing worlds apart every day. Why not invest some of that estate in a vital part of lives--the university--to educate our young people properly. Give them the education based on both textbooks and practical experience so that they can go out into society and become productive members of the business world sooner. Donations are great and there are many of them given to various places now. If gifts are invested or given properly, they can pay great dividends to our people and our country.

I greatly appreciate the time you are taking to consider this situation. You will be contacted about this matter very soon. Should you desire to make a gift before you are contacted, your contribution or pledge should go to the Endowment Association of Fort Hays State University along with a note directing them to apply it towards the Swine facilities.

Sincerely,

Lynnay Pammenter

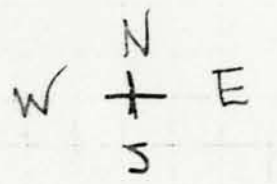


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Manure Lagoon For This Unit



Out Side Pens For Cull Pens, Gilt Pens, etc.

