“HUNTING” TIME

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This is the time of year in which 4-H members, parents and agents are scouring the country looking for the one “winner” for the show ring. I would dare say thousands if not tens of thousands of miles are logged this time of year going to sales, producers farms and picking up animals from on-line sales to prepare for the late summer and fall show season. I really miss this time of year when my children and I would embark on what we referred to as the “HUNT”. We have lots of memories from our HUNTS and we share our funny stories when we gather with their families. From sleeping at truck stops to driving all night to get back home and experiencing really bad Mexican food outside of New Mexico (This became a rule of our travels – NO Mexican food outside New Mexico, ever).

I would like to put a little spotlight on things to consider during your “HUNTS”. In an ever increasing world of talk of biosecurity, this is the time to BE vigilant for anything which would harm your “HUNT”. While there are health issues and concerns for all show species, I would like to speak from the view of swine in particular. I attended the International Livestock Congress this past March, part of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo events. There were participants from 22 countries at this year’s event. An event worth attending if you ever have the opportunity. One of the presenters was Dr. John Clifford from USDA (APHIS). His presentation was on animal tracking and the reasons participation (and lack of participation will be shunned) will someday be necessary for the US producers to compete in the world food markets. The example of the Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv) spread was used to describe how things can happen and happen fast. He indicated that this virus originated in China. How it spread to the USA was the question APHIS is trying to determine. The “best guess” is it piggy backed to our shores in poly bags used to transport cheap grains purchased in China. PEDv is only one example of a virus which can set back a show hog (Lambs and steers have their challenges as well).

You are probably trying to determine where this is going. I share this to say be careful on your “HUNTS”. Ask questions of the producers about illnesses they have had, the vaccination programs they use and the health of their herd. If they are unwilling to share this information I would be a little leery of buying from them. One thing I have seen this buying season, some producers have announced on their web page they in fact have the PEDv and most are willing to hold animals purchased at their expense until their facility has been cleared and/or refunding funds from on-line purchases if the exhibitor so wishes. I applaud these producers for being forth coming and open about their situations.
The swine show industry in New Mexico is the largest single producer of swine in the State. While most producers are vigilant about having visitors wear plastic shoe covering and/or dip their feet prior to entering their hog facility, do your 4-H exhibitors practice this at home? I dare say not. On your travels between exhibitor’s barns do you have biosecurity protocols in place? Do you have plastic shoe coverings, wash your hands and equipment regularly? It might even be a good idea to have the exhibitors “quarantine” any new animals brought to their facility before mixing and mingling just in case an animal is sick and just has not shown any symptoms. This may not be practical in all circumstances but none the less something to consider. While all of this may be academic and seem like a waste, a hog off feed for a week or even a few days can mean the difference in a heavy weight, light weight or not even making weight. Your exhibitors spend a lot of time and money on their “HUNTS”, a few extra minutes to put on a shoe cover seems like a good idea.

Dr. Clifford shared there are 4 swine viruses currently in the US that originated in China, two are “non-effectors” (meaning they are not causing problems) and two are having major effects on the US swine industry.

The following is taken form USDA (APHIS) fact sheets on swine diseases:
“In response to the significant impact swine enteric coronavirus diseases (SECD), including Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PEDv) and Porcine deltacoronavirus (PDCoV), are having on the U.S. pork industry, USDA issued a Federal Order on June 5, 2014. USDA also announced $26.2 million in funding to combat these diseases. USDA, States, herd veterinarians and producers will collaborate to manage the diseases in a manner that supports business continuity for commercial pork producers and maintains a plentiful supply of pork for consumers.”

“There are two basic requirements of the Federal Order. First, producers, veterinarians, and diagnostic laboratories are now required to report all cases of new SECD, including PEDv and PDCoV, to USDA or State animal health officials. Second, operations reporting these viruses must work with a veterinarian – either their herd veterinarian, or USDA or State animal health officials – to develop and implement a reasonable management plan to address the detected virus and prevent its spread.”

“USDA confirmed the presence of PEDv in this country on May 16, 2013. As of April 5, 2014, more than 5,500 cases have been confirmed in 28 states. PEDv has significantly affected swine in the U.S.”

“Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea is a virus that causes significant sickness in swine, affecting their growth and health, and causes high mortality in piglets. The disease is common in parts of Asia and Europe, but is not reportable to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). PEDv only affects pigs and does not pose any risk to people or pets. It is not a food safety concern.”

The following web site is a good source of diseases facing the US livestock producers. There are others, but I give the APHIS page as it is updated on a regular basis.
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/
You can check here to see what are the current diseases and where they have spread or if they are under control.

Have fun on your “HUNTS”, make memories, share your stories and take lots of photos. However, when you return home, practice some simple biosecurity measures to keep your animals healthy and well during their growing phase. I'll see you in the show ring later this year.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

US Dairy Education & Training Consortium
May 18 – June 26, 2015
Clovis, NM
Information at usdetc@tamu.edu

NM Youth Ranch Management Camp
Valles Caldera, NM
May 31 – June 5, 2015

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MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY
Monday, May 25th

All NMSU offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday

Safe and Happy Travels
SEMINAR

“How Extension Can Assist NM Beef Producers with the Challenges They Face”

PRESENTED BY
Dr. Anthony McNeel
Candidate for Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

TUESDAY, May 26
1:00 pm - Knox 201