Greetings Youth PQA Plus Advisors! Thank you for your time and assistance with the Youth PQA Plus program in Michigan. Because of your work and dedication to this educational opportunity, the state of Michigan ranks second in the number of youth currently enrolled in Youth PQA Plus. Currently there are over 5,000 youth involved in Youth PQA Plus. It is because of dedicated advisors like you that we have been able to build a successful program, offer educational programming for youth involved in pork production and promote good production practices for exhibition swine.

Please join us for the Michigan Youth Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus Advisor Update Webinar with Julie Thelen and Megan Sprague, during an Adobe Connect session on February 19th, 2014 at 4:00 pm. During this session you will hear about updates to the program, have access to newly developed educational materials. For access to the webinar, use https://connect.msu.edu/youthansci/

If you have never attended an Adobe Connect Pro meeting before, please test your connection in advance by going to this link: https://connect.msu.edu/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm. You may need to download a small, harmless plug-in and update your version of Flash Player. Also, to get a quick overview of Adobe Connect go to: http://www.adobe.com/go/connectpro_overview. If you have problems, call the MSU Distance Learning Services 24-hour helpline: 800-500-1554 or 517-355-2345.

We would also like you to know that Beth Ferry from Michigan State University Extension is no longer working with the youth program, with the exception of advising the creation of the curriculum and serving on a national committee. If you have problems please direct them to Megan or Julie.
Get Certified Online

Due to a decrease in available Youth PQA Plus Advisors in Michigan we have partnered with National Pork Board to provide the youth in Michigan an alternative method to complete the Youth PQA Plus program. Youth will be able to access an online tutorial hosted by National Pork Board. Details on how the system will work are described below, however we are still working to finalize this process as the 2014 Youth PQA Plus revision curriculum will be released this summer.

In order for youth to access the online system they will need to contact the Pork Checkoff Service Center at 800-456-7675. They are open from 9 am - 6 pm, Monday through Friday. They will only be available during their business hours. They will then proceed to register the youth for the online Youth PQA Plus program. It may take up to 3 days to update the registration; once the registration is completed and the database is updated, an email will be sent to the youth with instructions on how to enter the online system. When the youth has received access to the system they will need to complete an online training module. If the youth leaves the training module at any time they can return to where they left off and finish the program. Once the training module is complete, if the youth is eligible to test out, they will be prompted to do this by the program. Once a youth begins the testing process they must complete the entire test at that time. The system will automatically update the database with the youth’s new expiration date and the youth will be able to print their PQA Plus number and expiration date once the process is completed. Advisors will be able to search the system to find current information for the youth, however it may take up to a week for the system to update after the online program is completed. Please read through the “YPQA Online Tips” on page 3 in order to have a successful experience with the online system.

Contact Information:

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**Megan Sprague:**  
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In order to become an Advisor for the Youth PQA Plus program you must contact your Youth PQA Plus State Trainer (Megan Sprague or Julie Thelen) and submit your name for consideration. The State Trainer is then responsible for submitting the qualified candidate’s name and contact information to National Pork Board. They will also set up either an online or face-to-face training session for the candidate. In order to be considered as a candidate for the Youth PQA Plus program you must be a certified veterinarian, extension personnel, or a secondary/post-secondary agriculture instructor. Once you have been identified as a possible Advisor for the Youth PQA Plus program your State Trainer will set up your training session. This may be provided via face-to-face with the State Trainer or through online modules supported by National Pork Board. Once you have completed your training you will be required to take and pass an exam to gain your Youth PQA Plus Advisor certification. This exam can be taken up to three times before re-training is required.

New for 2014 all Extension employees responsible for Youth PQA Plus events are encouraged to become an advisors. Even if teaching Youth PQA Plus is not something 4-H staff feel comfortable with, they would still benefit from completing the training. If you ask another advisor to present to your group you are still able to enter certifications and look up participants as needed.

If you are a current Youth PQA Plus Advisor you have to renew your certification every three years with the State Trainer. This can also be completed via face-to-face training or through the online modules. In order to remain a certified Advisor you will need to complete and pass the exam following the training.
Resources

All resource information that has been developed by Michigan State University Extension Educators is available for Youth PQA Plus Advisors. Some of these materials will be housed on the Michigan State University Pork Team website http://pork.msue.msu.edu/.

The 2014 Power Point and the exams that coordinate with the 2014 PowerPoint will not be accessible online, the exams will be used for multiple sites and years and the Power Point is a very large file. In order to access the 2014 exams and the 2014 Power Point you must contact Megan Sprague, Michigan Pork Producers Association, by cell phone: (989) 525-3743 or by email: Sprague@mipork.org. Answer keys are also available by request for advisors.

The Youth PQA Plus program curriculum is currently undergoing final review and will be released in June of 2014. Other resource information is available from National Pork Board and is housed at www.pork.org.

Class Info

An effort will be made to maintain information on Youth PQA Plus training dates throughout the state for 2014. This is to ensure that youth have access to all of the sessions being held. For 2014, the training date information will be housed on the Pork Team website http://pork.msue.msu.edu/. If you have scheduled a Youth PQA Plus class in your area please email the following information to the Pork Team website administrator, Katie Sollman, kt.sollman@gmail.com.

- Date and time of training
- Location, including address
- Contact person and number
- Program fee information

Meet Julie

Julie Thelen joined Michigan State University (MSU) Extension in June as the statewide 4-H Livestock and Veterinary Science Educator. Thelen brings years of experience and a strong background in animal science and teaching including 4-H leadership and a plethora of animal science based activities, awards and memberships. In this position, Thelen works with various faculty and staff members, 4-H volunteers and stakeholders to implement and evaluate programs that provide opportunities for youth to develop content knowledge and life skills. Thelen plans on growing the animal science resources while creating more statewide veterinary science programs and coordinating Youth PQA Plus. Thelen is a MSU graduate in Agriscience Education and Animal Science. Thelen recently completed her Master of Science in Agricultural Education from Iowa State University while teaching agricultural education courses in Indiana.