Career Readiness Indicator Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help guide the process for review of a Career Readiness Indicator (CRI). It is the responsibility of the local education agency proposing the addition of the CRI to gather the information and submit it to Josh Laney, Assistant Director for Workforce Development. Answers should be as concise as possible. Information should be submitted as a completed packet, not piecemeal. Additional information may be included at the discretion of the applying agency if it might be pertinent to the evaluation process.

Contact information for person filling out questionnaire

Full Name of the Career Readiness Indicator: **Youth Pork Quality Assurance - Advanced**
Agency:                      Email:                      Phone number:                      Date of submittal:

Why do we want this CRI?

1. What industry is asking for the CRI? (List multiple if applicable.) The Pork Industry—from producers to consumers, and haulers to processors/packagers.

2. What companies within the in industry are requesting this CRI? (Attach letters of request on company letterhead.) Tyson Foods, Prestage Farms, JBS, and all major packing plants require their suppliers to be PQA certified. Also managers/owners of farrow to finish operations and those who own breeding sows are required to hold the PQA certification.

3. What entity, company, or testing agency is the “owner” of the CRI? (Who determines what it takes to earn the CRI?) Provide contact numbers, names, websites, or other info for inquiries.
Pork Checkoff Service Center
www.pork.org/youth-pqa-plus
800-456-7675

4. For what career technical program(s) is the CRI being requested? **Agriscience**

How does one actually get the CRI?

5. How long does it take for a student to earn this CRI? (Answer in approximate hours of instruction, not school years or terms. Give an average or best estimate.) **5 instructional hours plus testing time**

6. How does the student earn the CRI? (Does the student have to take a written exam, log a certain number of hours, complete a skills demonstration, some combination of these, etc?)
   **Online modules and exam OR face-to-face training (with experiential learning activities) and exam are required.**
   **Youth 12-14 years of age (Intermediate) and 15-19 years of age (Advanced) can certify/recertify for one year by attending an approved Youth PQA Plus education program OR can certify by completing and passing and examination at the appropriate age level. To certify by examination, a minimum of 70 percent of questions must be correctly answered. Certificates by examination are not to exceed three years.**
   **Once certified by examination, the youth is not required to recertify in Youth PQA Plus until the next age level is reached. However, certification by examination is not to exceed three years. In the Advanced group, a 15-year old who passes an examination would need to:**
recertify after a period of three years, despite not having reached another age level. When youth reach the next age level or exceed the certification period of three years, they can either attend a Youth PQA Plus training class or take the appropriate examination at their new age level. Certification by examination is valid for a minimum of one year, but will not exceed three years. Official exams and scoring procedures are available to advisors from the National Pork Board. Tests are graded by advisors. Unassisted knowledge of the Youth PQA Plus content must be measured; therefore, NO supplemental information (for example, Youth PQA Plus manual, notes, approved state Quality Assurance material) may be used by the youth to aid him/her during the administration of the exam.

7. Is there a minimum age requirement for gaining the CRI? 
   course)
   15-19
   8 years old (for beginner

8. Are students required to be graduates before earning the CRI? No

9. Are there minimum pre-requisite course requirements for earning the CRI?
   No, but the Agriscience teacher should incorporate the certification into their unit or lessons that involve the pork industry.

10. What equipment is required to train for this CRI? (Only list items which are different than what would be found on the standard equipment list for the program.) No additional items

11. Does the earning of the CRI require the student to have computer access for the testing? Not necessarily—can be taken online or taught by trained advisor during class time.

How much does it cost and what resources are required?

12. What is the cost of the exam for earning this CRI? No cost

13. Is there a practice test available from the CRI issuer or from other parties?
   Yes—study guides or practice tests can be found online or are available through the extension service.
   a. If yes, does the practice test have a cost in addition to the actual exam and if so, how much? NO
   b. Can rights to the practice material be purchased once or is there a recurring fee?

14. Who can administer the exam? (Some CRIs prohibit the person who trained the student from administering the exam.) Students can complete the training and exam online or the Agriscience teacher has to be a trained YPQA Plus Advisor.

15. Is special certification or licensure required for a teacher to administer the CRI?
   Yes, teacher must be a certified YPQA Plus Advisor
   a. If yes, what is the cost for gaining the appropriate licensure? Travel cost only
   b. Is this a one-time or recurring fee? N/A
16. Is site, facility, or equipment certification required for administering the CRI?  No
   a. If yes, what costs are included?
   b. Is this a one-time or recurring fee?
August 31, 2015

Career Readiness Indicator Review Panel:

As owner operator of Ohatchee Farm I would encourage you to maintain Youth PQA Plus as part of your program. Youth PQA Plus is a valuable tool to any young person looking for jobs in our industry. As an owner we require all of our employees to be PQA Plus certified. Any young person that we consider hiring will certainly benefit from going through Youth PQA Plus certification.

Youth PQA Plus teaches skills and provides knowledge that are not only beneficial but required in the pork industry. Most integrators require PQA Plus certification of their farms and therefore most farms require all of their employees to be certified. Being Youth PQA Plus certified will no doubt give them a leg up on anyone that has not gone through that program.

In today’s environment, proper humane handling of livestock is of the utmost importance. That is an understatement. It is a requirement. Since most youth do not grow up on farms and therefore do not have hands on and practical knowledge of livestock it is a must that they be exposed to such programs as Youth PQA Plus. If we teach them the correct way to manage livestock from the beginning we will have fewer incidence of mismanagement in the future. Youth PQA Plus certainly provides that training.

Additionally, by covering all Good Production Practices (GPP’s) our youth learn how to responsibly produce pork. Taking into account the environment and the importance of protecting our natural resources is perhaps one of the most valuable lessons in Youth PQA Plus training. GPP’s also help in the most important issue, providing the safest, highest quality product for consumers.

I hope as you review Youth PQA Plus as part of your Career Readiness program you will see how important it is not only for the pork industry, but for local producers as well, that we have properly trained youth ready to step in and provide quality care and management for our livestock. This only ensures the sustainability of our industry and provides confidence in our product.

If I can answer any questions or be of service to you, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Tim Donaldson
Managing Owner Ohatchee Farm, LLC
August 28, 2015

The Career Readiness Indicator Review Panel
Alabama Department of Education
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

Dear Panel,

I am writing to express my support for Youth Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus certification program being used in Career Readiness Indicator training. Youth PQA Plus is the food safety, antibiotic use, and animal well-being awareness and education program for youth pork producers ages eight to 19. Youth PQA Plus mirrors the content of the industry's adult program Pork Quality Assurance Plus (PQA Plus), but presents it in a format conducive to youth learning.

Every major processor and production company in the United States requires that employees at the swine farms and those that transports the pigs have the PQA Plus and the Transport Quality Assurance (TQA) certification training or the equivalent. The PQA Plus program ensures that U.S. pork products are of the highest quality and safe, and animals raised for food are cared for in a way ensuring their well-being. Transport Quality Assurance (TQA) is a program that helps swine transporters, producers and handlers understand how to handle, move and transport pigs and the potential impacts of those actions on pig well-being and/or pork quality.

PQA Plus and TQA are required certification programs for employees of Prestage Farms of Mississippi and Alabama. Any part time labor at the farms that are high school age would be required to have Youth PQA training before gaining employment.

If I can be of any assistance please give me a call at 662-494-0813 ext. 242.

Sincerely,

Terry Emerson, General Manager
Prestage Farms, Inc.
Monday August 31, 2015

Dear Mr. Laney:

My name is Micah Schneider. I am currently employed by Prestage Farms, Mississippi division, based in West Point, MS. I am a farm manager of a 3,600 breed-to-wean sow unit. Prestage Farms produces nearly 850 million pounds of pork annually and are very competitive nationally in production statistics such as daily weight gain, livability, feed conversion, and pig farrowing rates. I am Pork Quality Assurance Plus (PQA) certified and can speak to its usefulness working in the swine industry.

PQA is the industry’s commitment to the continual improvement of food safety, animal well-being, environmental quality, and public health. In an age where those in agriculture must constantly reassure the public that our food supply is safe and wholesome, Youth PQA and PQA provide proof that we care about the product we raise, transport, and process. I would be more willing to hire someone already YPQA or PQA trained and certified, knowing the potential employee is committed to improving swine production practices. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about how we utilize Pork Quality Assurance at Prestage Farms or in the swine industry in general.

Sincerely,

Micah Schneider
Prestage Farms
Farm Manager
Micah.a.schneider@gmail.com
601-466-8431
August 27, 2015

Alabama State FFA Representative,

As the Certification Manager for the National Pork Board, I oversee our certification programs such as: Pork Quality Assurance Plus Program (PQA Plus), Youth Pork Quality Assurance Plus Program (Youth PQA Plus), and our Transport Quality Assurance Program (TQA). I understand that you are considering implementing the Youth PQA Plus program into one of your Alabama state curriculum programs. I wanted to extend my support and provide a little more background about the PQA Plus and Youth PQA Plus program as well as offer some recent survey results that demonstrate the level of support for the PQA Plus program in the industry.

PQA Plus is a producer-driven program they can use to ensure U.S. pork products are of the highest quality, and animals raised for food are cared for in a way ensuring their well-being. Modeled after the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) programs used by food manufacturers to ensure the safety of food products, PQA was then customized for on-farm use. The Youth PQA Plus program mirrors the content of the industry’s adult PQA Plus program, but presents it in a format conducive to youth learning. In taking a closer look there are 62,535 individuals certified in the Adult PQA Plus program and 30,275 youth individuals certified in the Youth PQA Plus program from across the United States.

Due to pork producers’ commitment to continuous improvement, PQA Plus and Youth PQA Plus is regularly revised to increase its effectiveness, incorporate new research information, and ensure the program’s validity. Maintaining its food safety tradition to ensure U.S. pork products continue to be recognized domestically and internationally as the highest quality and safest available, PQA Plus and Youth PQA Plus also provides information to ensure producers can measure, track and continuously improve animal well-being.

At the end of 2013, the National Pork Board conducted a survey with several questions about different topic areas. One of the topic areas was PQA Plus. Responses were received from 22 different companies that operate 42 packing plants. These 42 packing plants process more than 91.7% of the 2012 U.S. commercial hog slaughter. The market packers estimate that more than 99% of their hogs come from a PQA Plus certified farm and the sow packers estimate that 99% of their sows come from PQA Plus certified farms.

The PQA Plus program is nationally recognized and supported by packer, retail, channel markets and other industry partners. I encourage the Alabama FFA program to implement the Youth PQA Plus program into your state curriculum.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at dpeebles@pork.org or 515-223-2600.

Sincerely,

Dinah Peebles
National Pork Board
Certification Programs Manager


*Mission*: The National Pork Board harnesses the resources of all producers to capture opportunity, address challenges and satisfy customers.