

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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This is my second and final year as your president. I want to say it has been an unexpected honor and I have served with humility because some of the technical aspects of testing--developing indexes, using standard deviations and genetic correlations, etc.--have been over my head. My salvation has been some topnotch committee chairmen, committee members and a knowledgeable, dedicated secretary, Chuck Christians.

Just as there were some dedicated persons that got NPPC and the voluntary market check-off launched back in 1967, there were some equally dedicated people--test station managers, extension personnel, and purebred breeders--that initiated plans for this National Swine Improvement Federation in 1974. Top swine research people and members of the livestock press soon joined the team and we've seen tremendous interest and cooperation of all segments of the pork industry.

Even though this is a young organization and this is only our 5th annual meeting, when you look back to the almost complete lack of uniformity of procedures between various test stations and breed programs, you have to say we have come a long way. We now have, in hand, the final draft of new REVISED "Guidelines for Uniform Swine Improvement Programs". Our trait and program committees are already working on ideas for continued improvement and progress in the future. These committee members, as well as participants in our conference programs, all work without any special compensation from NSIF. For this I want to say a big THANK YOU!

More details on activities of NSIF during the past year will be given in Secretary Christians' report. As we look to the future I sincerely believe that NSIF can play an all-important role in continued progress of the pork industry. I think we've reached the point of limited return with selection by conformation only or conformation plus litter size. I think breeders must get real serious about a more complete and consistent performance-testing program that will better identify the boars and sows that carry the right genes for profit-making traits.

In the last few years much emphasis has been given to productivity traits and much progress has been made. That is fine. But let's not forget that we need to keep pork quality and production efficiency in balance. Consumers expect a good product for the price they pay--and pork chops from a 3-inch loin eye are not a good product. True, we learned the hard way 15 years ago that too much muscling brought on some problems. However, correcting those problems has brought on new ones. There has been a popularization of the extreme, tall, narrow, cat-hammed kind of hogs that have no place in a good commercial herd. If this trend continues, our product will suffer. The increasing percentage of loin eye disqualifications in our barrow shows is a disgrace and should warn us that we're in trouble. I hope breeders will take heed and start reversing this trend.

I agree with Dick Nash who last year at this conference told us "the fastest way to improve hog carcasses is for the packer to add some dollars to his checks for superior, meaty kind." On the same program our Canadian friend told us that in their marketing system there is as much as \$15 difference between the value of the highest and lowest grading 170 pound carcass. The October Successful Farming magazine in cooperation with a SIU meat scientist, compared two 210-lb market hogs, a No. 1 and No. 3. The No. 1 was worth \$9.32 more per hundred in trimmed wholesale cuts.

I am optimistic that our marketing system can and will be improved in the not-too-distant future but in the meantime let's put all the emphasis we can in our NSIF program, to develop superior carcass value, along with the production traits. Remember, we must sell pork and continue to sell more pork, but we have to keep some profit in the swine production operation--and we can't do it with meatless wonder type hogs! This problem, and several others, will be solved if more breeders will really get serious about the theme for this year's conference--"Performance-Testing.... THE Thing to Do!"