

CAROLINA-VIRGINIA

FARMER

The Bissett tradition see Page 13

Slimming cotton acreage see Page 14

Where buffalo roam see Page 25

Pork's outlook

By RICHARD DAVIS

Key Points

- Obama administration will bring change to pork industry.
- Influx of Northerners creates new voting patterns in South.
- Stimulus, regulations and reform will impact pork business.

THOSE attending the North Carolina Pork Council's annual meeting at the Greenville, N.C., Convention Center had one predominant theme on their minds. They were trying to assess what an Obama presidential victory will mean to the pork industry in the state and across the nation.

"When the Obama administration gets set up, I think you are going to see more oversight and regulation of businesses in this country, including the pork industry," said Kirk Ferrell, the nonpartisan vice president for public policy for the National Pork Producers Council.

"This is the largest change in domestic policy since the 1930s. We are dramatically increasing the federal role in local and state governments and our school systems," he said.

John Davis of John Davis Consulting in Raleigh, N.C., noted that out of all the states that went for Obama in the election, his margin of victory was the slimmest in North Carolina. However, that victory signifies a new political landscape for some Southern states, including North Carolina.

"We're no longer a red state. We are no longer a blue state. We're a purple state," Davis said.

"That makes it very difficult for everybody because everybody is more competitive," he

added. "And more competition means it is much more expensive to win campaigns."

The reason for the change, Davis noted, is that voter rolls in the Tarheel State have grown from 3.4 million to 6.2 million since 1990. Of the new voters, 64% are not from the South. They come largely from Pennsylvania, California, Florida, New York, New Jersey and Ohio, and they have settled mainly in urban areas of the state.

"Half the votes [in the state] are now in 14 counties," Davis noted. "The other half of the votes are in 86 counties."

Davis calls North Carolina, Virginia and Florida the "New South." The demographic shift means national Democrats will have a better chance to win in close elections in these three states going forward.

Initial emphases

Ferrell expects three initial emphases from the Obama administration: government stimulus, reform and regulation.

"We need to keep track of these three," he reiterated.



3 generations are thriving with pork

ZACK McCullen III (left) raises pork under contract and oversees swine operations for Prestage Farms in both North Carolina and Iowa. He manages the pork operation with his father, Zack McCullen Jr. (center), and with his son, Zack McCullen IV, also known as "Zeke." The pork industry is often criticized on a number of fronts, but pork production makes staying on the farm possible for thousands of producers while providing nutrition and dining enjoyment for consumers. Read more about the McCullen family operation on Page 4.

"Government stimulus, reform and regulation."

We are already in the midst of the government stimulus, he said, although he expects more to come. That will be followed by reform, led by the reform of financial institutions.

"We are going to be reforming

agriculture policy. We are going to be reforming health care policy. We are going to do a lot of reform on labor.

"You're going to see a very activist new agriculture secretary from Iowa, Vilsack," Ferrell added. "And you're going to see this administration have a sig-

nificant impact on businesses in this country — that means animal-health companies and that means pork producers. That means everyone in this room is going to be impacted."

■ Read more of Ferrell's comments on Page 8.

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