

New software manages audits, assessments and compliance processes

By Cheryl Day

EVERY day, pig farmers are working diligently in the barns to do what is right for the pigs. However, the world is demanding more transparency. Producers must meet standards for ensuring compliances with safe food, animal well-being, environment and workers' safety. In order to streamline the assessment process, MetaFarms Inc. developed Assurance — a comprehensive module specifically for managing audits, assessments and compliance processes for livestock production.

The great thing about Assurance is the industry standards established by the Common Swine Industry Audit and Pork Quality Assurance Plus are built in. Lisa Butler, MetaFarms sales account executive, says, "Assurance adds visibility and accountability to your operation, helping to ensure compliance and providing insight to make better business decisions."

With Assurance, MetaFarms provides a first-of-its-kind solution to manage your audit and assessment compliance program. It easily gives administrators the ability to manage their compliance oversight process by creating, planning, scheduling and assigning audits, as well as seeing completed and missed scheduled audits. Overall, the comprehensive reporting gives management greater insight to identify issues, make process improvements, help ensure animal welfare and meet consumer demand.

The producer can either use the preloaded forms for Common Swine Industry Audit, PQA Plus site assessment or create custom forms in real time. The flexibility to adapt forms to meet the operation's personalized needs is a huge plus and an appealing feature acknowledged by the New Product Tour panel. Customization



Lisa Butler, MetaFarms sales associate, passionately explains the attributes of the Assurance software.

includes creating your own audits, categories, questions, scoring, auto-fail, auto-reschedule, corrective actions, points of emphasis and threshold levels.

Butler told the New Product Tour panel one of the best things MetaFarms did from the beginning was to design the mobile application so it does not require an internet connection or data cellular to perform audits and assessments. Entries can be entered on-site and offline, and data such as site history can be called up on the spot. In addition, mobile printing allows auditors to leave a copy on-site. Syncing the information occurs when an internet connection is available.

Assurance is available as a stand-alone solution or as part of the MetaFarms integrated livestock production platform to more easily tie results to production performance at a detailed level or rolled up at the company-producer level.

Butler stresses that MetaFarms takes data security and system availability very seriously, and leverages proven vendors to protect your in-

formation and ensure the system is available at all times. The company has partnered with vXchnge, a colocation services provider, to host its application within its state-of-the-art, secure, reliable and fully monitored data center.

Also, MetaFarms is affiliated with Sungard Availability Services' Hybrid Cloud Solutions for its disaster recovery needs. As with all MetaFarms products, Assurance comes with industry-leading client and technical support from the company's team members who know the business.

Panel members unanimously agree the introduction of Assurance is timely and gives the producer a powerful tool to manage audits, assessments and compliance processes for livestock production.

While the panel recognizes a hog farm can perform self-audits without a special software program, Assurance simplifies the assessment process, providing checks and balances along the way. "As an industry, we do a pretty poor job of self-auditing and recordkeeping. This is a way to formalize this," says Aaron Lower, panel member and veterinarian.

MetaFarms delivers an interactive, user-friendly approach to the audit and assessment process, making it easier to stay in compliance. Still, at the end of day, it is up to the hog producer to make self-assessment a priority. Purchasing the fancy computer program is only as good as the implementations.

Overall, Assurance gives users the flexibility to create, schedule and review assessments to easily manage their process, and gain insight to continuously make improvements and enhance communication between livestock producers, packers/processors and consumers throughout the supply chain. Learn more about Assurance at metafarms.com. **NHF**