

## *Minimum Standards for the Youth PQA Plus™ Program*

### **Age Requirements**

- Age is determined by the youth's age on January 1 of the current year.
- The Youth PQA Plus program is for youth 8-19 years of age. Youth 20 years of age or older must become certified through the adult PQA Plus education program.
- Youth under 8 years of age cannot be certified in Youth PQA Plus, but are strongly encouraged to attend a Youth PQA Plus education class. It is strongly recommended that a parent or guardian accompany the child in Youth PQA Plus education classes. However, the parent or guardian cannot become certified at a Youth PQA Plus education class. Adults must attend an adult PQA Plus education program to become certified.

### **Recertification Period**

- Youth 8-11 years of age (Beginner) must recertify annually by attending an approved Youth PQA Plus education program.
- 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 an examination at the appropriate age level. To certify by examination, a minimum of 70 percent of questions must be correctly answered. (See Youth PQA Plus Certificate Expiration Table). 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.
- Youth may attempt to pass a Youth PQA Plus exam a maximum of three times in one sitting. If three attempts yield unsuccessful results, the youth must attend another Youth PQA Plus education class prior to additional attempts at passing the exam. If the youth had already attended a Youth PQA Plus education class prior to failing three times, they have the option to accept a one-year certification, beginning on the date of class attendance, in lieu of attempting the exam again.

### **Youth PQA Plus Trainers**

- States will identify a State Youth trainer or State Youth trainer team to be certified by the National Pork Board.
  - Trainer candidates must complete and pass an examination to become a certified Youth PQA Plus trainer. The examination may be attempted three times at a single training session. If the exam is not passed within three attempts the candidate must attend another training session before attempting to pass the exam again.
- A State Youth trainer must be a veterinarian, Extension specialist or a secondary/postsecondary agriculture instructor.

- State Youth trainers serve as trainers for the state-approved local Youth PQA Plus advisors. Only State Youth trainers may submit names of trained Youth PQA Plus advisors to the National Pork Board for certification.
- State Youth trainers may also function in the advisor role.
- Trainers must complete and pass an examination at least once every three years to remain a certified trainer.

### **Youth PQA Plus Advisors**

- Youth PQA Plus advisor candidates must attend a training session provided by their State trainer.
  - Advisor candidates must also complete and pass an examination to become a certified Youth PQA Plus advisor. The examination may be attempted three times at a single session. If the exam is not passed within three attempts the candidate must attend another training session before attempting to pass the exam again.
- Youth PQA Plus advisors must be veterinarians, Extension personnel or secondary/post-secondary agriculture instructors.
  - Only state-trained advisors are certified, qualified and responsible to submit names, birthdates and contact information of youth to the National Pork Board for certification.
  - Certified advisors may assemble training teams at the local level. Team members may include qualified local volunteers and adult leaders. A certified Youth PQA Plus advisor must be involved in the planning and oversight of the Youth PQA Plus program delivered to youth.
  - At least one state approved Youth PQA Plus advisor must be present during training and the administration of a Youth PQA Plus exam.
- Advisors must attend a training session with a State Youth trainer at least once every three years for updates and complete and pass an exam to remain a certified advisor.

### **Content**

- National Pork Board youth materials or a National Pork Board-approved state quality assurance program must be used to train youth.
- All Good Production Practices (GPPs) are addressed annually.
- A portion of the Youth PQA Plus materials may be taught in depth each year provided that all of the GPPs are covered in depth over a three-year period. The content of each of the GPPs must be reviewed every year. Fact sheets and other additional materials are available from the National Pork Board and address current issues and complimentary topics which can augment and add variety to the annual education program.
- As Good Production Practices are covered in depth, the Key Learning Objectives, as outlined in the National Pork Board Youth PQA Plus training materials, must be addressed.
- Interactive and/or experiential learning activities are required.
- A minimum of one hour of programming, consisting of presentation and activities, is required to cover three GPPs annually in the Youth PQA Plus education program.
- Examinations are intended to test a thorough understanding of the complete PQA Plus program including the content found in the Youth PQA Plus manual available from the National Pork Board at (800) 456-PORK (7675) or <http://www.pork.org/Producers/Youth PQA/YouthPQAPlus.aspx>.

## Youth PQA Plus Certificate Expiration Table

	Age on Jan. 1 Current Year	Certificate Expiration	
		Annual Class	Test Out
Beginner	8-11	1 year from class/entry date	Not Applicable
Intermediate	12	1 year from class/entry date	Dec. 31 of the year they turn 15
	13	1 year from class/entry date	Dec. 31 of the year they turn 15
	14	1 year from class/entry date	1 year from test/entry date
Advanced	15	1 year from class/entry date	3 years from test/entry date
	16	1 year from class/entry date	3 years from test/entry date
	17	1 year from class/entry date	Dec. 31 of year they turn 20
	18	1 year from class/entry date	Dec. 31 of the year they turn 20
	19	1 year from class/entry date	1 year from test/entry date

## Youth PQA Plus - Certification and Roles

