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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOV. 17, 2020**

**PORK CHECKOFF FUNDS TO SUPPORT
NATIONAL AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM'S AGRICULTURE LITERACY EFFORTS**

The National Pork Board is partnering with the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) and its Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC) state program members to strengthen agricultural literacy and education programs focused on the pork industry in classrooms nationwide.

"Younger generations – including those who haven't yet graduated high school – are increasingly interested in knowing more about where their food comes from," said Dr. Brett Kaysen, vice president of sustainability at the National Pork Board. "This next generation of consumers is also the furthest removed from farming and agriculture we've ever seen, so it's incredibly important we help them understand how the modern food system works, and how technology allows America's pig farmers to continue to provide a safe, nutritious and sustainable source of protein for a growing population. We're excited to work with NAITCO to expand these educational resources and foster better understanding of our industry."

The National Pork Board's sponsorship is in support of the 2021 NAITCO National Conference "Fields of Dreams" to be held in Des Moines, Iowa, June 28-July 1.

"With the support of partners like the National Pork Board, we can provide a unique and rewarding opportunity to engage with educators from around the nation in effort to create generations of agriculturally literate students and families," said Tammy Maxey, president of NAITCO and programs director of Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom.

NAITCO and its AIRC state program members reached 87,000 teachers and 8.2 million students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in the U.S. in 2019.

The National Pork Board has responsibility for Pork Checkoff-funded research, promotion, and consumer information projects, and for communicating with pork producers and the public. The Pork Checkoff funds national and state programs in consumer education and marketing, retail and foodservice marketing, export market promotion, production improvement, science and technology, swine health, pork safety, and environmental management and sustainability. For the past half century, the U.S. pork industry has delivered on its commitment to sustainable production and has made significant strides in reducing the environmental impact of pig farming. To learn more visit www.pork.org.

NAITCO's mission is to increase Pre-K-12 agricultural literacy education and it does so with an online, searchable database of lessons and resources called the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix, a national conference, a virtual conference, a national teacher awards program, and professional development and support for Agriculture in the Classroom state programs in 50 states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. To learn more about NAITCO, please visit www.agclassroom.org.

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