

Money Talks

It's a common phrase—"Money talks."

But, if it's true, and most people would nod in agreement, animal agriculture and the pork industry should settle in for a rough ride.

Keeping tabs on activist groups' funding is a challenge, but their tax filings do provide a bird's-eye view of their financial status.

That status is increasingly robust. According to a report in *Animal People*, a publication that bills itself as "News for people who care about animals," donations to animal rights groups jumped 40 percent from 2003 to 2004. That's the most current snapshot available, since 2005 taxes are not yet due. The financial data is drawn from the Internal Revenue Service Form 990, which such groups must file.



Here's a look at some of the groups that are most interested in you.

- The Humane Society of the United States, 2004 revenues equaled \$74 million, up 3 percent from 2003.

- The Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals had \$48.2 million, an 11 percent gain.

- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals reported \$28.1 million, up 20 percent.

- Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (which is affiliated with PETA) and the PCRM Foundation combined for \$16 million, up from \$12 million in 2003.

- Farm Sanctuary collected \$4.2 million, a 24 percent gain.

Still, that's only a partial snapshot because information is not available for all groups, such as the Global Resource Action Committee for the Environment, creator of The Meatrix (which you can view at www.themeatrix.com).

Animal Agriculture Alliance, who works on your behalf, points out that the activist groups' combined efforts targeting animal agriculture equaled more than \$290 million in 2004.

It's also worth noting that radical groups like the Animal Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front and Animal Defense League did not file tax documents, yet have been responsible for many visible attacks on animal-related businesses. (See page 12.)

Many more dollars are being funneled into various efforts that more casually shed a light

on your business. Some of them are veiled as marketing strategies or expanded consumer options, but they are much more.

Whole Foods Market is one such example. This leading natural- and organic-food retailer developed the "Animal Compassion Foundation" in January 2005. Part of the published goal is to help farmers and ranchers create environments and conditions that support their animals' physical needs, natural behaviors and wellbeing. (You can read more at www.animalcompassion-foundation.com.)

But there's more. PETA named Whole Foods the "Best Animal-Friendly Retailer" last year for its species-specific Animal Compassionate Standards. PETA, The Humane Society of the United States, Viva! USA, Animal Welfare Institute and Animal Rights International are among the advocacy groups helping develop those standards for Whole Foods' meat suppliers.

Each year, Whole Foods commits 5 percent of a day's profits to the Animal Compassion Foundation. Last year the tally was \$550,000. This year, 180 stores in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom generated \$650,000.

Now, a retailer has every right to create standards for its suppliers or to try to set itself apart. It's the subtle and cozy relationship with animal rights groups that should make you nervous.

Animal agriculture has committed more money toward efforts to address animal wellbeing and animal welfare issues. But, tally up all of those dollars and you won't even inch close to the activists' funding.

Agricultural groups are still very segmented, each one focuses on its industry's own special needs, which is exactly how the activists want it.

Yes, there are more joint agricultural efforts underway. Yes, there are more proactive programs. Yes, you can be proud of the husbandry knowledge that you have and the attention that you provide in caring for your animals. But you still face a cavernous deficit.

On a positive note, despite the activists' deep pockets, it's a testament to your efforts and your industry that activists are making only small inroads with consumers. However, with each year and each dollar, their repetitive messages will ring louder with consumers.

After all, money talks. ■