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Cary woman wins NC Pork Council cooking contest

RALEIGH – A recipe for Italian Sausage stuffed Butternut Squash took first place Wednesday, Oct. 20 in the NC Pork Council “Passpork” recipe competition at the N.C. State Fair. Lisa Bresica of Cary won $200 for the winning recipe.

Jill Perkins of Garner took home second place and $150 for her Cantonese Spicy Pork Lettuce Wraps, while Gail Fuller of Raleigh won $100 and third place for Pork Paella.

The competition asked contestants to create an international recipe using at least four ounces of pork.
The winning recipe follows:

**Sausage stuffed Butternut Squash**

2 pounds butternut squash halved and seeded  
32 ounces Italian sausage, casings removed  
½ cup chopped onion  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 cup grated parmesan cheese  
1 cup breadcrumbs  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

**Instructions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut squash in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. Place the squash halves flesh side down on a pan and roast in the oven for 35-45 minutes until tender. Remove and cool partially, about 10 minutes.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Cook the sausage until browned and crumbly, about 5 to 7 minutes. Do not drain the fat.

Add onion and garlic to the sausage. Continue to cook and stir over medium heat until onion has softened, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, remove most of the flesh from the squash, leaving about 1/3 of an inch flesh in the shell to keep it sturdy, and place the flesh in a mixing bowl. Mix the flesh, sausage mixture, parmesan cheese, breadcrumbs, parsley, oregano and cayenne pepper together.

Stuff the squash shells with the new mixture and bake in the oven for 25 minutes.

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