





Vol 25. No. 2 February 2021 Australian Pork Newspaper PO Box 162 Wynnum 4178 Phone (07) 3286 1833 Email ben@collins.media



Australian Pork Limited launched its cheeky advertising campaign showcasing

# **Australian pork reclaims** weeknight dinners

"AGAIN! ... I guess we could make it a quickie." In January 2020, Australian Pork Limited launched for the first time its cheeky advertising campaign showcasing pork as quick and easy

However, COVID-19 changing the world around us and with Australia thrown into lockdown, consumers' behaviours shopping shifted.

to cook

Supermarket meat cabinets emptied, suggesting Aussies were stockpiling pork in their fridges and freezers – even those who were unfamiliar with pork or had not previously pur-

The decision was therefore made to postpone the 'quickie' campaign activities and prematurely remove the ads from air.

team at APL refocussed their efforts and adapted to the change in circumstance. With people spending

more time and meal occasions at home, APL increased its focus on inspiring audiences with recipe ideas and tips on how to cook the pork they already had on hand.

With the rollercoaster year that was 2020 behind us, APL are ready for a relaunch.

The new year means tactics for APL's



Highlighting the variety pork brings to the family dinner table, recipes give family favourites a delicious

quick and easy campaign, and while last year's ads featured pork steak for barbecue season, the revised versions highlight Instead, the marketing the variety pork brings to the family dinner table.

> The ending has been tweaked to showcase three new pork everyday meal options - spaghetti bolognaise, tacos and schnitzel.

Highlighting the fact pork offers a great substitute for family favourites, already on the repertoire in many Australian house-

"It's so quick and easy to give your old family favourites a delicious new

"Just get some pork on your fork."

Now on air, the ads will run nationally across freeto-air TV, subscription TV, radio, social channels and online video, and are in keeping with APL's iconic cheeky tone - offering a light but education-focussed message.

To see the ad, visit https://youtu.be/oJzt BiIfJvQ or to check out APL's 'quickie' recipe collection head to pork.

# A positive note for pork industry

THE Australian pork industry has started 2021 on a positive note, buoyed by the release of Nielsen market data showing that, as we had hoped and anticipated, Australian pork was a stand-out performer over the festive season.

stay-at-home As Christmas demand pushed overall fresh meat sales higher compared to 2019, with an increase across all fresh meat volumes of 7.6 percent, roast pork soared above the pack with a 24 percent rise in volume and a 27 percent rise in value

Australian Pork Limited marketing director category Kathleen Pindsle details the breakdown of the Christmas sales results in this publication, but I want to specifically highlight a few other key numbers.

Remarkably non-supermarket roast pork sales surged in both year-on-year volume by 43.5 percent and value by 41.6 percent, representing an incredible result for smaller retailers.

The Nielsen figures, which captured the four-week period to December 27, reported 2.4 million ham purchases in whole or half portions, with 1.3 million bone-in ham purchases.

This demand for bone-in ham across all retail sales represented a rise in volume of 10.8 percent and value of 15.2 percent.

APL is very proud does share a number



Point of View

by MARGO ANDRAE CEO

of these results and as always, we are very grateful for the efforts of producers and all industry stakeholders to help achieve this success. In 2020 we certainly

learned a great deal about the resilience of the pork supply chain and how our industry's agility and collaborative spirit is a tremendous weapon in the face of COVID-19, African swine fever or any other potential emergency.

Reflecting on such an extraordinary year, it is important to look at the valuable lessons derived from the way the pandemic played out in agricultural sectors overseas, particularly in the US

COVID-19 continues to evolve and how it will continue to cause market disruption here and internationally remains to be seen, but that should not prevent us from reflecting on what unfolded in the US pork industry last

While we are proud of the way our on-farm and supply chain integrity set us apart, Australia's pork industry



of similarities with the US product also dom-

inates our import categories, so what happens in the US is very relevant to Australian pig farmers. Almost 50,000 frontline workers across 546

US meat plants tested positive for COVID-19 between March and mid-November, and tragically 250 of these cases were fatal.

The crisis heightened in April and May, as plants were closed for weeks at a time or running at 50 percent capacity and farmgate pig prices dropped markedly.

On April 29, the national daily slaughter throughout 203,000 fewer pigs than the same day in 2019.

The backlog of millions of pigs forced producers to commence euthanasia on a massive scale.

Notwithstanding the personal impact these circumstances had on US producers and supply chain workers, US economist Steve Meyer described the situation as: "The worst financial disaster ever for American hog

farmers" and estimated combined farmgate losses exceeded \$A6.52

Watching the devastating crisis unfold from across the Pacific Ocean has served as a reminder for why one of the four pillars of the APL sustainability framework is 'people'.

As the US situation has shown, if the wellbeing of our workforce is compromised, it can manifest as a genuine disaster for the whole industry.

The US crisis also confirmed why APL's emergency management approach is to act as a responder, not a reacter.

Being a responder to a crisis means drawing on our strengths in a deliberate manner as part of road-tested emergency protocols, no matter how unforeseen a situation might

Reacting is a backfoot approach, which can often exacerbate rather than mitigate a

As such, there is a very proactive preemptive focus in the way we are tackling the risk of ASF and in developing new adaptable response frameworks which can be used as a model for other industries.

The many positives of the past 12 months and the lessons from events here and overseas have reinforced APL's resolve to continue to increase the popularity of Australian pork and the success of our producers throughout 2021 and beyond.

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#### **Pork Industry Calendar of Events**

#### 2021

FEB 24-26 - Agritech West Africa Exhibition, Accra International Conference Center, Accra Ghana www.agritechwestafrica.com

FEB 26 – SA Pig Industry Day, Barossa Weintal, SA www.porksa.com.au

MAY 4-5 (POSTPONED) - Pan Pacific Pork Expo (PPPE), Gold Coast E: pppe@australianpork.com.au

**AUG tbc** – Kingaroy Baconfest www. kingaroybaconfest.com.au

**NOV 15-18** – Australasian Pig Science Association (APSA) Conference www. apsa.asn.au/

How to supply event details: Send all details to Australian Pork Newspaper, PO Box 162, Wynnum, Qld 4178, call 07 3286 1833 or email: ben@collins.media

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# The research and innovation process

AS we begin 2021, there is an optimistic feeling around the outlook of the pork industry – touch

To that end, I wanted to focus this month's article on Australian Pork Limited's Research and Innovation process, in the interests of not only pork producers but researchers who read Australian Pork

One of APL's core deliverables is to provide an advanced and world-leading research program for our members.

Both Australian Pork Limited and Australasian Pork Research Institute Ltd, of which APL is the major investor, are working towards the same aims and objectives.

That is to provide members higher returns, open new markets to create demand and address the priorities of our industry stakeholders.

Thinking about this, it is worth acknowledging that Australian farmers have a reputation for inventiveness and developing strategies to cope with our occasionally challenging operating environment - be it markets, grain shortages or disease.

At the Producers' Forum last November, I presented an overview of how APL was developing a more flexible and responsive research program to close knowledge gaps, while crafting a vision for in-



General Manager -Research & Innovation

by ROB SMITS

novation and technology adoption to enable longterm industry change.

APL Solutions are research and innovation projects that provide understanding on how producers and the supply chain currently operate.

For example, understanding the risk factors associated with African swine fever biosecurity, looking into the seasonal causes of light/fat carcasses and how this can be reduced, and identifying the opportunities from using black soldier flies to convert piggery waste into valued by-products.

Proposals into APL Solutions can be submitted at any time and by anyone.

As a producer, if you have an innovative idea or an issue that is holding your business back, we want to hear from you.

One of the benefits of our generational acceptance of search engines and sharing technologies is we have access to a wealth of ideas that can be mined from a



variety of industries.

These can be identified, adopted, tested and demonstrated through APL Solutions.

As the late Apple chief executive officer Steve Jobs once said: "Creativity is just connecting things to make new things."

Transformational change in the production of pigs will come through improved understanding and subsequently innovative development around core problems or opportunities within our industry.

changes I have been involved with was the industry decision to voluntarily remove gestation stalls.

This transformational shift was brought about with considerable engagement and consultation with stakeholders including producers, customers, community interest groups and researchers.

This is the essence behind APL's Horizon Program, which focusses on a small number of 'strategic intents' offering significant or transformational improvements to industry competitiveness in cost, revenue or risk.

There will be consultation with all stakeholders to ideate different innovative solutions to address any 'strategic intent'.

Improved animal health was the first of the Horizon Program projects to be named and commenced, and involves ad-

dressing costs of production and processing.

If you get a call to provide feedback and input into different concepts around improving herd health don't hang up - it's not a telemarketer!

Producers, technology providers, researchers, customers and interest groups will all be invited to work together to come up with acceptable innovative strategies for our industry.

The pork industry has the capacity and capability to be innovative, flexible and to embrace new technology and change.

Young players are wanting to farm in smart and rewarding ways.

Seasoned players have background knowledge and experience.

Whether it is as farmers, researchers or service support, we want to hear of and share your ideas.

Send to research@aus tralianpork.com.au and we'll be in touch.



The research and innovation process at Australian Pork Limited, past producer

# Meat workers prioritised for COVID vaccine

processing workers have been included in a priority group to receive COVID vaccinations in Australia immediately after the first round of doses for frontline quarantine, health care and aged care workers are rolled out.

Meat processing workers have been included as critical and high-risk workers alongside defence, police, fire and emergency services personnel and will receive the vaccine in phase 1b of the vaccine roll out. Phase 1a includes quarantine and border workers, frontline health care worker sub-groups for prioritisation.

Identified priority groups will receive the first available doses that are proven to be safe and effective.

More people will have access to a vaccine as more doses become available throughout 2021.

Australian Meat Industry Council chief executive officer Patrick Hutchinson said the inclusion of meat processing workers in phase 1b followed intensive work and advocacy from the council.

"Meat processing workers are classified as high-risk workers with the vaccine rollout," he said.

"We are the first workforce after health, defence and emergency services that will receive the vaccine in the Australian rollout vaccination

strategy, classed as 1b." More details on the national rollout strategy can be found via the health. gov.au website.

Mr Hutchinson said AMIC is now working with government departments to clarify the following questions including what workers fit the definition of 'meat processing' and how will the metro and regional

hubs work. To be clarified also are the logistical issues of the different vaccines and the opportunity of site vac-

cinations at facilities. AMIC is working with the Federal Government on solutions to the above and have praised the response received from staff of Ministers Greg Hunt and David Littleproud's offices to date.

"I can't speak highly enough of the support we have received," Mr Hutchinson said.

Meat industry groups in other countries are also lobbying for slaughterhouse workers to be added to priority lists for immediate vaccination against the coronavirus.

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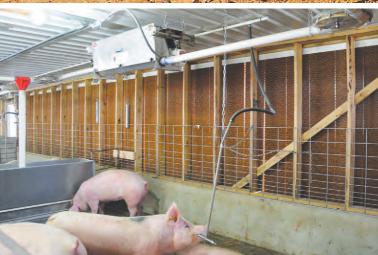
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# **Record sales for fresh pork**

#### ■ Fresh pork volumes grew 16.7 percent

IN the lead up to Christmas 2020, we waited with bated breath to experience the result of a Christmas under lockdown.

On one hand, with fewer Australians able to dodge family gatherings by travelling overseas, there was an expectation of higher volumes of pork sold on average.

On the other hand, with state border restrictions and clusters in the northern beaches of Sydney locked down, many families would have disrupted gather-

Quite frankly, we were unsure of how this would affect the scale of entertaining and the usual spread at the Christmas dinner table.

With this in mind, the Australian Pork Ltd marketing team worked hard as Christmas approached to ensure it was inspiring Australians to get pork on their Christmas table.

We're very happy to report that growth in sales of pork did indeed exceed that of total fresh meat.

Fresh pork volumes grew 16.7 percent for the four weeks prior to December 27 compared with the previous year, and in terms of value the growth was 17.5 percent.

In comparison, fresh meat grew only 7.6 percent in volume and saw 14.3 percent growth in value partly due to retail price increasing 6.2 percent.

Despite concerns around smaller gatherings, pork roast was a very strong performer over the period, growing 24 percent in volume and 27 percent in value.



Marketing Matters

by KATHLEEN PINDSLE



The strongest per-Clearly the quality of forming retailers for Aldi ham has translated roast sales were Woolinto sales for the retailer worths (+31 percent in - a great story and plat-\$ sales), butchers (+42 form for us to support percent in \$ sales) and other independent supermarkets (+60 percent in \$ sales), though all retailers grew in value compared with the pre-

vious year. Surprisingly, it was pork mince that experienced the strongest growth of all pork cuts in December, leaping a massive 50 percent year on year, with ribs and rashers up 30 percent and pre-prepared pork up 26 percent in volume each growing significantly.

Delving into sales of ham over the festive period, we saw strong growth in bone-in ham sales, with a 10.8 percent increase in volume sold and a \$ sales increase of 15.2 percent compared with the previous year.

Aldi had particularly strong growth in its bonein ham sales, climbing 22 percent on the previous Christmas period.

Coincidentally, APL helped to support a major story in a news segment regarding the quality of supermarket hams this year, with Aldi winning the ultimate favourite among our group improved quality of pork products in the future.

In 'out of home', we were seeing weakness in the sector, with the share of lunch and dinner meals plateauing and average spend slightly down compared with the November period.

In terms of competitors, there was a lot of media coverage regarding seafood and support of those industries for Christmas.

In fact, we did see a solid increase to seafood sales, however fresh pork sales slightly outperformed them.

Fresh seafood grew 15.5 percent in volume and 26.3 percent in

The average price paid for seafood over the period was at record highs, at an average of \$27.21/ kg, up from \$24.90/kg the previous year.

The marketing team is looking to build on these strong foundations to ensure 2021 will also record many successes, and will continue to report on these via this publication throughout the year. 🖘



Fresh pork sales grew 16.7 percent in volume and 17.5 percent in value for the four weeks prior to Christmas.

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# New year, new priorities

eventful 2020 and with a sigh of relief, the Australian Pork Limited policy team found time to put its feet up and enjoy multiple servings of Aussie Christmas ham with family and friends, and we hope the same was true for you.

The new year inevitably followed and with it the setting of resolutions and priorities, each aimed at getting the most out of the coming 12 months.

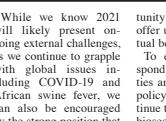
To help set our new year's resolutions, the APL policy team has continued conversations with industry throughout January to better understand the big issues affecting business in 2021.

Driven by our ethos of representing the interests of the Australian pork industry, we're focussed on making sure our priorities align with our stake-



Policy Director

by HEIDI REID



will likely present ongoing external challenges, as we continue to grapple with global issues including COVID-19 and African swine fever, we can also be encouraged by the strong position that pork continues to main-

Government will also be focussed on post-COVID-19 recovery policies and investment programs throughout 2021, presenting a great oppor-



tunity for our sector to offer up solutions for mu-

tual benefit. To ensure we can respond to these opportunities and threats, our 2021 policy priorities will continue to focus on ASF and biosecurity, strengthened traceability systems, improved access to labour and training providers, environmental planning regulations, anti-farm trespass and consumer education on imported pork

via this publication, the APL policy team will present a deep dive into each of these issues. Our aim is to not only to

equip you with the latest information on each topic on what we're hearing from government and regulators.

The series will also introduce you to the new names and faces of the APL policy team, who are passionate about representing your interests.

The policy team, alongside other APL staff, will be out and about -COVID-19 permitting in February and March to discuss everything and anything pig industry re-

Hopefully, we'll see you on our travels but if not please feel free to reach out and let us know your thoughts. 🖘

www.porknews.com.au



# **APRIL** on track in 2021

I WOULD like to wish stress and disease, abateveryone a happy new year and a successful

As we start the new year, I wanted to first reiterate the commitment Australasian Pork Research Institue Ltd has to supporting research, education and training, and commercialisation activities that will help to ensure the sustainability of Australasian pork production, and second to introduce a few of the activities and initiatives that lie ahead for APRIL this

Early next month, the APRIL Research and Development Advisory Committee will be assessing around 20 innovation project applications that were submitted towards the end of last year.

Applications have addressed a diverse number of topics of interest to the pork industry - ranging from solutions to heat

toir carcass management, environmental and production monitoring methodologies, and nutrition and physiology of sows and pigs.

We look forward to providing an update after the Board meeting in Feb-

APRIL will continue to explore the external funding pools that exist both nationally and internationally.

Its Kickstart Program is open to assist with submitting specific, targeted and agreed major external funding applications.

In December last year, with APRIL as one of a number of other industry and university partners, a four-year Australian Research Council Linkage grant was submitted by Murdoch University addressing 'Novel approaches for combating critically important antimicrobial resistance in

transformational project in APRIL's strategic plan, and I look forward to a positive outcome later in the year.

Commercialisation, translation and adoption of research findings are clear imperatives for APRIL, and in 2021 there will be a greater emphasis on projects and activities that assist in bringing new products or services to the

APRIL has a number of commercialisation initiatives either underway or coming on board this year, as results from projects come to hand.

Commercialisation can be a protracted process, but we are always looking for new ideas and thoughts.

One of the foundations of APRIL is its commitment to human capacity building for the Australasian pork industry.

The mix in APRIL of universities and research organisations. mercial pork production businesses, peak industry bodies, and companies and organisations serving the pork industry, provides the opportunity for real-world industry learning.

APRIL currently has three industry placement program awardees established in commercial pork production businesses, learning the business of pork production while engaging in both research and development, and professional development activities.

In this regard, the APRIL education advisory committee will meet next month to consider undergraduate and postgraduate education and training award applications received earlier this month.

We are looking forward to a busy and engaging

Tony Peacock Dr APRIL chair

# **Supporting Queensland** pork producers

PORK Queensland Inc wishes pork industry members all the best for a happy and prosperous 2021.

With recent rains across inland Queensland and southern states harvesting bumper crops in many regions, we hope to see feed prices return to the norm.

Labour supply has become a critical issue for a number of farmers and processors.

PQI has been working closely with industry groups and government to identify options for quarantining overseas workers from low-risk COVID countries.

Two locations have been the subject of an approval process involving the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Queensland Health.

There are two applications on the table - one in the Toowoomba district and one close to Gatton.

Both have the capabilities to house several hundred workers until they are cleared from quarantine.

The increased risks around the new COVID strains has posed additional issues for the campsite providers, however final approval is expected shortly.



President's Perspective

by JOHN COWARD



Government has been made aware of how serious the current labour shortage is and any delays will result in farmers having to consider business continuity options.

PQI continues to work with Approved Employers of Australia which coordinates overseas labour arrangements - and the providers of approved camp sites in an attempt to address the critical issue.

PQI has also been engaging with Australian Pork Limited to deliver an industry forum addressing the critical issues around key issues including African swine fever, Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program, labour and training.

The forum is to be held in Toowoomba in early March and POI encourages producers to attend the face-to-face meeting where there will be opportunities to provide producer feedback to

both PQI and APL on critical issues.

Keep an eye out for the invite from APL and we hope to see you in person on the day!

PQI holds a seat on the Biosecurity Queensland Ministerial Advisory Council and has accepted a seat on the ASF Prevention and Preparedness Project Reference Group.

Both these roles are to ensure the impacts on industry from any government actions are clearly understood.

While POI will always assist members address issues our resources are limited and as such I call on Queensland producers to review and renew their membership to help us continue to provide the ongoing representative role.

Please contact president John Coward on john.coward1@gmail. com or 0407 622 166 or any director for membership details. 🖘



Dr John Carr

# A specialist's nine principles for monitoring health

IN November 2020, Dr John Carr became one of only two registered specialists in pig medicine in Australia.

John's specialty in pig medicine was registered by the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Queensland and is recognised nationally and in New Zealand. Only those recognised by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc can claim the title of specialist.

In response to a question about antimicrobial medicines and pork production John wrote, "The health of the human race is largely determined by the production of healthy food."

"Our food is now healthier than it ever has been, and the pigs people eat must be healthy.

"Well before it was fashionable to talk about antimicrobial resistance and reducing the use of antibiotics, my peers Michael Muirhead and Allen Leman led me into the interesting world of health maintenance.

"If the pigs are healthy, there is no need for medication."

This led to the development of nine principles that John uses to monitor the health of a pig farm: biosecurity, pig flow, medicine control, water, food, floor, air, staff and the stock themselves.

There must be good control over medication supply, storage and use.

John recounted an ex-

John recounted an example from a farm in Cornwall England.

"After a pathogen control exercise 10 years ago, antibiotic use had been minimal."

"We have recently had an 'outbreak of pericarditis and pleurisy' and the mortality rate jumped alarmingly.

"Antimicrobial sensitivity tests indicated that chlortetracycline – discovered in 1945 – would be effective against the pasteurella and streptococci bacteria isolated, though other pathogens not isolated were also considered possible contributors.

"A five-day course of CTC stopped the deaths, however the lesions will take longer to heal.

"Because the farm had

not used antibiotics routinely for 10 years, the response was dramatic, but we stopped treatments as soon as we restored the balance."

The cause of the problem?

John was very firm.

"A new pathogen – no."

"Resistance developing – no.

"The cause was a new member of staff not navel dipping the piglets at birth as required, and this allowed organisms access through the wet navel into the piglets.

"Improvement in perinatal care is what has been prescribed to actually resolve the issue in the long term."

John completed his veterinary degree in Liverpool in 1982, then after several years in practice completed a PhD in kidney disease in the UK in 1990, followed by a diploma in pig medicine at the UK Royal Veterinary College in 1996.

Recognition as a specialist by the Royal Veterinary College followed.

In 2007, he also became a diplomat of the European College of Porcine Health Management.

Over the course of his career John has taught pig medicine to students in veterinary science at multiple universities and in many countries, perhaps most notably at the Royal Veterinary College in London, at North Carolina State University and Iowa State University, and now James Cook University in Queensland.

While his academic credentials and publication list are strong, it is his involvement with pig farming businesses globally that give him depth.

One of his obligations under his specialist registration is to encourage more pig vets to become specialists and to con tribute to the development of pathways for this.

**Ross Cutler** 

Before joining the farm team and implementing the nine point health strategy.



A year after joining the farm team. Finishing herd mortality rate was reduced by half and with it antimicrobial usage fell sharply.

# Stockyard Industries expands its sales team

STOCKYARD Industries is expanding its team and would like to welcome Roby Parker as the new territory sales representative for Queensland and northern NSW.

Roby has been in the agricultural industry all his life, with more than eight years experience in sales.

He has travelled around Australia in roles with Elders, Tru-Test Datamars, cattle and sheep live export, and grain farming on various properties.

Roby is passionate about the success of all agricultural business and looks forward to focussing his abilities on the pig and poultry sectors.

Roby will be based in Clifton and will work alongside current regional manager Joe Oliveira, servicing both the pig and poultry industries.

Roby's initial focus will be on assisting customers with consumable product needs, and on gaining subsequent knowledge and experience, will be capable of supporting all project and technical requirements.

Roby looks forward to meeting Stockyard customers in person and growing our respective businesses together.

He can be contacted on 0437 859 421 or roby@stockyardindus tries.com





Stockyard Industries welcome Roby Parker as its new territory sales representative for Queensland and northern NSW.



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Alex from Extraordinary Pork in Eumungerie NSW calmly walking the pigs to their on-farm processing facility.

Distributed by

# Feather and Bone the home of pasture-raised pork

IF it wasn't for the hard border and quarantining here in our island state within an island, as WA was labelled early in the COVID-19 pandemic, I'd fly to Sydney every week just to shop at Feather and Bone Butchery in Marrickville, NSW.

Well okay, pigs might fly you may well say and I fess up that I could not afford the flights or the time, but I can afford to dream.

Feather and Bone understand my pasture-raised pork fetish and whet my appetite with their newsletter, which most recently was about the provenance of the pork they sell and,



**Cant Comment BRENDON CANT** 

more particularly, what the happy little porkers eat before Feather and So, here's a taste.

This edited extract from the latest communique says it all and it's all about

All the farms we source from run their pigs outside for their entire lives. Like chickens and humans, pigs are omnivores. so they need to be offered a diverse mix of proteins, minerals and nutrients to ensure they grow and thrive.

Throughout their lives, whether they stay on the farm as breeders or end up on your plate, these pasture-raised pigs have a varied diet anchored around a customised pig feed ration augmented

ucts including seasonal grains, fruits, vegetables, excess dairy whey and milk, spent brewers' grains, excess bakery sourdough and the various grasses, plants, dirt and insects that they dig up in the paddocks.

While all the farms we work with are connected by a common, regenerative management approach that prioritises ecosystem health and balance, each farm is unique.

Common to all is the reliance on wheat and barley as the major ingredient in all their formulated diet rations and the notable lack of any pharmaceutical inputs.

What sets a couple apart is the use of meat and/or blood meal, with varying

quantities of other inputs. Here are the farmers' responses in alphabetical farm order:

#### Bundarra Berkshires -Barham, NSW

Our pig diet consists of a pellet of non-genetically modified matter, which is comprised of barley, wheat, peas, lupins and a mineral mix of beetroot extracts, probiotics, oregano, cinnamon, apple cider vinegar and vege-

The pigs graze on saltbush, native grasses and pasture, though at this time of the year (high summer), it's dry grass and pellets only.

Whenever it's available, we add waste excess produce from local farmers - right now, it's avocado waste and orange peel, which they go berserk for.

We chose a vegetarian diet because while the pigs grow slower without using meat meals, we believe it is better for their gut heath and overall meat texture, sweetness and a clean earthy finish.

#### Extraordinary Pork -Eumungerie, NSW

We feed our pigs a custom-made pellet designed by a nutritionist that is wheat and barley based and carefully calibrated to produce a balanced diet of protein, energy and fat.

If the balance is out, we end up with fat pigs or poor muscle development or both!

genetically modified organism free and there is no meat meal or blood meal.

Currently, the diet includes these key elements: wheat 50 percent, barley 12 percent, soybean meal 12 percent and canola meal 8 percent.

There are also other ingredients including salt, lime, a nutrient premix and amino acids - they are derived from plants and ensure good muscle development.

We don't supplement them with any food scraps, but they certainly make good use of grass, bugs and grubs out in the paddock.

Near River - Hollisdale, NSW

In addition to the grasses and bugs foraged in the paddocks, the sows, weaners and grower pigs are fed a primary wheat feed, a barley mix and additional locally-sourced excess farm waste.

The pigs are offered differing ratios depending on when they require higher protein rates.

No corn, though sovmeal.

Primarily we feed our pigs wheat that we mill on farm.

We are very pleased to be able to source wheat from NSW again after shipping it from Western Australia for the past year or so.

We do our best to source chemical-free wheat.

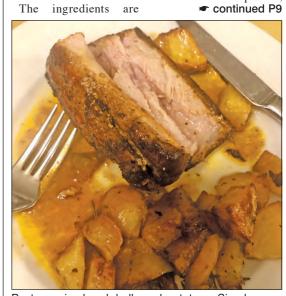
We mix this with a proprietary concentrate from Riverina Stockfeeds.

The base raw materials may change seasonally but the typical composition includes soybean meal, cottonseed meal, canola meal, pulses, meat and blood meal, amino acids, salt, dicalcium phosphate, mould inhibitor, Riverina vitamin and mineral premix.

In the past six weeks we have also added a biscuit meal to these mixes, to increase the energy component.

This is created from out of date or incorrectly packaged biscuit goods.

These components comprise the prepared ration that is 62 percent of the daily grower diet and are mixed in the following ratios: wheat 60 percent,



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#### Feather and Bone - home of pasture-raised pork

concentrate 20 percent and biscuit meal 20 percent.

The remaining 38 percent of the pigs' daily diet is comprised of barley, in the form of spent brewer's grain from one of our local craft brewers.

In addition, each day the pigs get around 600L of whey from our local Real Dairy cheese factory.

Research suggests that whey consumption can replace up to 30 percent of a regular grain diet, and we have found that as our heritage breeds Berkshire and Wessex Saddlebacks are prone to high fat scores, the addition of whey diminishes this.

We also source fruit and vegetable waste from a local food processor, usually 200-300kg each week, mostly tomatoes and strawberries.

There are also irregular sourdough waste from our baker and out of date lines from the dairy, usually cream or feta.

Oxhill Organics - Wauchope, NSW

Each pig gets approximately 1.5kg grain, 0.5L milk and as much grass as they want to eat!

The pigs wander on certified organic pastures, so the 'grass' includes rye, oats, chicory, clover, paspalum, kikuyu, plantain and the composition changes depending on the season.

Every morning, the pigs get a feed of dry grain comprised of Mara Seeds' organic barley 71 percent, organic wheat 20 percent and soybean meal 6 percent, Ag Solutions' organic minerals 3 percent to which we add 20L of organic raw milk from our dairy.

Pillar Rock Pork - Binaway, NSW

I feed my pigs a pellet which I find suits my sows and young pigs.

The sows get a lower protein feed than the young stock.

I have been using the same feed mill - Premier Stockfeeds – since 2016 and the product is consistent in quality, my pigs do well on it, and they are good to deal with.

I don't give the pigs anything else and do not change it around.

The pellet ingredients include barley, wheat, sorghum, meat meal, sunflower meal, tallow, methionine, lysine, salt, vitamins and trace minerals.

With all the recent rain, the native grasses are bouncing away, so the pigs are enjoying grazing the pasture.

Saulsbury Berkshires Frogmore, NSW

We feed our pigs a soybean protein-based pellet not meat meal.

We choose to feed a pellet ratio that is specially tailored to meet the pigs, nutritional needs, rather than mixing our

In addition, the pigs receive a variety of the seasonal produce that we grow here on the farm.

Depending on the season, this includes vegetables, fruits, nuts and specifically grown crops including rye grass and saccaline, a heritage strain of sorghum.

Periodically, the pigs

also receive a special treat of fresh jersey milk, corn and pollard/bran mash.

This mash is used to introduce young piglets to an adult diet and also as an animal husbandry technique to help with the moving and weighing of

Spring Grove Fresh Food - Casino, NSW

Our pigs get about 900g of pelletised feed per day from the Riverina feed mill here in Casino.

Typical composition includes wheat, sorghum, barley, maize, bran and pollard, vegetable protein meals, pulses, meat and blood meal, salt, molasses, vegetable oil, amino acids, lime, dicalcium phosphate, mould inhibitor, Riverina vitamin and mineral premix.

Base raw materials may gradually change season-

The rest comes from the pasture they graze.

Tathra Place

Wombeyan Caves, NSW We feed our pigs a Vella ration that is chemical, pharmaceutical and GMO

Ingredients and ratios are subject to change based on availability and season.

No crude protein in any

Up to 30 percent of the pigs' diet is perennial pasture, legumes, as well as bugs grubs, tree sap anything they can find!

Wallendbeen Park Wallendbeen, NSW

The pigs are fed twice a day and receive about 2.5kg per adult pig per - dispersed on the ground, not in feeders.

the same feed prior to weaning.

No meat products or swill in the diet.

We don't wean our pigs so we can fully utilise the sow's milk, which takes about 100 days.

This means that the piglets/growers stay up to 120 days or longer with the sow before they're separated.

During that time, we gradually train the grower pigs by feeding them separately in the yards, while the sows get a bigger ration outside the yards.

After four months, the separation process is easy and stress-free.

Apart from foraged food, the daily diet consists of about 40 percent cracked corn soaked and 50 percent commercial pellets comprised of cereal grains barley, wheat, bran and pollard, canola meal, lupins, limestone, bentonite, salt, Acid Buf, mineral and vitamin premix, enzymes, essential amino acids.

The remaining 10 percent comes from paddock plants and grasses, plants, worms, insects - whatever they dig up and forage in the paddock.

Also excess seasonal fruits such as apples, cherries and peaches when available.

If you live in NSW and want to try Feather and Bone products, visit their website featherandbone. com.au or call into the shop at 8/10-14 Lilian Fowler Place, Marrickville NSW or phone them on 02 9818 2717.

Bon appetit. 🖘



A predominantly Tamworth herd on the river flat at Oxhill Organics in Wauchope NSW. Used along with egg laying chickens, in rotation with the dairy herd where the main on-farm enterprise is supplying organic cow's milk to the local co-op.

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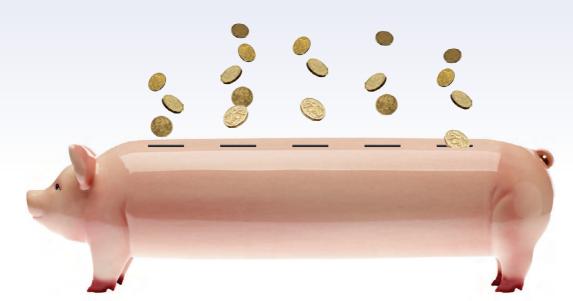
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# African swine fever strains point to unlicensed vaccines in China

A BLOW to the world's largest pork producer still recovering from a devastating epidemic of African swine fever, the new form of African swine fever identified in Chinese pig farms has possibly been caused by illicit vaccines.

New Hope Liuhe chief science officer Yan Zhi-

chun said two new strains of African swine fever had infected more than 1000 sows on several farms owned by China's fourth-largest producer, as well as pigs being fattened for the firm by contract farmers.

The strains are missing one or two key genes present in the wild Af-

rican swine fever virus and don't kill pigs as did the disease that ravaged China's farms in 2018 and 2019, they do cause a chronic condition that reduces the number of healthy piglets born.

With infected pigs being culled to prevent the spread, the disease is effectively fatal.

While known infections are currently limited, if the strains spread, they could wipe out China's pork output – the world's top consumer and producer.

Only two years ago, AFS decimated half of China's 400 million-head pig herd.

Pork prices remain at

record levels and China is under pressure to strengthen food security amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I don't know where they come from, but we find mild field infections caused by gene-deleted viruses," Yan said.

Beijing-based veterinarian Wayne Johnson said he diagnosed a chronic less-lethal form of the disease in pigs last year.

The virus lacked certain genetic components, known as the MGF360 genes.

New Hope has found strains of the virus missing both the MGF360 genes and the CD2v genes.

Research has shown that deleting several MGF360 genes from ASF creates immunity.

But the modified virus was not developed into a vaccine because it tended to mutate back to a harmful state later.

Nairobi-based International Livestock Research Institute principal scientist Lucilla Steinaa said: "You can sequence these things, these double deletions, and if it's exactly the same as described in the lab, it's too much of a coincidence, because you

would never get that exact deletion."

There is no approved vaccine for ASF, which is not harmful to humans, though many Chinese farmers struggling to protect their pigs have resorted to unapproved products.

The fear is that illicit vaccines have created accidental infections, which are now spreading.

The new strains could thrive globally through contaminated meat, infecting pigs fed on kitchen waste.

The virus is known to survive for months in several pork products.

China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has issued at least three warnings against use of unauthorised ASF vaccines, cautioning that they could have severe side-effects and that producers and users could be charged with a criminal offence.

In August, the ministry said it would test pigs for different strains of the virus as part of a nation-wide investigation into illegal vaccine use.

Any strains with gene deletions could indicate a vaccine had been used.

No findings on the issue

have been published to date, which is highly sensitive for Beijing.

Reporting of the recent ASF outbreaks was exten-

sively covered up.

After decades of research towards producing a vaccine against the complex swine fever virus, researchers globally are focussing on live-virus vaccines – the only type to have shown any promise.

However, such vaccines carry higher risks because even after the virus is weakened so it doesn't cause serious illness, it can occasionally recover its virulence.

One such vaccine used in Spain in the 1960s caused a chronic disease with swollen joints, skin lesions and respiratory issues in pigs that complicated efforts to eradicate ASF over the next three decades.

Since then, no nation has approved a vaccine for the disease.

A vaccine with both MGF360 and CD2v genes deleted has been undergoing trials by China's Harbin Veterinary Research Institute after showing promise.

Yan said he believed that people have replicated the sequences of virus strains being studied, which have been published in scientific literature, and that pigs injected with illicit vaccines based on them could be infecting others.

"It's definitely manmade; this is not a natural strain," Yan said.

Neither Johnson nor Yan have fully sequenced the new swine fever strains.

Beijing strictly controls who is allowed to work with the virus, which can only be handled in laboratories with high biosecurity designations.

Though several private companies have developed test kits that can check for specific genes.

GM Biotech based in China's central Hunan province said it had developed a test that identifies whether the pathogen is a virulent strain, a singlegene deleted attenuated strain, or a double-gene deleted attenuated strain.

The test helps pig producers because the new strains are very difficult to detect at the initial stage of infection and have a longer incubation period after infection.

The government has not confirmed how widely used illicit vaccines are or who has produced them.

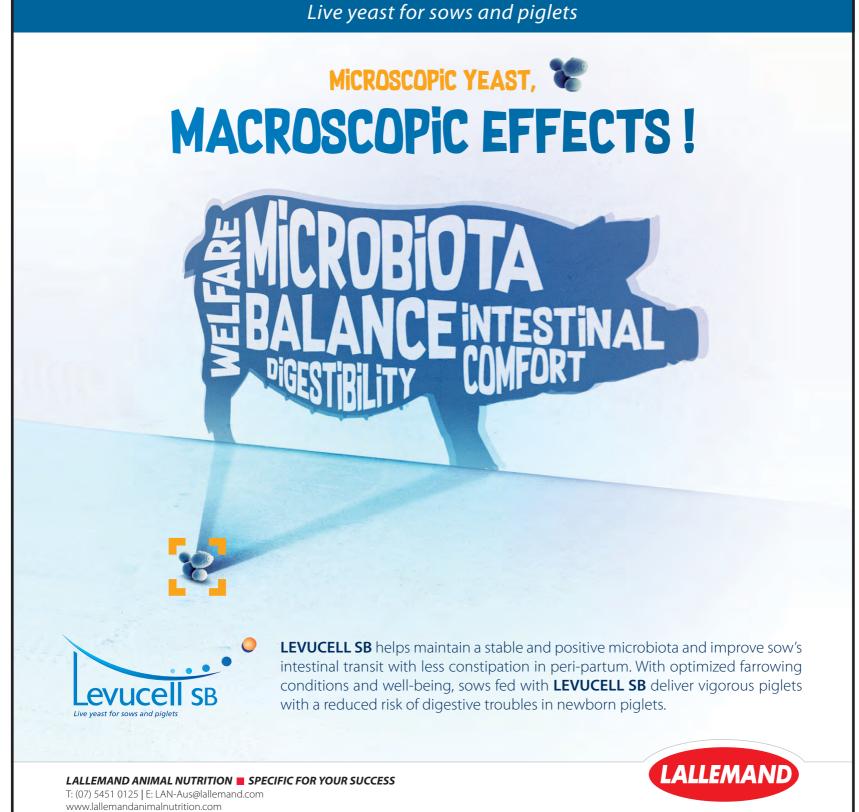
However, a great number of pigs in China have been vaccinated, Johnson said – a sentiment echoed by many other experts.

Colorado State University professor of veterinary medicine Mo Salman said in 2004-5, when the H5 bird flu strains were spreading across Asia, Chinese laboratories produced several unauthorised live bird flu vaccines, raising fears that they could produce dangerous new variants.

Prof Salman who has worked on animal health in Asia said: "The current ASF unlawful vaccine use in China is repeating history."



Pigs are seen at a backyard farm on the outskirts of Harbin, Heilongjiang province, China September 5, 2018. Photo: REUTERS/Hallie Gu



# Aussie Pump is sludge hog

MOVING liquid manure in piggeries is a continuing challenge and can be a real cost driver.

When electric drive pumps are out of service or in the event of power failures, heavy duty portable engine drive trash pumps can fulfil a vital role in emergency sludge removal.

portable pumps that are available in either petrol or diesel drive.

The Aussie trash pump range is designed to handle solids in suspension and, as a key facet, come with a huge cleanout port built into the front of the pump's



A 4" Aussie diesel trash pump with the cover plate out, providing access to the impeller and mechanical seal for easy service without disturbing pipework or dismantling the pump.

Aussie Pumps manufacturers 2", 3" and 4"

tion port providing a huge advantage in that it can be opened just by undoing two toggles by hand and pulling the whole front cover assembly off including the volute, revealing the interior of the pump and with full access to the impeller.

Thus, not only can the impeller passages and pump body be cleared of debris but, where necessary, both impeller and mechanical seal can be changed out without completely dismantling the pump!

mounted below the suc-

That's a huge convenient advantage during any service.

An additional feature is that the pipework or hoses connected to the pump on the suction or discharge side do not need to be disturbed.

The pumps have the capacity to handle spherical 38mm (1.5")

Best of all. Aussie trash pumps self-prime through a vertical lift of 7.6m, without the use of priming aids.

With flow up to 1800Lpm, the Aussie pumps offer heads of up to 27m, allowing them to transport the sludge reasonably long distances over horizontal surfaces.

The heart of the pump is a huge high spheroidal graphite cast-iron impeller and volute that are extremely wear resistant.

A silicon carbide mechanical seal is standard, designed for long-sustained operation.

The whole machine, engine and pump included, are encased in a heavy duty frame.

The 2", 3" and 4" pumps in Honda petrol engine configuration come with a sturdy frame, mounted on a steel base with anti-



The Aussie 4" trash pump self-primes and will pump 1800L per minute.

vibration mounts.

The diesel versions, using Yanmar air-cooled diesels, with either recoil or electric start, come with galvanised steel frames and base plates with the anti-vibration mount feafure.

For areas where there is a possibility of any build-up of potentially dangerous gases, a 'mine spec' version is available, with a super heavy duty frame, battery isolation, E-stop and an integrated fire extinguisher.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, "We build these pumps right here in Sydnev."

"They're designed for the most rugged applications and find their way into pumping abattoir waste, piggeries, poultry farm sludge and even handling dairy effluent." A big 6" semi trash version, also with a high SG open impeller, will move up to 2500Lpm, and is available in Honda petrol

Further information, including a comprehensive brochure on pumps for the agriculture market are readily available from aus siepumps.com.au 🖘

or Yanmar diesel drive.

### Lab-based meat company secures \$A7.7m in seed funding

AUSTRALIAN cellbased meat company Vow Foods has secured \$A7.7 million in a seed funding round, with backing from Mike and Annie Cannon-Brookes' investing arm Grok Ventures.

Using animal cells, the Sydney-based startup produces traditional meat such as pork and chicken, as well as alpaca, water buffalo and even one of Australia's most iconic animals the kangaroo.

In 2019, the company made kangaroo dumplings, becoming the first company in the world to make a food product from the cells of an un-

domesticated animal.

It has since expanded its product range to 11 different animals, and even plated them during a demonstration in partnership with Australian chef Neil Perry.

In less than a year, the company has grown from five to 22 employees and is set to complete a state-

of-the-art food design studio and lab in Sydney. With the seed funding

under its belt, the company plans on outperforming meat rather than replacing it.

In a statement, Vow co-founder and chief commercial officer Tim Noakesmith said, "We believe that the only way to change the behaviour of billions of people is to make many products that are simply better than what we have today."

"This latest round of investment allows us to focus on the culinary opportunity and make food that really excites people.

"It's a bonus to know that these are the same foods that will allow us to live in harmony with our planet and move away from the climate emergency associated with our current food systems."

The funding comes after the sale of cultured meat was approved in Singapore in December, strengthening its place in the meat production market

Vow co-founder and chief executive officer George Peppou believes that cultured meat will soon be mainstream.

"This is about so much more than an alternative to animal agriculture, it's about a category of products totally distinct from, and better than, what animals are capable of producing," he said.

The funding round was led by Square Peg Capital, which has backed companies including Airwallex, with investment from Blackbird Ventures, Grok Ventures and Tenacious Ventures also.

Square Peg Capital spokesperson James Tynan said, "In Vow, we found a team with the most audacious vision for the future of food."

"They're tackling one of the biggest problems on the planet and have delivered results with less than 1 percent of the resources of its competitors.'

Vow's funding comes amid a rise in the number of Australian companies producing meat from alternative sources, with businesses such as v2food, Fable and Proform Foods making plant-based meat. 🖘

### Philippines to triple pork imports

THE agriculture minister for the Philippines has said that after an increase of domestic prices by more than 50 percent from the previous year, as African swine fever devastated hog populations, the country intends to triple its pork imports in 2021.

Agriculture Secretary William Dar said the Philippines - the seventh-largest pork importer globally prior to local demand falling due to the pandemic – aims to purchase 162,000 tonnes, predominantly from the US, Canada, France, Spain and the Netherlands.

Based on government data, in 2020 ASF prompted the culling of more than 300,000 pigs, or around 3 percent of the hog population, which resulted in an estimated decrease of 30 percent for the country's pork production.

With an initial 54,000 tonnes set to arrive by February or March, Mr Dar said: "We are studying tripling the current minimum access volume of 54,000 metric tonnes per year."

As ASF was detected mainly on farms on the country's largest most populous island Luzon, home to the nation's capital, prices of pork were especially high in Ma-

Due to higher food prices, and with supply of meat and vegetables hampered by typhoons, inflation increased in the last quarter of 2020.

The Philippines government postponed a scheduled increase in chicken import tariffs to 40 percent, confirming it would stay at 5 percent this year to help curb inflation.



Vow Foods co-founders Tim Noakesmith and George Peppou.



# Forewarned is forearmed

#### ■ Education to help secure our industry future

FINALLY, months after the forced closure of the mink industry in Denmark, conversations are now being had about the compensation mink producers will be offered.

To date, no compensation has been received, nor were the producers allowed to take any money for the pelts else they would not be entitled to receive anything for the forced government closure of their business.

The question remains if the industry will legally be allowed to recover – though it seems highly unlikely given the sobering number of animals killed - including all breeding stock in Denmark.

Though still masked as a necessity for human safety, the decision was made with little to no scientific evidence.

In fact, the government acted against recommendations made by the national scientific advisors.

This is particularly scary to consider when the next industry to come under scrutiny could easily be pork.

Even scarier is that this devastating event was possible in a country such as Denmark, despite the democracy that is meant

Clearly the government currently in power Nordic News

by ASHLEY NORVAL



has an agenda against farming animals, in a similar fashion to the government in Germany, which was previously written about and which continues full steam ahead with extreme restrictions for pig producers.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, in particular during lockdown periods - which we are currently still under - we have seen a 10 percent increase in meat sales, corresponding to an approximate 10 percent downturn of vegetarian and vegan-friendly meat replacement products.

Despite being price comparable, it would seem as though the plant-based products are the least popular choice by the average consumer – so much so that the products are regularly sold at a high discount.

It looks as if consumers do not want to give up their right to eat meat, which is good

However, soon there will be a new option for consumers in lab-

grown meat. This is a product that we have known about for a while, but it is now becoming a regular option in shops and is being advertised.

The only messaging available about the product is that it is grown from animal tissue, with high and controlled food-safety standards, without any suffering to the ani-

The general consumers' concern for animal welfare, in addition to their general lack of knowledge about how any animal is produced, is dangerous for us as an industry.

Especially when other products, which are in the consumers eyes at least, a suitable substitute for an actual animal meat product.

One of the key things I believe we can do is educate consumers and tell our industry's story.

The labelling of animal products in Denmark is excellent.

Labelling laws state that on each package of meat the country in which the animal was raised, slaughtered and processed must be listed.

Yet despite this, consumers remain generally ignorant in their knowledge of agricul-

There is also no schools program in Denmark about the pig industry, though it creates billions in income every year and is an industry that the country relies on to survive.

It seems logical that the education of the next generation will help to bridge this knowledge gap.

There is a high chance that sooner or later people with an agenda of shutting down animal farming will enter Australian parliament - we already know of several in the minority.

These people also look to other parts of the world for inspiration - its working in Germany with the pig industry and in Denmark with the mink industry.

Now is the time to step up our industry presence and consumer education to ensure we have a future in Australian food production, while we still have the

# New Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance **Program Lead** I AM proud to share

my recent appointment as Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program lead in the Producer Relations team at Australian Pork Limited and introduce myself and my role, which primarily serves to support the APIQ.

In a nutshell, APIQ assists Australian pork producers to manage on-farm risks while meeting regulatory requirements around pig welfare and good husbandry practices.

The scope of this role sees me responsible for leading continuous improvement to the system to ensure APIQ remains relevant and valuable to all stakeholders, while building strong relationships with producers and other industry stakeholders to demonstrate the value APIQ pro-

Another important aspect of the role includes supporting APL's PigPass, the national tracking system of pig movements across Australia, including the final stages of development of APL's new PigPass

The app build in- have given me consid-



Quality Assurance

by BJORN LUDVIGSEN



producers, transporters and recipients to provide training support and encourage uptake of this timesaving technology.

As part of the Producer Relations team, I serve as the primary contact within APL for a wide range of producers across Aus-

I'm enjoying re-connecting with producers with whom I have an existing relationship, as well as getting to know many for the first time through regular contact.

Prior to joining APL, my career was primarily based in operations and project management within the pork and stockfeed milling industries.

My roles in family farming and corporate farming enterprises

volves working with erable experience in maintaining APIQ and other quality assurance programs – Stock Feed Manufacturers Council of Australia's Feed-Safe and New Zealand Pork's PigCare – from a producer's viewpoint, which allows me to bring a fresh perspective to this role.

> For the most part, I will be based in Adelaide, having recently relocated after three years living and working in New Zealand in the pork industry.

> I look forward to working with producers, processors and other stakeholders in the year ahead and wish everyone a great 2021.

> I'm always available to chat on either 0439 261 168 or bjorn. ludvigsen@australian pork.com.au 🦃

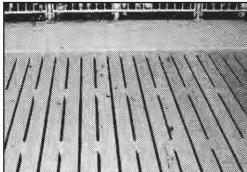
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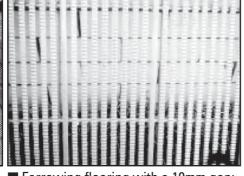
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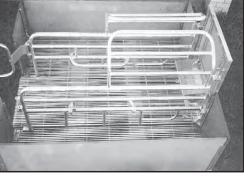
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# Alltech's 2021 Agri-Food outlook - five trends

ALLTECH'S 2021 Agri-Food Outlook focusses on trends that largely resulted from limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While China's quick rebound back to its place as the world's largest feed producer is Alltech's top story of its 2021 Agri-Food Outlook, other industry trends stem primarily from the global coronavirus event.

The occurrences of the past year caused a shift in supply chains to trust-based transactions, saw the rise of ecommerce, made health a consumer priority and created innovation through empathy and inclusion.

Alltech highlighted these five trends in its 2021 Agri-Food Outlook, presented in a virtual event on January 26.

#### China

China's pig herd was decimated over the past two years, as African swine fever spread quickly throughout the country.

But in 2020, China saw a faster-than-expected recovery.

Alltech president of Asia Jonathan Forrest Wilson said: "The swine market in China came back faster than anyone would have expected."

According to Alltech China director of customer experience Winnie Jia, China's pig production capacity has recovered to 90 percent of its 2017 numbers and growth is expected to continue.

Alltech president and chief executive officer Mark Lyons said, "China has exceeded expectations, with an incredible rebound in 2020."

"It has resumed the position as the No. 1 feed-producing country, and it started 2021 with strength."

Mr Wilson said the industry had largely restructured, with backyard farms replaced with modern, large-scale facilities.

"The reduction in backyard farms really increased the need for modern compound feeds."

"Waste that was previously fed to pigs is no longer an acceptable feedstock," he said.

Poultry prices in China improved slightly in the second half of 2020, "but performance continued to be weak and the world

market demand for poultry recovered steadily, and the supply is growing rapidly," Ms Jia said.

In the ruminant market, "feed costs are rising, and overcapacity and biosafety are still the three main challenges for the whole industry."

"We expect there will be more investment in the breeding program of beef cattle and sheep this year," she said.

Shifts in supply chain
Global food supply chains faced great challenges due to the pandemic, but remained strong, Mr Lyons said, adding that the past year has created demand for more trust and transparency from food producers.

"After six years of abundant global grain supplies and relatively stable commodity markets, we have now entered a period of tightening supplies and strong demand, resulting in a 57 percent increase in corn prices and a 52 percent increase in soybean meal prices during the past five months," he said.

Alltech global purchasing and supply chain director Eric Glenn said, "These are price levels that we haven't seen since 2014."

"Premix companies are also telling me that logistics remain a concern for shipments out of China, that there is a lot of congestion at import ports and that truck freight within local markets has been tight.

"This has led to higher prices for vitamins and amino acids that many people expect will continue into the second quarter.

"Amino acids such as lysine and methionine are also expected to be in strong demand as commodities like soybean meal and corn have increased in price," Mr Glenn said.

While food producers face those challenges, IMI Global senior director of operations Kathryn Britton said they also must realise consumers' growing desire for more transparency in food and livestock production.

"Because we're able, as an industry, to have a story about food production and translate that through the supply chain, consumers were able to continue to trust in the food that they

were purchasing."

"It's important to consumers that food companies tell an "accurate, authentic story about food.

"If we don't know the source, if we don't know where that feed product is coming from, or where that animal is coming from, and then be able to track that through the supply chain, we can't tell an authentic story to the consumer about that product," Ms Britton said.

Ecommerce
Ecommerce exploded in 2020 as a result of lock-downs and stay-at-home orders related to the pan-

Now that consumers have become accustomed to ordering more things online, companies need to build on the trust that has been created and build their brands.

Alltech digital marketing manager Anand Iyer said, "Nobody wants to buy from a brand they don't know about."

"Quality of the product, traceability – these are all things brands need to consider," he said, adding that there were several things companies can do to build a good rapport with cus-

"A comprehensive and easy-to-understand privacy policy, partnership badge, contact information and social proof are great ways to build trust and credibility.

"Personalisation, exceptional customer service and one-to-one relationship will help build trust with your customers."

Health
Health became an even greater priority for consumers in 2020, "strength-

ening a trend that was already underway," Mr Lyons said. "We started to seek out health-boosting foods

health-boosting foods, and even as restrictions lifted, these new, healthier habits continued.

"This trend will have major implications for the food supply chain."

Alltech director of Acutia and human nutrition initiatives Nikki Putnam Badding said fear and functionality are drivers of health purchases.

"Fear has always been a purchase driver in the health space," she said.

"Over the past 10 years, we've seen health-conscious consumers turn to functional foods, or foods with health benefits above and beyond the norm, like

selenium-enriched eggs or DHA-enriched milk, to give them a greater sense of control over their health and well-being."

Reinforcing previously mentioned trends, she said trust and transparency are becoming more important for consumers, who traditionally base their food purchases on price, taste, familiarity and health.

"But gaining in popularity is the review and consideration of the entire product life cycle, from welfare to supply chain transparency to brand alignment with personal values," Ms Putnam Badding said.

Innovation

Businesses face the challenge and opportunity of using empathy and inclusion to drive innovation and collaboration.

"Innovation is fuelled by cultures of collaboration where there's an openness to every idea, where every person can be seen, heard and valued for their contributions," Dr Lyons said.

"There's never been more pressure on businesses, nor has there ever been more opportunity."

Alltech Mexico general manager Bianca Martins said companies should have inclusion programs not just diversity goals.

"We talk about diversity, we talk about equity, but inclusion is much stronger than anything," she said.

"Diversity is the traits and characteristics that make people unique, but inclusion refers to the behaviours and social norms that ensure people feel welcome and comfortable to be part of something really important."

"Companies can support inclusion by having a clear mission and purpose, showing empathy, understanding that every employee brings unique experiences, and having an inclusive culture."





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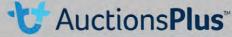
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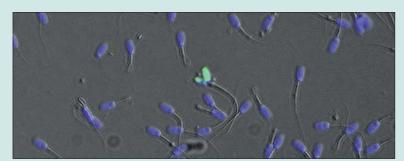
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DNA damaged (green) and intact (blue) boar sperm at 400 times magnification detected by TUNEL assay.

# Heat stress models could predict heat-tolerant boars with higher fertility

TROPICAL summer causes 16 times higher DNA damage in boar sperm that can significantly reduce litter sizes in pigs.

However, the ability to study and solve summer infertility in boars is difficult due to the seasonal nature of heat stress.

Associate Professor Damien Paris, Professor Bruce Gummow and PhD student Dr Santiago Peña Ir from the Gamete and Embryology Lab at James Cook University, have developed heat stress models that can be used

The in vivo 'boar hot room' model induced a biologically significant increase in sperm DNA damage, which varied widely between individual boars.

Interestingly, the in vitro 'sperm heat shock' model showed that sperm from several boars were more resistant to heat-induced DNA damage at increasing temperatures compared to others.

This suggests that this 'sperm heat shock assay' could be used as a diagnostic fertility

screening tool to select heat-tolerant boars better suited to service the pig breeding industry of the tropics.

The work was supported by an Australia Awards Scholarship to Dr Peña, and has recently been published in the scientific journal Tropical Animal Health and Production doi. org/10.1007/s11250-020-02516-y

For more information, contact Assoc Prof Damien Paris on 07 4781 6006 or email damien.paris@jcu.edu.

# Australian producers can now apply for grants

AUSTRALIAN farmers, producers and manufacturers can now apply for financial support from the Coles Nurture Fund to help them innovate and grow.

Coles has opened a new round of the Coles Nurture Fund to provide grants of up to \$500,000 for small and medium-sized businesses to develop new products, technologies and processes.

Coles chief executive officer Steven Cain encouraged businesses to apply for financial support in Round 9 of the Coles Nurture Fund.

"At Coles, we want to win together with Australian producers by funding projects which drive innovation to inspire customers or improve sustainability on Aussie farms and production facilities," Mr Cain said.

'Together we hope to ground-breaking tech-

drive differentiation, nology, improve sussustainable practices, extend growing seasons and improve productivity."

Businesses with innovative ideas, fewer than 50 full-time employees and a turnover of less than \$25 million in annual revenue are eligible

to apply. Since it was established in 2015, the Coles Nurture Fund has awarded more than \$24 million in financial support to over 60 Australian businesses to help them introduce

tainability, establish new products and drive productivity.

Previous Nurture Fund projects include Australia's first quinoa processing plant, an automated indoor facility that grows highly nutritious cattle fodder in just six days, and fence posts made from recycled soft plastic.

National Farmers Federation chief executive officer Tony Mahar said Australian farmers are among the most innovative in the world.

"For five years the

Coles Nurture Fund has recognised and rewarded Aussie farmers who are leading the way in ingenuity and innovation."

"Each round of the Nurture Fund uncovers inspiring farm businesses pushing the boundaries when it comes to processes, technologies and valueadding.

"The Fund's focus on sustainability and increased efficiencies is in direct alignment with the NFF's vision to grow Australia's overall farm gate output to \$100 billion by 2030, up from \$60 billion today," Mr Mahar said.

To apply for Round 9 of the Coles Nurture Fund, log onto coles. com.au/nurturefund

Applications close at 5pm AEST on Friday March 19, 2021.



# Virocid strengthens the fight

VIROCID has been approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, Permit 88135v2, for use as a disinfectant for farm decontamination as part of the emergency disease control of African swine fever and classical swine

Strict biosecurity measures are now more than ever at the forefront of sustainable production farming, with the aim to prevent the introduction of

disease which can lead to catastrophic outcomes.

Zamira Australia general manager Dr Andrew McKay said, "Strong biosecurity standards are everyone's responsibility."

"The Australian Federal Government is responsible for border protection, while producers are responsible for ensuring good biosecurity practices on farm."

Internal and external biosecurity practices are critical in preventing path-

ogens entering the farm and spreading through the herd.

Farm hygiene plays a vital role in any biosecurity plan.

A key element of achieving good farm hygiene is having a systematic cleaning and disinfecting protocol, using high quality products.

"Only a few disinfectants have the ability to inactivate the African swine fever virus," Dr McKay

Virocid is a concentrated disinfectant that is highly effective at killing bacteria, viruses, fungi and yeasts at a very low dilution rate (0.25-0.5 percent) just 1L of Virocid covers 1600sqm.

While no cases of African swine fever have been detected in Australia, the disease's high mortality rate means farming communities must be prepared with an emergency response plan should this status change.

changing distribution means it's a significant biosecurity threat," Dr McKay said.

As there is no treatment for ASF, prevention along with a prompt response is crucial to stop this highly transmissible disease from devastating herds in Aus-

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#### ABARES and ABS deliver new Australian farm database

A NEW secure database of Australian farms has been constructed as part of a multi-year collaboration between the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The final report of the Agricultural Data Integration Project released by ABARES details this innovative work that integrates several existing datasets to unlock new insights and applications for Australian farms.

The report presents a range of new analysis undertaken with the database, exploring fine scale trends in crop production, the effects of seasonal climate and drought on farm outcomes, and measuring trends in water productivity in the Murray-Darling Basin.

ABARES senior economist and project lead Dr Neal Hughes said the dataset can help us better

understand, measure and potentially forecast the effects of drought and climate change across different types of farms.

"This database provides a clearer picture of longterm trends in the agriculture sector, allowing us to publish datasets at finer spatial scales and with more consistency over time, than has been possible in the past," Dr Hughes said.

"There are exciting future applications, including supporting new approaches to drought risk management for farmers and undertaking detailed evaluations of government programs or farm management practices."

The project combined ABS Agricultural Census and survey data since 2000-01 to construct the Farm-level Longitudinal Agricultural Dataset, which was then integrated with the ABS Business Longitudinal Agricultural Data Environment.

Project work was supported by the Australian Government's Data Integration Partnership for Australia.

ABARES executive director Dr Steve Hatfield-Dodds said the construction of this database was a significant achievement, providing government with a long-term asset that can be used to inform key issues, ranging from the drivers of farm productivity, to the effects of drought and climate change, to understanding policy impacts in areas such as water reform.

"The project represents an important milestone both for efforts to extract the best possible value and insight from existing government datasets, and for the development of a new, modern approach to agricultural data and statistics that delivers more to industry and government users, while reducing the respondent burden associated with surveys," Dr

Hatfield-Dodds said.

As with all DIPA projects, the privacy and anonymity of an individual's information is protected, with the database de-identified and held in a secure environment to be used only for policy analysis and research purposes.

ABS industry statistics general manager John Shepherd said the project was a testament to the close relationship between AB-ARES and the ABS and their shared commitment to modernise Australian agricultural statistics.

"The ABS Five Safes Framework and secure DataLab environment allow this valuable work to be undertaken while strictly protecting privacy and confidentiality," Mr Shepherd said.

The Agricultural Data Integration Project report can be viewed by visiting agriculture.gov.au/abares/ research-topics/climate/ag ricultural-data-integration-

# How acidifiers improve gut health in pigs

TO see organic acids or simply acidifiers being used as feed additives to replace antibiotic growth promotors is common now.

Acidifiers play an important role in pig gut health in many ways.

Two recent studies published in 2020 in the Journal of Animal Physiology and Animal Nutrition and Animals Journal give an overview of key benefits of acidifiers in pig gut health.

The research focussed on the benefits of organic acids on pig gut health as exerted through different modes of action in the feed and along the gastrointestinal tract in pigs.

The modes of action include reduction of pH and feed buffering capacity, antimicrobial actions, beneficial modulation of microflora, the provision of energy and factors influencing efficacy.

Organic acids can be classified into three main functional categories: short chain fatty acids, medium chain fatty acids and tricarboxylic acids.

The common MCFA are lauric, capric, caprylic and caproic, while for SCFAs they are acetic, propionic and butyric acids, and citric, malic and fumaric for TCAs.

Other than these categories, few organic acids such as benzoic, sorbic and lactic acid are widely used in food and feed preservation.

Many acids are commonly used as salts of sodium, potassium or calcium.

The benefits of salts are less odour, easy handling during feed manufacture, less corrosive and high solubility in water compared to free acids.

#### Explaining feed buffering capacity

The researchers stress the antimicrobial action of organic acids exerted through reduction of pH of the feed – reducing the risk of microbial contamination to the animal – and by direct growth inhibition of specific pathogenic bacteria such as salmonella.

The addition of organic acids to piglet diets is important since piglets lack the capacity to acidify their stomach content by hydrochloric acid and gastric pH of piglets is kept

high by the buffering capacity of the diet.

Thus, the pH value in the stomach may stay high at usually pH 4-5 after feeding leading to suboptimal protein digestion and unfavourable pH for killing pathogens.

Besides poor production of HCL, piglets lack sufficient lactic acid from lactose fermentation.

The researchers further highlighted that acidifiers improve protein digestion by reducing the buffering capacity of feed.

High gastric pH impairs pepsin activation and function – optimal under pH 2 to 3.5 – reducing the efficiency of protein digestion.

Improved protein digestion means a healthier gut and undigested fractions that could act as substrate for pathogenic bacterial strains are reduced.

This is particularly the case for undigested protein, which is linked to clostridium perfringens, the bacteria responsible for necrotic enteritis.

On the other hand, high pH increases the rate of gastric emptying, reducing the digestion time in the stomach.

In addition, various organic acids such as citric, formic, fumaric and lactic acid reduce environmental excretion of minerals namely calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and zinc by improving their absorption and retention.

For example, citric acid increases calcium and phosphorus absorption through chelating calcium – this makes the phytate structure less stable and more accessible to phytase action.

#### action. Antimicrobial action

Though the antimicrobial activity differs between organic acids, by influencing the pH most organic acids inhibit the growth of pathogenic bacteria.

What the researchers found was that the efficacy of acids against the coliform bacteria follows this order: benzoic > fumaric > lactic > butyric > formic > propionic acid.

The proliferation of most pH sensitive bacteria such as e coli, salmonella and c perfringens is minimised below pH 5, while acid-tolerant varieties survive.

This means organic acids promote the proliferation of beneficial bacteria which are acid-tolerant such as the lactobacillus sp and bifidobacterium sp, creating the preferred microbiota-balanced or eubiotic state in the gut.

Based on the environmental pH and pKa values, organic acids in their undissociated form can diffuse across the bacterial cell membrane and dissociate inside the cell, releasing H+ ions and decreasing intracellular pH.

This inhibits bacterial replication and growth, leading to bactericidal effects.

The efficacy of organic acids varies depending on the target organism.

Gram positive bacteria – c perfringens, enterococcus spp, streptococcus spp – are mainly susceptible to MCFA, while gram-negative bacteria such as e coli, campylobacter jejuni and salmonella spp are more sensitive to SCFA.

The lipophilic nature of MCFA allows them to have a stronger antibacterial activity against grampositive species, whereas the presence of lipopoly-saccharide in the gramnegative cell wall confers resistance to these species.

Also observed was that SCFA in pigs increased the relative mRNA expressions of intestinal development-related genes, including IGF-1, IGF-IR, GLP-2 and GLP-2R, indicating the benefits of SCFA on gut morphology and development.

Taking an example, butyric acid was seen to promote intestinal epithelial integrity as measured through its effects on increasing the relative mRNA expression of tight junction – offering an intestinal barrier function.

#### Modulation of micro-flora

The researchers further explained how organic acids modulate intestinal fermentation patterns.

For instance, the most studied formic acid or its salts increased acetic acid and decreased lactic acid concentrations in both ileum and colon contents.

This indicated a shift in the composition of intestinal flora and a modulation of microbial fermentations with more nutrients or metabolites such as acetate available to the host.

Based on the antimicrobial mode of action, organic acids can inhibit the growth of undesired pH-sensitive microorganisms – enterobacteriaceae

- while promoting the proliferation of beneficial bacteria tolerant to lower pH.

In this view, organic acids can be an optimal tool to control the dysbiosis characterised by coliforms overgrowth and lactobacilli depression, typical of weaning time in pigs.

SCFA reduce the pH and promote the proliferation of beneficial bacteria, thus offering a probiotic effect in the colon.

The researchers also found that besides individual organic acids, blends of organic acids including SCFA, MCFA and acids salts increased the levels of acetic, propionic and butyric acid produced by microbial fermentation of carbohydrates in the

large intestine.

Overall, organic acids have the potential to modulate the microflora populations and consequently microbial metabolites production along the GIT.

#### Provision of energy

Organic acids can have a metabolic role by improving the intestinal mucosa trophism and modulating general metabolism, particularly for SCFA.

In the large intestine of pigs, SCFA are rapidly absorbed by the colonic epithelium to play a pivotal role in the intestinal and general energy metabolism.

Butyric acid is almost completely oxidised within the mucosa, serving as preferred energy source for the colonocytes, whereas propionic acid is collected by the liver where it is converted into glucose, and acetic acid is instead used by peripheral tissues.

Sorbic acid added to weaning piglets increases growth performance through the modulation of lipid metabolism and the enhancement of insulinlike growth factor system, particularly relevant for the GIT development.

In addition, the researchers point out that pigs can utilise fumaric acid as an energy source, with an efficiency close to that of glucose.

The researchers also gave an overview of the various applications of acidifiers in animal nutrition as highlighted in Figure 1.

#### Factors influencing efficacy

Several factors influence the efficacy of acidifiers: physical and chemical form of acid, salt, coated or uncoated, odour and taste, solubility, pKa value, minimum inhibitory concentration, site of action, dietary composition and feed buffering capacity.

Coating, as an example, ensures the slow release of acids throughout the GIT and curbs the effect of odour.



Photo: Dusan Petkovic

# Jefo announces Lisa Nietschke as regional sales manager South Australia

JEFO, a global leader in high-performance non-medicated nutritional solutions for animals, recently announced that Lisa Nietschke joined the Jefo Australia team as regional sales manager South Australia, on February 8.

Jefo Australia's managing director Wayne Bradshaw said, "Lisa will be an outstanding asset to the Jefo Australia team."

"She has a wealth of knowledge and history in the Australian animal feed industry and I am honoured that she has joined our team.

"Lisa not only has bachelor's degree in animal science, and the practical experience of formulating and balancing diets for monogastric and ruminant animals, Lisa is also a member by examination of the Australian Association of Ruminant Nutritionists.

President and founder of the Jefo Group Jean Fontaine said, "Lisa is a fantastic asset to the team led by Wayne Bradshaw, who has been working with our strategic partners within Australia and New Zealand for 16 years now, and our commitment is stronger than ever."

Lisa has worked in Australian intensive industries for 12 years and has knowledge in all areas of monogastric and ruminant nutrition, as well as in research, development and extension.

Lisa has seen the real benefits that the Jefo matrix technology offers to modern day intensive animal production and performance.

"I am happy to join a company that is offering key solutions to provide a real return-on-investment to the farmers," Ms Nietschke said.

Lisa can be contacted on 0407 701 944 or at lnietschke@jefo.com 🖘



Jefo Australia's new regional sales manager South Australia Lisa Nietschke.



# **Tackling pork market with innovation**

WHEN it comes to value adding, particularly for the smaller pork and bacon producers, the Australian pig industry is finding its feet and adopting new ways to market product, often using direct relationships with butchers.

Australian Pork Limited released its roadmap for the future this month in the form of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and it highlights some of the important ground the industry has made in the past decade to combat ongoing threats such as cheap imports, climate change and animal welfare issues.

APL chair Andrew Baxter outlined in the report that in the past 10 years the industry had increased domestic pork consumption by 35 percent while at the same time grown the industry to be worth \$5.3 billion via a lift in productivity.

During the same period, Mr Baxter said piggeries now used 60 percent less carbon and many generate electricity via on-farm waste.

During the next five years APL intends to specifically target market and product differentiation, better management of market volatility, driving consumer demand, social license and enabling viable productive farms.

But at the coalface many pork producers are already making their own luck and generating strong community demand for their innovative pork products.

Wellington butcher and pork producer Rodney Dowton is right in the thick of making a living from both ends of the meat and livestock production chain.

He breeds his own pigs and lambs on his property a little west of town.

Mr Dowton and his wife run the Dowto's Family Meats butchery to complement the farm's produc-

He started his butchering career as an apprentice to Greg Gillin, who bought the shop in the late 1980s.

Mr Gillin was a specialist when it came to curing and Mr Dowton said he soaked up all the mentoring he could to become quite adept with the process.

As a result, the shop offers cured hams and chickens, plus smoked products including bacon, chooks, and a range of homemade salamis.

The lead-up to Christmas preparing hams meant all hands on deck at Dowto's Family Meats butchery.

Their butcher shop is now one of only three family-own butcher shops in town, but it's still competing well against the Coles and Woolworths meat aisles also in Wel-

Mr Dowton said his ham smoking process during curing used shavings from either white box, mountain red gum or even aca-

"You really can't beat Aussie hardwood for smoking, although acacias are soft, but give a real bush taste," he said.

All his wood comes from their property Four Winds between Walma and Arthurville.

All their animals are rangeland bred and reared. so there's a 'grassfed' taste to the meat with not a lot of grain.

Mr Dowton said he tried to manage up to three litters from his sows a year.

"They roam the farm and piglets have to survive, especially the foxes in winter, and I'll market those as either suckers or baconers, depending on the time of year, and of course the lead up to Christmas is ham time.' he said.

Mr Dowton takes his stock to Cowra abattoir for slaughter.

"I fill the trailer with straw (home grown cereal) and you can see the pigs enjoy the ride," he said.

"I reckon they fall asleep they are so comfortable, and I can assure you they're hard to budge out of the straw when they arrive."

Mr Dowton said he was using Duroc sows with either a Red Duroc or a Large White boar to produce his pigs for the butcher shop.

In addition to the pigs, he runs Glenwood SRS blood Merino ewes with either Merino or meat breed rams.

At present, he has an Aussie White ram whose progeny are about four months and getting close to market.

The progeny are all sold as home-grown prime

Mr Dowton said the taste of his Merino lambs was fantastic.

"I reckon you can't taste the difference between these and crossbreds," he said. 🖘



Rodney Dowton with two of his homegrown and cured hams in his Wellington butcher shop. He produced more than 100 hams to sell before Christmas. Photo:

AUSTRALIA

Aussie Pumps

**AUSTRALIA** 

AUSSIE GMP

Aerator or effluent pump ... it can be both

#### Just 2.16 percent less Photo: Melissa Askew

SODIUM nitrite is used in small quantities to cure bacon, but scientists have stabilised the chemical to persist long enough in an outdoor environment to use it to kill pigs.

One of the new technology's developers Dr Linton Staples reckons it's a game changer and could become a frontline defence should African swine enter the country

The key to the bait is sodium nitrite's ability to convert hemoglobin into methemoglobin, eliminating red blood cells' capability to carry oxygen.

The end result of that is the pig goes to sleep then dies without awareness.

Dr Staples compares its effects with carbon monoxide poisoning

The research into the new bait, which now has Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority approval for use, began 12 years ago.

Initial investigations were of pigs' metabolism, seeking exploitable weaknesses.

Once sodium nitrite was identified, then came the challenge of stabilising the chemical in an outdoor environment.

This was technically difficult because it is "the hardest I've worked on in 30 years," according to Dr

Staples. The final version of the bait is in paste form and is

**New bait to combat feral pig incursions** 

While the baiting area must be signed, the APVMA has approved it as an S6 chemical, meaning there is no specific training or certificates needed for

Dr Staples said the team at Animal Control Technologies Australia (ACTA). which developed the chemical and named it Hoggone, reckoned the cost per dead

be moved from property to property, meaning the cost can be shared among landholders.

the active ingredient is first put out, then the pigs become 'besotted' with it.

sodium nitrite is added and the bait does its job. "They're affected by it

But the desire for the

to tally.

found within 100-200m of

tonnes of Australian wheat last month, S&P Global Platts reported.

Wheat shipments to

since 1988.

AUSTRALIAN goods than the \$148.4 bilexported to China lion total for 2019, reached \$145.2 billion which was the highest

for 2020 despite a year

rife with tariffs and

trade restrictions, ac-

cording to preliminary

600,000 tonnes of wheat

to China last month -

the largest-ever monthly

wheat export total from

Australia to any single

that Chinese authori-

ties might block Aus-

tralian wheat amid an

escalating political row,

wheat exports to China

surged last month,

underscoring a year

when overall trade be-

tween the countries ap-

proached a record high.

which there had been no

wheat trade between the

two countries, hundreds

of thousands of tonnes

changed hands in De-

cember, valued at \$248

million according to

preliminary trade data

from the Australian Bu-

The exchange came

in sharp contrast to the

tensions that rocked

the China Australia re-

lationship for most of

Final export figures

will be confirmed early

February, but based on

preliminary international data, Australia's

total goods exported to

China reached \$145.2

billion for 2020.

reau of Statistics.

After three months in

shipped

warnings

figures.

country.

Despite

Australia

grain-hungry China surge

recorded in ABS data

Amid blistering de-

mand from grain-short

Chinese importers, in

part due to supply short-

ages in competing Black

Sea markets, Australia shipped 600,000 tonnes

of wheat to China in

December and a further

110,000 tonnes in Jan-

uary, according to com-

modities analyst S&P

The ABS confirmed

the bumper sale to

China in December ac-

counted for a third of

all wheat exported from

Australia and was its

largest-ever monthly

wheat export to any

Vietnam and Indo-

nesia each received

shipments of 265,000

single country.

Global Platts.

Australia's 600,000tonne shipment was well ahead of its last record single shipment of wheat at 400,000 tonnes in early 2014.

Given decreasing competition from export restrictions in Russia, Australia is well-placed to supply wheat not only to eastern Asia but also markets in the Middle East and Africa - regions where Black Sea and European suppliers traditionally dominate.

The 600,000-tonne shipment was booked in September and its successful export in December was a good sign that Australian wheat orders were not being turned away, unlike other commodities such as coal had been. 🖘



dispensed from a moulded the entire family unit is plastic hopper to stop nonkilled. targeted species accessing

pig was about \$5.

The hopper costs about \$400, is reusable and can

In trials the paste without

Then one good dose of

within minutes and dead within about three hours," Dr Staples said.

tasty morsel has them hanging around for more, meaning results are easy

Most carcases can be the hopper.

And because pigs live in family groups of 10-50 the whole lot can be taken out, whereas shooting from a helicopter doesn't assure

"Aerial shooting is suppression, not control," Dr Staples said, suggesting in any given area 75 percent of the population needed to be taken out to begin quelling it.

He said aerial shooting cost estimates in the US, areas of which have similar feral pig problems to Australia, put per head dead from US\$25 to \$US50.

For the past few months ACTA has been working with Local Land Services and farmers on Kilarnev near Hillston with camera monitored baiting points.

Dr Staples, who runs Angus breeders on about 400 hectares near Victoria's Lake Eildon, said because of sodium nitrite's nature, there was no chance of secondary poisoning by scavenging animals.

He has worked in the pest elimination field for 30 years, with an agricultural science, fundamental research background.

He successfully worked to improve fecundity in sheep using melatonin.

It was then he realised what farmers already knew, foxes were taking the extra lambs.

It was then he moved into pest control.

Since then he has helped develop Fox Off, Rabbait, Mouse Off and Rat Off.

First appeared on theland.com.au 🦙

Page 16 – Australian Pork Newspaper, February 2021

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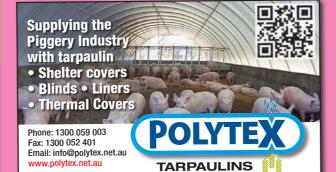
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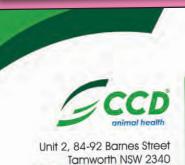
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