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# Australian Pork

## NEWSPAPER

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## Biosecurity vigilance to stop African swine fever spread to Australia

AUSTRALIAN pork producers remain on alert following confirmation in the last week of March that the deadly African swine fever virus caused the deaths of hundreds of pigs in Papua New Guinea.

PNG officials, who confirmed samples from the affected Southern Highlands pigs were sent to Australia and returned positive for ASF, are investigating how the virus spread to the region, including the possibility of transmission via imported canned food.

Australian Pork Limited CEO Margo Andrae said the detection of ASF in PNG reinforced the importance of ongoing ASF mitigation work between the pork industry, government and other stakeholders.

"While ASF does not pose human health risks, the deadly virus would absolutely devastate Australia's pork industry if it arrived here," she said.

"The potential national economic impact from an ASF incursion in Australia is estimated to be more than \$2 billion.

"There is no cure for ASF and millions of Australian pigs would be at risk if the disease reached our country.

"That would devastate pork producers and Australian fresh pork supplies, and seriously jeopardise the wellbeing of the 36,000 Australians employed in our industry."

Ms Andrae said ASF represented potentially the biggest animal disease event the world has ever seen, having already killed hundreds of millions of pigs across Asia and Europe.

"ASF has been confirmed in PNG, Indonesia and Timor Leste, and we are concerned of its potential spread to the Pacific region.

"The battle is being fought across international borders and we wel-

come the Federal Government's offer to assist PNG to contain the virus.

"Even with current travel restrictions, there is no room for complacency in terms of ASF, particularly given international postal services remain operational.

"That is why the installation of two new 3D x-ray machines at the Sydney and Melbourne mail centres, as part of the government's \$66.6 million ASF-response package, is such an important part of our defence.

"Biosecurity measures in the Torres Strait have been strengthened as a result of COVID-19 and the government is reviewing those measures to reflect the risk ASF in PNG poses to Australia."

Confirmation of ASF in PNG coincides with the Inspector-General of Biosecurity's release of the updated report on the adequacy of preventative border measures to mitigate the risk of ASF.

"A timely recommendation in the report is the inclusion of additional criteria in risk assessment for flights from ASF-affected countries, including a focus on seasonal farm workers," Ms Andrae said.

"We cannot afford any weak links in our defence against ASF.

"All aspects of monitoring at the border are critical, as is the work by producers to strengthen on-farm biosecurity and the cross-agency collaboration being led by National Feral Pig Management Coordinator Dr Heather Channon."

The IGB report is available at [igb.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/asf-review-report.pdf](http://igb.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/asf-review-report.pdf)

## Pork supply secure, call to support foodservice trade

THE Australian Pork Limited team is taking the lead on several fronts in response to the rapidly evolving impact of COVID-19.

APL is committed to ensuring Australian pig producers and the wider pork industry are able to respond strongly to the unfolding situation.

As an industry, our priorities are to protect the health and safety of our staff and customers, and to ensure a consistent supply of high-quality and nutritious Australian pork.

We are encouraged by assurances from federal and state jurisdictions that agricultural supply chains are recognised as essential services and will remain operational during any shutdown periods.

Nonetheless, we will maintain a vigilant watch on anything that may compromise producer and processor operations.

APL is working closely with the National Farmers' Federation and directly with the Federal Government to guarantee the movement of animals, product and farm inputs across the country, including across state borders.

APL is also in regular contact with state-based pork groups to communicate updates on national initiatives and receive valuable local feedback to help guide ongoing APL priorities, including maintaining access to a wide range of markets.

State-based representative groups are working closely with their respective state government to ensure the



### Point of View

by MARGO ANDRAE CEO



industry remains operational to maintain supply to consumers and uphold the wellbeing of the animals in care.

As a member of NFF, APL and our producers are being strongly represented at several high-level Federal Government working groups, convened by the Prime Minister, relevant Ministers and Commonwealth departments.

This engagement has been strengthened by Minister David Littleproud's appointment of former Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture Mark Tucker as the key liaison between the department and industry, to help ensure agricultural production and supply chains are maintained throughout the COVID-19 response.

Fresh pork plays a significant role in meeting our national food needs – on average each Australian eats more than 10kg of fresh, locally produced pork every year.

Australian processors have a combined weekly throughput of about 100,000 pigs.

They are doing everything possible to uphold employee wellbeing to

have purchased pork to eat at home.

A great eating experience is always important, especially for those who don't regularly prepare pork meals in their own kitchen.

Meanwhile, the foodservice trade, which represents about 25 percent of our sales, has been brought to a devastating standstill by the isolation measures designed to limit the spread of the virus.

I encourage all of us – we are all consumers – to support foodservice businesses, which remain operational during this critical time.

Home delivery services are a great way to support the restaurants that support our industry, even if you're eating at home.

Producers are encouraged to consider how the range of Federal Government support measures may apply to their businesses.

From an on-property perspective, APL has also developed a guide for producers to manage the risks posed by COVID-19.

This guide and other ongoing updates are available via [australianpork.com.au](http://australianpork.com.au)



### Adequacy of preventative border measures to mitigate the risk of African swine fever

Review report No. 2019-20/02



The report on the adequacy of preventative border measures to mitigate the risk of ASF is available at [igb.gov.au](http://igb.gov.au)



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## Pork Industry Calendar of Events

2020

**APR 21-22** – Dutch Pork Expo, Netherlands [www.dutchporkexpo.nl/en](http://www.dutchporkexpo.nl/en)

**MAY 12-13** British Pig and Poultry Fair Warwickshire, UK [www.pigandpoultry.org.uk](http://www.pigandpoultry.org.uk)

**JUN 3-5** – World Pork Expo, Iowa, US [www.worldpork.org](http://www.worldpork.org)

**JUN 9-11** – Agritech West Africa 2020, Accra, Ghana [www.agritechwestafrica.com](http://www.agritechwestafrica.com)

**JUN 9-11** – Alberta Pork Congress, Alberta, Canada [albertaporkcongress.com](http://albertaporkcongress.com)

**JUN 17-18** – Ontario Pork Congress, Ontario Canada [porkcongress.on.ca](http://porkcongress.on.ca)

**AUG 11-15** – Global Animal Nutrition Summit, Guelph, Ontario, Canada [globalanimalnutrition2020.uoguelph.ca/welcome](http://globalanimalnutrition2020.uoguelph.ca/welcome)

**SEP 19-22** – The Allen D. Leman Swine Conference, Saint Paul, Minnesota, US [ccaps.umn.edu/allen-d-leman-swine-conference](http://ccaps.umn.edu/allen-d-leman-swine-conference)

**How to supply event details: Send all details to Australian Pork Newspaper, PO Box 387, Cleveland, Qld 4163, call 07 3286 1833 fax: 07 3821 2637, email: [ben@porknews.com.au](mailto:ben@porknews.com.au)**

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# Differences between science and commerce

LAST time I was involved as part of a team of technical experts was over 18 years ago, and it was with about 70 food technologists.

So, I called a mentor of mine and asked him whether I might have forgotten anything about working with technical experts.

His answer was annoyingly concise: "They are people Pete, treat them like people."

Accordingly, in my first four weeks in Research and Innovation, that's what I've been doing.

We've had honest conversations and agreed to actively working together to remove barriers and improve processes in order to deliver outcomes in a timely manner.

In commerce, we're primarily interested in the effect an action has on profitability, or cash flow, or both.

I don't know why a 5 percent price promotion affects about 40 percent of consumers to change the brand they buy, just that it does.

People probably each have their own reason for changing their behaviour.

But the same action regularly causes a reaction of similar magnitude, and in my experience, this is the case in most categories.

My understanding of research was that it's primarily interested in why things happen.

The Oxford English dictionary defines science as "Knowledge about the structure and behaviour of the natural and physical world, based on facts that you can prove."

So, perhaps commerce is more outcome driven and science is more cause driven, or maybe not.

In our first week together, the Research and Innovation team told me what they want is both the cause and the outcome.

I was wrong.

If we are focusing on outcomes, what do we need to do more of?

If Newton was right and actions cause reactions, then what actions should we undertake to be successful?

I'm still learning and understand this is possibly 'enthusiasm that comes with a new goal', though it seems to me there are four clear areas.

First, accountability and authority.

We employ smart people, and if they are going to be accountable for delivering outcomes, then they also – within reason – need to have decision-making authority over how they are going to make those outcomes happen.

Second, streamlining.

It seems that if technology is evolving faster, then we need to be faster.

Therefore, we need to work towards achieving high-quality outcomes in a quicker way.

Third, responsibility for delivery.



by PETER HAYDON  
Research and Innovation  
General Manager



In most arenas, where a person with money agrees on someone with a skill to deliver a service, it is the service provider's responsibility to provide that service, to the agreed quality by the agreed date.

Currently, if things go off-track, the responsibility seems to lay more with Australian Pork Limited than with research providers.

We need to take a look at that.

Last, measuring outcomes.

We can improve how we measure outcomes, and we should.

We make a guess at what the outcome of an experiment will be before we do it, then do the experiment in a controlled way to try to achieve that research outcome.

We don't then measure who uses those outcomes for benefit in-industry and who does not.

Clearly we aren't going to change these things overnight, but we are actively working on them.

Producers are understandably triple checking, due to COVID-19, all the biosecurity plans they

double-checked in the 'Keep African swine fever out of Australia' activity of late-2019.

A positive is the results of a 2019 survey found that over three-quarters of pro-

ducer respondents – who cover slightly under 90 percent of pigs – take measures to minimise visitor biosecurity risks on farm.

Not only are these measures key to reducing risks to the health of pigs, but in our current situation, those same measures are also providing protection to staff by reducing their potential exposure to COVID-19.

Recent events have seen the APL marketers pivot their focus towards more in-home help with recipes and 'how to cook' outcomes.

Likewise, our APL regulatory teammates are working to find ways to continue to export Australian pork.

COVID-19 has caused numerous project delays in R&I, but many are still on schedule and so the research team continues to focus on finding ways to reduce production costs, keep our farms safe and improve our licence to operate.

Until next time, stay safe and let's continue delivering nutritious, fresh food to Australia and beyond.



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The full Position Description can be obtained by calling (02) 6033 8268.

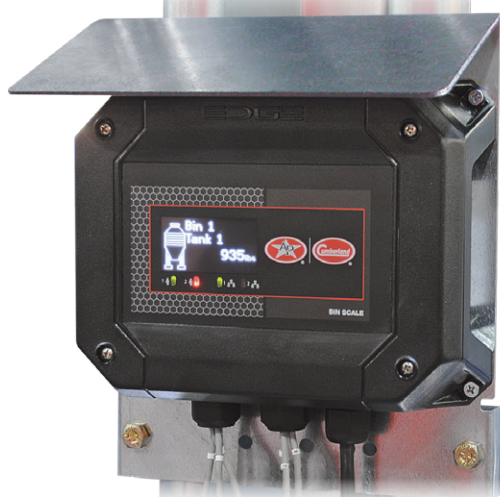
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# A worldwide exercise in biosecurity

BY the time this edition of APN goes to print, I am fairly sure most of Australia will be in some form of quarantine in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Denmark, we have been in lockdown for three weeks, which was extended to five weeks given the current conditions – already an extension from the original plan of a two-week nationwide quarantine.

Overnight the schools closed, the public sector was told to stay home and the private sector instructed to have their staff work from home wherever possible, with heavy restrictions placed on workplace 'stocking density'.

Within two days of those limitations all restaurants,



## Nordic News

by ASHLEY NORVAL

cafes, bars and eateries were takeaway only.

Police hand out hefty fines to anyone breaking the restrictions, including those considered too close to each other in public spaces.

One positive the pandemic is bringing to light is the importance of agriculture and food supply stability.

Unlike Australia, Denmark does not produce all its own food, and is reliant on importing many products – not including pork, of course.

Though panic buying did not hit Denmark quite as hard as Australia, over recent weeks media campaigns have been reassuring consumers that Danish agriculture is operating as usual.

The campaigns highlight the importance of buying Danish produce and increase understanding of the high standards Danish farmers must meet.

Given Denmark's three-week quarantine, it is becoming the new normal for Danes to be restricted in their movement and aware of how they could be spreading the disease unwittingly.

The concept of biosecurity is in the forefront of everyone's mind.

This presents a unique opportunity to not only educate consumers to buy local, but to promote how important disease control is for agriculture.

Suddenly a real-life, serious viral threat is impeding the general popu-

lation and not only the agricultural community.

In the background of this pandemic, however, other threats with serious consequences continue to bubble away, such as African swine fever.

The importance of good biosecurity resulting in disease preparedness has commenced on Danish pig farms.

The past year has seen a significant increase in messaging directed to the public and pig production employees regarding ASF, from both SEGES and individual businesses.

This messaging was amplified specifically to non-Danish employees who could potentially travel from their hometown in Eastern Europe with pork products.

The message was clear to them, and to all travellers – do not bring pork products into Denmark.

Unfortunately, due to the Schengen Agreement it is impossible to enforce this rule at the border, which means a reliance on understanding how important and real the threat is.

With COVID-19 on the scene, and staff forced into quarantine therefore unable to work due to the lockdown, this message intensified.

If ASF were to hit Denmark, it would not only cripple the industry but also the national economy, and the decision taken out of the hands of individual businesses as to how they respond.

Many employees would be out of a job and pos-

sibly unable to stay in the country.

The significance is beginning to hit home for general consumers – we need people to work on farms to produce food for the population and equally we need to keep disease out of the country, which is something they can help with.

This appears simple to those of us in the agricultural industry, but somehow the message is lost when consumers have no basic understanding of the agricultural supply chain.

These are challenging and uncertain times for many around the world.

If nothing else, I sincerely hope people start to realise the importance of food security and supporting their local farmers.

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## COVID-19 update for producers

AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited has developed a general guidance document for pig producers to assist in planning for and mitigating risks posed by COVID-19 to their employees, business, animal welfare and supply of pork products to the community.

These guidelines are designed as prompts to consider strategies aimed at:

- Protecting the health and safety of employees, families and broader community;
- Ensuring the ongoing supply of pig meat to Australian consumers, thereby supporting food security at this challenging time; and
- Facilitate, as far as possible, business continuity – thereby ensuring the welfare of animals is not jeopardised and ongoing job security for employees.

The guide includes information on keeping employees informed and engaged, recommendations to prevent

introduction and spreading, protocols if an employee is confirmed infected, contingency arrangements and supporting staff.

The full document can be found at [australianpork.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CoVID-19-and-your-workforce.pdf](https://australianpork.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CoVID-19-and-your-workforce.pdf)

Please note that while care has been taken preparing the guide, it does not constitute legal advice.

Heed any advice and direction given by public health officials.

Be aware that the COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly, and as a result the guidelines may require revision in light of new developments.

For further information, contact the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

AUSTRALIAN  
Pork

**AUSTRALIAN PORK LIMITED**  
CoVID-19 and your workforce  
Guidelines for industry



# Coronaviruses, COVID-19 and our pigs

PIGS cannot get COVID-19 and will not give you COVID-19.

To date there is no evidence of any animal transmission with this new coronavirus COVID-19.

This is a human virus and a human problem.

The evidence is pointing to a person in Wuhan becoming the first case in November 2019.

There was a report of the virus being found in a dog in Hong Kong, and though the virus was located, it was not replicating and the virus died out in the dog without producing any clinical signs.

There have been no cases – zero – of pigs getting

COVID-19 in China.

Coronaviruses are a big family, which is made up of similar viruses.

They are so called because down the electron microscope they look like the corona of the sun.

This virus family is thousands of years old.

The corona is formed from a variety of spikes that stick through the oily envelope.

The virus family lives in many species of mammal, birds and other reptiles.

Man has many known coronaviruses, with various human coronaviruses identified before 2019 responsible for 15 percent of all common cold cases.

Though there are also types that are very serious, including severe acute respiratory syndrome and Middle East respiratory syndrome.

They are a difficult family to control and vaccination generally produces poor protection.

Their genetics are based on RNA and this means they can easily change.

Which makes them challenging to manage because new forms will constantly emerge and the host (animal and human) population will have little or no immunity to the 'new' form.

This is what happened at the end of 2019.

A new form of this virus appeared and is now spreading worldwide.

Our pigs can get their own coronaviruses, which have a range of clinical problems.

Porcine epidemic diarrhoea affects the intestines of piglets less than 10 days of age with fatal consequences.

Porcine respiratory coronavirus affects the breathing of pigs causing a mild cough and sneeze, similar to human seasonal colds, which can be dramatic but the pigs recover.

Though these viruses do not infect people.

The change in PED to a more virulent form occurred following the interaction of the pig coronavirus with a bat coronavirus.

COVID-19 in humans has a similar history.

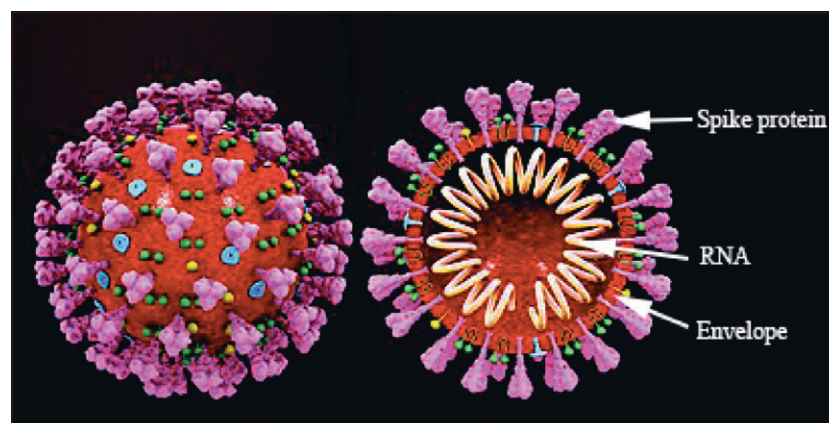
These coronaviruses do have a weakness – they have a layer of fat on the outside of the virus and if this is removed the virus cannot function.

For this reason, washing your hands carefully with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, ideally with a nailbrush, is a great idea.

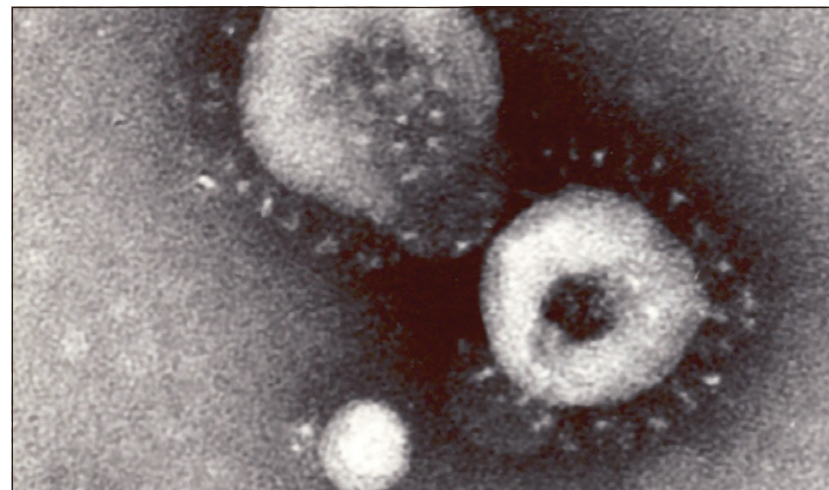
Washing your hands to remove viruses can be difficult as illustrated on the previous page using an ultraviolet soap, which students use to teach them good hand biosecurity.

In the table, let's go through some of the signs of this particular COVID-19.

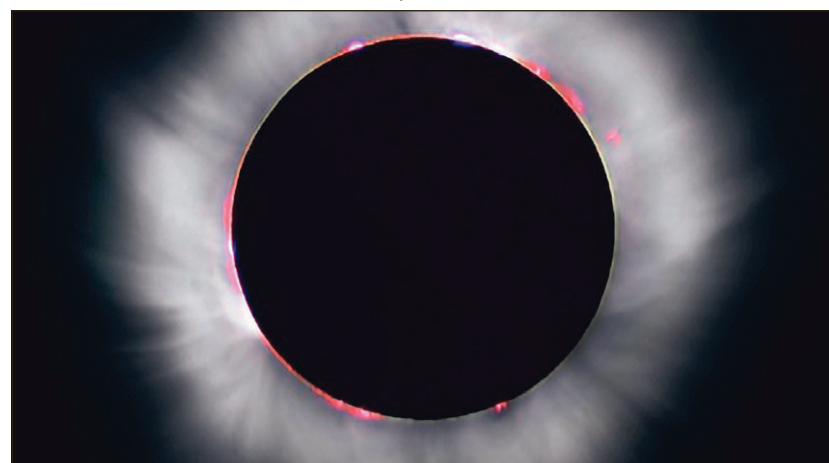
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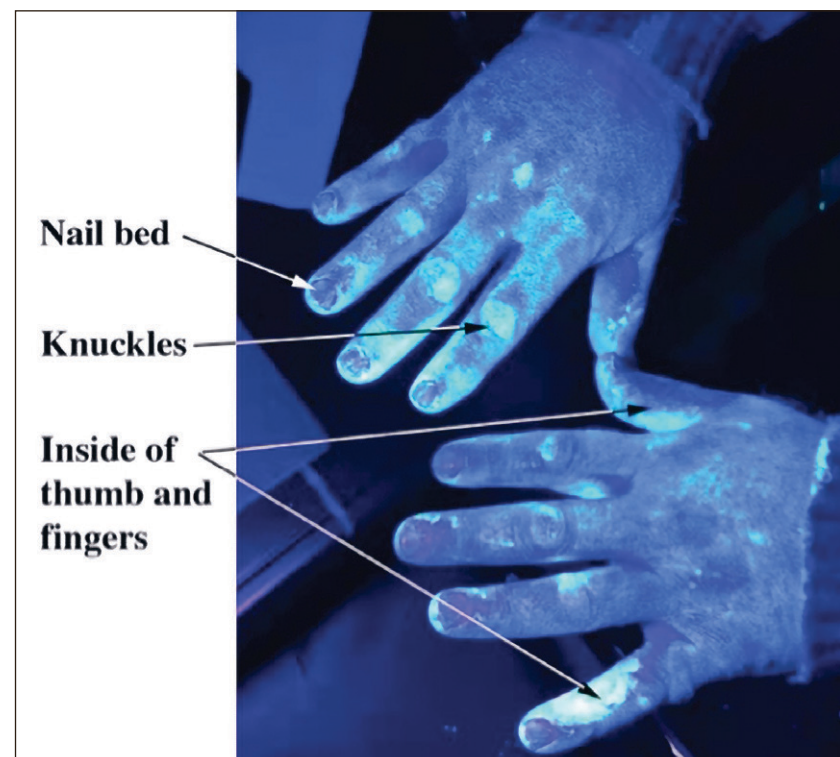
The structure of a coronavirus – the varieties all have a similar structure. Image: 3D medical illustration of 2019 novel coronavirus, derived from a CDC-released image.



Electron microscope view of coronavirus.



A solar eclipse and the corona.



Ultraviolet soap highlighting unwashed areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Veterinary Journal Volume 97 No 7, July 2019



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# Coronaviruses, COVID-19 and our pigs

from P5

ID-19's major clinical signs.

This is only an outline, if you are concerned you must consult with a medical professional.

The major signs are fever, fatigue and coughing.

Sneezing and a runny nose are not signs of this COVID-19 disease.

## Age groups affected

The majority of flu and colds appear to be more serious for the very young and old.

COVID-19 is different in that it really affects older people.

Pigs with PED have something similar but the other way around, where pigs less than 10 days of age get very sick, though in older

pigs the clinical signs are relatively mild.

One of the contributors might be that at birth we are gifted with natural immunity to pathogens.

The body takes 14 days or so to create antibodies but these only protect us

when we are infected a

second time – not the first.

As we get older the innate defence mechanisms of the body become weaker and we rely on antibodies to protect it.

With this virus, no-body has the antibodies

because it is new.

Once the first wave has passed, this virus will likely become one of the seasonal cold varieties we are familiar with.

But this first occurrence is a painful lesson – we are all human and in this together. 🐷

Clinical signs	Common cold	Influenza	COVID-19
Fever	Uncommon	Common	Common
Fatigue	Sometimes	Common	Common
Cough	Common	Common	Common
Aches and pains	Common	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Headaches	Uncommon	Common	Sometimes
Shortness of breath	No	No	Sometimes
Runny nose	Common	Sometimes	Uncommon
Diarrhoea	No	Sometimes	Uncommon
Sneezing	Common	No	No

# Now is the time to pivot Australian Pork Limited's marketing focus

THE first rule of marketing is 'ask a customer or observe a customer'.

Since 2010 we have been doing just that.

Coincidentally pork has been the growth species over the past nine years.

Australian Pork Limited's marketing programs remained consistent because customer behaviour remained largely consistent.

Australians bought what their families enjoyed eating.

This has gradually changed over time towards Australian pork and chicken, and away from beef and lamb.

There is little doubt Australian grocery shoppers radically changed their behaviour earlier this year.



## Marketing Matters

by PETER HAYDON



It has become common in the past four weeks to see toilet rolls, tinned vegetables, pasta, rice and meat shelves empty.

Panic buying has caused shoppers to fill their pantries, fridges and freezers with a barely believable level of stock.

The changes in consumer behaviour have caused four necessary changes to APL's marketing activities for the next three to six months.

First, Australians reduced eating out, before the governments limited them to takeaway and delivery only.

So, for the short term we will support restaurants and foodservice as much as possible in these horrendously difficult times.

Unfortunately, many will close.

The support will not be promotion, but it will be help.

In times of trouble, people remember who made a contribution rather than an excuse.

Promotion will return when we get to the recovery phase of this pandemic.

Second, people are not eating less, they are buying their food and stock from supermarkets and butchers.

These channels have mostly stopped promoting and are focusing on getting high-quality Australian meat to shoppers who want it.

There is little point promoting while demand is through the roof.

Third, and unfortunately, the change in supermarket buying patterns has made Adelaide's 'buy Australian ham' trial invalid.

The purpose of the trial was to learn what effect awareness that 'the majority of ham is made from imported meat' had on normal sales.

Sales are no longer normal, so we have halted the trial and will re-run it when we're back to normal sales.

That will occur, as all crises pass.

Finally, there are now many Australians who have panic bought pork.

Almost all these people will find themselves spending more time at home in the coming weeks, cooking a greater portion of their meals at home.

Many Australians are not practised pork cooks and many of them now have cuts in their freezers they are unfamiliar with.

There is an immediate opportunity.

Last year, as part of the digital content strategy, the Marketing team created a 'how to cook by cut' video guide for all major cuts.

They have also been busy building the recipe library.

We now face an opportunity from a position of strength and preparedness.

The team members have reorganised their time and budget allocations to manage the myriad small, quick decisions that make up an agile, increasingly digital and social blitz.

We will make mistakes, but we will also get direct hits.

We have an opportunity to help Australians enjoy pork more than they expected too, but time is of the essence.

The arenas for doing well in the next three months are in the hearts of out-of-work chefs and foodservice staff and in the homes of Australian consumers.

We can't get hundreds of thousands of people back to work, but we may be able to make hundreds of thousands of in-home meals better. 🐷

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Abnormal sales have unfortunately halted Adelaide's 'buy Australian ham' trial.

# Small-scale pig keeping: the importance of water for pig health

PIGS require water to meet their physiological needs.

These include most metabolic functions, the movement of nutrients through to body tissues and organs, lubrication of joints, adjustments in body temperature, removal of waste, milk production, and for growth and reproduction – including semen production.

A pig can lose most of its fat and half its body protein without dying and up to 10 percent without affecting performance, but if it loses as little as 10 percent of its water content, death quickly follows.

Water balance is constant in the pig, with the most important source being available via drinking, though additional water is manufactured in the body via the breakdown of dietary carbohydrate, fat and protein.

A pig loses water via urine, faeces, respiration and from the skin.

This intake-output balance is directly affected by a multitude of factors including age; what they're fed and crude protein content of their feed; weather/climate; health status; wallows provided; and husbandry type (indoor/outdoor) – so the quantity required cannot be quoted in absolute litres.

The recently published Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs (England) provides a guide on the minimum quantities consumed in a temperate climate, but a continuous supply of potable water is the aim.

Potable being the key word – not contaminated with faeces or urine, including relying on streams as a source of drinking water because these may be contaminated from further upstream.

## Crude protein levels

The amount of water consumed increases proportionally with the amount of crude protein in the diet.

Therefore pigs fed on 13 percent crude protein will drink less than those on 16 percent or more.

Pigs consuming a pelleted feed require more water than those fed a wet meal and also, perhaps

surprisingly, a dry meal.

It is reported that underfed pigs increase water consumption, particularly in gestating sows as they presumably attempt to 'feel full'.

Pigs fed a diet supplemented with permitted fruit and vegetable waste will naturally drink less.

## Effects of disease

Pigs affected with diseases require more water than healthy pigs of the same age and body weight, especially if the illness is accompanied by diarrhoea or the animal has a high temperature caused by fever.

This makes perfect sense as more water is being lost.

Encourage drinking by sitting extra troughs near the sleeping quarters.

## Working boars

A 'working' boar can perform with considerable physical exertion and produce up to 450ml of semen at each service, which will lead to water deficiency that will need replacing.

## Wallows

Muddy wallows are an essential tool for outdoor-reared pigs to keep cool in hot weather via transfer of their body heat and if you don't provide one, the pig will make one using the only water they have available – from their trough.

Pigs are clever, but they don't have the foresight to see that this reduces the water available for drinking.

## Climate

Hot weather puts additional pressures on the pig to keep cool and, due to a deficiency of functional sweat glands, expulsion of heat via urination is one way they can cool down.

However, this does require them to take in more water.

Pigs are instinctive and will limit feed intake in hot weather to reduce the metabolic heat generated by digestion.

Feeding at the cooler ends of the day can assist to maintain water balance.

## Trough sizing

You should use water troughs of different sizes for different ages, and always be mindful that piglets, which need water provided from two weeks

of age, may be able to get in but not out, so choose trough depths carefully.

Pigs, when they can, will purposely tip troughs over for various reasons, for example through boredom, for fun or to lie in the cool spilt water.

By fitting automatic water dispensers, apart from in freezing conditions, you can avoid this issue.

This includes nipple drinkers, which are teats attached to the mains water supply via pipes, which do not require cleaning out and have continuous fresh water.

Careful maintenance of water dispensers is required because they can stick and flood, and as

flow rates are known to affect the ability to digest feed efficiently, they can be damaging if set incorrectly.

## Final thought

Given the correct husbandry conditions, and with plenty of fresh palatable water, pigs are good at looking after themselves.

How proficient you are at providing for them isn't generally challenged on a day-to-day basis, however the difference between OK and excellent water management lies in how your system provides for the needs of any that become unwell or are vulnerable in other ways.

Dr Michaela Giles



Photo: Amber Kipp

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Photo: Riley Bartel

## Confirmed incursion of African swine fever in Papua New Guinea

THE Australian Animal Health Laboratory has confirmed the incursion of African swine fever in Papua New Guinea.

The National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority of PNG raised their alert level and have imposed a quarantine zone at the affected region in the Southern Highlands Province.

Confirmation of ASF could not have come at a worse time.

PNG is struggling to respond to COVID-19, and getting the neces-

sary attention and resources to where it is needed will be challenging.

A widespread outbreak of porcine virus would be devastating for the regional economy.

Confirmation of ASF followed re-testing of tissue samples sourced from pigs that had died in suspicious circumstances in the town of Mendi and the surrounding area.

Preliminary testing on the samples was undertaken by NAQIA in Port Moresby.

The AAHL results

found that two of the five pigs investigated from the Mendi area of Southern Highlands Province were positive for ASF, and negative for anthrax and classical swine fever.

At the time of writing, the results for the other pigs were yet to be confirmed.

NAQIA advised they raised their ASF alert to red and the Minister immediately declared a quarantine area.

Focus is on containing the outbreak in Mendi, through strict movement of live pigs to prevent further spread.

NAQIA advised that screening had been actioned by the Southern Highlands provincial team but that additional logistic support would be needed.

Following the restriction of movement, NAQIA proposed to undertake a delimiting survey to establish any spread of ASF to surrounding communities before deciding on eradication of any pig populations.



Photo: Remi Yuan

## Urgent call for food supply chain to be listed as an essential service

THE nation's leading organic industry body, Australian Organic, is joining the National Farmers' Federation in making an urgent call for agriculture and the food supply chain to be deemed an essential service, for the purpose of the COVID-19 response.

Australian Organic CEO Niki Ford said: "As a member of the NFF, we have been in weekly meetings with them to support focus in the agricultural area, and now more than ever given the current crisis, will continue to back them."

"The NFF is committed

to ensuring modern farming is not only viable and sustainable but continues its vital and growing contribution to the nation despite any challenging circumstances.

"The organic agricultural sector makes up a significant portion of the industry, and we will be endeavouring to make sure the needs of organic growers are met during these difficult times."

The 2019 Australian Organic Market Report reveals that the current area of land under certified organic management in Australia is over 35 million hectares (about 9.6 percent of farmland) – more than half of all certified land area on the earth.

There are currently more than 2000 certified organic primary producers in Australia including farmers, graziers, apiarists and wild harvesters.

Vegetable production dominates in the fruit, vegetable and nut sector, with three-quarters of the sector value.



Photo: Kate Trysh

Beef dominates in the meat sector with around 87 percent of value, lamb comprises the bulk of the remaining 13 percent in addition to organic pork, goat and aquaculture.

Poultry products are fairly evenly weighted between eggs and poultry meat in terms of value.

NFF president Fiona Simson said her organisation had been in discussions with the government with regard to the critical importance of a reliable food supply chain.

"The NFF has been assured that agriculture and the food supply chain will not be interrupted, despite the closure of travel between some states," she said.

"This is in line with the Prime Minister's commitment to prioritising lives and livelihoods."

"The continued provision of quality fresh produce is paramount to safeguarding the wellbeing and health of the nation."

"Our state farming member organisations have been having similar conversations with their state governments."

Ms Simson said the confirmation of agriculture as an essential service, by the states and the Commonwealth as a collective, would guarantee measures to control the spread of COVID-19 and did not inadvertently obstruct food production and supply.

"The agriculture industry takes human health seriously and is taking appropriate measures to ensure this is a priority."

"That being said, the transport of produce from farm to market must be able to happen unobstructed – this includes across state borders."

"Likewise, for the logistics that ensure the flow of essential agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and crop protection products."

Ms Simson said discussions also remain active about how to protect the workforce of key facilities such as abattoirs, should there be a positive COVID-19 test.

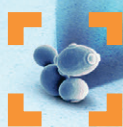
"We understand a list of essential services may be developed by states," she said.

"It is absolutely critical that there is consistency across states in the recognition of the importance of food production and the supply chain."

"In our discussions with government, the NFF has reiterated the farm sector's commitment to playing its vital role in ensuring Australians continue to have access to the quality, fresh groceries they depend on in these uncertain and challenging times."

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Promoting pig in Pontassieve? Hardly necessary, but the author proudly wore his heart on his sleeve, so to speak.



Roast pork and potatoes with a glass of Chianti was a lunchtime favourite in Tuscany.



After lunch most days at La Bottega a Rosano, it was a slow walk home for a siesta, with water and limoncello served by the charming Sergio.



The author loved this cellar at his BnB at Montioni in Tuscany. The tower house and cellar have been traced back to the 1100s.



Salame toscanello, yummy 100 percent pork salami enjoyed in the Tuscan hills.



Legs of wild boar greeted the author at the entrance to a restaurant in Florence.

## Don't mention the 'C' word

WANTING to ponder something pleasant, rather than anything related to the vile and viral 'C' word, I cast my mind back six months to a fabulous few weeks spent in Portugal and Italy.

A highlight, as is always the case when travelling overseas, was the food, especially the pork.

The wine too was memorable, especially the casual Chianti carafes which accompanied all lunches

in Tuscany, Italy, but perhaps a lesser highlight because we really are spoilt for choice in Australia and, dare I say it, particularly here in the west – read Margaret River and Geopraphe regions.

While I've always been a big fan of prosciutto, where we've always been well catered for by the likes of national manufacturers D'Orsogna and some smaller artisan producers, my love affair with prosciutto went to another level in Tuscany.

Perhaps, I confess, this may have had a little to do with price too.

Despite a very low Australian dollar, a handful of Euros bought a handy portion of delicately sliced prosciutto from supermarket deli counters, and especially so from little restaurants in the countryside.

Likewise, our BnB host in Tuscany, Massimo, treated us to some wonderfully cured pig product, including his coppa, also known as capocollo, which is dry-cured neck and shoulder, seasoned with wine and herbs and spices.

Yum, yum, pig's bum, albeit not anatomically correct.

You get the 'flavour'. Other memorable delights included several succulent, simple meals, with pork belly and roast pork front and centre and fresh greens, tomatoes and baked potatoes on the side.

Let's hope that as Italians now live in lockdown and we adjust to much the same routine, thanks to that vile and viral 'C' word, we all keep cooking pork while confined to our homes.

Meanwhile, don't forget the other more palatable 'C' words, namely charcuterie and Chianti, both easily enjoyed in our homes.

Ciao. 🐷



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The Tuscan hills looked magical when pondered through a limoncello lens and with a prosciutto-filled tummy.



Mouth-watering meats, fresh or fermented, were the order of the day most days in Italy.



The author enjoyed sampling Gerini salamis in Pontassieve, a delightful little town in Tuscany.

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Photo: Pascal Debrunner



Photo: Christina Warner

# Opportunities and challenges facing Aussie livestock industries

A KEY theme of the recent 2020 Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences Outlook conference was the practical steps we'd need to take as an industry to reach the goal of lifting the value of Australian agricultural production to \$100 billion over the next decade.

Biosecurity through the supply chain plays a major role in achieving and protecting agricultural production, as was emphasised at ABARES by Queensland cattle producer and 2019 Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Melinee Leather.

"Our reputation for producing safe, quality food commands a premium for Australian produce at home and overseas – this is ultimately underpinned by our disease-free status," Ms Leather said.

"That status relies on our animal health and biosecurity system – from Australian Border Force all the way through to individual farmers – being prepared to not only respond to threats of pests and diseases but to be proactive, innovate and make improvements to protect our industries and ecosystems."

Rapid and transformative changes in the way livestock farmers do business and the way consumers select products – driven by increasing demand, advances in technology, ecological considerations and climate variability – calls for a long-term, holistic approach to animal health and biosecurity policy in order to safeguard investment in livestock, and adoption of new technologies.

Central to the industry's success in this changing landscape will be addressing issues of protection against the risk of emerging diseases, and assurance of food safety, product integrity, provenance and traceability.

With these issues front of mind, Animal Health Australia commissioned Spigare Consulting, which compiled a report titled Megatrends, Opportunities and Challenges Facing Australian Livestock Industries.

The Spigare report provides insights into global megatrends and explores four possible mega-shock scenarios that could impact future productivity and profitability of Australia's livestock sectors over the next 10 years, through the lenses of animal health and biosecurity.

With the analysis of these scenarios, Australian livestock industries

have a new outlook on current and future challenges, as well as the opportunities they present.

AHA CEO Kathleen Plowman said: "The Megatrends report highlights how biosecurity, animal health and the health of our ecosystems are closely intertwined and critically important to Australia's future."

"When we think about these key trends and scenarios, and their potential effects on production systems and markets, we must ask what can be done to mitigate risk to our industries."

"We aim for this report to be a catalyst for animal and crop industries to discuss key issues, develop new strategies, identify transformative opportunities, and translate these to sustainable success for the industry into the future."

Ms Plowman believes sustained co-operative and collaborative efforts will be needed to ensure our livestock industries remain competitive and retain their social licence to operate.

"It's unlikely any one sector – across livestock, cropping and aquaculture – will be able to do this alone."

Ms Leather agreed, adding the key trends outlined in the Megatrends report as impacting on the Australian livestock sector, reinforce the need for collaboration among industry, government, researchers and community.

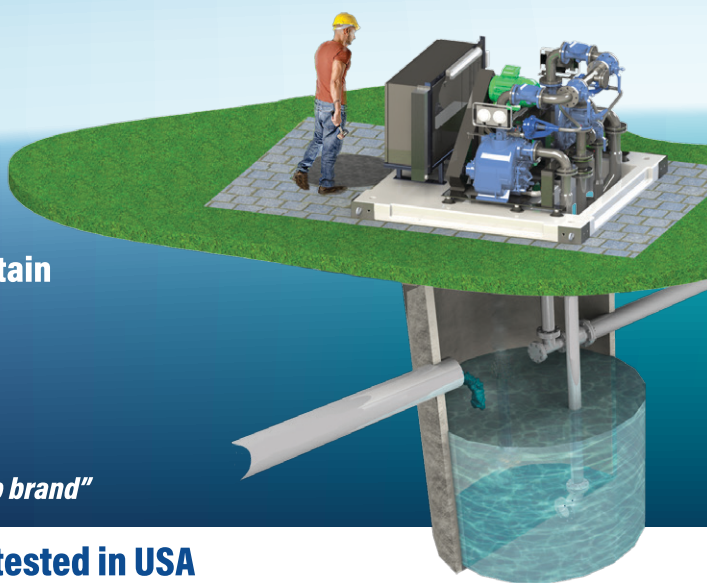
"The livestock sector will need to strive for high-level scientific expertise and innovation to ensure new and more efficient solutions to biosecurity threats and animal health can be developed and applied as needed," Ms Leather said.

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# COVID-19 update for pork producers

AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited is active on several fronts in response to the rapidly evolving impact of COVID-19.

APL is committed to ensuring Australian pig producers and the wider pork industry are best placed to respond to the unfolding situation.

We are encouraged by assurances from federal and state jurisdictions that agricultural supply chains, as essential services, will remain operational during any shutdown period.

Nonetheless, we will maintain a vigilant watch on anything that may compromise producer and processor operations.

APL is working closely with the National Farmers' Federation and directly with the Federal government to guarantee movement of livestock, food and farm inputs

across the country, even upon the closure of state borders.

Furthermore, APL will remain in regular contact with state pork groups to communicate updates on national initiatives and receive valuable local feedback to help guide ongoing APL priorities.

State-based representative groups are working with their respective state government to ensure our industry remains operational, to maintain supply to consumers and to uphold the wellbeing of the animals in our care.

Given much of the power relating to these emergency situations rests with the states, the advocacy work being undertaken by state groups, for example in Victoria, is crucial.

APL is strongly promoting the National Farmers' Federation's campaign to

reassure shoppers of their ongoing access to quality, locally grown fresh food.

NFF's campaign included a full-page newspaper ad and a short video for social media.

Pork has also played a role in the broader message from agriculture, with pig producer Ean Pollard featuring in NSW Farmers' campaign to reassure consumers about the supply of fresh meat and produce.

As outlined in APL's media release, foodservice outlets had experienced unprecedented downturns in business and many have since been forced to close.

Meanwhile, supermarkets and butchers have seen high demand for easy-to-freeze meats like mince and sausages.

Accordingly, APL's Marketing team has commenced work to promote

recipes and ideas for consumers who have purchased pork to eat at home.

A great eating experience is always important, especially for those who don't regularly prepare pork meals at home.

In response to the spike in retail purchasing over the past few weeks, Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud has committed to continue to work with industry to keep rural supply chains moving and safeguard Australia's food supply.

APL has also welcomed Minister Littleproud's announcement that former Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture Mark Tucker has been appointed as the key liaison between the department and industry, to help ensure agricultural production and supply chains are maintained

through the COVID-19 response.

In the meantime, our industry is being represented at a number of high-level Federal Government working groups, convened by the Prime Minister, relevant Ministers and Commonwealth departments.

Producers are encouraged to consider how the Federal Government's second round of COVID-19 support measures may apply to their businesses.

A summary of the measure is available at [farmhub.org.au](http://farmhub.org.au)

APL has also developed a guide for producers to manage the risks posed by COVID-19, a valuable resource available at [australianpork.com.au/library-resources/news](http://australianpork.com.au/library-resources/news)

Further advice and information will be shared

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## Potential impacts of coronavirus

AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited is working with our producer members and other supply chain stakeholders to ensure our industry is prepared for the potential impact of coronavirus and to minimise risk of disruption to supply, operations and our workforce.

### What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a viral disease, which can cause illness in humans and is spread through:

- Close contact with an infectious person;
- Contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze; and
- Touching infected cough or sneeze droplets on objects and surfaces then touching your mouth or face.

### Can you get coronavirus from meat?

Well-respected international agencies including the European Food Safety Authority and Australia's Food Standards agency have confirmed there is no evidence coronavirus is transmitted in food.

### What is the Australian pork industry doing?

The Australian pork industry is positioned strongly to respond to the challenges arising

from COVID-19, given the existing importance of biosecurity, hygiene and food safety through our supply chain.

All facets of Australia's meat industry operate to very stringent standards including HACCP, Good Manufacturing Practice and Australian Standards, which are verified by state and federal food safety authorities.

These standards include ensuring processing establishments are routinely washed down and sanitised, and undergo a variety of monitoring programs to ensure hygienic operations.

Workers are required to follow strict hygiene and personal health policies and practices and wear suitable personal protective equipment as relevant, for example hair nets, beard nets, gumboots, aprons, full length protective uniforms and gloves.

Retail butchers are required to have detailed food safety plans in place to ensure hygienic operations.

Updates regarding COVID-19 can be found via the Federal Department of Health website [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)

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## Not all coronaviruses are created equal

WITH over 800,000 confirmed cases, all eyes and ears continue to track the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before we move too far down the track there are a few things we should ensure everyone understands.

For starters, viruses are complex and not all are created equal.

Coronavirus is a broad term used to encompass quite a few different subtypes of prominent viruses.

These infectious agents are classified as ribonucleic acid – or +RNA – viruses.

This simply means they are efficient when it comes to infecting new cells and do not require assistance before sending offspring from the original host cell into the big wide 'body' world, to graffiti and vandalise.

Examples of coronavirus infections affecting humans include severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV), and coronavirus disease 2019 (SARS-CoV-2).

Why is this relevant to the Australian pork industry, you ask?

Simple – over the past few weeks there has been a low rumbling regarding livestock's, specifically pig's, ability to become infected and serve as a reservoir or carrier.

Here is where you promise you'll read until the end of the article.

The short answer is yes, pigs can get sick from coronavirus-type viruses.

The full answer is that the known pig viruses are different viruses to SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the current

COVID-19 pandemic.

As brilliant as it sounds, lumping all viruses in the animal kingdom together by class to simplify matters isn't always a good thing.

Since you promised to keep reading, give yourself a pat on the back.

The sad reality is that a decent percentage of readers would have dropped the paper after reading pigs get sick from coronavirus-type viruses.

You know it, I know it and the man preparing to sell them a year's worth of hand sanitiser and freeze-dried tofu is banking on it.

It's up to you and those of us in health and science fields to educate our neighbours and ensure pork will continue to hold a place in the global food market.

For your awareness, Australia does not currently play host to any of the coronaviruses that we

know affect pigs.

It has been well documented both on a personal note as well as at a global level, that the known coronaviruses affecting pigs have never been demonstrated to be infectious to humans.

The coronaviruses known to infect pigs are transmissible gastroenteritis, porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus, porcine delta coronavirus and haemagglutinating encephalomyelitis virus (which is also known as 'vomiting and wasting disease').

As you have no doubt surmised, based off the creative nomenclature, virtually all pig coronaviruses involve gastrointestinal complications.

Which is interesting when you think about it, as the human COVID-19 has no relation to the toilet and yet the 2020 toilet pa-

per shortage marches on.

For those of you who remain a little sceptical, I leave you with this – the Friedrich-Loeffler Institute is the National Institute for Animal Health of Germany.

They issued a statement in March indicating that there remains no evidence farm animals can contract SARS-CoV-2 or that pigs can transmit or spread it.

They are currently in the process of testing the susceptibility of various species to the virus and expect to be able to report their official findings at the end of April.

Having said this, remember to practise good hygiene, use a tissue – once – then dispose of it, and high-five your inner introvert for recommending a meeting is held via email or conference call.

## How to move animal waste sludge – an easy task for the right pump

MOVING animal waste sludge can be a difficult proposition for pumps.

It can be thick and corrosive, and is definitely only a job for the right pump.

As the waste liquid gets thicker, it becomes much less efficient to use a centrifugal pump, but the right peristaltic pump is an ideal solution.

Italian-made Ragazzini brand hose-pumps, distributed by Hydro Innovations, can move thick slurry comfortably when sized correctly and fitted with the right tubular element.

Ragazzini Rotho pumps use a roller on bearing method to 'squeeze' the tubular element, creating a vacuum on the suction side, enabling pumps to operate on high suction lifts.

The pumps are also capable of delivering pressures up to 15 bar, enabling them to push the sludge material over high static lifts or through long pipelines.

These pumps are fitted with a leak detection system that will stop the pump and send an alarm if the hose wears.

This is a float-type sensor that is located at the lowest point in the pump.

The pumps have no seals or valves to maintain, can run dry without damage, and there is no contact between the pumped media and moving parts.

Ragazzini pumps are designed to run slowly to promote longer hose life and they are able to pump liquids of sludge containing solid particles.

Flows from a few litres

per minute up to 180 cubic metres per hour can be delivered, depending on pump model.

Ragazzini peristaltic pumps are available with a wide variety of hose options to suit abrasive and corrosive applications and are available with food-grade hoses capable of being sterilized with hot water to 70C and steam to 120C.

Because the pump casing is not filled with lubricating fluid and the speed of the leak detector, contamination is prevented and product loss is greatly minimised.

These pumps are perfect for clean in place or sanitise in place applications when fitted with the optional 'retractable roller'.

With this system, one of the rollers can be retracted via an over-cent-

tre rapid release cam and lever system.

This now enables full flow of a flushing/cleaning/sanitising fluid through the hose.

This new positioning system is essential for fully automated foodstuff handling applications that require regular cleaning and sterilisation of all the components in contact with the product.

Ragazzini pumps can also be run in reverse,

making them ideal for tank emptying and filling operations.

Ragazzini pumps do not need the casing to be filled with lubrication fluid.

This reduces the chances of contamination and makes hose changes cleaner, quicker, safer and cheaper.

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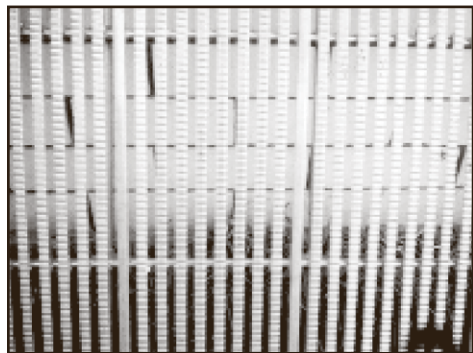
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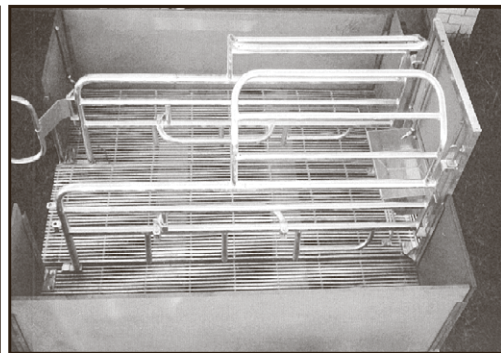
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Bio-Dri II washing a vehicle.



A vehicle after being washed.



How Bio-Dri II works.

## AGCO Grain & Protein offers unique capabilities

OFFERING customers capabilities unlike many other companies, AGCO Grain & Protein has the ability to design their own equipment, then deliver, build and construct the equipment to your requirements for your farming operation.

AGCO's Grain & Protein division services the swine, poultry, grain and seed industries through well-known brands such as AP, C-Lines, Tecno, Cumberland, GSI and Cimbria.

Bio-Dri II is an exciting product from AGCO's swine equipment manufacturing company AP.

The Bio-Dri II is designed and manufactured in the US, and has been proven in the market for years, assisting in preventing the spread of devastating diseases such as African swine fever, porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome from one farm to another.

Bio-Dri II works by thoroughly heating and drying trailers after wash-down, making it an effective virus prevention tool.

The primary purpose of Bio-Dri II is to heat the trailer to a user-defined temperature and maintain that temperature for a designated period of time.

To enable this, the Bio-Dri II is comprised of two 10hp centrifugal fans, two upstream modulated heaters, two air inlet doors, duct assembly and two portable 36" circulation fans controlled via an interface.

AGCO Grain & Protein product manager Peter Lutterschmidt said, "Globally we are seeing extensive interest from large farms, integrators and slaughterhouses – currently installing Bio-Dri II units at a rate of many units per month – or 20-plus per annum across North America and China."

"Washing vehicles down is only one part of the virus prevention process.

"It is critical these washed-down surfaces are thoroughly dried to ensure the virus is eliminated.

"By installing Bio-Dri II in close proximity to vehicle wash bays, the chances of transmitting viruses are

reduced significantly."

The Bio-Dri II system is built around four key areas – control and monitor, easy operation, efficient drying, and temperature.

Control and monitor – the user-friendly interface provides control and monitoring of the drying process.

Users receive a record of each drying cycle for process verification from the system's datalogging capabilities.

Control system monitoring includes: time elapsed in cycle; current mode and time remaining; trailer surface temperature; chamber air temperature; upper and lower duct temperature; and cause of system shutdown.

Easy operation – the user-friendly interface is simple to use and the heavy-duty duct-work system is easily rolled into position for convenient drive-through operation.

Efficient drying – high-volume, high-velocity fans combined with liquid petroleum or natural gas heaters provide quick, quiet and efficient drying.

Temperature – infrared sensors aimed directly at the trailer sidewalls monitor surface temperatures.

For more information about Bio-Dri II, please contact Peter Lutterschmidt on 03 9313 0313 or at [peter.lutterschmidt@agcocorp.com](mailto:peter.lutterschmidt@agcocorp.com)



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The Bio-Dri II setup.

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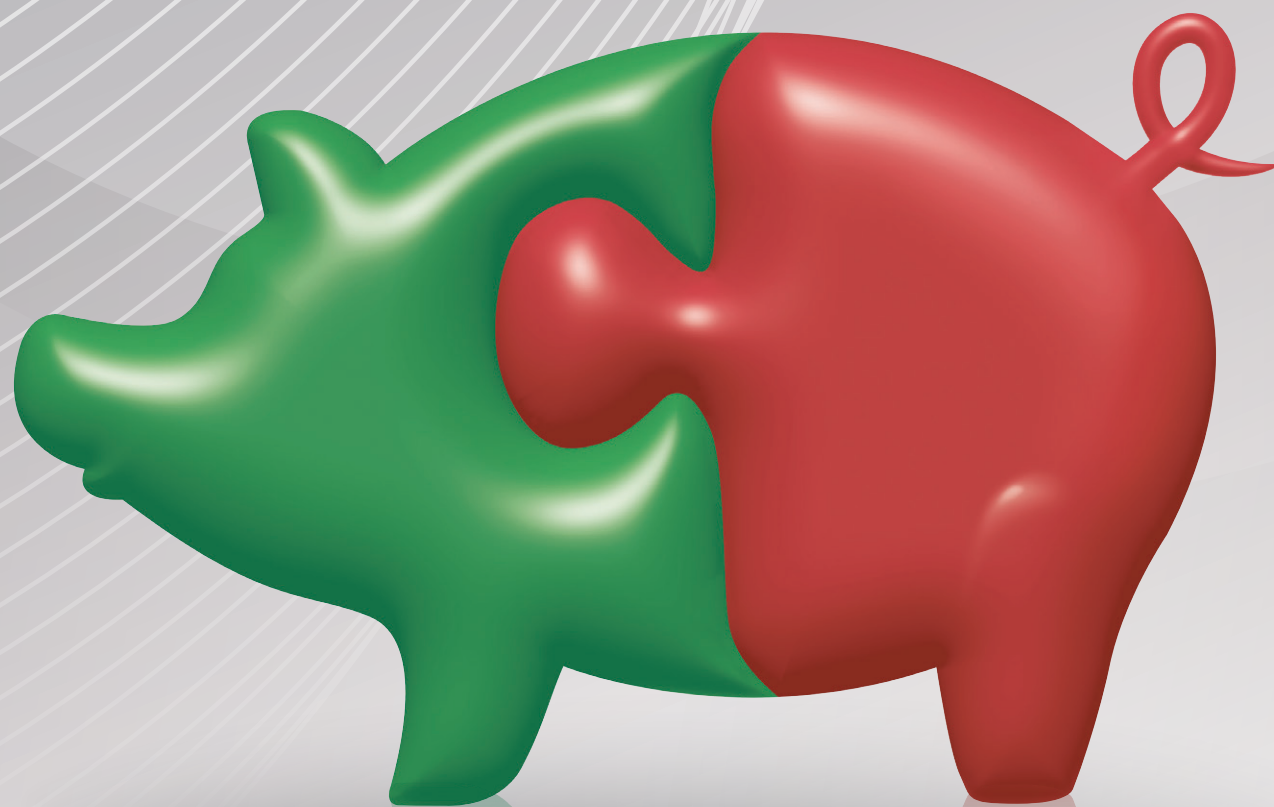


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PCV2 = Porcine circovirus type 2; *M. hyo* = *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae*

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