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Judging of the bacon entries.

Bacon lovers take note: the search is on for Australia's top rasher

JUDGEMENT time is drawing nearer for bacon makers as the hunt for Australia's best-tasting bacon begins, and with International Bacon Day looming, the search is perfectly timed.

Butchers and smallgoods manufacturers from all around the country have perfected their recipes and sent their entries in to this year's Australian Pork-Mark Bacon Awards in the hopes of being announced as the nation's best.

Judging commenced recently and tempting as it may be for the panel to dive straight into tasting the entries, first, each individual bacon will be assessed based on its appearance.

The judges then assess the aroma and lean to fat ratio in both the raw and cooked form.

The judging panel, featuring four passionate bacon connoisseurs comprising Fleischnmeister Horst Schurger and chefs Simon Bestley, Adam

Moore and Paul McDonald, will determine the winning bacon, set to be announced on August 26 in time to celebrate International Bacon Day on August 31.

Australian Pork Limited General Manager of Marketing Peter Haydon said the competition shines a light on smallgoods makers who are using 100 percent Australian pork to produce their bacon, which is great news for both producers and bacon-lovers.

"People are becoming much more interested in where their food comes from – now more than ever – and this competition celebrates that by championing Australian grown," Haydon said.

"Many people are surprised to learn that 80 percent of bacon sold in Australia is made using imported pork.

"If you want to support Australian pig farmers, look for the pink Australian Pork logo on the pack.

"Otherwise look for the green and gold country of origin label and make sure the bar chart is almost full."

Having won the competition last year, Campbell's Superior Meats owner Rhett Campbell knows exactly what it's all about and more importantly, what goes into award-winning bacon.

"This competition celebrates the best Aussie produce and an iconic ingredient," Campbell said.

"I know I'm not alone in saying it's not a successful Sunday morning if bacon and eggs don't feature on the menu.

"I think what set us apart last year was the salty smoke profile of our short cut bacon.

"But the fact is, we start with a pretty incredible product so it's easy to achieve a winning result."

The winning bacon, and winners in each state, will be announced on August 26.

New boss hogs in Canberra

WE not only have a newly re-elected Federal Government in Canberra with Scott Morrison confirmed as the people's choice in continuing as Prime Minister; we also have an energetic and keen new Australian Pork Limited CEO getting ready to take over on August 1, 2019.

Our members would have seen the announcement of the appointment of Margo Andrae to the position of APL CEO on June 5.

I've known Margo for a number of years and she really is a very talented woman who I'm sure will imprint her personality on APL very quickly.

Margo is now finishing up as CEO with the Cattle Council of Australia, located just down the road from the offices of APL in Barton, Canberra.

Since Margo is taking over the reins in August, she will be introducing herself in the *Australian Pork Newspaper* front page article in the August edition.

The consequence of course is this is my last article in *Australian Pork Newspaper* as APL CEO before I leave the organisation a week after Margo starts – August 7.

I've really only had two proper jobs in my career; one as an employee of a series of merged and acquired agricultural chemical/biotechnology companies (including 10 years overseas) and one as CEO of APL.

I never really intended to work for the pork industry upon my return to Australia with my family in early 2005 and when I first heard of the vacancy, with an acquaintance urging me to apply, I wasn't particularly enthusiastic.

In the end, however, I contacted the recruiter and submitted an application, finding myself at 101 Collins St, Melbourne for an interview.

That was the start of a journey I could never have imagined.



Point of View

by ANDREW SPENCER CEO



I found my interviewers highly impressive people who gave me a very professional image of the way the pork industry operated in Australia, which turned out to be real.

They were Paul Higgins, Kate Spargo and Nigel Smith – all APL directors at the time and names many of you will recognise from the past.

One thing led to another and I eventually found myself in Canberra in this chair where the past 14 years have, in hindsight, seemed to fly past.

It hasn't been a smooth ride – there have been two highly damaging financial crises for the industry over this time, the last of which we are only now hopefully emerging from.

Many producers I have met over the journey haven't made it through these difficult times, and that hurts.

Others have gone from strength to strength, some putting the kids in charge now, and able to put their feet up – at least some of the time.

No one said being in the pork industry was easy, but it can be rewarding.

You've got to have a bit of a thick skin in this job because it's totally impossible to keep all the people happy, all the time.

I am particularly proud of who APL is, however, because APL has been able to build a culture, with the support of the Boards of various make-up over the years, of doing what we believe to be right for industry.

This was not always the most popular option, but popularity comes and goes and doing what's right should last forever.

Producers reading this should also be proud of the industry they've chosen to belong to.

Simply put, there's no BS about pig farmers.

They're typically not there because their father and grandfather did the same thing, they're there because they've got a business to run to provide for their families.

There's been a lot of support for me along the way, none more important than someone I refer to as the 'gift to the pork industry' – Enzo Allara.

Thirteen of my 14 years with APL have been served with Enzo as chairman and what an honour it was to work with someone of that integrity and quality.

The new team is now at the starting blocks and I wish Margo, David Lock and the rest of the APL Board the very best in steering the industry in the right direction – with the help and support of the pig farmers of Australia.

I could never sign off without thanking the APL team – those who've been with me for a long time and those for a short time.

Having a really great team around you, especially the general managers of past and present, can make you look good.

Goodbye and good luck! 🐷



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Pig Industry Calendar of Events

2019

JUL 9-14 – Australian Intercollegiate Meat Judging Association Careers Expo, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga www.icmj.com.au

JUL 31-AUG 2 – Australian Pig Vets Conference, Cairns QLD www.eiseverywhere.com/400241

AUG 11 - 14 – The International Conference on Boar Semen Preservation, Hunter Valley, NSW www.boarsemen2019.com

AUG 25 - 28 – Asian Pig Veterinary Society Congress, Buscan, South Korea www.apvs2019.com/invit.html

AUG 26 - 29 – SafePork Conference, Berlin, Germany www.safepork-conference.com

SEP 21 - OCT 1 – Royal Melbourne Show, Melbourne Showgrounds VIC royalshow.com.au

OCT 19 - 21 – Leman China Swine Conference, Zhengzhou, China www.vetmed.umn.edu/news-events/leman-china-swine-conference

NOV 13 - 15 – 2019 Pig Welfare Symposium, Minneapolis, US www.pork.org/events/pig-welfare-symposium

NOV 17 - 20 – Australasian Pig Science Association Conference, Adelaide, SA www.apsa.asn.au

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

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ENERGY Networks Australia and Bioenergy Australia recently hosted a Renewable Gas Symposium in Sydney.

This symposium explored emerging innovations and research in hydrogen and biogas.

The drivers pushing businesses to consider utilising low carbon gas and the injection and policy mechanisms needed to support it being blended into existing gas networks.

It was evident that major gas corporations across Australia are committing to the development of hydrogen energy projects and there are currently 10 projects being piloted in development across the country.

Hydrogen can play an important role in helping Australia's gas networks decarbonise and store energy.

Biogas is also considered to be very important to the development of hydrogen technology as it is one of the cheapest forms of energy, particularly when waste products are used to produce it.

Hydrogen is expensive to produce and transport but can be utilised in electric vehicles (think hydrogen fuel cells), with the by-product (exhaust) being water.

In 15-20 years, the thought is there will be a blend of biogas and hydrogen in gas networks to reduce CO₂.

Energy Networks Australia has produced Figure 1 on renewable gas sources.

So, what does this mean for pork producers?

Currently, about 15 percent of the industry produces biogas from covered anaerobic ponds for its own heating, cooling or electricity needs.

Some producers also feed the surplus energy into the electricity grid.

The information presented at the conference clearly shows biogas is an important contribution to the renewable gas sector.

The Symposium included a presentation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Denmark, which discussed the steps taken to develop their bio-



gas industry. This included a commitment to reducing methane output from agriculture where it has been mandated that 50 percent of manure by-product must

be utilised in biogas production by 2020 and this includes a 20 percent investment grant to develop the technology. Key challenges to the development of hydrogen

energy include:
1. Two-thirds of energy is lost in conversion;
2. It is costly to produce;
3. Problematic to transport;
4. Producing it at scale requires a lot of power; and
5. Scale-up requires investment.

In addition to the development of hydrogen energy, the Australian biogas industry has significant untapped potential.

The investment opportunity for new bioenergy including biogas projects is estimated at \$3.5-5 billion. Biogas also has the potential to avoid up to 9 million tonnes of CO₂-e

emissions each year. Value drivers include:
- Continuous and dispatchable energy source;
- Renewable energy;
- Produces energy from waste; and
- Supports local economies and regional communities.

As a renewable natural gas, biomethane can replace natural gas by being injected into the existing gas grid. Therefore, it can provide a cleaner energy to large industries, business and households as well as fuel for vehicles.

Water treatment facilities, such as Sydney Water, are also beginning to use

continued P4

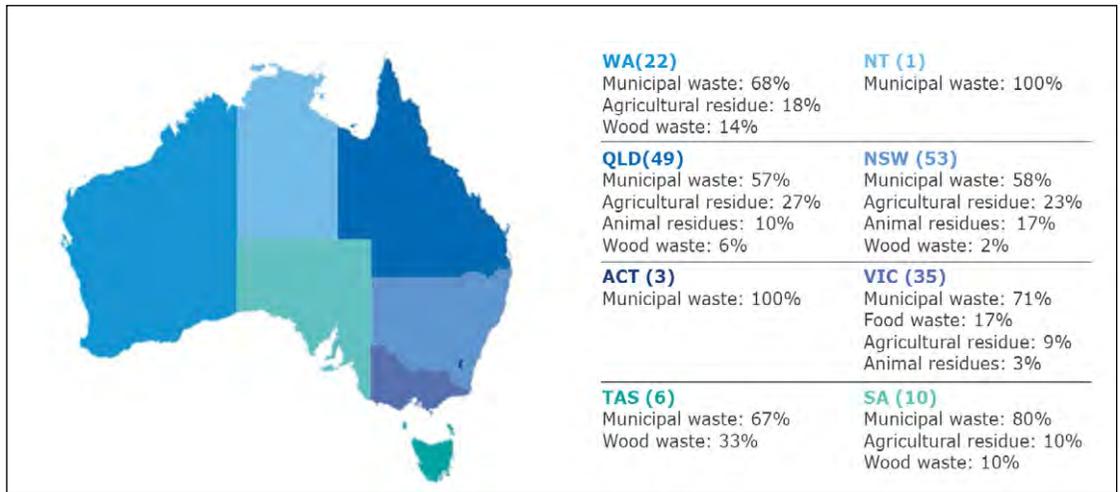


Figure 1

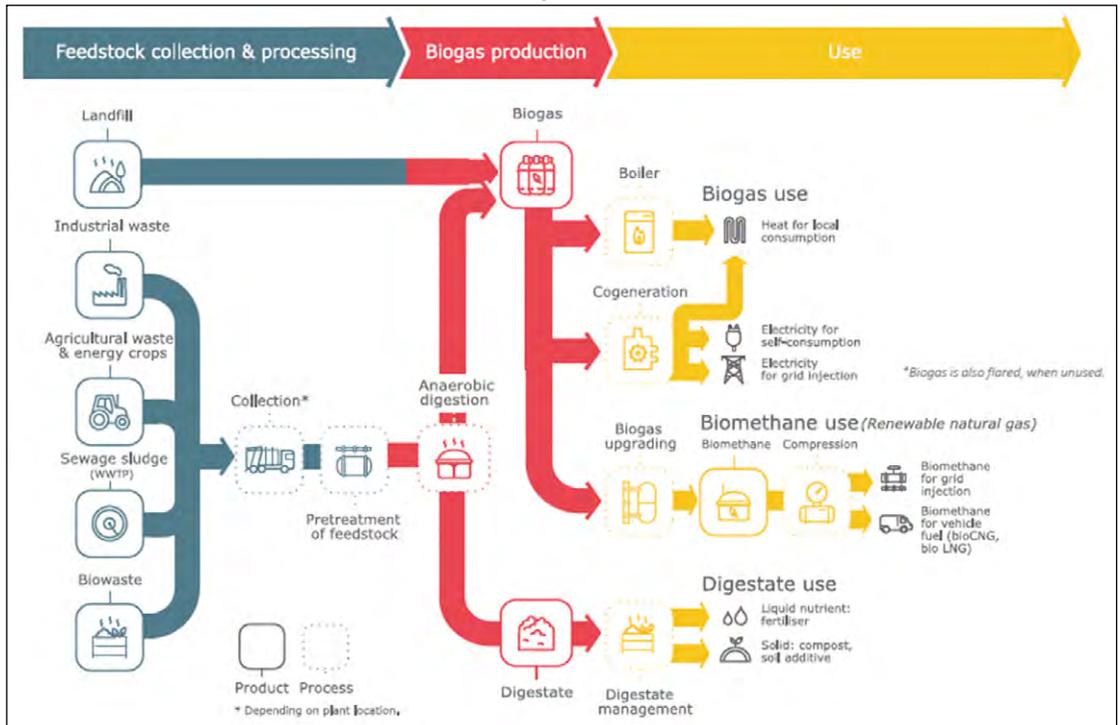


Figure 2: Biogas opportunities for Australia. Source: Enea Consulting



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IS YOUR FARM PREPARED FOR AN EXOTIC DISEASE OUTBREAK?

Recent events provide a timely reminder that despite Australia's envious geographical position, the threat of disease to our livestock industry is real:

- ASF now widespread throughout China's 430M pig population
- 2M pigs slaughtered in Vietnam
- Large amounts of illegal pork products seized at Australian borders testing positive to ASF

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Eligibility Requirements:

- Cover is only available to producers that utilise Apiam Animal Health biosecurity services.
- An effective biosecurity system is essential to managing the risks to your business.



Contact Jesse Thorp to find out more about protecting your farm against an outbreak.

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Email: jesset@myadroit.com.au

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APL Membership:

Leveraging your pig levy

- If you're an Australian Pig Producer and you've paid the Pig Slaughter Levy in the 2018-19 financial year, from **1 July 2019** you're eligible to apply or renew your APL Producer Membership.
- **Being a pig producer or having a PigPass account does not automatically make you a Producer Member.**
- As a member you gain access to a range of benefits – including voting for your representative in the upcoming Delegate Elections
- Learn more about membership and download the forms at www.australianpork.com.au/members

Why? APL has an obligation to confirm its Members' details and eligibility for membership every three years.

How to become a member

- Determine how much pig slaughter levy you paid from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.**
Example: *Pig Slaughter Levy: Number of pigs slaughtered x Levy amount \$3.25 = \$ Levy paid.
- Complete the the APL producer member application.**
Confirm or update your organisation information and eligibility for membership and either:
 - give a standing consent for APL to calculate levy paid via accessing PigPass records (NVDs), or
 - provide a statutory declaration to APL stating that you are an Australian pig producer and the amount of PigSlaughter Levy you have paid in the relevant financial year.
- Return the completed form to us by Monday 2 September by either:**
 - scan and send it by email to members@australianpork.com.au
 - fax it to 02 6285 2288, or
 - post it to PO Box 4746 Kingston ACT 2604 Australia.



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Death toll hits 2.8 million in Vietnam

VIETNAM has culled nearly 10 percent of its pig herd to contain an African swine fever outbreak that has started hitting large-scale industrial farms, the Vietnamese Government said in a statement on June 25.

Earlier outbreaks have appeared mostly at small household farms but have now started to occur at larger industrial operations, including Phu Son Farm in Dong Nai province near Ho Chi Minh City.

"This is a very worrying sign as these farms have tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of pigs each and therefore the damages would be significant," the government said.

ASF, which is deadly to pigs but harmless to humans, was first detected in Vietnam in February this year and has spread to farms in 60 of the country's 63 provinces, according to the statement.

Deputy head of Vietnam's Department of Animal Health Bach Duc Luu said: "Authorities have recently culled hundreds of pigs at Phu Son Farm, home to more than 18,000 pigs."

A representative of the farm owned by Phu Son Livestock Joint Stock Co declined to comment.

Phu Son Farm, founded in 1976, is one of the oldest of its kind in Vietnam.

The farm supplies pork mostly to Dong Nai province and neighbouring Ho Chi Minh City.

Nationwide, Vietnam has culled more than 2.8 million pigs in the outbreak, the government said in the statement, up from 2.5 million pigs a week prior.

In March, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation advised Vietnam to declare the outbreak a national emergency but officials said recently they had no plans to do so.

Luu said heavy rain in southern Vietnam could help the virus spread further.

Head of epidemiology at the animal health department Nguyen Van Long said it was "only a matter of time" before the disease spreads to all 63 provinces.

Pork makes up three-quarters of total meat consumption in Vietnam, a country of 95 million people where most of its 30 million farm-raised pigs are consumed domestically.

The country's pork industry is valued at about 94 trillion dong (\$A5.77 billion) and accounts for nearly 10 percent of Vietnam's agricultural sector.

ASF was first detected in Asia last August in China, the world's largest pork producing country, where the disease is expected to reduce the herd by up to 200 million pigs this year.



APL CEO Andrew Spencer, Australia's CVO Dr Mark Schipp and Biosecurity Strategic Review Panel Chair Gardner Murray.

Renewable gas – a potential future addition to farm micro power grids

from P2

biogas to help offset costs.

It is acknowledged there are still cost, regulatory and policy constraints that hinder the ability to tap the full potential of these technologies in Australia.

However, it is refreshing to see these options are being presented as a potential solution to energy generation throughout Australia.

Visit by Dr Mark Schipp, Australia's CVO to Australian Pork Limited

APL's Biosecurity Strategic Review Panel, chaired by Dr Gardner Murray, includes members from the Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Australia and pig veterinarians.

The Panel meets quarterly to discuss and provide constructive feedback on Australia's preparedness for exotic and endemic disease and identify RD&E needs and key risks for the Australian pork industry.

Following an invitation from the panel, Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Mark Schipp attended the Panel meeting on May 14, 2019 and discussed the role of the CVO, the Department's biosecurity priorities and activities, World Organisation for Animal Health matters, antimicrobial resistance and African swine fever.

Some interesting results:

Dr Kate Plush from Sun-Pork Solutions recently completed an APL-funded study aimed at reducing litter weight variation.

It is well recognised that variation in litter birth weight can affect pork production from the time of birth through to slaughter.

However, there is little published information on the seasonality of variation in piglet birth weight.

It has been shown that feeding dextrose to sows can reduce variation in litter weight but this has not been tested during summer.

This study aimed to test the effectiveness of dextrose administration in a 'wean to mate' diet to sows at alleviating within litter weight variation during summer and determine whether variation in piglet birth weight is influenced by season.

Evidence for increased piglet birth weight variation in sows bred during summer despite the reduced litter size was obtained.

This finding is concerning as it suggests seasonal infertility can also result in increased within-litter variation.

Interestingly, the inclusion of 5 percent dextrose in the 'wean to mate' sow diet increased litter size without affecting litter birth weight variation.

Feeding 5 percent dextrose in a 'wean to mate' diet also resulted in less piglet removals and higher growth rates overall in piglets born to sows mated in winter (lactated in summer).

While this may suggest the applied treatment improved piglet vigour, this remains to be confirmed.

So, what are the costs involved?

Dextrose is easy and safe to handle and its inclusion in the diet is relatively cheap.

At about \$1000 per tonne and 5 percent inclusion, the cost is \$55 per tonne of feed milled.

With a wean to service interval of five days and feed consumption of 3.5kg per day, the application cost is less than \$1 per sow.

Using the reported farrowing rate of 82 percent and 13.7 piglets born alive, the benefits far outweigh the costs if farrowing house management is adequate.

Per 100 sows bred, the number of piglets born alive improved from 931 to 1118 using dextrose during the wean to mate period irrespective of season.

Though this may all seem rather promising, farms could find it difficult to order and store if volumes required are low and/or there are limitations on silo space.

To exploit the advantages identified in this study, it was recommended daily feed allowance of sows be top-dressed with about 190g of dextrose until breeding.

This is easy to achieve in systems that wean into breeding stations but will be more complex in group-weaned farms.

For further information on items discussed in this article, please contact me on 0423 056 045 or heather.channon@australianpork.com.au

www.porknews.com.au

From chaos to control: 2005 to 2019

AS you will be aware, Andrew Spencer is going to leave us as CEO in early August.

I'm sure Andrew has covered that, but I thought I'd get my piece in too.

Andrew joined Australian Pork Limited in 2005 and colleagues, both existing and past, who were there then have relayed their memories of that time.

It's fair to say Andrew's appointment came at a time of relative chaos. As an industry, we were thinking about taking the government (a major contributor of funds) to court.

We subsequently did this and lost 2:1 on appeal in 2006.

The industry had become a relatively low-profit one, with growing imports bolstering supply and contributing to lower prices, which were still highly seasonal.

While I didn't join APL until 2007, judging from how marketing operated internally, APL was, let's be kind, perhaps a little unstructured (the Policy division appears to be an exception as they successfully landed the current model code in 2007).

To suggest that Andrew was the right man for the time is to underestimate the fit.

Andrew's measured, logical, calm and methodical approach to problem solving helped APL make sustainable progress.

For example, we have moved from a method of choosing R&D projects which essentially focussed on the Board deciding (I hear) to a



Marketing Matters

by PETER HAYDON
General Manager Marketing



system where business plans were written, and projects selected by a diverse group of producers and experts.

As you know, this method is evolving to keep the rigour and add some focus (a smaller number of bigger projects to make a bigger difference).

In marketing, we moved away from creating a different campaign every year that ran for an average period of four to five weeks, which didn't allow much time to build rapport with consumers.

We took a leaf out of the PorkStar playbook, chose a campaign (Get some pork on your fork) based on what the consumer (the person with the money) wants and talked about that to some of the people, all the time.

In addition to these improvements in reasoned choice making, the industry has voluntarily removed gestation stalls for the most part and learnt how to manage group housing, introduced an excellent quality assurance scheme, found ways to both manage on-farm profitability while benefitting the en-

vironment (biogas) and chosen to invest more in APL levies.

Over the course of the past 14 years, the Policy Division has rebuilt relationships with the government, which I suspect were quite 'strained' after the legal battle.

My sense is we are now seen by the government departments as relatively easy to deal with, which has to improve the chances of a relatively small industry getting some of what it

wants, most of the time.

This is backed up with a government relations ethos of 'when we come to see you, it's important'.

Speaking from the inside, APL is in a much more consistent and productive place and that is in large part due to Andrew's leadership.

There is a management cycle called the Control-Challenge-Change model that says in order to challenge you must be under control, and only from challenge can successful change occur.

Now, 2019-20 will be a year of challenging our thinking and changing our industry.

As producers and others help us shape the next strategic plan, the coming changes should excite us as we embrace them from a position of control.

Andrew helped deliver that control. 🐷

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Canadian pork sector keen to resolve export issues with China

THE Canadian Food Inspection Agency stopped issuing export certificates to China for all pork and beef products as of June 25, resulting in the suspension of shipments of those products to that nation after the validity of Canadian export certificates were called into question by China.

Officials of both nations have remained in close contact regarding the issue and an RCMP criminal investigation is now under way.

Canadian Pork Council director of Government and Corporate Affairs Gary Stordy stressed this is in no way a food safety issue but appears to be a situation where Canadian export certificates have essentially been forged.

Gary explained to Farmscape that the situation is being investigated by Canadian officials and criminal agencies.

"We are asking the Canadian government to continue the dialogue between the two government officials,

the CFIA in Canada and Chinese authorities and to keep us informed of the progress," he said.

"We realise this is going to take some time to resolve.

"We're hoping it's weeks rather than months but we understand this is a criminal investigation.

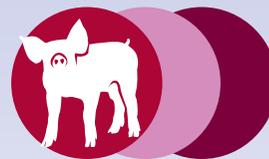
"For the Canadian industry, the economic impact, it's a bit too soon to tell.

"We are watching and monitoring the system but there are some silver linings.

"Essentially all the product that has been en route or able to be shipped as of June 25 will proceed to market.

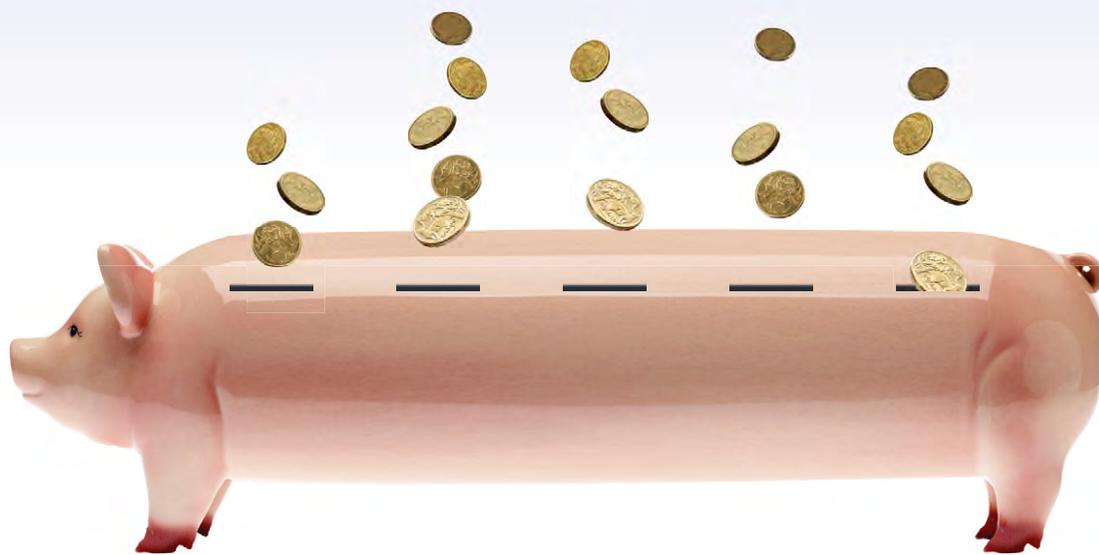
"The rest of the product that has not been prepared or boxed and ready to go to China will be ideally absorbed within other markets."

Stordy said the temporary suspension is not related to any food safety issues but is, frankly, the result of fraudulent paperwork. 🐷



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As the 2019 Federal election dust settles...

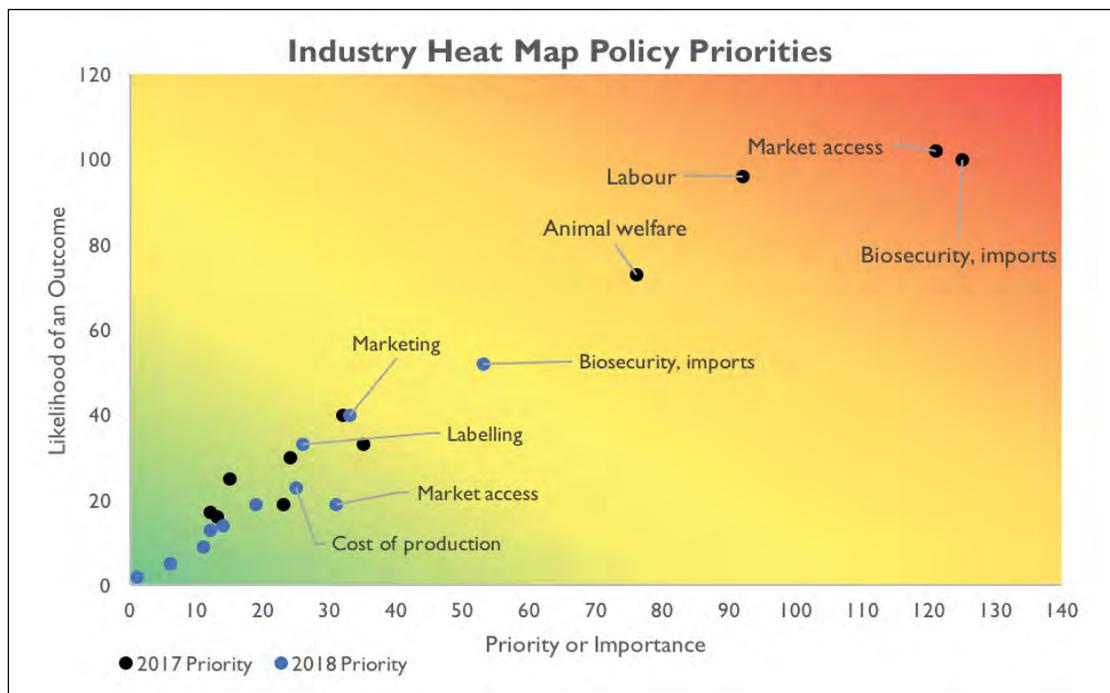


Figure 1

IT was the election that was not winnable and yet in one of the biggest election surprises of recent times, the Coalition was returned to Government with a tiny one seat majority in the House of Representatives and a two-party preferred swing of +1.17 percent.

Forty senators had to contest their spot, out of 76 seats.

The structure of the new Senate is Coalition with 35 Senators, Labor 26, Greens nine, One Nation two, Centre Alliance two, Cory Bernardi and Jacqui Lambie.

While the Coalition has strengthened its position in the Senate compared to the previous parliament, it will require the support of at least three cross-benchers to pass legislation.

The election also provided an opportunity for a re-shuffle of Ministerial portfolios.

The major change for pork industry was the appointment of Bridget McKenzie as the Minister for Agriculture.

The Minister is already engaging with her key stakeholders, holding 30-minute 'speed dating' meetings in Canberra recently, and is now out on the ground meeting producers and other agriculture organisations.

Both Houses of Parliament will commence sitting in the first week of July, providing the first opportunity for the Coalition to get back to 'business as usual'.

In terms of what this means, the Government has indicated its first business is to implement its income tax cut package announced in the May budget, first home buyers' deposit scheme, infrastructure and skills package policies.

For the pork industry, the key policy issues are:

- Trade: China market



Point of View

by DEB KERR
General Manager Policy



access for pork and pork products, anti-dumping regime changes and the EU free-trade agreement.

- Labour: the inclusion of 'pig farmer' under the Pork Industry Labour Agreement. However, the current tightened system for skilled migration is likely to continue.

- Animal activists: the Government announced new offences regarding the use of carriage services to disclose personal information, and that the Government would support farmers seeking to bring civil action.

- Border biosecurity: the changes implemented recently have been welcome, but APL supports a permanent testing regime for surrendered and seized products, higher infringements and deportation on the first offence.

- Animal welfare: a review is under way focusing on the way in which animal welfare standards are undertaken (this will not affect the review of the Pig Standards).

- Disease preparedness: measures to improve our ability to respond and stamp out an African swine fever (or other exotic diseases) incursion across governments and industry.

- Traceability: a number of government projects are under way to identify ways to improve Australia's unique livestock traceability system including through the adoption of innovations.

- Country of Origin Labelling: while the Government has deferred any implementation concerns to the 2020 statutory review, APL has called on the Government to implement stronger education measures.

- Research & Development Corporations: the Government response to the Rural Innovation Report undertaken by Ernst and Young will be a key measure in the next steps.

While the above does not include every policy concern of producers, it does focus on those that are the responsibility of the Federal Government and is reflective of the issues identified in November 2017 and November 2018 by delegates (see industry heat map policy priorities in Figure 1).

Feel free to drop the team an email at policy@australianpork.com.au if you have a policy issue you wish to raise with APL – otherwise pick up the phone and call me on 0408 169 628.

July 31- August 2, 2019 | Pullman Cairns International

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Registration www.eiseverywhere.com/400241
 Accommodation not included. Quote Conference Code: AVA/AVP Conf bookings close July 8, 2019.

Reports show swine fever toll in China may far exceed recorded 137 outbreaks

AS many as half of China's breeding pigs have either died from African swine fever or been slaughtered because of the spreading disease.

This means the actual death toll for swine fever in China may be twice as high as is being officially recognised by the Chinese Government.

Cracks are already beginning to show as food prices rise and the volumes of imported pork increase each week.

China's rural economy is suffering greatly, with 40 million pig farmers making up that demographic.

Losses are being recorded across the pig industry by vaccine producers, feed additive producers and ge-

netics companies alike. Losses are not only from infected pigs dying or being culled, but in many cases farmers are sending pigs to market early to avoid contracting the disease when it has been confirmed nearby.

This action has kept pork prices down in previous months but prices are now showing a dramatic rise and China's agricultural ministry believes they could increase by 70 percent throughout 2019.

It is believed many outbreaks are still going unreported.

Due to China's 'vast and fragmented' agricultural sector, it may be poor data quality making it impossible to gauge the full extent of the disease.

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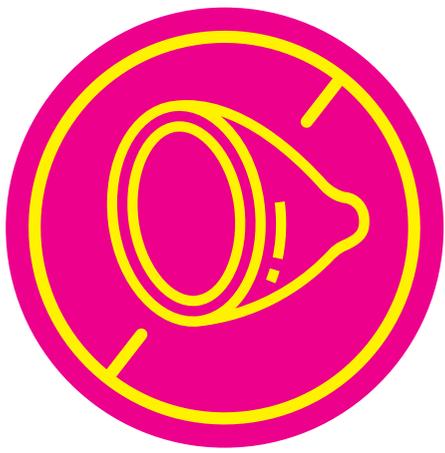
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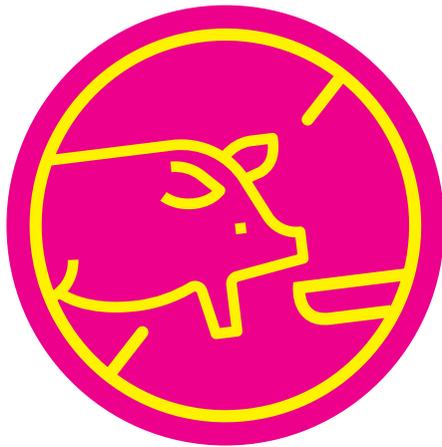
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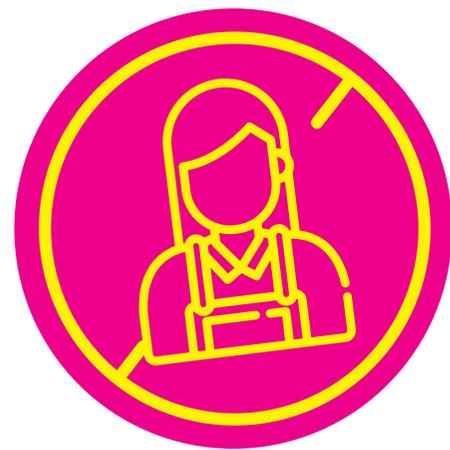
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Pork CRC chairman Dr John Keniry officially opened the 2007 Pork CRC Annual Conference in Brisbane and welcomed about 100 delegates.



The author enjoyed APSA 2015 dinner in Melbourne with Pork CRC colleagues Richard Westmacott (left) and Geoff Crook (right). Funny guys, Richard and Geoff always got the job done with a smile. What could be better?

Pork CRC closes its doors after opening many others

PORK CRC closed on June 30 after 15 years delivering the goods for pork R&D.

Pork CRC chairman Dennis Mutton, writing recently to Pork CRC participants, said the CRC had achieved great outcomes for the industry and wider community.

"The initiative successfully delivered research outcomes taken up and implemented across Australia's pork industry, identified new products and services that have been commercialised with international application

Cant Comment by BRENDON CANT



and energised research institutions to build capability in pork research, resulting in a significant increase in researchers to

well as a few challenges along the way.

"However, whatever the challenges, it's good to know there are many wonderful, hard-working, smart people in the industry and the future is in safe hands," he said.

"I've had the great pleasure working with one of those, Roger Campbell, who I thank for his hard work, patience, humour and dedication to the industry.

"We kicked many goals and had a few misses, but Roger made the CRCs what they are and should be congratulated on his fantastic achievements.

"As well as Roger, a great many people have contributed to the outstanding success of the CRCs. "Our researchers have

worked tirelessly to provide solutions to industry problems, our students have committed themselves to our industry and are already demonstrating the capacity to be leaders of tomorrow.

"Our participants showed outstanding support for the CRCs through their contributions of cash, staff and facilities and we shouldn't forget the small but dedicated staff and Board of the CRCs.

"I've also enjoyed working closely with our Communications Manager Brendon Cant, who has been with the CRCs for my time and a bit before.

"You've all played your part well and I thank you all for your involvement."

support the industry," Mr Mutton said.

Dennis reinforced the widely held view that the high-integrity theme of the second and final Pork CRC focused attention on important issues for the industry going forward.

"A strong scientific and welfare-based program for sow housing resulted in significant and sustainable changes to farm management, with sow confinement now reduced by more than 85 percent," he said.

"There is also significant anecdotal evidence of reduced antibiotic usage on farms around Australia as alternative ways to manage health and disease have been discovered through research effort."

He also noted the ongoing challenges of increasing per capita consumption of pork were addressed through improvements in eating quality, resulting from research that impacted on processing, preparation, packaging and cooking.

Pork CRC CEO Geoff Crook, in his reflections on almost nine years with Pork CRC, said there had been some great achievements enabled through Pork CRC's research, as



Dennis Mutton, director and chair, Pork CRC, 2012-2019.



Dr Roger Campbell, CEO, Pork CRC, 2005-2018. Not one to just 'hang around', Roger is now director of consultancy RG Campbell Advisory and can be contacted on 0407 774 714.

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Removing Ceftiofur from a farm treatment list

CEFTIOFUR is an antibiotic classified as having high importance for human use.

It is one of the essential antibacterial drugs for the treatment or prevention of infections in humans where there are few or no treatment alternatives for infections.

Ceftiofur is not registered for pigs but some veterinarians have prescribed its use 'off label'.

As the global antimicrobial debate has gained traction this practice is recognised as being in breach of both good practice and Australia's antimicrobial resistance strategy.

This case study from 2016 describes the measures involved when ceftiofur was removed from the farm treatment list.

It has not been used since, with no detrimental

effect on pig health.

The farm was a commercial sow breeder farm.

Litters were farrowed in farrowing crates with a combination of plastic and metal flooring.

The heat lamps and heated flooring were controlled by a remote system.

There were no health challenges in the sow herd.

The prevalence of clinical signs of scours (5 percent of litters) and poor doing piglets (5 percent) fell within industry norms.

The management and treatment program for 'piglet scour' were Scourban, neomycin or Trivetrin injection and Ceftiofur injection.

The last is not registered for use in pigs but was used off-label with a vet prescription.

It came with the specific instructions from the herd's veterinarian for use with 'non-responsive scour – use only as last resort'.

An animal health review following an ownership change found a high use of Ceftiofur.

Inspection of farm records and questioning of staff revealed all piglets were receiving a dose of Ceftiofur by injection at one to two days of age, regardless of clinical signs of scours.

In using Ceftiofur outside the specific instruction, staff stated: 'scours have been bad recently.'

They had confidence that Ceftiofur was effective for control.

Despite this, piglet death rates had increased over the last month.

Inspection of animals and facilities found treatments for scours in up to 10 percent of piglets from one to four days of age.

All sows were routinely vaccinated for E. coli.

More sows were farrowing than expected.

Turnaround time in the farrowing house was shortened to fit the extra sows in.

This reduced cleaning, drying, disinfecting and 'resting' time between litters.

Post-mortem inspections of dead piglets revealed scours weren't the major problem.

The elevated death rate was due to increased overlays.

Observation of the facilities revealed piglets lying away from the heated creep areas, putting them at higher risk from the sow.

The temperature of the creeps varied from 38-50C, when the recommended temperature for neonatal piglets is 30-32C.

It came to light that there were no routine checks of the controlled set point against the actual temper-

ature in the pens.

The temperature settings were recalibrated and a protocol agreed to routinely check temperatures against set points.

A cleaning, drying and disinfection program was agreed.

It allowed time for these operations and more timely movement of sows due to farrow.

A bentonite-based drying agent was introduced as part of the disinfection process.

No sow was moved into a pen that was wet.

Feeding close to farrowing was reviewed.

Sows were offered minimal feed on the day of farrowing and 'stepped up' each day to limit overeating early in lactation.

Staff were retrained in best practice colostrum management and fostering techniques.

All piglets could consume colostrum from their birth mother and fostering was only used if the piglet did not have a functional teat to use.

Following these measures, pre-weaning deaths decreased by 3 percent.

Deaths caused by 'scour' fell from 30 percent to less than 5 percent of all deaths.

Total antimicrobial drug use on piglets fell from about 1.2 doses to less than 0.1 doses per piglet born alive.

Piglet scour was soon considered to be a non-issue at this farm.

The most common treatment now for any piglet diarrhoea is to provide electrolytes and review the environment.

Ceftiofur was removed from the treatment list.

The case study is drawn from the Veterinary Prescribing Guidelines for Pigs available on the Australian Pork Limited website australianpork.com.au

Ross Cutler

RELEASE THE POWER

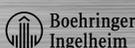
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European research – more antibiotics are not better for pig production

WHEN the Dutch removed to reduce antimicrobial use on pig farms, good results followed coaching on prudent antimicrobial use.

A total of 61 herds were studied over an eight-month period that involved three visits by an external coach.

Medications were reduced by 46 percent in piglets, 82 percent in finishers and 32 percent in sows.

Over this period, pigs weaned per sow, per year increased by 1.1 pigs, daily weight gain increased by 7.7g and finisher mortality rate decreased by 0.6 percent.

The European research also shows there is a large variability between countries regarding how much antimicrobial drugs are used and the range in doses.

Indeed, the data showed antimicrobial use does not influence the number of pigs produced per year or per sow.

Medication practices between countries and farms are probably driven by belief rather than evidence.

The results summarised in a paper presented at the Merck Swine University course in Bangkok late

continued P11

ASF tightens its grip in six Asian countries

OFFICIAL statistics from the Food and Agriculture Organization show you can now find African swine fever in Cambodia, China, Laos, Mongolia, North Korea and Vietnam – and experts predict its relentless march will continue.

In Vietnam alone, officials report 2.8 million pigs have been culled from the national herd due to ASF.

The disease has spread to nearly every province.

In a country of 95 million people where pork makes up 75 percent of total meat consumption, this reality spells trouble.

Meanwhile in China, the picture does not look too much better despite the Chinese Government's ongoing efforts and that by large private producers.

The nation's swine herd shrank 21 percent on the year in April to a level not seen since the early 1990s, according to agriculture ministry data.

Dutch lender Rabobank forecasts the herd will decline between 20 and 30

percent in 2019 from the previous year when China recorded a herd of 428 million head.

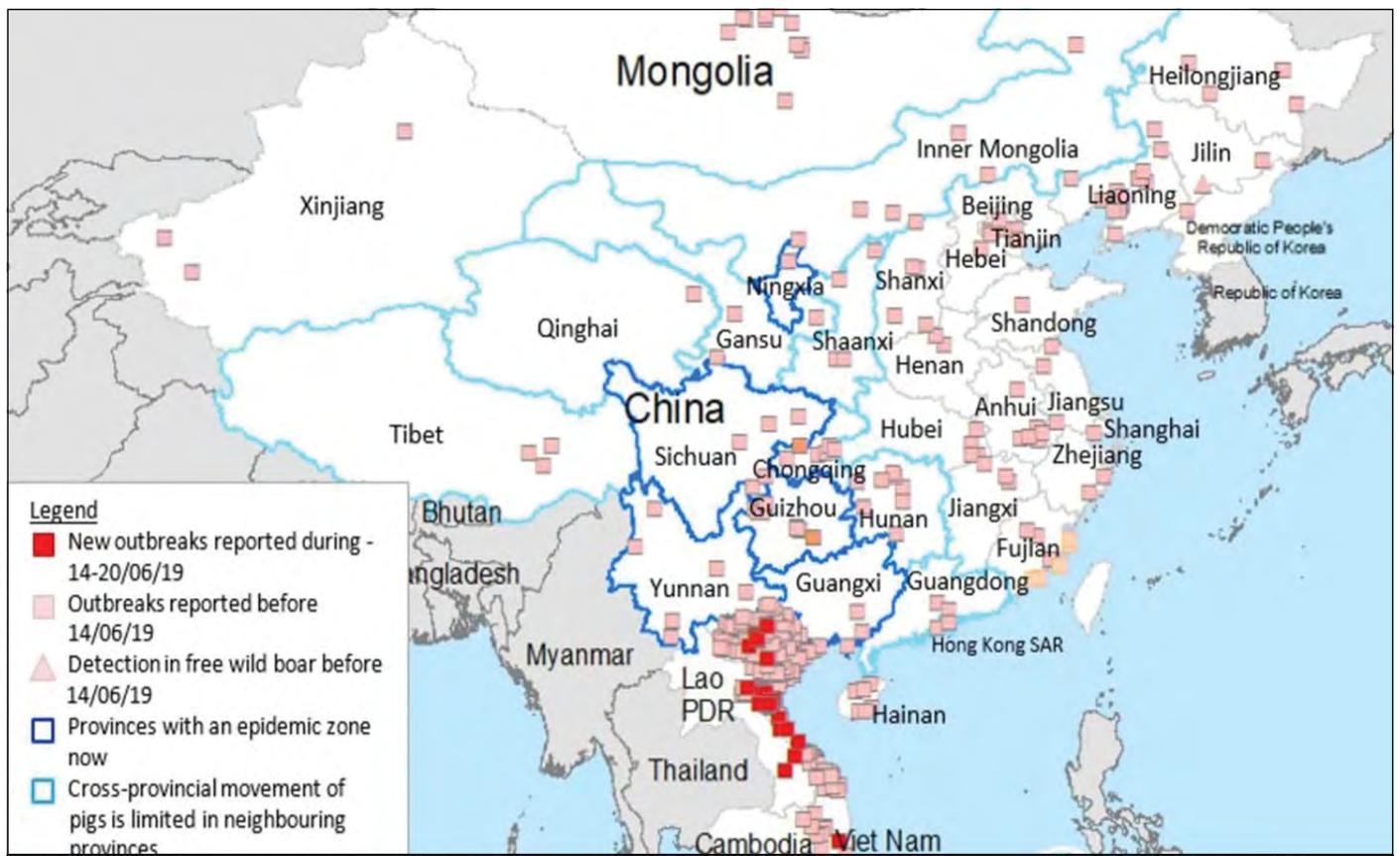
The disease's toll on China's swine herd continues to reach epic proportions, with recent estimates pegging current and future losses related to ASF at more than 200 million pigs.

With the losses farmers have had to face, some are reluctant to begin repopulation, as has been encouraged by the Chinese Government, for fear they could lose their entire herd to the disease again.

This said, some commercial herds are looking at expansion, with New Hope Liuhe, a Chinese integrator, announcing its plans to add 1.6 million head to its herd across three provinces.

Investigation into the spread of the disease concluded vehicles and workers are the most common way ASF spreads.

Feeding swill and transporting live pigs or pork with ASF contamination are also key methods of ASF transmission.



ASF situation in Asia (August 2018 to date). Image: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



European research – more antibiotics are not better for pig production

from P10

last year by Dutch veterinarian Dr Merel Postma showed higher level antimicrobial use in sows was associated with higher antimicrobial usage from birth until slaughter.

A shorter farrowing turnaround and a younger weaning age were also associated with a higher antimicrobial usage from birth until slaughter.

This is probably a reflection of misplaced diligence in the care of sows and litters.

Those farms that vaccinated more also used more antimicrobials.

This reflects the underlying health status of the herds but could also be linked to the nature of the veterinary advice and the attitude of conscientious staff not to leave any stone unturned.

Excessive, unnecessary treatments are not helpful and lead directly to antimicrobial resistance.

The trick is to get the balance right but first the animals need to be raised in an environment and fed in a way that leaves them fit and healthy to start and able to mount a proper immune response when required against the

micro-organisms present in a herd.

Better external biosecurity is related to lower antimicrobial usage from birth until slaughter.

This may be due to those herds being of higher health status but could also have been due to better focused management.

Dr Postma concluded management practices such as weaning age and biosecurity measures may be important factors indirectly impacting antimicrobial usage.

The producers using lower levels of antimicrobial medications were also those with a higher internal biosecurity status.

Basically, they kept the farms cleaner and deployed measures to reduce the internal spread of disease.

These herds were in areas where there were fewer pig farms, hence the opportunity for disease to spread between farms was reduced.

Antimicrobial use was lower on the farms that effectively controlled scours in baby pigs.

Dr Postma also found, as could be unexpected, the lower the level of respiratory disease, the lower the level of antimicrobial use.

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GRAIN & PROTEIN

Coles and Aussie farmers raise over half a million dollars for MND

FUNDS raised from pork sales increased by a massive 57 percent this year.

Coles and its pork producers have raised nearly \$520,000 to fight motor neurone disease following a national campaign on pork sales.

The fundraising result for FightMND represents a 57 percent increase on last year, making Coles once again the biggest corporate donor to the charity.

Over nearly six weeks, Coles donated 10 cents from the sale of each pack of fresh pork – from spare ribs, sirloin steak, scotch fillet, loin chops, schnitzel and mince at over 800 Coles supermarkets.

In addition to Coles' donation, Coles' Aussie pork farmers donated to the FightMND foundation during the appeal.

Coles chief operating officer Greg Davis said the response of customers to the FightMND appeal had been fantastic.

"Australian pork is one of the most delicious, versatile meats to enjoy at this time of the year and it was great to see so many customers buying Coles Brand fresh pork while also

supporting such a worthy cause," Davis said.

FightMND CEO Jamie Howden thanked Coles as well as their customers and pork producers for their generosity.

"The partnership between Coles, Australian Pork Limited, Aussie pork farmers and FightMND has gone from strength to strength this year," Howden said.

"Through the generosity of Coles, the farmers and the Australian public who purchased fresh pork products during the campaign, FightMND will now commit the money raised to more world-class research projects to find effective treatments and a cure for MND."

Every day, at least two Australians die from MND, while another two are diagnosed with the debilitating illness.

The fundraising appeal at Coles coincided with FightMND's Big Freeze at the MCG, which has been held on the Queen's Birthday holiday each year since 2015, raising awareness and funds for MND medical research to find effective treatments and a cure for the disease. 🐷

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IT TAKES PEOPLE

Industry leaders rewarded for higher welfare of pigs

FARM animal welfare is gaining huge momentum across the global food industry, as highlighted at Compassion in World Farming's latest Good Farm Animal Welfare Awards ceremony in Brussels, Sweden on June 27.

The awards were hosted this year by vet, TV presenter and author Emma Milne, celebrating companies committed to improving the lives of farm animals.

"I'm hugely honoured to have been asked to host this year's Good Farm Animal Welfare Awards," Milne said.

"All the time we use animals for food, it's essential we keep striving to improve their welfare, not just in life but in death too.

"The awards recognise those who embrace this," she said.

This year there was a total of 50 awards celebrating market-leading food businesses for their higher-welfare policies and practices, which are set to benefit the lives of over 39 million animals each year.

The second-biggest retailer in Sweden with 650 stores, Coop Sweden was the only retailer to receive a Good Sow Commendation in recognition of the high welfare standards in its pork supply chain.

All sows are reared in groups throughout life, with straw bedding and enrichment and farrowing crates are never used.

Chipotle Mexican Grill (US) also received a Good Sow Commendation for its conviction to ensure sows are never confined to gestation crates or farrowing stalls.

Chipotle Mexican Grill animal welfare manager Yael Cypers said, "We are dedicated to serving food with integrity and ensuring our real ingredients are responsibly sourced."

"Our pork is raised outdoors or in deeply bedded open barns, and our sows are never in cages or crates.

"We have been serving humanely raised meat in all our restaurants (2500) for more than 20 years and are dedicated to maintaining high animal welfare standards.

"We look forward to continuing to work with Compassion in World Farming and our supply partners to drive further progress in our collective efforts to cultivate a better world."

Compassion's awards program in China has continued to flourish, working with the International Cooperation Committee of Animal Welfare to recognise the higher-welfare achievements of Chinese pig and poultry producers.

The Chinese producer awards are based on criteria that equate to stars, with five being the highest accolade.

This year there were eight Good Pig Production Award winners (with two five-star winners)

who have made significant commitments to improving the welfare of pigs.

This year also saw the return of the biennial Retailer Awards, which stem from Compassion's Supermarket Survey results and feature the Best Retailer Innovation and Marketing Awards, which are selected by an expert panel.

This year, Waitrose & Partners was awarded both the Best Retailer Award – beating competition from 27 other retailers from the UK, France, Italy, Germany and Scandinavia – and Best Retailer Marketing Award for the second time for its consistent and high-level consumer-facing communications on farm animal welfare, with its recent 'Waitrose & Partners' re-brand campaign.

Waitrose & Partners Agriculture Manager Duncan Sinclair said, "It's a huge honour to receive these awards, and to win the Best Retailer once again is a particularly proud accomplishment."

"It takes a lot of passion, dedication and hard work to maintain the high standards we have become famous for over the past 30 years and we owe a considerable amount to the longstanding relationships we have with our farmers for building that reputation.

"Without their loyalty and commitment, our pursuit and retention of such pioneering animal welfare standards would not be possible and we share these accolades with them."

The Best Retailer Innovation Award was presented to leading French retailer Casino Group, who partnered with three animal welfare NGOs, including Compassion, to launch the very first animal welfare labelling scheme in France in December 2018.

Compassion's director of Food Business Dr Tracey Jones said, "While change is being driven by myriad stakeholders concerned about the welfare of farm animals and the need to look after our planet, it

is the food industry that makes this change a reality."

"Addressing the major welfare issues in pig production is challenging at the best of times.

"It's particularly encouraging therefore to be able to award eight winners from China this year, and to have a previous winner, Fumagalli, speak at our awards on its progress towards free farrowing and higher welfare pig production.

"We hope by sharing experiences, more producers will gain the confidence needed to invest and trial new systems.

"Our awards are a great way to recognise and congratulate those doing their part to better the lives of farm animals and we were pleased to be able to recognise Coop Sweden and Chipotle for their commitments.

"We hope others will follow in their footsteps to help drive change, for the sake of the millions of pigs reared for food each year." 🐷

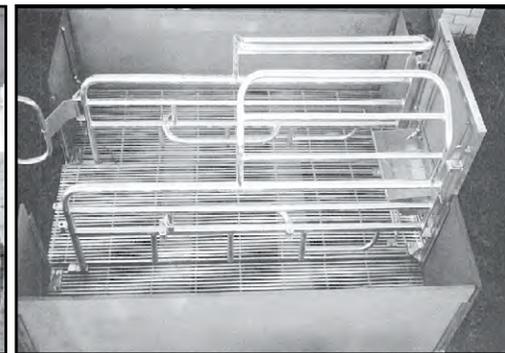
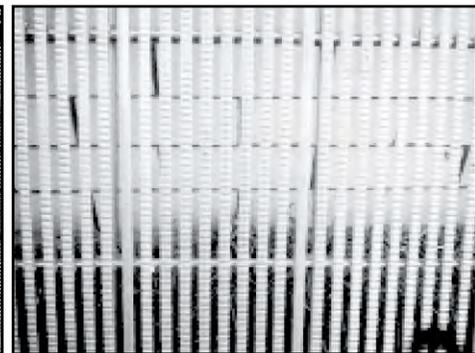
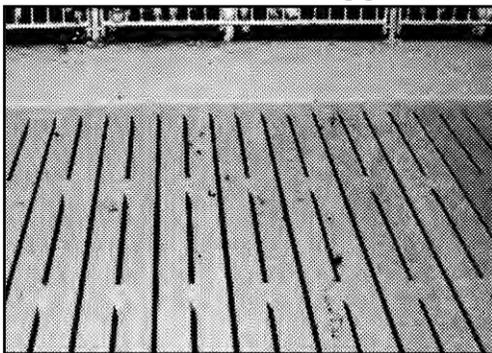


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According to Hydro Innovations, the venturi-aeration system can deliver high oxygen transfer efficiencies, but the biggest advantage to the system is the ease of access for monitoring, servicing and maintenance.

Because the system is located on the banks of lagoons, not floating on them, operators can safely and easily access them.

This has a very positive impact not only on safety but maintenance costs.

With the V-A system, no cranes or boats are necessary to access equipment, eliminating the associated risks (and costs) of having to use them.

Downtime is also greatly reduced because of the speed at which the equipment can be accessed, and because Gorman-Rupp pumps are used to provide the flow and pressure, any service required on the pump is able to be done in a very timely manner.

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More information about this system can be obtained from info@HydroInnovations.com.au



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Farmers welcome practical recommendations for unwieldy EPBC Act

THE National Farmers' Federation has welcomed the release of the final report into the interactions between the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation 1999 Act (the Act) and the agriculture sector, prepared by Dr Wendy Craik AM.

NFF president Fiona Simson said, "The NFF has worked closely with Dr Craik and the review process since 2018, advocating for outcomes that will finally make the legislation more workable for farmers."

"The NFF's significant input into this review is reflected in both the recommendations and the body of the report.

"The report makes a number of practical recommendations to reduce the regulatory burden on agriculture without reducing environmental standards.

"The Act's current one-size-fits-all approach does not recognise the inherently complex landscape scale interactions of farming and attempts to force environmental outcomes."

The report raises legitimate concerns about the operation of the legislation, including a lack of clarity around the overarching objectives of regulation of agricultural activity; a lack of awareness of the Act; unclear, complicated, time-consuming and impractical advice that discourages referring agricultural decisions for www.porknews.com.au

decision; and punitive approaches that disempower the real protection of environmental assets.

In the report, Dr Craik recommends a market-based approach to incentivise farmers to protect matters of national significance, a paradigm shift from the current command and control approach.

"The Act, as it stands, continues to fail to arrest the decline of biodiversity crucial to Australia's food and fibre system," Ms Simson said.

"A market solution is a sensible mechanism to pursue."

The NFF is working to develop market-based instruments through its natural capital policy.

The recommendations appear to be substantively consistent with the views put by the NFF in its submission and other engagements with the review.

"The NFF welcomes the Minister's commitment to engage in the conversation and to commit to Dr Craik's recommendations," Ms Simson said.

"It is crucial we find the right balance between environmental outcomes and the production of food and fibre, underpinned by evidence-based science and the sensible policy that we need to support a growing population.

"The 10-year statutory review of the Act will be critical to the direction of environmental policy in Australia."



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Legislation to increase maximum sentence for animal abuse in UK

ENVIRONMENT secretary Michael Gove has announced a new bill to enable tougher prison sentences for the worst animal abusers was introduced to UK Parliament on June 26.

The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill means animal abusers could face up to five years in prison. A significant increase from the current maximum sentence of six months.

This will make it one of the toughest sanctions in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.

The Bill follows a public consultation last year, in which more than 70 per cent of people supported

the proposals for tougher prison sentences.

It means the courts will be able to take a tougher approach to cases such as gross neglect of farm animals, dog fighting or abuse of puppies and kittens.

Environment secretary Michael Gove said, "There is no place in this country for animal cruelty."

"That is why I want to make sure that those who abuse animals are met with the full force of the law.

"Our new Bill sends a clear message that this behaviour will not be tolerated, with the maximum five-year sentence one of the toughest pun-

ishments in Europe.

"I am committed to making our country the best place in the world for the care and protection of animals."

The RSPCA received 1,175,193 calls to their 24-hour cruelty hotline in 2018, with a call every 27 seconds.

There have also been several cases in the past few years in which the courts said they would have handed down longer sentences had they been available.

Recent examples include a case when a man trained dogs to ruthlessly torture other animals, including trapping a fox and a terrier dog in a cage to brutally attack each other.

Animal welfare minister David Rutley said, "These increased maximum sentences will act as a serious deterrent against cruelty and neglect in the future."

"This step builds on recent positive action we have taken to protect animals, including plans to ban third-party puppy and kitten sales and banning the use of wild animals in circuses."

Claire Horton, chief executive of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, said, "The introduction of this bill is a landmark achievement, which will make a profound difference to dogs and cats in England and Wales."

"We, and many other rescue centres, see shocking cases of cruelty and neglect come through our gates and there are many more animals that are dumped and don't even make it off the streets.

"Research shows that tougher prison sentences act as a deterrent to would-be criminals, so today's announcement should prevent the suffering of many animals in the future."

This announcement complements Finn's Law, which came into effect earlier in June 2019 and provides increased protection for service dogs and horses.

It was named after a German shepherd called Finn, a police dog stabbed in the head and chest in 2016 while trying to catch a man suspected of robbing a taxi driver at gunpoint.

If passed into law, today's Bill means someone who attacks a police dog could face a sentence of five years in prison.

The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill will be introduced into the House of Commons before moving through to the House of Lords.

If passed, it will come into effect in two months after it receives Royal Assent.

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Fresh approach to domestic beef sales at Western Meat Packers Group

GRAHAM Martin has been appointed domestic sales manager of Western Meat Packers Group.

Announcing the appointment, WMPG chief executive officer Andrew Fuda said his many meat industry roles across retail, food service, marketing, quality assurance and sales gave Mr Martin the necessary skills, contacts and experience to build brand awareness and lift sales.

“A qualified butcher, Graham knows how to present beef to today’s discerning consumers and he will focus much of his time on promoting our multi-award-winning Margaret River Fresh beef to independent butchers and selected su-

permarkets,” Fuda said. “While the Margaret River region has long been globally recognised for its fine wines, our Margaret River Fresh-branded beef is now serving up a beef taste sensation to consumers.”

The Margaret River Fresh trademark is registered with IP Australia to WMPG and used exclusively to package the group’s premier products. Cattle are selected after grazing on their natural pastures and then raised and fattened almost exclusively on pasture, before carrying the Margaret River Fresh brand after processing at the WMPG abattoir located on 250ha in the Margaret River region.

Mr Martin was red

meat/food service manager with Globe Meats for three years before spending another three with Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation as retail area manager, driving a value-added program and introducing trim lamb to the WA meat industry.

This was followed by two years as a meat specialist with FAL and then seven with Meat and Livestock Australia (formerly AMLC).

“As WA Area Manager, I was part of the team that launched the successful Meat Standards Australia eating quality program and the muscle seaming program,” Martin said.

“Of course, today MSA is very well known to shoppers looking for a consistent beef product.

“Memorable highlights with MLA included working with Neil Perry at Tasting Australia in Adelaide and Sam Neill in Cape Town for filming of the very successful Red Meat Program ‘We were meant to Eat Red Meat’, featuring the dancing butchers.”

For over three years Mr Martin was WA manager for Australian Pork Limited, delivering many marketing and quality programs and ‘PorkStar’ to the food service sector.

Before joining WMPG he was seven years with Linley Valley Pork, where he had several roles, including brand building with retail butchers and independent supermarkets.

“Many of my industry roles meant I’d design and run workshops for apprentice and trainee chefs through TAFEs, always featuring an overview of the meat industry, including on-farm management, processing, ageing of meat and, of course, cutting demonstrations,” Martin said.

Started in 1983, Western Meat Packers Group is 100 percent owned by its founders Rod Russell and wife Shana.

It annually turns over more than \$150 million and employs 450 people at its Osborne Park processing and packing facility, Margaret River abattoir and Bibra Lake value-adding unit.

www.wmpg.com.au



Aussie Pumps has ramped up production of drain jetters in response to increased demand from a range of industries converting to high-pressure water jetting.

Piggeries go jetting

PIGGERIES with issues of blocked pipes and drains often rely on local plumbers to clear those chokes.

Unfortunately, some plumbers are still clearing drains using old mechanical methods that are dangerous, slow and ineffective.

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Aussie Pumps sales manager Brad Farrugia said, “Aussie Pumps distributors Powderly’s Pumping & Irrigation in Young NSW are helping their local piggery with a new high-pressure water jetter that clear drains faster.”

“The piggery is buying their own jetter equipment so they can take control of the issue rather than relying on

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Drains can easily become blocked when effluent, feed and debris are washed into them.

Aussie Pumps’ range of drain-cleaning jetters unblock drains in minutes with high-pressure water jets.

These not only clear the blockage but the water flushes the pipes at the same time.

The jetters are available in both 4000 and 5000psi options as class A machines, which means operators do not need to be certified to use them.

The range uses Honda and Vanguard petrol engines, with diesel-drive versions for remote communities.

Each unit is fitted with a heavy-duty steel

reel with 60m of high-pressure Aussie Pumps sewer cleaning hose.

An Aussie Nozzle Box is supplied as part of the kit to tackle virtually any drain-cleaning task.

The nozzle selection includes a turbo mulcher for stubborn chokes.

“The bonus for piggery operators is a drain-cleaning jetter can also double as an extremely effective pressure washer too,” Farrugia said.

“So you’re getting two machines for the price of one.”

Further information on the Aussie Cobra range of drain-cleaning jetters is available on the Aussie Pumps website (aussiepumps.com.au) and Aussie Pumps Gold Distributors throughout Australia and the South Pacific.



Western Meat Packers Group domestic sales manager Graham Martin.

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US pork lobby asks for simpler regulations for genetically altered livestock

THE US pork lobby said on June 26 that more must be done to simplify regulations for genetically altered livestock, weeks after President Donald Trump signed an executive order to streamline the review process for agricultural technology.

Trump, who was elected in 2016 with broad support from farmers, signed the order in Iowa on June 11 and said it would speed up reviews of biotechnology.

The US National Pork Producers Council had hoped the order would relax how the US Food and Drug Administration regulates gene editing, a technology that could be used to alter pigs to resist disease.

The agency "inaccurate-

ly classifies livestock as drugs and farms as drug-manufacturing facilities" the council said in a statement.

However, the FDA told the council it thinks its approach to gene editing is already in line with Trump's executive order, according to lawyer for the pork group Andrew Bailey.

The FDA told Reuters it is working to implement the order and wants to avoid unnecessary barriers to innovation in plant and animal biotechnology.

The agency said it does not regulate animals as drugs, but regulates intentional alterations to genomes in animals.

FDA regulation could lead to a lengthy and expensive process for re-

searchers and companies to gain US approval for gene-edited hogs, according to the National Pork Producers Council.

That could put the US at risk of falling behind suppliers like Canada, Brazil and China, the group said.

Unlike traditional genetically modified organisms, in which a gene is added from another organism, gene editing works like the find-and-replace function on a word processor.

It finds a gene and then makes changes by amending or deleting it.

Scientists can edit genomes more precisely and rapidly than ever before, and altered agricultural products could get to market more quickly and cheaply.

The National Pork Pro-

ducers Council wants the US Department of Agriculture rather than the FDA to regulate gene editing in livestock.

Pig farmers globally are battling diseases like African swine fever and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, which can kill animals or increase the use of drugs in livestock.

Dan Kovich, deputy director of science and technology for the council, said the FDA needs "to go back to the drawing board" regarding its approach to gene editing.

Kovich said the pork lobby was working with the Trump administration "to discuss ways to move forward and frankly make sure the FDA hears and understands our concerns." 🐷

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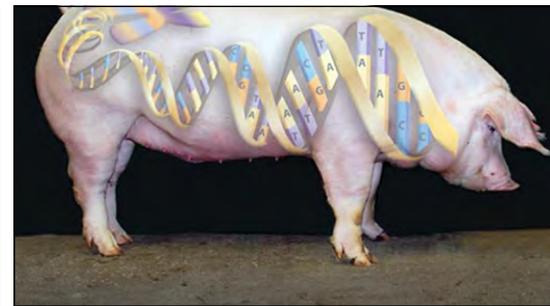


Photo: National Hog Farmer

The effect of water quality on pig performance

WATER is considered by most swine nutritionists to be the most important of all nutrients required by pigs.

At birth, water makes up about 82 percent of the pig's body weight and steadily declines to about 50 percent for a pig at market weight.

While water is a vital component of any livestock diet, the question remains; does the quality of drinking water influence health and performance of pigs?

University of Minnesota researchers are set to address this question by looking at the impact of water quality on animal performance, gut health, and liveability of nursery pigs.

Many producers ensure water is available and fresh; however, little is known about the effect of water quality on pig performance.

This project will compare three different water sources (two deemed bad, and one good) when fed to nursery pigs.

Through a series of video recordings, water sample collection, and data analysis, researchers will dive deeper into how water quality might influence pig behaviour, gut function and immune system function.

The study will be conducted at the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Centre, Morris, Minnesota.

The need for such a study was raised by producer concerns and ech-

oed by the Minnesota Pork Board.

Christensen Farms director of research and development Brent Frederick said, "Water quality is an important factor within livestock production, and often receives too little attention."

"While we focus on the essentials of our pigs every day, in providing them feed, air and water, this research will allow us to fully understand the effects that water quality may have on the overall performance of our animals."

The research team will also evaluate the range of water qualities currently being consumed in the Minnesota pork industry; such a data set currently does not exist for Minnesota or any other state.

The results of the project will provide a more thorough understanding of gut function, which may allow producers to implement feeding programs that encourage improved gut integrity, reduce negative impacts of pathogens in the gut, and therefore keep pigs healthy with less need for antibiotics.

Improved pig performance and health will also reduce the carbon footprint of pork production which also garners support from customers.

Very likely, results of this project will have applicability to other livestock species.

Funding for this project is being provided by the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Pork Board and Christensen Farms.

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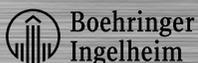
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