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# Australian Pork

## NEWSPAPER

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## What the statistics tell us

WE all know why we have low pig prices at present – because we have way too many pigs in the market compared to how many the market needs.

But how did this come about and are there any clues looking backwards as to what led to this situation?

In this article, I'm going to use the data we have to explain what I think happened leading up to our present pricing predicament.

If you're not into numbers, you're probably not going to enjoy it much, but I know a lot of pig farmers are into numbers, so here goes.

Demand growth in the retail sector is the easiest for us to measure, so it tends to be how we report demand.

Figure 1 shows demand for a four-week period expressed as a percentage of the demand for the same four-week pe-



### Point of View

by ANDREW SPENCER CEO



riod a year earlier.

Therefore, whenever it was above 0 percent, pork demand grew for that four-week period.

It has also been corrected to ignore inflation and population growth.

As you can see, most of it is above 0 percent for most of the time because demand for pork has been growing very healthily.

The graph shows a particular period of very strong demand growth between January 2014

and September 2015 – probably averaging between 7 and 8 percent.

Figure 2 shows what would seem to be the consequence of this sustained period of strong demand growth.

In August 2015 – about 18 months after the high demand growth period referred to commenced – we see farm gate pig prices turn sharply upwards.

These are the reported weighted average buyer prices for pigs of 60-

continued P3



Figure 1 – Demand growth.

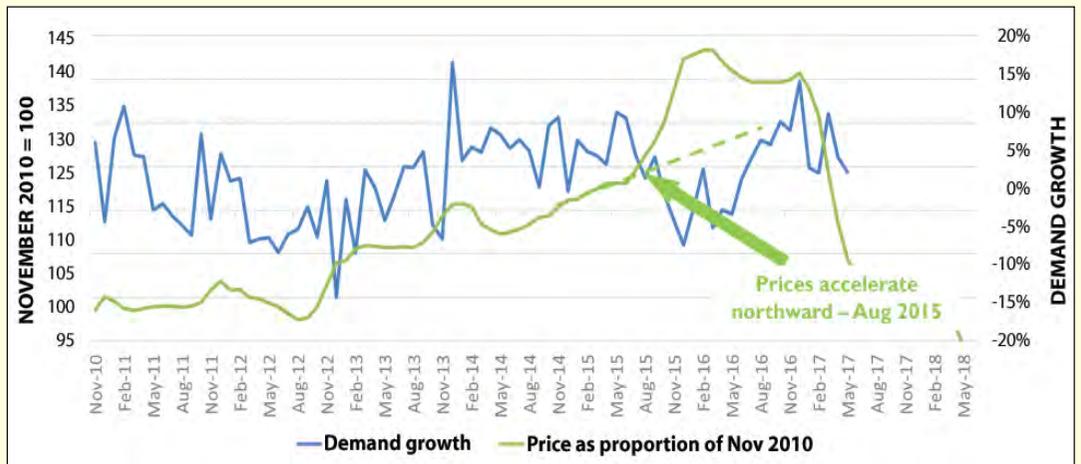


Figure 2 – Demand growth and farm gate pig price averages.

## Country of origin labelling – what has been done?

COUNTRY of origin labelling is now mandatory and many people have raised questions as to what the industry has done and is doing.

The short answer is we are working on getting broader distribution for Australian pork and not yet investing in CoOL.

This is because we believe the public is not yet aware enough of the changes, as there has been no 2018 education advertising campaign from government.

We are monitoring awareness (we will research in September), but spending producers' money on educating about CoOL is unlikely to generate as

many Australian pork sales as advertising nutrition and versatility in fresh pork.

Right now, increasing pork sales and having dialogue with our producers are our top two priorities. **What did Australian Pork Limited do to prepare for country of origin labelling?**

**Pre-July 2016**  
Australian Pork Limited Policy team worked to ensure the Government's proposed CoOL requirements would deal with the issues important to our industry.

The treatment of brine and the use of the kangaroo logo on imported ham and bacon did not get over the line.

That said, the new CoOL was extended to cover deli cabinet products, which was previously an omission.

**October 2017**  
APL Policy team created a tool to help producers and butchers calculate CoOL requirements for each product.

**November 8, 2017**  
The Pig Industry Marketing Committee agreed the CoOL program ought to be ready to start rolling out retailer communications in March 2018 to ensure all collaborators are ready by July 2018.

**February 9, 2018**  
APL representatives met with Australian Made, Australian Grown who

confirmed the ACCC will take over logo management and compliance domestically.

They also mentioned there was no budgeted government education campaign.

**February 13, 2018**  
Pig Industry Marketing Committee asked APL to

develop consumer messaging.

This group also agreed APL should use public relations and media interviews to support CoOL, as APL funding an Australian consumer education program was not the best return on investment to producers.

continued P4



### Marketing Matters

by PETER HAYDON  
General Manager Marketing



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## Pig Industry Calendar of Events

2018

**AUG 21 - 24** – Digestive Physiology of Pigs, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane QLD  
[www.dpp2018.org](http://www.dpp2018.org)

**SEP 17 - 19** – VIV China, Nanjing International Exhibition Centre (NIEC), China  
[www.vivchina.nl/en/Bezoeker.aspx](http://www.vivchina.nl/en/Bezoeker.aspx)

**SEP 25 - 27** – PorkExpo 2018 Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil  
[www.porkexpo.com.br](http://www.porkexpo.com.br)

**OCT 17 - 19** – Vietstock Expo & Forum, Saigon, Vietnam  
[www.vietstock.org](http://www.vietstock.org)

**NOV 11- 14** – Space 2018, Rennes, Francia, France  
[www.space.fr](http://www.space.fr)

**NOV 13 - 16** – EuroTier, Hannover, Germany  
[www.eurotier.com/en](http://www.eurotier.com/en)

**NOV 15 - 18** – Allen D. Leman Swine Conference, Saint Paul, Minnesota, US  
[www.ccaps.umn.edu/allen-d-leman-swine-conference](http://www.ccaps.umn.edu/allen-d-leman-swine-conference)

**NOV 19** – National Pig Awards, London UK  
[www.nationalpigawards.co.uk](http://www.nationalpigawards.co.uk)

**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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# Innovation – now and into the future

WITH the profitability issues currently afflicting the industry, it is very difficult for many of you to think about implementing new ideas and innovative solutions on farm.

However, it is still important for us to remain aware of new learnings and opportunities that may benefit and have applications in our industry.

In early July, the Australian Society of Animal Production conference was held in Wagga Wagga at Charles Sturt University, with the theme of 'Fostering Innovation through the Value Chain'.

Australian Pork Limited sponsored the opening keynote presentation, which was given by Edwina Beveridge of Blantyre Farms.

Edwina's honest and enlightening presentation was certainly an 'on-topic opener' and provided the audience with a great insight of the innovations possible in modern commercial pig production systems and why continuing innovation is vital to ongoing industry sustainability and viability in Australia.

As Edwina highlighted during her presentation at PPPE, challenges come with innovation and one solution to a problem can result in the development of another problem.

For example, utilising human food waste in order to reduce feed costs creates tonnes of waste packaging that needs to either be disposed of or recycled – which is usually easier said than done!

These challenges are not insurmountable and further innovation or simple changes to processes or procedures can help to resolve these issues while



by **HEATHER CHANNON**  
Research and Innovation  
General Manager



**As the roll-out of fixed wireless and satellite internet services continues, pig and poultry producers will have access to a greater array of digital technologies, enabling more informed decision-making.**

still reducing costs.

The benefits of methane capture and biogas generation for use on farm as a real cost-saver in terms of on-farm energy costs were also discussed.

Edwina emphasised that innovation doesn't have to be complex but can be as simple as changing a process or making small management changes to result in incremental increases in efficiencies; with these incremental gains adding up over time.

While the conference covered a range of livestock species, Edwina's presentation struck a chord with attendees and presenters who referred back to the issues she highlighted in their own presentations and also initiated some stimulating discussions among different industry stakeholders.

Dr Jay Johnson from the US Department of Agriculture discussed the effect of heat stress in livestock.

A lot of Dr Johnson's

work has involved investigating the effects of heat stress in the pig, and in particular, prenatal heat stress.

More and more research is indicating prenatal heat stress may be partially responsible for reduced postnatal performance of progeny.

In utero heat stress has immediate effects on offspring and litter characteristics.

Birthweight can be reduced as a result of in utero heat stress, which is likely caused by shortened gestation length and in utero growth retardation due to insufficient placental development.

In addition to the immediate effects on offspring and litter characteristics, a variety of postnatal consequences resulting from IUHS were described, including effects on thermo-tolerance, nutrient partitioning, performance, reproduction and bioenergetics.

APL is currently fund-

ing a number of studies in this emerging area of research and outcomes from research being conducted under Australian commercial production systems will add greatly to our knowledge of the negative impacts of IUHS on postnatal performance and welfare.

It will also aid in the development of effective mitigation strategies to help manage this issue.

Another interesting area addressed at the conference was big data.

Big data refers to the production of large data sets that are so vast that traditional data processing software is insufficient to handle these data sets.

Big data requires cloud-based platforms to accept data streams from multiple inputs and uses analytic software to provide information to decision makers.

Dr Stuart Wilkinson from Feedworks focused his presentation on modern pig and poultry production.

Stuart discussed the current and future challenges facing industries on the cusp of a digital revolution.

Driving this digital revolution of agriculture are advancements in sensor technology, faster and more powerful computing as well as the requirement to increase production while reducing inputs.

Pig and poultry producers generate vast amounts of data, however, the method of capturing and recording is typically via manual inputs, with little sharing among decision-makers along the production chain.

As a result, management decisions are most often performed in hindsight with missing and/or inaccurate information.

In a world where everything is connected, data is a critical asset.

Food production is no different, yet agriculture has the lowest adoption of digital technologies of all industries.

Access to reliable and fast internet is often cited as the predominant barrier to the adoption of technology on farms.

As the roll-out of fixed wireless and satellite internet services continues, pig and poultry producers will have access to a greater array of digital technologies, enabling more informed decision-making.

As internet access increases in rural and regional areas, it is predicted an increase in the adoption of automation and sensor technologies will follow, leading to the production of big data sets.

By capturing, analysing and sharing data in real time, this can be used to

better inform decision making.

For pig producers, the measurement of feed consumption, water intake and body weight in addition to environmental and behavioural indices (that are likely to be available in the near future) will provide vast data sets and opportunities for improved decision-making.

A revolution in how we raise and manage our animals is on the horizon.

So, producing meaningful data sets that feed into meaningful real-time decision making tools will facilitate increases in production efficiency – thus enabling industry to produce more from less.

In APL's latest call for research, the demonstration of technologies that provide real-time feedback in terms of body weight measurement and animal health indices were included as a priority to ensure the Australian pig industry is well informed on currently available technologies.

We will keep you informed of developments in this area as outcomes become available.

On another note, I advise the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has recently completed a review on the use of macrolide antibiotics (kitasamycin, oleandomycin and tylosin) as growth promotants.

The APVMA has decided to withdraw approval for the use of macrolide antibiotics for growth promotion in animal production.

Growth promotant and improved feed conversion efficiency (in pigs) claims are to be removed from the labels of macrolide antibiotics.

The registrations and associated label approvals of the product 'Vet only TRUBIN L-50 growth promotant for pigs (35806)' will be cancelled.

The APVMA has determined there will be a 12-month phase-out period, such that the use of TRUBIN L-50 growth promotant for pigs and other kitasomycin, oleandomycin and tylosin products that do not carry the new labels can only be used until April 9, 2019.

The Australian pork industry is committed to the prudent use of antibiotics and antimicrobials to ensure the continuation of the high standards of animal health and welfare in our industry.

The full report can be found on the APVMA website [apvma.gov.au](http://apvma.gov.au)

For further information on any of the topics discussed in this article, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0423 056 045 or [heather.channon@australianpork.com.au](mailto:heather.channon@australianpork.com.au)



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# What the statistics are telling us now

from P1

75kg hot standard carcass weight, expressed proportional to the price in November 2010 (as 100).

The high demand growth at retail seems to have led to higher demand for pigs at the farm gate, and with a limited number of pigs available, higher prices were where we see the demand increase being realised.

Figure 3 shows the next major change that pre-empted our present over-supply situation.

It shows how in around June 2016 there was a significant shift upwards in production growth (for this graph, expressed as the moving annual total production volume of pork in Australia indexed to November 2010 as 100).

There can be some debate about the links of this production increase to the price increases commencing August 2015.

For example, was it simply a market response whereby given the very healthy prices and assumed profitability increases, increasing production was an attractive financial option for producers?

Alternatively, was it that producers were investing their improving profits back into their facilities to improve productivity, and thereby increasing production?

It was probably a mix of both, but we know the ultimate consequence, which was to see pig prices crash from January 2017, when it became clear the market was oversupplied.

Through our APIQ quality assurance system, the PigPass movement reporting system and our Australian Pork Limited membership system, we collect data about breeding sow numbers in the Australian herd.

These numbers haven't always been highly accurate, especially the further back you go.

Irregular clean-ups of the data led to some lumps and bumps in the figures along the way but because we've been improving the ways we do this, including better cross-checking between systems, we believe the numbers we have today are fairly reasonable.

The trend over time – also shown in Figure 3 – can also be considered reasonably representative of reality.

Figure 4 shows these breeding sow numbers since October 2013 (note this is more recent than the other graphs, which start at November 2010).

It shows how breeding sow numbers have increased since this time, but interestingly, they don't line up very well with the increase in slaughter numbers (the angle of the lines can be compared because the axes are to scale).

Slaughter numbers are

moving annual totals and supplied through the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

However, if we divide our annual slaughter numbers by our sow numbers (giving us one of our productivity indicators, which is pigs sold per sow, per year), this seems to have grown more closely with the development in slaughter numbers (again, you can compare the angles).

This is shown in Figure 5.

There are really only three things that can contribute to higher pork production volumes over time.

They are (1) more breeding sows, (2) higher productivity per sow (more pigs per sow, per year) and (3) heavier carcass weights.

Adding the Australian Bureau of Statistics carcass weight data to that you've already seen expressed in the graphs above, we can do an analysis of which of these three contributors has had the biggest impact on pork production growth over the past five years or so.

This has been done in Figure 6.

The results of this analysis

continued P4

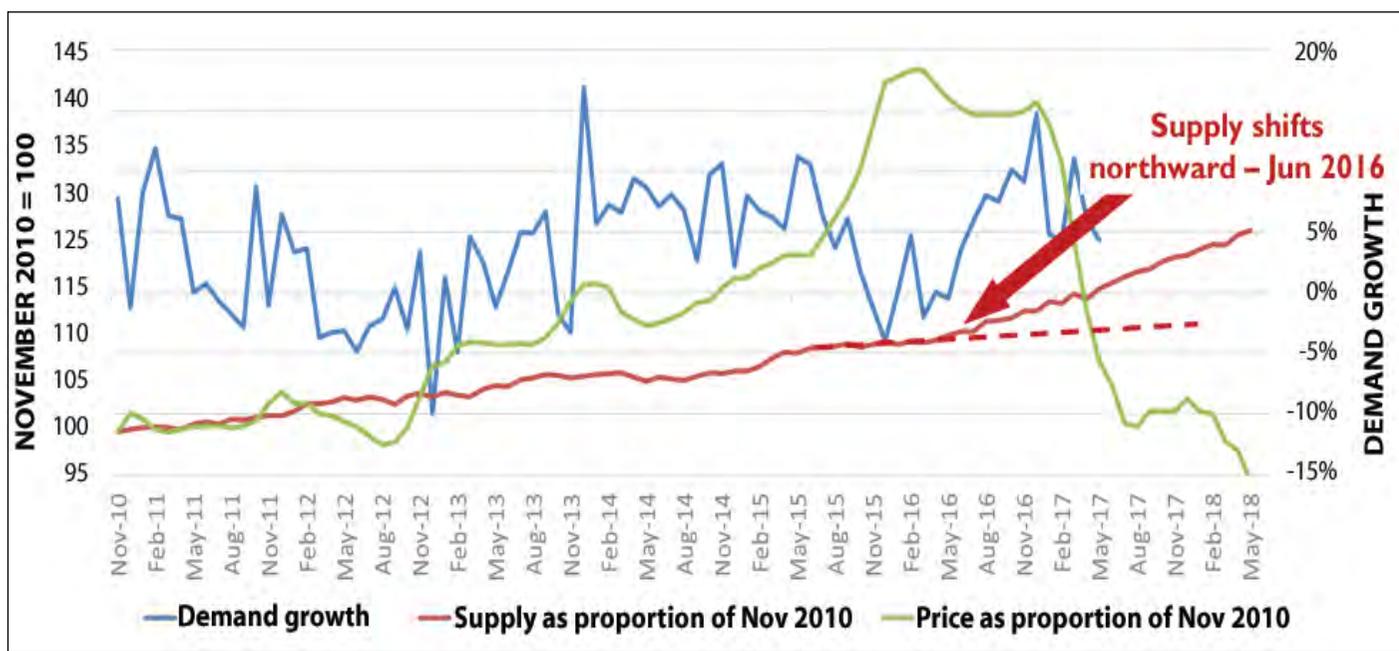


Figure 3 – Demand growth, pig prices and pork volume production (supply).

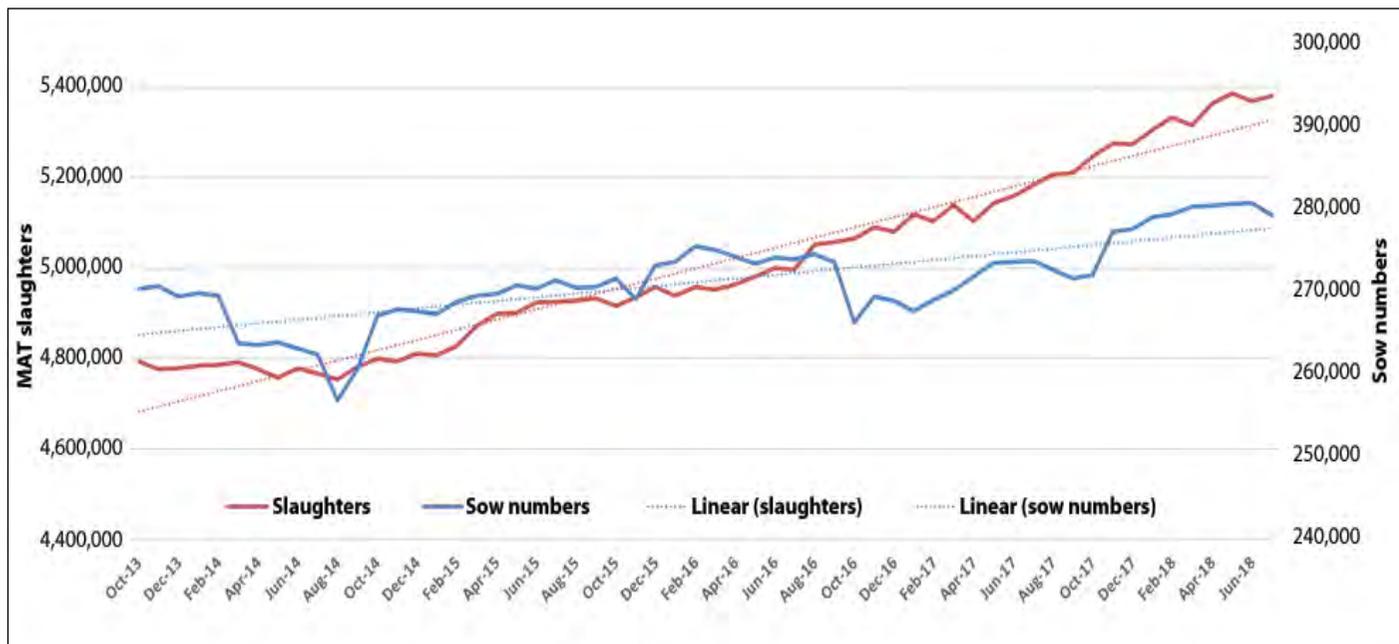


Figure 4 – Breeding sow numbers and slaughter numbers.



Figure 5 – Pigs sold per sow, per year and slaughter numbers.

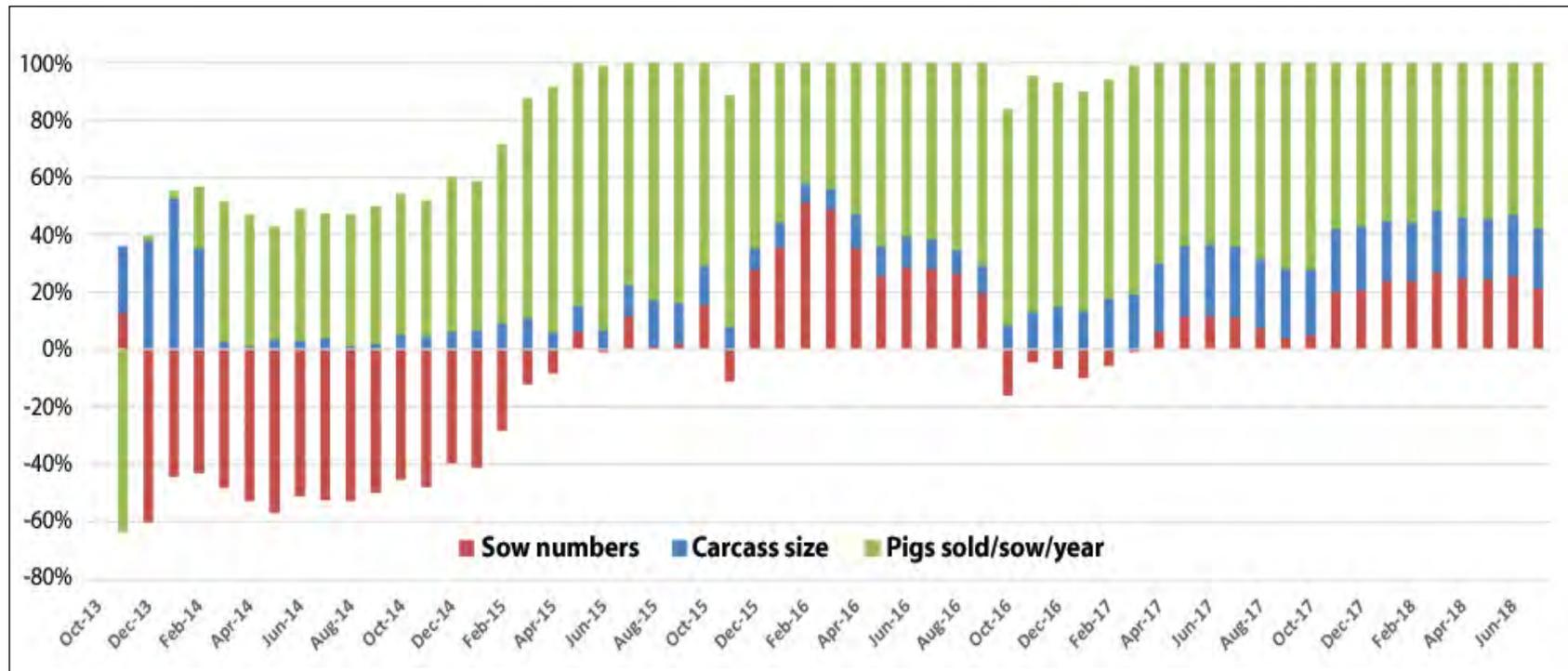


Figure 6 – Contributors in percentage terms to the increase in pork production since October 2013.

# What the statistics are telling us now

from P3

ysis show that as of June 2018, about half the increase in pork production since October 2013 has been caused by a combination of carcass size increases and higher sow numbers.

Somewhat surprisingly, the other half has all come from productivity increases in pigs sold per sow, per year.

So, we have quite a few extra sows but all our sows it would seem have become much more productive over the past five years.

The productivity increases were probably enthusiastically planned but the in-

creased production was maybe more of a hidden side benefit.

This could be one reason why the price crash was such a surprise at the time.

It may also be a reason the industry has had such difficulty in getting supply volumes matched better to demand since the price crash.

The statisticians and mathematicians out there might be able to pick holes in the detail of what I've laid out in this personal explanation, and there are probably plenty of other credible alternative theories.

If we're to learn from our experiences, it's a good debate to have.

# Country of origin labelling – what has been done?

from P1

APL also hosted a workshop between the large processors and ACCC to review the complexities of the new law and confirmed that all large organisations were on track.

Contact with ham and bacon manufacturers since then has been approximately monthly.

At this meeting the ACCC confirmed there was no substantial consumer education campaign planned.

It was recommended they go back and ask for an education campaign.

Most brands were planning their packaging changeover to new CoOL requirements between March and May 2018.

**February to May 2018**

The PorkMark team focused on getting as many PorkMarks onto new packs as possible and preserving the PorkMark on existing packs.

The Policy and Marketing teams were also in frequent contact with ACCC.

**February 22, 2018**

Met with Coles to investigate ranging of Australian and their CoOL plan for July 2018 – while these have not borne fruit yet, proposals are ongoing.

**March 9, 2018**

Sent out the first producer, PorkMark licensee and butcher briefing on CoOL rules and timings.

These have since occurred seven times for producers, six times for PorkMark licensees and three times for butchers.

Three butcher briefing meetings, organised by

their industry body, were also attended.

**March 21, 2018**

Met with Woolworths to investigate ranging for Australian and their CoOL plan for July 2018 – while these have not borne fruit yet, proposals are ongoing.

**March to May 2018**

A TV advertisement has been developed as a contingency in case the Government changes its mind, or if awareness of CoOL grows to be a bigger consumer issue than it currently is.

**Late April**

The four largest ham and bacon processors confirm they are willing to take Australian product if producers are prepared to commit to a monthly volume and price competitive with imports.

That price is lower than the current pig price.

**May 29, 2018**

Presented a four-phase plan to Delegates' Forum:

- Provide information to producers who sell direct and butchers with free CoOL point of sale materials;

- Expand PorkMark licensee base and increase engagement with existing licensees;

- Consumer campaign is ready – if there is an opportunity when CoOL is a significant story; and

- Develop meanings for Australian pork that justify a 20 percent-plus premium (as Australian is not enough by itself at the moment).

**June 14, 2018**

Pig Industry Marketing Committee endorsed the plan presented at Delegates' Forum.

**June 25, 2018**

Sent information via direct mail to 2800 butchers.

Over 200 businesses have responded and asked for materials.

**June 24 to July 16, 2018**

Total CoOL media coverage measured by iSentia monitored 216 items, reaching a cumulative audience of 6,723,186.

This coverage was largely general in nature, covering the July 1 implementation, and included the listeria in frozen vegetables and imported honey issues.

This figure is on par with pork's media coverage for an average month.

**May 2018 – present**

The APL Policy team continues to work on clarifications such as where the CoOL responsibility lies when retail-ready pork planned to be exported is redirected to the domestic market (without CoOL label attached).

This decision rests with the person/organisation choosing to sell this product domestically instead.

There are other examples.

Obviously, there is much more than has been included in this article, and suggestions on how to improve our approach are welcome.

**What is the latest interaction we had with government?**

The latest interaction with the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources was the week commencing June 25 to brief him on the current situation.

Given the present issue

is market driven, there is little government can do.

**Why hasn't APL taken the lead on getting processors to take more Australian product?**

This would require APL to get involved in commercial arrangements, which historically, producers have told us not to do.

Practically, if large integrated producers wanted to do this they could.

However, it is those without contracts that are the most exposed.

These producers will probably need to collaborate with other producers.

They would likely need to use the same abattoir in order to get enough volume commitment for each future month.

The big manufacturers will not want to deal with many small producers.

If there is interest, APL will be happy to connect parties.

Pricing will be lower than the current average prices reported each week.

Below is an order of magnitude estimate.

Imported pork lands here boneless at around \$4.15/kg with about \$0.30/kg on-costs.

A total import cost of pig meat is \$4.45/kg.

Australian pork farm gate price would need to be at a price of \$1.93/kg (hot standard carcass weight - trim 1) assuming a \$1/kg boning cost to achieve price parity with imported pig meat.

There may also be particular cut opportunities, and while wholesaling is not part of APL's skill set, if there are specific things we can help with, please contact me.

**Why are we not aggressively promoting Australian at the point in time that CoOL has become mandatory?**

First, because investing producer funds in a business that generates \$2.34/kg on average is better than investing in a business that generates \$1.93/kg.

Also, history says this oversupply is a cycle and the fresh business will again become sustainable.

However, we will need structural cost reduction to be able to maintain a business profitably at import parity pricing.

Second, timing would have been important if the Government was going to do an education program (they have said they are not going to).

The current PR does not provide an adequate springboard but consumer familiarity with CoOL may occur over time.

If it does and CoOL becomes a bigger consumer issue then we should revisit the priorities.

**Why are we not telling consumers to look for the gold bar chart on labels, in collaboration with other industries?**

In addition to the above priorities, the gold bar chart is in fact not gold on many products, as the colour is not mandatory.

On many ham and bacon products that do comply, the logo, statement and bar chart are monochrome and remarkably small.

**If the labelling is unclear, why don't we get the labelling laws changed again?**

Changing the law again

straight after just having changed it is not something governments do (except after an election to reverse the previous government's legislation).

It makes them look like they made a mistake the first time.

**Commercial considerations of more Australian ham and bacon**

For any product to succeed it must be wanted and profitable to all the links in the supply chain.

With that in mind, let's consider each of those requirements from the perspective of the relevant stakeholders.

**Who wants more Australian ham and bacon?**

- Australian consumers – 90 percent claim to have a preference to buy Australian if it's the same price. Where their ham and bacon comes from (for the vast majority) is not important enough for them to actively search out Australian.

- Retailers – Want enough Australian to satisfy their customers and to avoid a competitive disadvantage. Are really interested in how many shoppers come into their shops and how much margin they make from each shopper.

- Ham and bacon makers – The large ones are open to Australian as it adds flexibility and some have businesses that operate in fresh pork too. Main focus is how they can make a margin on what their customers want (high quality at low cost). There is not a lot of product difference between local and imported products

- Australian pig producers – Have a very strong preference as it gives us another source of demand. It is a big market and more in a producer's interest than it is in the rest of the supply chain's.

**Is more Australian ham and bacon profitable?**

- Australian consumers – The ones who buy volume are not prepared to pay the 20 percent-plus premium that is required to be as profitable to the supply chain as imported. We should continue to attempt to build product stories that are worth the premium with supply chains and retailers (which we are).

- Retailers – To be as profitable as imports, Australian needs to be sold at a premium that reduces the volume sold versus imports.

- Ham and bacon makers – Can't be competitive in pricing to retailers using Australian in a normal market. There is no discernible difference in product except cost between imports and Australian (except Danish middles are seen as more consistent). Are prepared to buy more Australian at import parity prices.

- Australian pig producers – The prices required for volume in processed are significantly lower than that in fresh, except for premium niches that are already being served. Processed is less profitable than fresh pork for most producers.

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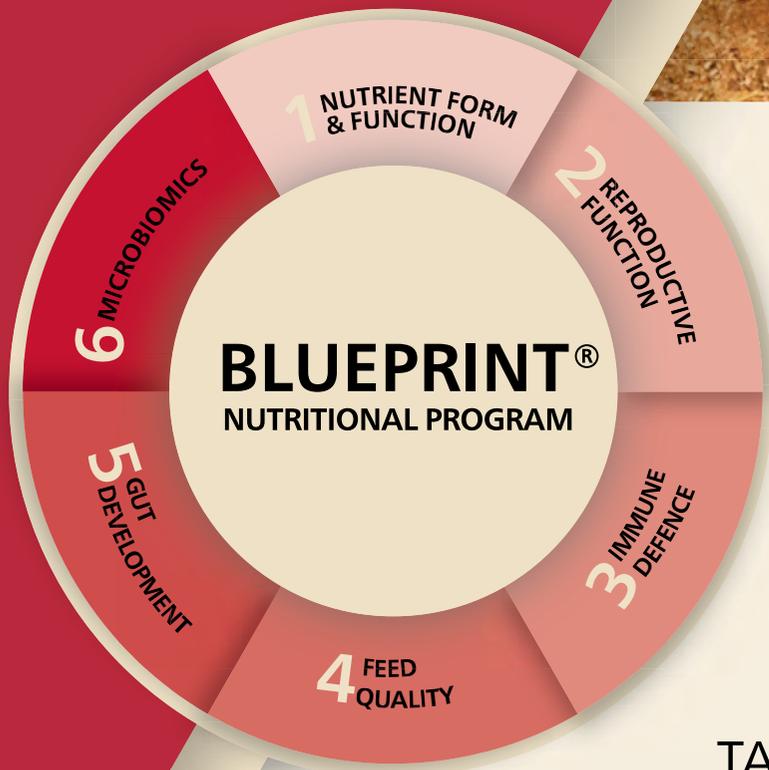
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# Our industry needs a good 'Roger'ing'



Dr Roger Campbell has been the public face of Pork CRC since 2005. Here, he presented to Pork CRC stakeholders in Melbourne in 2016.

KEEN readers of *Australian Pork Newspaper* will have noticed that this August edition is the first for many years without a Pork CRC Initiatives column from Dr Roger Campbell greeting them on Page 3.

His final column, 'Roger over and out', was penned last month when he retired as Pork CRC CEO, albeit he'll be doing some consulting work for the CRC as it moves steadily towards its wind-up and June 30, 2019 date with destiny, having injected more than \$200 million into Australian pork R&D in its lifetime of achievement.

Having headed up Pork CRC since its establishment in 2005, Roger has made an immense contribution to the Australian pig and pork landscape, while always painting a positive, practical picture of how well-resourced and targeted R&D would improve producer productivity and, ultimately, product desirability.

A 10-year association with Roger in my role as Pork CRC Communications Manager has given me a special insight into the workings of a man I first met way back in the mid or late-1980s when he was a charismatic and inspiring keynote speaker at a Watsonia Pig Day, which I MC'd annually for my then client, Watsons Foods (WA).

If my memory serves me right and the gig was mid-1980s, Roger would have been working at Victorian DPI's Animal Research Institute at Werribee, or at Bunge if it was the end of that decade.

Anyway, back to the future.

I hope Roger, who I believe has a significant birthday in September, continues to share his scientific knowledge of all things porcine and his passion and enthusiasm too.

There's no time like now for a good 'Roger'ing', as our industry struggles under the



**Cant Comment**  
by  
**BRENDON CANT**

weight of a mountain of pork.

Roger, no doubt, will methodically pick his way through the best R&D here at home and overseas, analyse it and somehow, in one form or another, share his views with those who need it most.

As Interim CEO of Pork CRC's successor, Australasian Pork Research Institute Limited, he's clearly not someone the industry wants to let go, and why would it?

In my 35 years in public relations, starting with 10 years with a big nationally networked consultancy and the past 25 (yes, this month exactly) running

my own PR company, I can't think of a client, at least not among the big field of scientists I've worked with, more attuned to communication and more capable of helping deliver it.

Roger is acutely aware that research locked away in the confines of researchers' minds or their institution's laboratory, or gathering dust on a library shelf, probably was never worth funding in the first instance.

That's why he was the perfect 'beast' to kick start the Pork CRC way back in 2005, because the CRC 'movement' was then and still is all about supporting research that will produce an outcome that may well benefit its stakeholders.

The Cooperative Research Centres Program was established in 1990 to improve the effectiveness of Australia's research effort by bringing together public and private sector researchers with end users.

Since then, more than 215 CRCs have been established.

Close interaction between researchers and end users is its defining characteristic, including encouraging end users to help plan the direction of the research and monitor its progress.

Having worked in government (Vic DPI in Australia, USDA in the

US) and private industry (Bunge in Australia, Ausgene in the US), Roger knew the ropes, especially how to untie unnecessarily bureaucratic ones, while also knowing how to lasso funding and support from the private sector.

It seems to me that Roger is now the perfect fit for APRIL, at least in his role as Interim CEO, as APRIL is fully member based with an initial investment in 2018-2019 approaching \$3 million.

APRIL's vision, 'Collaborative, timely and effective industry-funded and directed research focused on priorities and deliverables that ensure the sustainability of Australasian pork production', sits comfortably with Roger's, as does its mission, 'Facilitation of high priority research programs and effective investment management to generate optimal returns for all pork industry stakeholders'.

On behalf of all those people in Australia's pork industry, including many prominent names, who have contacted me to discuss their understanding, gratitude and appreciation for Roger's contribution to their industry, I offer him a sincere big thankyou for the past and a big wish that he remains part of our future for a long time to come. 🐷



In 2007, inaugural Pork CRC CEO Dr Roger Campbell (right) and inaugural chair-man Dr John Keniry checked out the FeedLogic automatic feeding system at DAFWA's Medina Research Station during a Pork CRC Board visit to WA. A glob-ally recognised nutritionist, Roger made his views known then, as he still does today.

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# Animal welfare cast in bronze by Pork CRC

ANIMAL welfare was the focus of Pork CRC's bronze sponsorship of 'Animal Production 2018', the 32nd biennial conference of the Australian Society of Animal Production.

Held over three days in July at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW, its theme was 'Fostering innovation through the value chain'.

Pork CRC manager, Commercialisation and Research Impact, Charles Rikard-Bell, who attended and represented the Cooperative Research Centre for High Integrity Australian Pork, said the theme was a perfect fit, as Pork CRC's four programs were all about innovation up and down the value chain.

This was particularly the case with Program 1, 'Reduced confinement of sows and piglets', which focused on developing innovative sow and piglet management and housing systems that progressively relied on less confinement to optimise sow and piglet welfare, while maintaining production efficiency and profitability.

Pork CRC Subprogram 1C leader Prof Paul Hemsworth of the University of Melbourne delivered the Barnett Memorial Lecture at the first day's final session 'Consumer demands and welfare', which was sponsored by Pork CRC.

The main conclusion from his lecture, titled 'Key determinants of pig welfare: implications of animal management and housing design on livestock welfare', was that group housing provided welfare advantages in



most situations.

Prof Hemsworth said it was clear from Pork CRC research that appropriate housing design, good management and stockmanship were three key drivers of successful group housing.

Design factors covered by his lecture involved research in areas of floor spacing, feeding systems, time of mixing, restrictive feeding and environmental enrichment.

Prof Hemsworth referenced the Pork CRC supported PhD research of Megan Verdon on the feeding behaviour of floor-fed group housed sows.

Dr Verdon had shown that dominant sows spent most time feeding under droppers, while subdominant and submissive sows spent most time feeding in areas close to dominant sows, but with less feed availability and in areas of limited or no feed availability, respectively.

All sows could get enough feed to maintain pregnancy and gain some weight, but in doing so they received more aggression than dominant sows.

Dominant and submissive sows exhibited significantly higher cortisol levels than subdominants, suggesting it might be more stressful protecting areas of high feed supply

and avoiding aggression altogether than adopting more opportunistic feeding behaviour.

These results had obvious implications for the design of floor feeding systems.

Interestingly, group size had no effect on aggression and stress levels.

Dr Rikard-Bell said while Pork CRC research established the major factors affecting sow welfare at and after mixing, Program 1 also concentrated on enrichment for pregnant sows and defining and improving welfare in

conventional systems at farrowing and lactation.

Addressing the conference at the conclusion of the session, Dr Rikard-Bell explained that Australasian Pork Research Institute Ltd, the organisation that will build upon Pork CRC's work following the completion of Pork CRC's Commonwealth funding agreement on June 30, 2019, had completed its first call for 2018/19 and the APRIL Board had approved 14 R&D projects to commence in July.

"Animal welfare will continue to be an important area of research for APRIL as we assess the animal's affective state and APRIL anticipates supporting future Animal Production Conferences and presenting research outcomes," he said.

[www.porkcrc.com.au](http://www.porkcrc.com.au)

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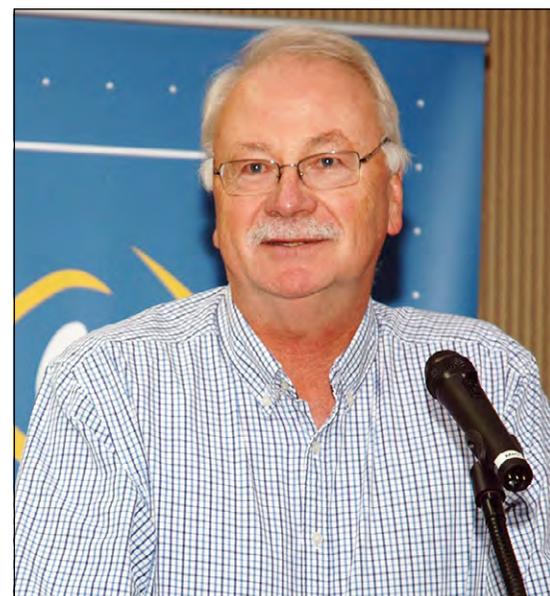
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Please email applications to – [graham@sabor.com.au](mailto:graham@sabor.com.au)



Pork CRC manager, Commercialisation and Research Impact Charles Rikard-Bell.



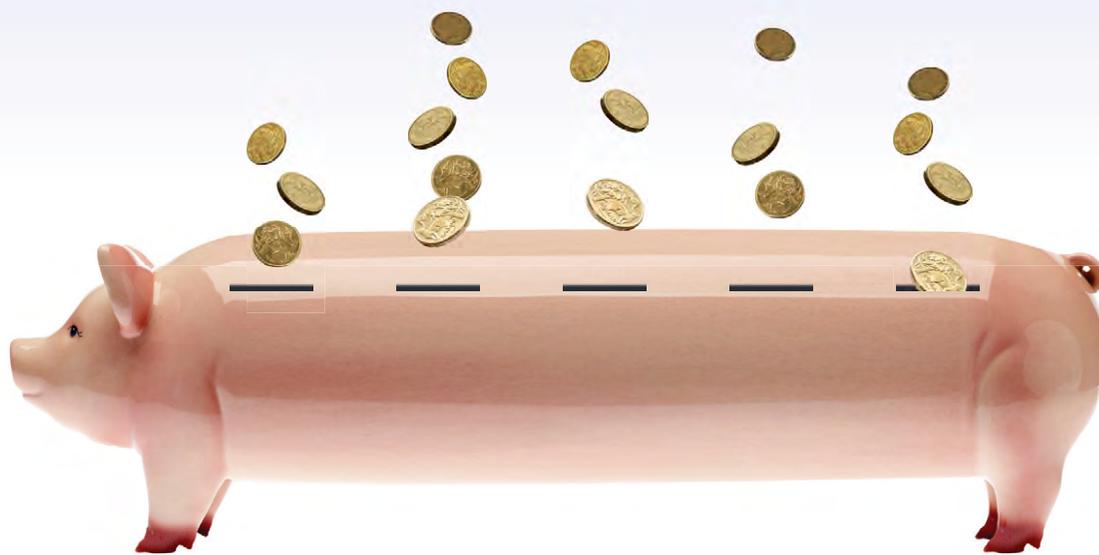
Pork CRC Subprogram 1C leader Prof Paul Hemsworth of the University of Melbourne delivered the Barnett Memorial Lecture, 'Key determinants of pig welfare: implications of animal management and housing design on livestock welfare.'

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# Aussie meat eaters reject credibility of animal welfare activists

A RECENT University of Adelaide PhD research study into Australian meat consumers' reactions to online farm animal activism suggests Aussie meat eaters are not engaging with content posted to social media by animal welfare activist organisations.

Using qualitative data gathered from a series of focus groups and inter-

views, the study explored how Australian meat consumers interact with animal welfare activism content posted to social media platforms.

While farm animal welfare is of increasing concern to Australian consumers, the research revealed that online content generated by activists and shared on social media was unlikely to change

meat eaters' perceptions or purchasing behaviour.

According to the data, Australian meat eaters do not consider animal welfare activists a credible source of information because they:

- Only highlight examples of poor or uncommon practices in animal farming;

- Use concerns about farm animal welfare to

promote the adoption of a vegetarian or vegan diet;

- Do not appreciate the realities of 'actual' animal farming; and

- Do not engage in authentic activism.

What is apparent from the research is Australian meat eaters do not appreciate being preached to.

While Australians are undoubtedly exploring ways to reduce their meat intake, this study clearly illustrates the unwillingness of meat eaters to alter their behaviours in response to activists pushing an anti-meat/'vegan agenda' on them via social media.

It also indicates the activist tactic of shocking and shaming meat eaters into renouncing meat consumption has in fact hardened meat eaters' resolve to continue their current consumption habits.

Consequently, activists have only succeeded

in creating online echo chambers that have alienated and scared Aussie meat consumers, who in turn have refused to be cowed by activity they consider extreme.

As the research suggests, simply having a voice does not mean there will be a receptive audience.

This is borne out by the inherent skepticism expressed by the study's participants towards activist organisations that engage in 'unlawfulness to promote their cause' and utilise social media to further their aims.

As mentioned by one participant of the research study: "Let's not confuse activism with slacktivism – posting on Facebook doesn't actually do anything."

Slacktivism is just that – slack activism.

While social media may indeed amplify animal

activists' content, it has – over time – become a windowless room, peddling a vegan agenda and failing to meaningfully connect with Australians who identify as meat eaters.

So what does this all mean for you, our Australian pig producers?

With more and more people turning their social media platforms into 'filter bubbles', cutting through the noise and clutter is more important than ever before.

Increasingly, it's becoming clear the considerable online 'chatter' generated by animal welfare activists and initially viewed as a threat by the meat industry should in fact be viewed as an opportunity.

Interestingly, participants in this research expressed their belief that "if farmers were more transparent about and explained their methods of production and animal welfare-related practices, activists (and particularly vegans and vegetarians) would not be as critical of these practices (though they might well continue to practice vegan or veg-

etarian diets)."

And herein lies the opportunity for Australian Pork Limited and all Australian pig producers.

Transparency is our friend.

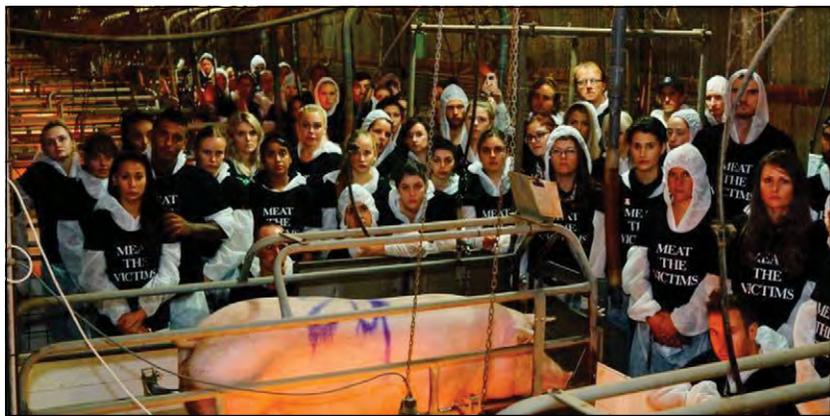
By continuing to embrace it as an industry, we can help defuse online activist negativity by showcasing the positive impact 'real' farming has across local Australian communities and the high-quality products that emerge from Australian farms each and every day.

Our refreshed Australian Pig Farmers website (aussiepigfarmers.com.au) launched last year bears this out.

Not only has the platform helped tell a positive story of the industry, but the industry has been praised for 'telling it like it is'.

APL is here to continue to tell that story and with our industry currently experiencing chronic oversupply issues, now is the time to encourage all Australian meat eaters that today is the day they should put more pork on their fork.

Kevin Daly



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## Gary Sansom Prize boosting agribusiness learning

UNIVERSITY of Queensland student William Hudson has been awarded the inaugural 2017 Gary Sansom Prize in Agribusiness, supporting learning and leadership in agricultural business and production.

Mr Hudson received the prize for achieving the greatest proficiency in the course 'Agropreneurship and Agricultural Economics' in 2017.

The prize was established to honour the memory of former Queensland Farmers' Federation president Mr Gary Sansom, who passed away in March last year.

QFF CEO Travis Tobin said Mr Sansom was instrumental in the foundation and leadership of QFF and was one of Queensland agriculture's most passionate and dedicated advocates.

"Gary was pivotal in driving awareness of the importance of biosecurity, furthering agriculture's interests in land use planning and developing the Farm Management Systems approach, which has evolved into what is commonly known today as Best Management Practice programs," Mr Tobin said.

"Establishing this prize was the least we could do to recognise Gary's tireless efforts in representing, advocating for and progressing Queensland agriculture – something he did for over 30 years."

The inaugural winner, William said the prize would go towards his third year Bachelor of Agribusiness studies and was a good confidence booster as he looked beyond university to a future in crop production.

"It is very humbling and truly an honour to receive the Gary Sansom Prize," Mr Hudson said.

"Agriculture is certainly a passion for me, and I have really enjoyed my learning experience at the University of Queensland.

"I find the areas of seed stock production and protected cropping through greenhouse production particularly intriguing and am hoping to have the opportunity to enter one of these fields in the future."

The Gary Sansom Prize in Agribusiness recognises high-quality University of Queensland students with an interest in agropreneurship and agricultural economics.

Funded by QFF, the prize will be awarded annually and is supported by industry.

The inaugural 2017 Gary Sansom Prize in Agribusiness was presented to Mr Hudson at the 2018 UQ School of Agriculture and Food Sciences Scholarships, Prizes & Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, July 25, 2018 by Mr Tobin and Gary's wife, Julie Sansom.

www.qff.org.au



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# APRIL projects to progress pigs and pork



## Detect meat spoilage with your smartphone

NEW technology uses sensors within packaging to convey spoilage statistics to your smartphone within seconds.

Researchers from the University of Texas, US, and Nanjing University, China, have developed highly sensitive gas sensors that interact with smartphones through near-field communication – a technology that has allowed smartphones to perform sensory functions for the benefit of human health.

The gas sensor, a nanostructured conductive polymer-based technology, can detect extremely low levels of ammonia, putrescine and cadaverine – biogenic amines indica-

tive of meat spoilage.

The near-field communication labelling technology allows this information to be delivered to a smartphone immediately upon requesting the information, allowing the consumer to determine whether the meat is safe to eat or not.

During the study, the meats were stored for 24 hours at 30C and the researchers found the gas sensors successfully detected significant amounts of biogenic amines.

It is hoped this technology can provide consumers more confidence when buying meat products as to the quality and potential health concerns should that product be rancid or unsafe. 🐷

AUSTRALASIAN Pork Research Institute Limited research and development projects for 2018/19 to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the Australasian pork industry have now been announced.

APRIL funded projects to a total value of more than \$900,000.

All successful applicants have now been advised, with all providing an additional 20 to 25 percent cash contribution to the APRIL funding.

APRIL's three programs cover resilience, cost and return on assets.

Under resilience, it sought proposals on the more judicious use of antibiotics, antimicrobial resistance and novel assessment of animal welfare.

Under cost it sought proposals to help the Australasian pork industry reduce reliance on more conventional feed ingredients and help insulate the industry from global grain and soybean markets.

APRIL's target is to reduce average feed cost by 10 percent and cost of production by 40 cents, based on 'current' ingredient prices.

The return on assets program covers new science to markedly enhance reproduction and progeny health and performance.

Interim CEO of APRIL Roger Campbell said the supported projects would provide new insights into antibiotic resistance and



how this might be avoided, the role of enzymes and ingredients on the gut microbiome and some out of the box means of enhancing performance and reducing cost.

"I am optimistic about the projects being game changers and excited about them getting underway," Dr Campbell said.

The supported projects are as follows:

- A1-101 – Novel approaches for reducing antimicrobial resistant and pathogenic Gram-negative bacteria in the porcine gut; Dr Sam Abraham, Murdoch University.

- A1-102 – Proof of concept: Oral Fluids and quantitative assessment for Porcine Chronic Respiratory Disease in Australian field conditions; Dr Anke Woeckel, Rivalea (Australia) Pty Ltd.

- A1-103 – Improving enteric health, understanding impact on gut microbiome and weaner performance through the use of protease enzymes; Robert Hewitt, SunPork North.

- A1-106 – A lab on a chip for real time pain and animal welfare biomarker measurement; Dr Robyn

Terry, SARDI.

- A2-101 – Protected vitamin and mineral premixes maintain performance of commercial pigs at reduced inclusion rates; Rob Hewitt, SunPork North.

- A3A-101 – Improved feed efficiency, control of P2 back fat and maintenance of pork quality in finishing pigs fed bitter extracts; Dr Eugeni Roura, University of Queensland.

- A3A-102 – Review

relationship between energy intake and protein deposition in 60-100kg pigs with modern genetics using DXA scanner; Dr Fan Liu, Rivalea (Australia) Pty Ltd.

- A3A-103 – Feeding a single diet to pigs in the grower/finisher stage to reduce feed costs and improve feed efficiency; Dr Karen Moore, PIWA.

- A3B-101 – Using GnRH analogues for fixed-time AI and pregnancy support to address seasonal infertility in sows; Dr Sean O'Leary, University of Adelaide.

- A3B-102 – Nutritional supplementation to increase the number of pigs weaned and fertility of sows which farrow and

are mated during summer/early autumn; Dr William van Wettere, University of Adelaide.

- A3B-103 – Identifying reciprocal chromosomal translocations to reduce early embryo mortality; Dr Darryl D'Souza, SunPork Solutions.

- A3B-104 – Seasonal fertility: a novel approach to alleviating seasonal infertility in sows; Dr Kate Plush, SunPork Solutions.

- A3B-105 – Effects of negative DCAD and vitamin D in transition diets to increase piglet weaning numbers, improve piglet weaning weight, and minimise sow condition loss during lactation; Dr Alice Weaver, Myora Farm.

www.APRI.com.au 🐷



Dr Alice Weaver of Myora Farm, South Australia and Interim APRIL CEO Dr Roger Campbell at PPPE 2018. Dr Weaver leads APRIL Project 3B-105.

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# Lallemand probiotics receive the organic 'tick'

THREE in-feed probiotics widely used in the Australian livestock industry – Levucell SC, Levucell SB and Agrimos – have been recognised as allowed inputs by organic certifiers in Australia and the US.

Australian Certified Organic, a non-profit subsidiary of Australian Organic Ltd, has recognised a total of five formulations – Levucell SC 20, Levucell SC 10 ME Titan, Levucell SB 10 ME Titan, Levucell SB 20 and Agrimos – as allowed inputs in organic food and fibre production.

In addition, the USDA National Organic Program has recognised the use of Levucell SC 20, Levucell SB 20 and Agrimos as general feed additives or animal health therapies.

NOP also recognised Levucell SC 10 ME Titan and Levucell SB 10 ME Titan, two coated formulations for use in pelleted feeds and pre-mixes, for use as animal health therapies.

All five products are marketed by Lallemand Animal Nutrition, the leading supplier of probiotics, silage inoculants and sealing systems used in Australia's fodder and livestock industries.

Lallemand Animal Nutrition managing director – Australia, Alex Turney, said the certifications represent a major breakthrough for the use of probiotics in the Australian livestock industry.

"These certifications give organic livestock producers, as well as pre-mix and feed manufacturers, access to innovative probiotics and yeast derivatives to support livestock health and performance," he said.

"Probiotic and yeast derivatives are recognised as scientifically proven alternatives to antibiotics in all production systems and are now widely used in Australia, the US and Europe.

"They offer the same health and performance benefits as antibiotics without any of the consumer concerns."

Whereas antibiotics modify the microbial population in the rumen or gut via direct antimicrobial activity, probiotics help to create a beneficial rumen environment via the proliferation of beneficial microflora.

They are particularly useful during periods of known stress, such as weaning, feed transitions or sanitary challenges.

Levucell SC is a natural, strain-specific live yeast (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae* CNCM I-1077) that improves the health and performance of dairy and beef cattle.

"*S. cerevisiae* has been used in baking, brewing and winemaking for thousands of years because of its exceptional fermentative capacities," Alex said.

"Lallemand selected the I-1077 strain from thou-

sands of samples because of its proven ability to improve rumen function, optimise rumen pH and improve fibre digestion."

The beneficial effects of Levucell SC upon the health and performance of dairy and beef cattle have been documented in more than 60 scientific papers published throughout the world.

International peer-reviewed studies have confirmed Levucell SC significantly improves the health and performance of dairy and beef cattle at levels equal to, or greater, than the commonly used antibiotic monensin.

Other studies have shown Levucell SC provides an effective alternative to the prescription therapies, virginiamycin and tylosin, for the management of sub-acute ruminal acidosis when fed in combination with rumen buffers and good management.

Levucell SB is a strain-specific live yeast (*S. cerevisiae* var. *boulardii* CNCM I-1079) that en-

hances the intestinal microflora of monogastrics.

It has a direct effect on minimising pathogen load and shedding in the animal and the environment.

"The European Commission recently authorised the use of Levucell SB as a feed additive for the reduction of carcass contamination by salmonella spp. in broiler chickens," Alex said.

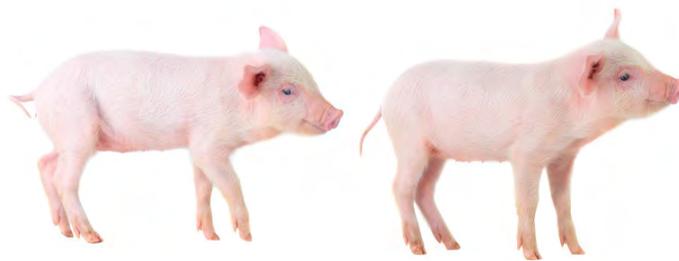
"Levucell SB is also being used in the Australian pig industry as a means of improving feed efficiency and reducing heat stress during summer."

Agrimos is an enriched yeast derivative that contains a rich source of mannan-oligosaccharides, which help to maintain optimal balance of beneficial microflora in the rumen.

Levucell SC, Levucell SB and Agrimos are manufactured using world-class processes that ensure potency, viability and stability are maintained from the factory to the animal.

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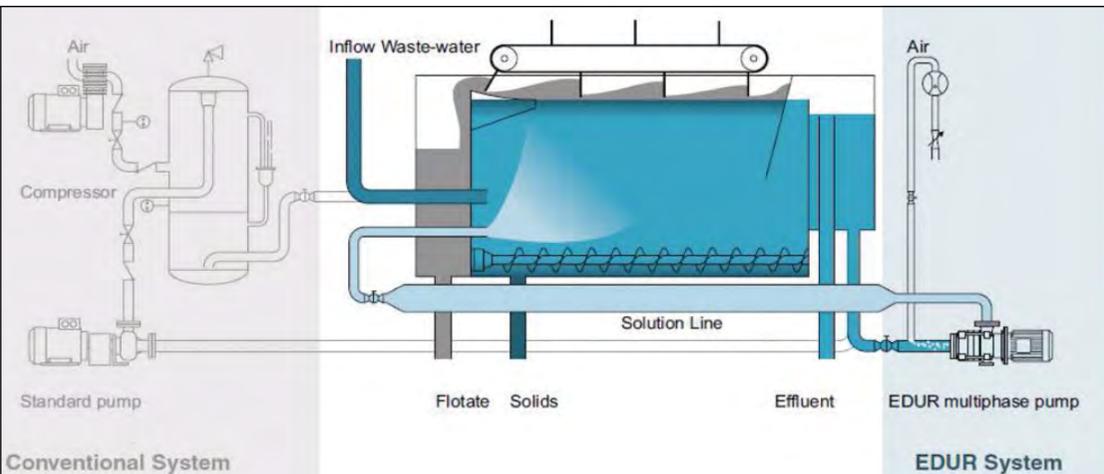
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and then feeds it at pressure through an enlarged solution line, then back into the DAF plant, producing a discharge stream into the tank that is saturated with 30 to 50-micron air bubbles.

Conventional DAF systems consist of a wastewater tank, compressor, air saturation vessel and effluent pump.

The effluent pump draws effluent from the tank and pumps it into the air saturation vessel.

A compressor pumps air into this same vessel.

The air/water mixture is 'saturated' under pressure, then released back into the wastewater tank at atmospheric pressure where tiny bubbles form and adhere to the suspended matter (fats, oils and other small wastewater particles).

The bubbles (with their attached suspended matter) float to the surface of the tank, where floatables can be skimmed off the surface.

By using EDUR multiphase pumps, which can produce the same micro-bubbles, asset owners can do away with the compressor, the air saturation vessel and any control or ancillary com-

ponents for these items.

The reduction of these system components and the simplification of the design results in lower investment costs and higher operational reliability.

The EDUR multiphase pump is an efficient alternative.

Now, one pump can replace the conventional pump, air saturation tank and compressor.

Energy and maintenance costs of running the compressor are eliminated.

EDUR multiphase pumps can deliver flows from 11/s (for smaller DAF plants) to 151/s (for larger DAF plants) and produce pressures to 12 bar (174psi).

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Naturally ahead



## Interim report shows UK farming's progress towards antibiotic use targets

RESPONSIBLE Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance has released a half-year summary of the UK farming industry's progress towards achieving 2020 targets for antibiotic use in each of eight different livestock sectors.

The targets, developed last year by the Targets Task Force and published in October 2017, include a number of numerical and qualitative goals towards reducing, refining or replacing antibiotic use in UK farm animals.

RUMA's secretary general Chris Lloyd said a comprehensive review of progress is due in November.

"In the meantime, this four-page summary provides a flavour of some of the activities being implemented to build on the

successful reduction of 27 percent in overall farm antibiotic sales for 2014-2016," he said.

Mr Lloyd added it's important to note each sector is very different – in terms of when they were first able to engage with the issue, disease pressure, number of producers and structure.

"This is why some have already made significant changes and are 'refining' how and when antibiotics are used, while others are working on bigger issues of data, communication and usage 'hot spots'," he said.

"But whatever the stage, all remain fully engaged on driving improvement and best practice to ensure the targets can be achieved by 2020."

The half-year summary can be downloaded from ruma.org.uk

www.porknews.com.au

# Victorian producers 'pay it forward' to garner local support

VICTORIAN pork producers are 'paying it forward' by donating hundreds of kilograms of high-quality pork to not-for-profit organisation FareShare in an effort to feed Victorians doing it tough.

FareShare rescues food and fights hunger by cooking and distributing nutritious meals to the people most in need across our community.

It operates Australia's largest charity kitchen from Melbourne and with the help of 850 regular volunteers, FareShare cooks 5000 free meals a day for charities such as soup vans, homeless shelters, women's refuges and community food banks.

As part of the new initiative, Victorian pig farmers will donate about 250kg of pork to FareShare, which it will incorporate into approximately 2000 meals per week and distribute to the most-needy Victorians.

This donation of high-quality Australian pork will provide those currently experiencing food insecurity with a nutritious, protein-rich meal that would otherwise not be available to them.

The initiative launches in the midst of challenging times for Victoria's pig farmers, who are facing significant oversupply and an unexpected price drop at the farm gate – in many cases below the cost of production.

Farmers are calling on Victorians to get some more pork on their forks to boost demand and reduce the oversupply, asking consumers to simply add fresh and delicious pork to another plate each week.

Victorian Farmers Federation Pig Group president Tim Kingma

said while the present oversupply of pork was negatively impacting on Victorian pig farmers, many felt compelled to assist those in less fortunate circumstances by redirecting some of their excess pork to those who need it most.

"Our organisation, together with the local processing industry, has decided to donate pork to FareShare to feed Victorians in need," Mr Kingma said.

"As we help those less fortunate, we hope Victorian families will put another serve of pork in their shopping trolley a week.

"Pork is currently discounted in many supermarkets, so it's a great opportunity to experiment with different cuts of highly nutritious, lean pork and prepare new and different meals for the whole family.

"Not only will you be consuming the highest-quality, freshest Australian pork, you will also be supporting Victoria's pig farms, many of which are family owned and operated and have been for many generations."

FareShare head chef Chris Mitchison said with protein being an integral part of a balanced diet, it is great to have some top-quality pork on offer.

"Meat casseroles are the first choice of meal for struggling families," Ms Mitchison said.

"The donated pork will improve the quality of our meals and boost the protein content for people who really need it."

For more information on how to incorporate pork into your weekly menu plan and on the new partnership between the VFF and FareShare, please visit [pork.com.au](http://pork.com.au)



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# Melbourne Salami Festa

THE Melbourne Salami Festa will take place on October 13 and 14 at Welcome to Thornbury.

This well-known bar and food truck stop is now the event's location. Come and explore the

new Grand Salami Garage and enjoy stalls, demonstrations and live music.

Of course, the next champion will also be crowned.

Could that be you? Entries for the homemade salami-making com-

petition open on August 1.

This is your chance for your salami to be crowned king as makers from all over Australia battle it out for the top prize.

To enter, you will need to provide between 1kg and 1.5kg of salami

(weight after curing).

You will also need to be available to drop off your salami entry for judging at Welcome to Thornbury on October 6.

**The Salami Festa needs you**

Volunteer registrations will open on August 6.

The Melbourne Salami Festa is a community event and without the support and generosity of wonderful volunteers, the event would be very nearly impossible to put on.

So once again the call goes out to all you wonderful folk to volunteer and help put on this great event.

Exclusive Salami Army pre-sale tickets will be on sale Monday, August 30, so pop that date in your diary.

Tickets will go on sale to the general public on September 1.

All the details will soon be live at [melbournesalamifesta.com](http://melbournesalamifesta.com)



## Greenhouse gas as a raw material for an important feed additive

PROF Arne Skerra of the Technical University of Munich has succeeded for the first time in using gaseous CO<sub>2</sub> as a basic material for the production of a chemical mass product in a biotechnological reaction.

The product is methionine, which is used as an essential amino acid, particularly in animal feed, on a large scale.

This newly developed enzymatic process could replace its current petrochemical production.

The results have now been published in the journal 'Nature Catalysis'.

Industrial production of methionine from petrochemical source materials is currently done via a six-step chemical process that requires highly toxic hydrogen cyanide, among other substrates.

In 2013, Evonik Industries, one of the world's largest manufacturers of methionine, invited university researchers to propose new processes for making the substance safer to produce.

Methionine, which occurs in nature as a degradation product of methionine, is formed as a facile intermediate during the conventional process.

"Based on the idea that methionine in micro-organisms is degraded by enzymes to methionol with the release of CO<sub>2</sub>, we tried to reverse this process because every chemical reaction is in principle reversible, while often only with the extensive use of energy and pressure," Prof Skerra said.

Skerra participated in the call for proposals with this idea, and Evonik awarded the concept and supported the project.

Supported by postdoctoral researcher Lukas Eisoldt, Skerra began to determine the parameters for the manufacturing process and for producing the necessary biocatalysts (enzymes).

The scientists conducted initial experiments and determined the CO<sub>2</sub> pressure that would be needed to produce methionine from methionol in a biocatalytic process.

Surprisingly, an unexpectedly high yield resulted even at a relatively low pressure – roughly corresponding to the pressure in a car tyre of about two bar.

Based on the achievements after just one year, Evonik extended the funding, and now the team, reinforced by PhD student Julia Martin, investigated the biochemical background of the reaction and optimised the enzymes involved using protein engineering.

**More efficient than photosynthesis**

After several years of work, not only was it possible to improve the reaction on a laboratory scale to a yield of

40 percent, but also to elucidate the theoretical background of the biochemical processes.

"Compared to the complex photosynthesis, in which nature also biocatalytically incorporates CO<sub>2</sub> into biomolecules as a building block, our process is highly elegant and simple," Prof Skerra said.

"Photosynthesis uses 14 enzymes and has a yield of only 20 percent, while our method requires just two enzymes."

In future, the basic principle of this novel biocatalytic reaction can serve as a model for the industrial production of other valuable amino acids or precursors for pharmaceuticals.

Meanwhile, Prof Skerra's team will refine the process, which has been patented, using protein engineering so it will become suitable for large-scale applications.

This could be the first time there is a biotechnological manufacturing process using gaseous CO<sub>2</sub> as an immediate chemical precursor.

Up to now, attempts to recycle the greenhouse gas, which is a major contributor to climate change, have failed due to the extremely high energy required to do so.

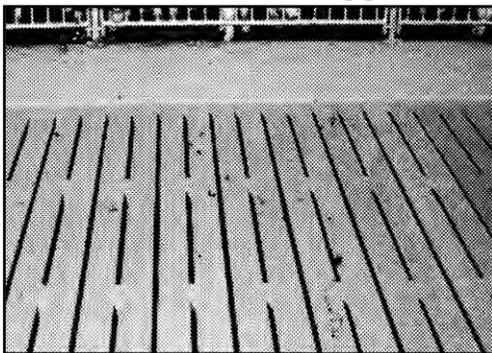


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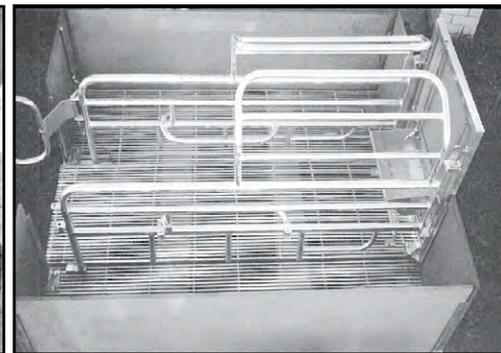
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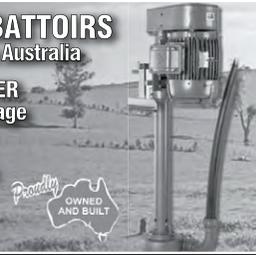
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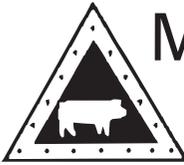
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# Trimming the fat makes for soap from heritage pigs

PRODUCING soap from heritage pigs is helping Andrew Hearne clean up at the markets.

He is producing a lemon-myrtle scented soap based on the fat from his slaughtered pigs.

They are raised on his farm near Pappinbarra, west of Wauchope on the NSW mid-north coast.

It is part of his determination to not waste one part of his porkers.

"It's one way of us completing the nose to tail ethos," Mr Hearne said.

"Nothing is wasted. The whole animal is used."

The soap is produced in partnership with a former butcher, Grace Steven, who has an Italian background and spent many a day with her family making soap based on her grandmother's expertise.

Ms Steven, who is based at Camden, south of Sydney, has sheathed her knives and now makes products such as soap.

"Andrew is a bit of a hero of mine," she said.

"I love what he does.

"Knowing he was butchering his pigs, it seemed a natural medium to play with."

After Mr Hearne's pigs are processed and the meat packed for sale, the fat comes back to him and is rendered and then sent to Ms Steven.

From one pig, aged six months, about 100 blocks of soap each weighing 120g are produced.

The finished product is very different to the soap Ms Steven experienced in her childhood courtesy of her grandmother.

"It wasn't that great a product," she said. "It cleaned clothes perfectly, but I daresay their hands were pretty dry."

The present process results in glycerine "one of the great unsung heroes of hand-made soap" being produced.

She said this was not retained in many of the mass-produced soaps, instead used in moisturising products.

Apart from the glycerine and lemon-myrtle, coconut milk is used to give

it a luscious and creamy texture.

"It is 100 percent edible," Mr Hearne said.

"If you don't like washing in it, yes, you can eat it."

"It is very creamy and lathers up very well."

Apart from supplying his pork to some of Sydney's upmarket eateries, Mr Hearne enjoys good sales at the Bondi markets.

The soap has been met with mixed responses.

"People love the scent," Mr Hearne said.

"They'll pick it up and smell it."

"Others say, 'I wouldn't wash in that, I wouldn't feel clean'."

"Then you get to explain to them where lard comes from and how soap used to be made."

Despite the interest, and using lemon-myrtle

as part of wanting to utilise all of his pigs, Mr Hearne is primarily a farmer.

"We're actually in the pork business, we are not going to diversify and create a range of soaps," he said.

So for the time being it is unlikely there will be a silk purse made out of one of his sow's ears.

Originally published at abc.net.au



Lemon-myrtle scented soap made from rendered fat from Andrew Hearne's heritage pigs. Photos: Andrew Hearne



The heritage pigs at Andrew Hearne's property forage throughout the farm.


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# Aussie Muck-off

A NEW high-pressure wash-down rig has been developed by Aussie Pumps.

Combining both high pressure and high flow, the new Aussie Pumps machine sets records in cleaning times for livestock waste wash-down.

The product was developed in collaboration with a shed cleaning contractor, Hunter Valley-based Pro Wash Poultry Service.

The Aussie Muck-off is designed for cleaning piggeries, feedlots, sale yards and chicken sheds.

The heart of the system is a Kappa 150, Udor four-diaphragm pump.

It produces a whopping 150l/pm flow combined with a maximum pressure of 50 bar (725psi).

The power is delivered to the pump through an integrated six to one reduction box driven by a Honda 20hp industrial petrol engine.

Aussie Pumps product manager Brad Farrugia said cleaning contractors love the big pump because of its reliability.

"It makes a hard job easier and less time consuming," he said.

The big positive-displacement pump self-primers and can draw water from a vehicle-mounted tank or stationary reservoir.

"We recommend the pump be mounted close to a source from which it can draw adequate water flow," Farrugia said.

"With the pump's huge flow it can empty a 1000-litre tank in seven and a half minutes."

The big Aussie machine plays a vital role in minimising the time it takes to clean and sanitise.

Stock crates could be cleaned effectively because of the machine's big flow at high pressure.

An added bonus is its multiple-gun operation.

"150 litres a minute at 50 bar is a lot of water for one person to hang onto," Farrugia said.

"The machine can be

set up so that up to three guns can be used simultaneously, getting big jobs done fast.

"Aussie Pumps owes a big debt to Pro Wash Poultry, who provided invaluable feedback and ex-

perience in development of this equipment."

Further information on Aussie Pumps' Muck-off range is available from [aussiepumps.com.au](http://aussiepumps.com.au) or by phone on 02 8865 3500. 🐷



Pro Wash's Michael Cooper completed a chicken shed clean-up with Aussie's spray rig.

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# Taxing imports is no simple solution

PRODUCER meetings are under way across the eastern seaboard as producers meet with Australian Pork Limited and respective state farming/pork organisations to discuss the industry's profitability crisis.

One of the issues that producers raise is whether APL can just ask the Australian Government to stop the imports.

Processors of pork products would then be forced into buying Australian pork – 'solving' the current situation.

Another version is that APL should ask the Government to put a tariff on imports, providing a more level playing field to Australian producers.

Sounds like an easy and a quick solution – producers will benefit and consumers will finally get more Australian pork on their forks.

However, life is never that simple.

Australia is a member of the World Trade Organisation, meaning Australia has obligations in how it interacts with trading partners.

These obligations include agreed commitments on tariffs and tariff quotas, export subsidies and domestic agricultural subsidies.

As a member of the WTO, Australia has undertaken not to raise tariffs above the levels agreed in trade negotiations and upper limits for subsidies.

WTO members generally have a bound tariff (the maximum tariff that can be applied) and an applied tariff (the tariff applied at the border, normally lower than the bound tariff).

For pork, the current levels of tariffs were agreed during the Uruguay Round in 1994, when Australia bound the pork tariff lines to zero,



Point of View

by DEB KERR  
General Manager Policy



meaning pork enters Australia with no tariff.

As this is the bound tariff, Australia cannot apply any tariff on pork outside of very special circumstances, for example in the event of an anti-dumping action (for more on this see Andrew Robertson's article on Page 12 in APN June 2018).

If APL were to ask the Government for an outcome inconsistent with Australia's WTO commitments, we would be burning political capital long built up over two decades – and for something the Government would not be able to deliver.

Even if Australia did decide to breach its WTO commitments and apply tariffs, this action would certainly result in retaliatory actions by trading partners applied to more than just the pork trade.

Retaliation may very well affect Australia's positioning across agriculture and non-agricultural trade and services.

The dispute between the US and China is a case in point, with producers in the US now suffering a significant domestic glut of pork, and producers in China facing significant increases in feed costs due to retaliatory tariffs applied by China to US soya beans.

In any case, it is useful to

look at the extent to which imports have contributed to our current situation.

APL's latest Import, Export & Domestic Production Report (dated May 2018), shows that over the year to May 2018, pork import volumes declined by 4.6 percent.

Pork imports have remained relatively steady since September 2015 – well before the current price decline occurred.

The same report shows pork exports have increased by 16.5 percent over the same period, albeit exports remain lower than imports at about 43,958 tonnes.

Exports (volumes and value) have been increasing steadily since around March 2016.

The current situation is a result of an imbalance between domestic supply and demand. The situation has not been caused by Australia's commitments regarding international trade rules – which have been in effect for 24 years.

Since then, Australia's domestic pork market has seen a few highs and lows, with the lows resulting in structural adjustment.

Unfortunately, the current situation will result in the further exodus of producers, mostly but not exclusively, smaller family owned pig farms. 🐷

## US subsidies another blow to drought-stricken farmers – NFF calls on government to register disapproval

THE National Farmers' Federation is calling on the Australian Government to register its disapproval in the 'strongest possible terms' with the US Administration following its decision to provide \$US12 billion in new subsidies to US farmers.

NFF chief executive Tony Mahar said the subsidies would hurt Australian farmers who were already suffering from crippling drought conditions.

"Australian farmers are among the least subsidised in the world, which means our agriculture exports are particularly vulnerable to increased government assistance in competitor nations," he said.

Mr Mahar said the news of the additional subsidies was particularly disappointing given Australian farmers, especially those in Queensland and NSW, were contending with one of the worst droughts in decades.

The subsidies are a direct response to the fallout



from the US' decision to impose tariffs on China, the European Union and other countries.

While the US Administration has called for a level trade playing field, these new subsidies will do nothing but further tilt agricultural markets against those farmers who play by the book.

Mr Mahar said such 'reckless actions' damaged the global trade system on which our farmers relied so heavily.

"Our fear is that this is

deepening the potential for a global trade war that will hurt producers and consumers alike."

The World Trade Organisation, and its predecessor the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade, were created to ensure the crippling tariff increases that contributed to the Great Depression did not happen again.

"It appears the US has ignored the hard-learned lessons taught by the damage caused by trade protectionism," Mr Mahar said.

www.nff.org.au 🐷

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