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Cybercriminals targeting Australian agriculture

RANSOMWARE, a type of malware, is an increasingly popular type of extortionist cyberattack, which encrypts data on infected computers or completely locks you out and holds your data or device hostage, with the attackers offering a decryption or return of access in exchange for a ransom.

According to Avast, the number of ransomware attacks in Australia increased by 10 percent during the height of the pandemic in March and April 2020, compared to January and February 2020.

Ransomware attacks in Australia have continued targeting the country's industry, with \$680,715 reported lost to Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Scamwatch this year, not including companies who haven't disclosed their ransomware payments.

One of the more recent attacks was on the world's largest meat processor JBS, which was attacked by ransomware in late May this year, resulting in 47 of their processing and packing plants ceasing operations.

This had damning consequences to JBS in the

US and Australia, where they supply an estimated 25-30 percent of the country's red meat, including to major supermarket chains Coles and Aldi.

The meat processing giant ended up paying a ransom of over \$14 million to regain access to their IT systems.

Another major ransomware attack in February 2020, saw wool brokers across Australia and New Zealand severely disrupted when Talman software's IT system, underpinning auctions and exports, was encrypted by cybercriminals.

This attack resulted in wool sales being halted for eight days and an estimated 70,000 bales being deferred for the sector that has sales of up to \$80 million a week.

Talman refused to pay the ransom, choosing to replace the software.

These ransomware attacks on such important Australian agricultural sectors and supply chains show how vital it is for authorities to defend markets against cyber threats.

In late June, Shadow Minister of Cyber Security Tim Watts tabled a new bill in Federal Parliament called the Ransomware Payments Bill, which

proposes the creation of a 'ransomware payment notification scheme' that covers corporations and all federal government entities, as well as state and territory government agencies.

It will require entities that make ransomware payments to notify the Australian Cyber Security Centre and allow the centralised collection of information and other actionable intelligence by our law enforcement and signals intelligence agencies to combat ransomware attacks.

However, this won't necessarily stop all ransomware attacks.

Though you may only ever hear of ransomware attacks on large businesses such as JBL and Talman in the media, small and medium agriculture businesses should still be very aware of ransomware and the potential vulnerabilities in their business infrastructure.

What to do for effective cybersecurity

In the case of a ransomware attack, businesses should definitely not consider paying the ransom or negotiating with the criminals behind the attack, as making the pay-

• continued P2

APL's digital transformation

AS we begin the second year of the Australian Pork Limited 2020-2025 strategic plan, we bring a new focus – that of delivery.

And we have kicked off the new year with a bang, with the launch of our new industry website, australianpork.com.au

While launching a website may seem straightforward, we've gone the extra mile to make sure users get what they came for.

Many thanks go to the 50 plus industry members who were involved in our user interviews over the past few months, and to more than 150 people who completed our online surveys.

This research shaped a new direction for the site, making it easier to navigate, search and read.

But the website is only part of the much larger communications overhaul we've been working on for a period of time.

When I joined APL in 2019, each division – marketing, research and innovation, as well as policy and corporate services – managed their own communications in different ways.

Multiple monthly and quarterly printed newsletters and producer notices were sent out each week with various spokespeople engaged with the media.

The range of digital communication touchpoints was also prolific, with multiple e-newsletters, social media channels and over 10 individual websites.

While there is always a role for different channels to speak to different audiences, an audit conducted in early 2020 showed content was often



Point of View

by MARGO ANDRAE CEO



Instead, we send a single e-newsletter, the APL Update, to over 4000 industry stakeholders.

This email includes market reports, media clips, an EAD update and critical industry information.

The APL Update has open rates among APL members averaging 49 percent – the industry standard being 23 percent.

These are only a snapshot of what we've delivered over the past 12 months in communications, and we are far from done.

Even though the new website is live, over the coming months we will be creating more content targeting the broader community.

This will bring more visibility to the industry and explain what we do, and importantly why.

I urge you to visit our site, sign up to the APL Update e-newsletter and please, continue to share your thoughts.

When launching the strategic plan in June last year, we restructured the APL team to deliver our new ambitious direction.

Instead of having communications staff sitting across divisions, the team has been centralised to oversee perceptions of our industry with a single voice.

Headed by communications director Julia Unwin, the APL communications team is made up of five team members who oversee every communication

channel from APL.

Their remit spans social media, websites, publications, events, e-newsletters and media liaison.

A centralised team brings more power to our messages by having one voice to stakeholders – be they the community, media, our producers or government.

The team has been focussed on streamlining our communications over the past year, and producers will have noticed we no longer send out printed newsletters and multiple emails throughout the week.

APL kicked off the year with the launch of its new industry website, australianpork.com.au



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2021

SEP 7-10 – International Animal Production Show www.feriazaragoza.com/figan-2021

SEP 18-21 – Allen D. Leman Swine Conference (Online) www.lemanconference.umn.edu

OCT 11-14 – 14th SafePork Conference 2021 www.safepork-conference.com

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

NOV 21-23 – AVAMS21, Gold Coast www.avams2020.com.au

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

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Cybercriminals targeting Australian agriculture

from P1
ment doesn't ensure you'll get your files back or that you'll get the right decryption key, and your payment will likely fund the development and launch of new ransomware.

Businesses can of course look for decryption tools that several antivirus companies may have for the malware, and in some cases this works, but you shouldn't rely on it.

It is better to protect yourself against these attacks systemically, specifically by deploying strong security solutions that include the latest malware protection features.

Here are a few ways businesses can prevent ransomware.

Keep your antivirus software up to date

The best way to prevent ransomware attacks is to stop the malware from accessing your computer or device.

The first thing you should do is install an effective top-quality antivirus program with a strong ransomware protection tool and RDP protection to address the growing risks

posed by remote desktop use.

Avast Business Antivirus has remote access shield to protect your devices from remote desktop vulnerabilities.

To defend yourself against the relentless creation and assault of new ransomware strains, you should also make sure you keep your antivirus software up to date at all times.

Most programs will automatically do this for you, but for additional peace of mind, set aside a moment once a week to check for updates.

Think twice before clicking on links

Phishing scams are still the most popular way of distributing malware.

Cyber-hijackers also distribute their ransomware through mobile devices using text messaging and social media messenger apps.

Don't click links you receive from unknown contacts via SMS, email or messenger applications such as Skype, WhatsApp or Messenger.

Even if you think you

know the sender, take a closer look at both their address and the link itself before proceeding.

If anything looks 'phishy', steer clear.

Though common sense still works very well against phishing attacks, antivirus software can help detect infected sites and block malware, with these features getting better every year.

Update your operating system and your software

As annoying as Windows, Apple and Android system update notices can be, you should never ignore them.

Many of these updates involve security patches that are vital to preventing ransomware and other malware from infiltrating your devices.

If you're still using an older operating system that Microsoft no longer supports, such as Windows XP, you are especially vulnerable to attack.

Do yourself a massive favour and upgrade to a newer operating system.

You should also keep all your software up to date, particularly your web browsers and plug-ins.

Fix your remote desktop access

It is essential to block the remote desktop access from the internet and leave it accessible only within

the internal network. The default ports – port 3389 for remote desktop – can be secured at the firewall level.

If the company does not need the remote desktop for its daily operations, it is better to turn it off completely.

Back up all important files

The absolute baseline prevention of company data loss due to a ransomware attack is regularly backing up.

Having backups of all your valuable and vital files will help you in terms of damage control.

The best way to prevent data loss is to use a combination of offline and online storage methods.

Save your files to one or more physical devices – external hard drives, USB flash sticks, SD cards are options to consider along with cloud storage services such as Dropbox, Box and Google Drive.

This way, if you do get hit with a ransomware attack, you're ready to restore all your important files as soon as you remove the ransomware from your device.

Ensure employees act securely and trust no one

It is also crucial to manage employees' access rights and to implement the 'zero trust' principle – a security concept that

requires all users, even those inside the organisation's enterprise network, to be authenticated, authorised and continuously validating security configurations before being granted or keeping access to applications and data – to reduce the impact of potential security vulnerabilities.

Remove access of administrative privileges for staff that don't require them and educate staff so they know how to browse securely, looking for the URLs padlock symbol and 'https' in the browser address bar, and they're less likely to access malicious hyperlinks, visit unknown websites and are able to recognise slight changes in URLs.

Encourage them to have strong passwords, ideally using different passwords for different website accounts, and add two-factor authentication where possible, especially on administrator accounts.

Also, it is worth regularly getting your staff to check to make sure none of their passwords have been leaked or stolen, which is easily done by using online tools provided by security companies, such as Avast's free Hack Check tool.

**Jakub Kroustek
Avast, Malware Research Director**



Advance notice of Australian Pork Limited AGM

THE annual general meeting of Australian Pork Limited will be held on Thursday 11 November, 2021 commencing at 12.30pm Australian eastern daylight savings time.

Given the uncertainties and movement restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is yet to be determined whether the meeting will take place at a physical venue or online.

Members will be advised of the meeting format as soon as practicable.

The business of the annual general meeting will include:

- Receiving and considering the financial statements of the company, together with the reports of the directors and auditor in respect of year ended June 30, 2021
- Appointing the company auditor for 2020–



2021 and setting their remuneration

- Voting to amend the APL constitution to provide greater clarity on key rules

- Voting to amend the APL constitution to allow delegates to remove an APL delegate under reasonable circumstances

- Electing one producer director

- Ratifying the appointment of two specialist directors

- Considering resolutions proposed to the company by members and delegates prior to the annual return date, September 3, 2021.

The APL annual report will be made available on the APL website and relevant meeting papers will be circulated to members, associate members, delegates, directors and the auditor no less than 28

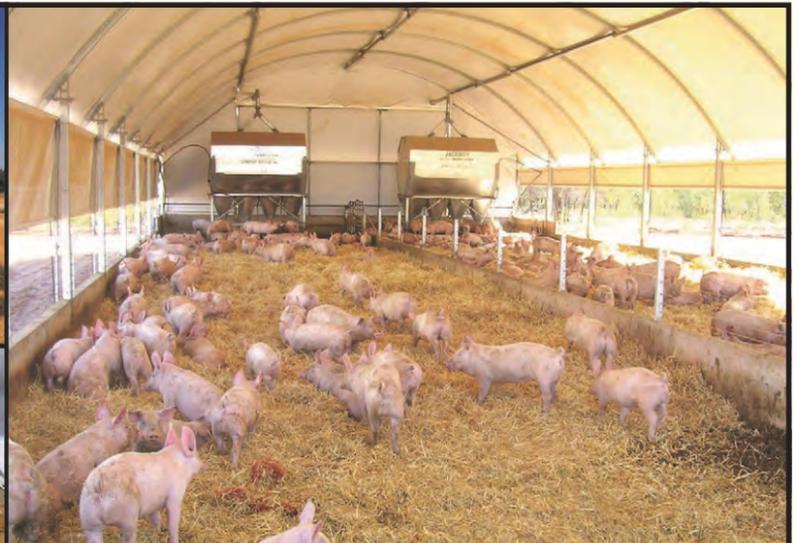
days prior to the annual general meeting.

For the purposes of determining a member's voting rights, if the annual pig slaughter levy amount paid by a member has changed since last reported to APL, or if a member wishes to revoke the standing consent associated with their PigPass declaration, the member may provide a new statutory declaration to APL prior to the return date.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact APL's corporate and governance liaison Nikki Watson on 02 6270 8814 or nikki.watson@australianpork.com.au

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BE Campbell bid for Rivalea knocked down but not out

ON June 8, Rivalea owner QAF announced global meat processing company JBS as the winning bidder for the business.

JBS bid \$175m. Predictably, the JBS acquisition of Rivalea is now subject to Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Foreign Investment Review Board determinations before it can proceed.

The ACCC has publicly signalled its plans to commence an investigation into the proposed acquisition by JBS and has also indicated it will invite public submissions and consult with industry participants as part of its review.

If the JBS acquisition of Rivalea goes ahead, it will make JBS the biggest pork producer in Australia.

It is already the biggest meat processor in the country.

JBS Australian operations include a vast network of processing, export and feedlot operations, plus the largest smallgoods manufacturer Primo Foods, Andrews Meat Industries, Tasman Group, Rockdale Beef and Australian Meat Holdings.

Cant Comment by BRENDON CANT



The ACCC has acknowledged that family-owned Australian business BE Campbell was the unsuccessful bidder and that it had ACCC pre-approval for the purchase.

BE Campbell has publicly expressed its disappointment at the decision to sell to JBS and has raised competition concerns.

Established in 1969 by Bruce Campbell and based in NSW, BE Campbell is a leading Australian family-owned and operated pork processor and wholesaler, processing and distributing fresh Australian meat and meat products and specialising in pork cuts.

BE Campbell employs about 700 staff and owns two sites in NSW – the flagship Weatherill Park pork deboning and processing plant, with capacity to process 15,000

pigs a week, and the Arndell Park multi-species processing plant, with weekly capacity of 400 tonnes.

BE Campbell sources its pigs from a network of high-performing independent producers across the country.

The company out-sources slaughtering and processes the carcasses at one of its two facilities.

With a fleet of 30 refrigerated trucks, BE Campbell distributes its products to multiple channels including supermarkets, restaurants and cafes, retail butchers, smallgoods producers and other food service providers.

It also exports to overseas markets.

Some industry observers have concerns about the impact of JBS dominance as a multinational company, its increased bargaining power and how

it may ultimately affect pork prices.

The drastically increased concentration of pig supply and slaughter services would enable JBS to act without effective constraint, and with the ability to control key segments of the supply chain.

Its proposed purchase of Rivalea would make JBS the owner of three of the four export accredited slaughtering facilities across southeast Australia, representing 75 percent of slaughter services across NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

This issue had been previously flagged by the ACCC's Rod Sims in JBS USA Holdings Inc's acquisition of Primo, and said that the commission is "wary of the potential impact of further consolidation of abattoirs" and that "the ACCC will continue to monitor this industry and any future acquisitions will face additional scrutiny."

JBS has indicated its plans to invest, expand and grow more pigs, which is in line with their track record in other proteins and jurisdictions.

This has raised some concerns among independent pork producers due to the delicate supply and demand dynamic of Australia's pork industry.

Typically, any meaningful increase in total pig supply causes pig prices to fall, which larger vertically integrated players can more easily withstand, leaving independent farmers to either pull back numbers, exit the industry or both.

Internationally, only 14 years ago JBS did not own a single US meat plant.

Today, JBS and three other food companies control nearly 70 percent of the pork market and about 85 percent of beef production.

JBS and Tyson Foods control about 40 percent of the poultry market.

JBS and the large multinational meat companies, including Tyson Foods, Smithfield Foods and Cargill, use their size and global presence to create efficiencies that enable them to produce a variety of quality foods at a lower price.

But many agricultural economists and food marketing analysts say when so few companies control the market, they can drive smaller operators out of business, reducing competition and occasionally raising prices for consumers.

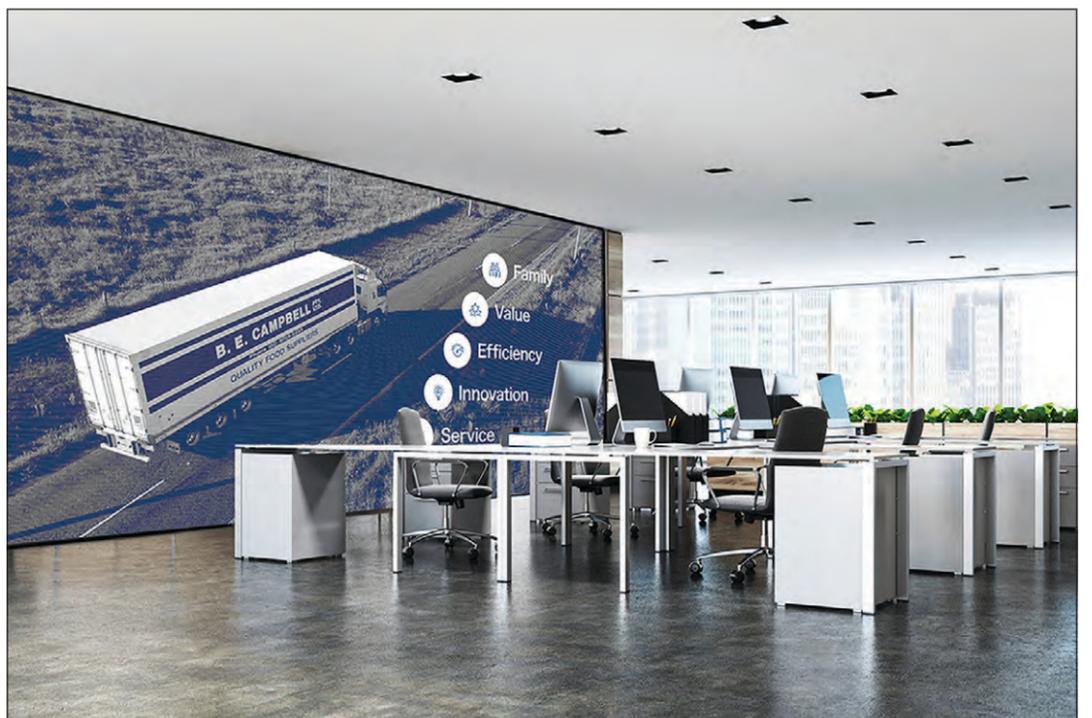
This is one possible outcome of JBS acquiring Rivalea, and one of concern.

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Mummified pig foetus mailed into Australia

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment reported that it recently intercepted a mummified pig foetus from international parcels that people had attempted to send into Australia.

DAWE acting head of biosecurity Dr Chris Parker said the pig foetus joined the list of prohibited items people have tried to bring into the country, via post or airports.

This list of recorded attempts at smuggling strange articles into Australia includes a taxidermy black bear, skinned frogs, horse dung, roasted otter and deer genitalia.

The more recent intercepts of pig foetus and freeze-dried quails posed a biosecurity and animal health risk.

“A few years back we intercepted deer genitalia at Cairns Airport, which could carry animal biosecurity risks, including foot and mouth disease,” Dr Parker said.

“Quails and other poultry can carry avian influenza, which is a serious disease of poultry and can cause high mortality in production birds.”

Though the number of people coming into Australia decreased significantly as a result of the pandemic, the volume of mail coming into the country was increasing.

“This means the biosecurity risks facing Australia will also increase,” Dr Parker said.

“While COVID has impacted on the number of passengers arriving, we have continued to inter-

cept food, meat and seeds.

“These are some of the more common risk items we intercept at airports and mail centres.”

In 2020, biosecurity officers reviewed over 60,000 parcels at Australia’s international mail centres — 55,000 of these parcels contained seeds and 3000 contained pork products.

Australia has strict penalties for breached biosecurity laws, and since 2019 authorities have cancelled 14 visas on biosecurity related grounds.

“This is why it is so important that everyone follows our biosecurity conditions when travelling or importing goods to Australia — including online shoppers,” Dr Parker said.

For more information on Australia’s biosecurity laws, visit awe.gov.au



Charaen Pokphand Foods, geared towards biogas production at all pig farms in Thailand, is an example of the simplest way to capture biogas — placing a plastic cover made of polyethylene over treatment lagoons to form a gas-tight seal.

Reducing energy costs by managing inputs and outputs

WITH the cost of energy rising by up to 40 percent in recent years, it is important for pork producers to consider alternative sources of energy.

When deciding what changes are suitable, producers may want to consider where energy is being consumed and the benefits of alternative energy sources, such as biogas.

Consideration must also be given to the processes involved in implementation and how best to tap into energy initiatives.

Understanding energy in pig production

Measuring actual energy consumed in the piggery can assist in reducing energy bills.

This can be done with easy-to-use tools such as a single-phase monitor, which measures specific pieces of equipment, including heat lamps, heat pads and small pumps.

Circuit board monitoring is a good way to compare the use of energy between individual sheds and help identify areas of the piggery where energy efficiency can be improved.



Extension Officer

by ROWENA DAVIS



Depending on the use of the biogas, it may be dried, cleaned of corrosive contaminants and then sent to a flare, boiler or a generator to recover useful energy.

Costs, carbon credits and renewable energy certificates

Until recently, biogas had only been demonstrated to be viable for large commercial 1000 plus sow piggeries.

A case study, conducted by Australian Pork Limited explored the viability of biogas for a small-scale 535 sows farrow to finish piggery, demonstrated the following inputs and outputs required by a biogas system:

- Capital costs \$614,720
- Operating costs \$17,004 — excluding desludging — estimated payback 6.3-7.7 years depending on finance

- Estimated electricity savings \$4598 per month or \$55,170 per annum
- Estimated LPG savings \$50,000 per annum.

The amount of electricity produced for the piggery resulted in the excess energy being exported to the grid.

Hot water was also produced, which was circulated through the under-floor heating systems.

The case study showed moderate economic feasibility for biogas used in a small-scale farrow to finish piggery system.

If you are looking to utilise a renewable energy system such as biogas and are interested in generating Australian carbon credit units or renewable energy certificates, it is important to contact the Clean Energy Regulator before making any investment decisions regarding the project.

If you commence the project before registering with the Clean Energy Regulator, you may not be able to earn credits or certificates.

For technical information on any of these topics, contact Gemma Wyburn at gemma.wyburn@australianpork.com.au

For a copy of the final reports, manuals or factsheets associated with any of these topics, contact Rowena Davis at rowena.davis@australianpork.com.au

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Naturally ahead

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ASF response a biosecurity shield

THE Australian Government's \$66.6 million African swine fever response package has strengthened Australia's biosecurity measures and ensured our system remains a world-class defence.

Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia David Littleproud said the 2019 package put more biosecurity officers and detector dogs on the ground and enhanced measures in the battle to keep ASF out of Australia.

"ASF would have a significant impact on pig health and production, as well as wider economic impact through loss of access to overseas markets for our pork products if it were to reach our shores," Minister Littleproud said.

"With its rapid spread through Asia and new variants being discovered, the disease is threatening the livelihoods of millions of people globally who rely on the pork industry.

"That is why in December 2019 the Australian Government announced its ASF response package to address the risk to Australia caused by the global spread of the disease.

"Since then, we have successfully strengthened Australia's border control measures and increased targeted operations to detect non-compliance."

"We have also raised awareness of our biosecurity requirements to those travelling or mailing goods to Aus-

tralia and reinforced our national preparedness.

"Our \$400 million investment in biosecurity in the 2021-22 budget continues our commitment to help protect Australia from the ongoing and evolving threat of ASF and other significant threats.

"Feral pigs are a major environmental and agricultural pest and would be an impediment to eradication of ASF if it were to arrive in Australia – as a result, the Australian Government is supporting a range of feral pig control measures," Minister Littleproud said.

Appointment of a national feral pig management coordinator and development of a national feral pig action plan is facilitating

nationally coordinated management and control of feral pigs.

In a recent thermal-assisted aerial control trial, thermal cameras detected 99 percent of the 126 feral pigs killed, compared to 1 percent that were visible to the human eye.

"Through the Communities Combating Pest and Weed Impacts During Drought Program, we delivered more than \$2.6 million to eight eligible drought-affected local government areas in Queensland and NSW for on-ground management of feral pigs, among other priority pest animals and weeds," Minister Littleproud said.

"Building on this work, our commitments in the 2021-22 budget will continue our efforts to reduce the economic and environmental burden of established feral animals and weeds.

"We remain committed to keeping ASF out of Australia and protecting local pork industries and international exports, while supporting land managers to better manage the impacts of feral pigs."

For further information on our efforts to keep ASF out of Australia, visit agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/asf and on the national feral pig action plan, visit feralpigs.com.au



Australia Pork Limited and NSW Department of Primary Industry have developed new resources including an eight-point checklist to make it easy for producers to make practical changes to their biosecurity.

Biosecurity preparedness ramps up on farm

AFRICAN swine fever preparedness on farm has been a critical priority for the ASF technical panel and liaison officers over the past three months.

Ensuring the message reaches all producers no matter the size is vital to protecting our industry.

This is why Australia Pork Limited and NSW Department of Primary Industry have developed new resources including an eight-point checklist to make it easy for producers to make practical changes to their biosecurity.

Now is the time to ensure property, staff and vets are prepared for an inspection with the new Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program biosecurity stand-

AUSTRALIAN Pork
General Manager –
Research & Innovation
by ROB SMITS



ards being auditable from September 2021.

Documented evidence of biosecurity plans will be requested.

For assistance, search 'biosecurity' on the APL website for resources, or contact APL APIQ lead Bjorn Ludvigsen at bjorn.ludvigsen@australianpork.com.au

As well as this, a new

APL emergency animal disease biosecurity committee has been set up to work alongside the APL industry technical panel.

The group draws together information from policy, research, producer relations and communications to share unanimously with industry, government and stakeholders.



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African swine fever creeping closer

AS many readers will be aware, African swine fever has now been detected in the domestic pig population in the Brandenburg province of Germany, albeit in a very small segment.

Three 'herds' have tested positive to ASF, though it is worth noting that two of these herds are actually hobby farms containing only a few pigs, with the third herd a commercial unit of 200 animals.

All three of the herds are outdoor production, and given that ASF has spread from Poland to Germany through the wild boar population, it is not surprising that this is the suspected transmission route to the domestic pig population.

ASF was first detected in the German wild boar population on September 10, 2020, and since then 1200 wild boars have been found to be infected

Nordic News
by **ASHLEY NORVAL**



veillance along the border are the major activities that have been credited to the success of the eradication plan initiated in January 2018.

All cameras at the border are continuously monitored, in addition to continued monitoring activities by Miljøministeriet Naturstyrelsen.

A new round of communication strategies to both the public and travelling farm staff have commenced with summer, reminding everyone to not bring pork products into Denmark from abroad.

The state-of-the-art truck washing and disinfection stations at the borders continue to operate in full swing, with the exclusion zones and quarantine matrix updated with every ASF development.

No doubt this development in Germany will push for new measures by the authorities and industry to isolate and manage the current ASF infection, especially considering that the spread in west Poland is out of control.

So far, the Polish authorities and industry have opted not to implement a permanent fence at their side of the border to contain the infection and thus help prevent further spread into Germany via the wild boar population.

It is possible that with increased efforts to contain the infection, Germany will manage to isolate and eradicate ASF, as has been shown previously by the Czech Republic and Belgium (admittedly on a smaller scale).

However, it is a long road ahead for industry recovery, with swift and immediate action required.

It is also a timely reminder that for such a management plan to work, all parts of the industry need to be considered and included, as it is only possible with collaboration.

in Germany, bringing the 2021 European total to 7870 to date.

After nearly a year of ASF in Germany, the disease is far from under control, with German producers criticising the efforts of the authorities.

The Deutscher Bauernverband – Germany's agricultural organisation – has demanded greater speed, better uniformity and a more consistent effort from the authorities.

These efforts include

for all wild boars along the border between Poland and Germany to be killed and fences to be set up in the same way Denmark fenced their border to Germany.

DB's chair Hubertus Beringmeier has also highlighted an urgent need for adjusted marketing opportunities for pig producers in the infection zones or a compensation scheme – neither of which currently exists.

Unsurprisingly, prices have dropped since the discovery.

Concurrently, the sow herd in Germany has been reduced by an estimated 8.3 percent over the past few weeks due to the upcoming new housing legislation.

This in combination with the recent devastating floods has resulted in very tough times now and for the foreseeable future for German producers.

Denmark remains vigilant to the ASF threat – the combined and collaborative efforts from all areas of the industry to prevent the disease from entering is currently holding.

The Danish Nature Agency Miljøministeriet Naturstyrelsen announced in June that the last wild boar in Denmark had been shot, with SEGES reporting no current knowledge of wild boar north of the Danish German border.

Intensive hunting, industry collaboration and the establishment of a fence with camera sur-



Intensive hunting, industry collaboration and the establishment of a fence with camera surveillance along the Danish border are major activities credited to the success of the African swine fever eradication plan.

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The Deutscher Bauernverband – Germany's agricultural organisation – has demanded a more consistent effort from the authorities, including for fences to be set up in the same way Denmark fenced their border to Germany.

Innovative ideas keep coming forward

THE APRIL Commercialisation Advisory Panel recently considered two more diverse ideas for future application in the pork industry.

Up for consideration was a biotechnology proposal to develop a vaccine for increasing fertility, and a feed additive to increase lean percentage and improve efficiency in finisher pigs.

Both technologies, if successful, would be beneficial to the Australasian pork industry.

The first proposal – originally developed for use in sheep – is based on the use of a vaccine.

Vaccine preparation and methodologies have ad-



**Australasian
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vanced significantly since the late 1980s, and the research group proposed to repeat an original proof-of-concept study using today's technology to develop a vaccine suitable for the industry.

The proposal involves a diverse team from several institutions to bring

this idea into reality, with various expertise including reproduction, immunology, innovative vaccine development and possible pathways to commercialisation.

The second proposal, a non-antibiotic feed additive, was purported to enhance carcass lean and

improve feed efficiency in finisher pigs.

Products capable of significantly improving these traits could fill the gap left by the withdrawal of ractopamine in most of the Australasian market.

There are currently many phytochemical compounds available, and differentiation in the market is achieved by offering different compounds or combinations of compounds targeted at specific genotypes and heavier carcasses.

Manipulation of carcass weight and carcass composition are still of paramount importance to the Australasian pork industry.

Both ideas were given thorough consideration, feedback and guidance from the panel on the next steps.

If you have a good pork industry relevant idea, why not put it forward to the APRIL Commercialisation Advisory Panel?

You will receive sound feedback and given suggestions on adjustments or be told, "It's a great idea, let's support it!"

We want to know more...

Put in a proposal!

For more information, contact APRIL commercialisation and research impact manager Dr Charles Rikard-Bell at c.rikardbell@april.org.au or on 0439 513 723.

In AusScan Online news, the agency in China has been set up to receive grain samples and scans for key clientele.

While the laboratory is ready to go, unfortunately COVID-19 and the impact of African swine fever on the Chinese pork industry has meant that promotional activities and logistics have markedly slowed the adoption of AusScan Online.

Closer to home, Australian laboratories have received the Ingot Check quality assurance reports for energy and lysine covering the first and second quarters of 2021.

The report is essentially a ring test in which the AusScan Online calibrations are determined from sachets containing grains of accredited reference analysis.

The sachets are scanned on a monthly basis and provide awareness of how the laboratory's near infrared machine is performing with respect to the cereal energy and lysine calibrations.

To date, feedback has been excellent as the reports enable the laboratories to make minor adjustments if required.

For more information on AusScan Online visit, aunir.com/products/aus-scan-online/

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Up for consideration was a biotechnology proposal to develop a vaccine for increasing fertility.

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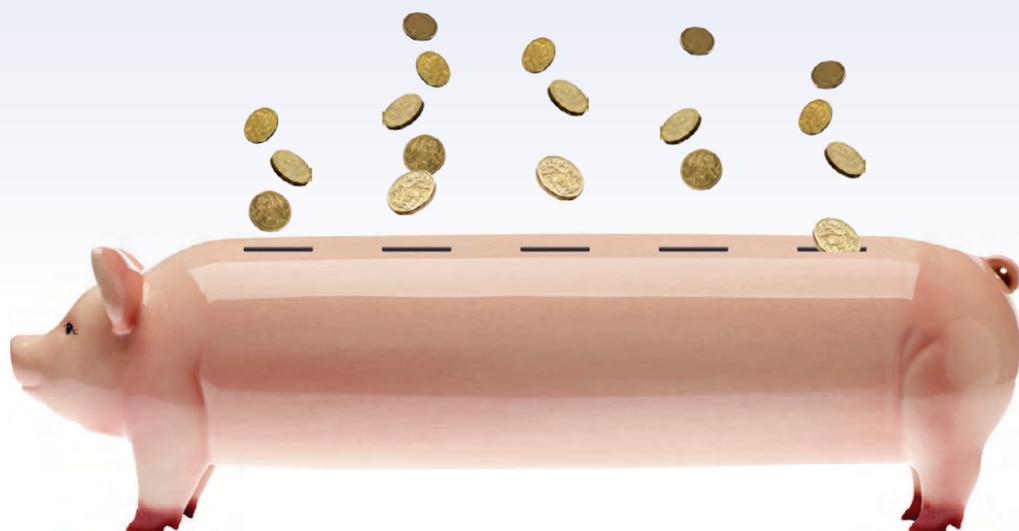
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The visitor check-in app is currently being successfully piloted by a major pork producer. Photo: Steven Weeks

Audit finds gaps in pig transport systems

ANIMAL movement vehicles and visitors to farms are two key biosecurity risks, according to an audit of data from the pig industry, supply chain partners, government and publicly available information.

The discovery was made as part of Australian Pork Limited's collaboration with technology company ExoFlare to build a disease risk module for African swine fever in Australia.

Recommendations from the audit suggested transporters use apps that can assess and mitigate risk and collect data.

In a case study, transport vehicles connected to a large producer were fitted with global positioning system location tracking to generate in-

sights on biosecurity and animal welfare. The analysis highlighted:

- The importance of full-time GPS truck tracking for biosecurity
- Increased biosecurity risk where trucks stop in uncontrolled locations
- Current challenges related to truck washing lo-

ocations and effectiveness

- Valuable animal welfare insights.

New pilot software has also been developed by ExoFlare to address the risks of visitors to farms to on-farm biosecurity.

The visitor check-in app is currently being successfully piloted by a major pork producer on-farm which has enabled:

- Consistent evaluation of visitor risk, with decision support for farm staff making risk assessments
- Efficiencies by replacing paper forms and manual processes with a web app accessible by devices
- High-level insights and appropriate mitigation measures to better manage biosecurity risks
- Electronic data capture for record-keeping, reporting and contact tracing.

Scoping of the next phase of this research project is underway to roll out the visitor check-in app and further develop the animal movement module.

Producers who are interested in further information or to register their interest in future trials can email vaibhav.gole@australianpork.com.au or visit exoflare.io/apl



Pork Integrity

by DR VAIBHAV GOLE



Kerry's new Australia and New Zealand Development and Application Centre in Brisbane will bring its food innovation cycle under one roof and increase capacity to drive food innovation.

New food innovation hub established in Queensland

IRELAND'S Kerry Group is set to build a new food technology and innovation centre in Queensland, Australia.

The facility will also be the company's new headquarters for Australia and New Zealand.

The new Kerry Australia and New Zealand development and application centre will comprise pilot plants, laboratories and tasting facilities.

It will have access to Kerry's global research and development network, insights, market knowledge, and culinary and applications expertise.

The Brisbane-based centre will enable Kerry to reduce time to market for new product development.

It will also increase its capacity to drive food innovation in the region.

Kerry Australia and New Zealand general manager Christine Giuliano said, "The facility will bring the benefits of our global technologies to local food and beverage producers - supporting regional industry development."

"Considering Queensland's alignment with Kerry's growth strategies, we are looking forward to supporting a strong,

sustainable and critical food and beverage manufacturing sector in the region," Ms Giuliano said.

The Brisbane facility is complemented by the Kerry Australia and New Zealand Commercial Connect Centre in Sydney.

The centre is a specialist research and development applications hub.

Australia is an attractive destination for food manufacturing.

The food and beverage industry is Australia's largest manufacturing sector.

It accounts for more than 18 percent or \$50 billion of Australia's total manufacturing turnover each year.

Kerry will also have access to a highly qualified workforce.

The company has indicated it will partner with local universities to place graduates in the centre through its graduate program.

Kerry's investment was supported by the Queensland Government's advance Queensland industry attraction fund.

It aligns with the Australian Government's modern manufacturing strategy, where food and beverage is one of six areas of comparative advantage and strategic importance.

Publishing error

The photo used in the Pork Storks article of Australian Pork Newspaper Vol 25 No 6 June 2021 on page

13 was not related to Pork Storks in any way and was an image taken at Sabor by Landline.



New pilot software has also been developed by ExoFlare to address the risks of visitors to farms to on-farm biosecurity.

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Evonik proves ecological advantages of its feeding solutions for swine

A COMPARATIVE life cycle assessment by Evonik has further demonstrated the ecological advantages of using its feed amino acids and feeding concepts compared with common animal nutrition practices.

The global LCA analysed the environmental impact of feeding swine, broiler chickens and laying hens.

The study was audited and certified by TÜV Rheinland according to ISO 14040 and 14044 in second quarter 2021.

Evonik's animal nutrition business line head Dr Emmanuel Auer said, "Our system solution – based on a balanced amino acid profile, low crude protein content and our amino acid products – can contribute significantly to reducing the environmental footprint of livestock farming, without



compromising animal welfare."

"And we need to use this scope to meet the animal protein needs of a growing world population without overstressing natural resources."

The animal nutrition business line is part of Evonik's life sciences division 'nutrition and care', which is about developing sustainable solutions for a better life for people and animals.

"It is impossible to meet the challenges of our times with single products," Dr Auer said.

"This is why we concentrate all our knowledge and experience on developing targeted

system solutions."

In 2010, Evonik pioneered its first TÜV-certified comparative LCA for feed supplementation with the essential amino acids methionine, lysine, threonine and tryptophan.

In 2015, a second followed, which also included valine.

Both times, feeds without amino acid supplementation served as a comparison.

Evonik efficient nutrition product line head Dr Jan-Olaf Barth said, "Today, amino acid supplementation is common practice in many parts of the world."

"This was taken into account in the current study,

as were regional differences in feed composition, which enables us to provide our customers with even more targeted advice," Dr Barth said.

In the new LCA, the environmental impact of species, and the developmentally appropriate feeding of swine, broiler chickens and laying hens with balanced amino acid profiles and low crude protein content, was evaluated according to specific criteria – global warming, acidification and eutrophication potential, blue water consumption, land occupation and respiratory inorganics.

The analysis included feed raw material production, animal husbandry and manure treatment emissions.

Evonik sustainability development in the animal nutrition business line head Dr Michael Binder said, "We have found that our feeding concepts and amino acids can have significant effects in reducing climate change and nitrogen-based emissions."

"Their application can reduce acidification, eutrophication and the release of respiratory inorganic substances induced by ammonia," Dr Binder said.

The study also demonstrates another advantage of low protein feeding regimes – the option to use regional raw materials with a lower environmental footprint.



The global life cycle assessment by Evonik analysed the environmental impact of feeding swine.



Sara Willis was presented with an honorary life membership award by the inaugural chair John Riley and acting secretary and Sara's then colleague with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Peter Fearon.

Peer's plaudits for Sara

SARA Willis was humbled at the twenty-seventh annual meeting of the Queensland Pig Consultancy Group held in Toowoomba in June.

After Sara was re-elected chair to head a new committee, vice chair Neil Gannon took the floor and surprised the chair by announcing that she had been awarded an honorary life membership in recognition of her outstanding service to the pork industry and valuable contribution and service to the QPCG.

Sara joined the group when it was formed in 1994.

The award was pre-

sented by the inaugural chair John Riley and acting secretary and Sara's then colleague with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Peter Fearon.

Since 2007 as chair, Sara has steered the activities of the group, including several very successful biennial industry conferences.

The QPCG has been described as a unique public-private partnership extension model that plays a leading role in the dissemination of research and new technologies to its members and their producer clients.

Sara's client base is in Queensland, but her knowledge is in de-

mand nationally.

She is involved with a number of groups addressing nutrition, benchmarking and biosecurity.

The success of the Toowoomba-based Australian Pork young leaders group – supported by DAF, commercial companies and Australia Pork Limited – has attracted many favourable comments from participants and their employers.

At the recent APL delegates meeting, it was announced that Sara's APYL initiative will be launched nationally by APL and repackaged as the Australian Pork emerging leaders group.



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Aussie Pumps' latest pump selection guide has Australia's biggest range of self-priming pumps from 1" all the way to 6".

Aussie's new pump selection guide

AFTER good winter rainfall across much of the country, now is the time farmers are maximising water harvesting, with proactive management of water tanks and dam levels.

Selecting the right pump to achieve this is essential.

Aussie Pumps' new 'Pump Smart' catalogue displays a full range of self-priming centrifugal pumps for a wide range of on-farm applications, including transferring water, spray irrigation, even firefighting pumps.

The catalogue explains how to select the right pump, providing details of pressures and flows.

Aussie's self-priming pumps all come with a five-year warranty.

The catalogue also contains a lot of information

about specific applications.

The product range starts with a lightweight 1" pump and goes all the way through to big 6" flood lifters that will move loads of water fast!

Engine-powered portable firefighting pumps are a safe solution, providing there is a water source to utilise.

Available in both petrol and diesel-drive versions, it is the diesel drive that the majority of farmers and property owners are turning to.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, "In our experience, customers choose diesel fire pumps for many reasons."

"From a safety point of view, refuelling a petrol pump during an ember attack is seriously dangerous. "Animals and crops are

lost in the paddock due to inadequate firefighting protection.

"Farmers are moving to diesel fire pumps for protection."

The Pump Smart catalogue also covers the Aussie GMP range.

These heavy duty cast-iron trash pumps can be used for everything from handling effluent to recycling water and stall washdown.

The Aussie GMP range also includes a full line up of 1" through to 4" heavy duty self-priming stainless steel pumps designed for abrasive applications.

Further information and free copies are available from Aussie Pumps on 02 8865 3500 or aussiepumps.com.au, or through one of the authorised distributors found on the website.

Failed bid to recover \$100k

CLAIMING that more than \$100,000 were owed in unpaid wages, Russell Cox, the former WA Pork Producers Association chief executive, has been unsuccessful in his legal battle against WAPPA.

Sacked from WAPPA in 2014 for stealing, Mr Cox commenced legal action in November 2020 alleging wages were unpaid for work performed.

After his employment was terminated, Mr Cox allegedly sought remuneration for further entitlements during discussions with Richard Evison, the then president of WAPPA.

Mr Cox claimed the entitlements were for overtime, supposedly performed outside of his employment contract between 2008 and 2013.

In his affidavit, Mr Evison states there were no talks in which he was told unpaid monies were owed or whereby WAPPA offered to investigate further entitlements.

The lawyers for WAPPA argued that Mr Cox was not entitled to payment of any monies beyond that prescribed in his employment contract, and that the time to make any claim for breach of the contract had lapsed.

Earlier this month and before the matter could proceed to trial, Registrar Kathryn Hogan ruled – as there was no evidence Mr Cox received written acknowledgement of any debt owed – in favour of WA Pork Producers Association.

"His affidavit does not depose to having received anything in writing and refers only

to conversations, the contents of which are in dispute," Ms Hogan said.

"He did not point to the existence of any document he had received upon which he had relied to explain the delay in seeking payment of the monies to which he claimed to be entitled."

Mr Cox was granted 10 days to appeal the summary judgment, which lapsed July 22, 2021.

WAPPA president Graeme Dent said after

seven years, the industry was relieved the issue had finally been concluded.

"It means we can now focus on the betterment of the industry rather than spending countless hours trying to defend ourselves," Mr Dent said.

Though WAPPA will claim about \$21,000 in costs, Mr Cox was ordered to pay up to \$40,000.

Last year, Mr Cox was convicted of stealing \$9987 from WAPPA –

in May 2014, he transferred the funds to his personal bank account after falsifying a request using Mr Evison's electronic signature.

Pleading guilty, Mr Cox received an eight-month suspended sentence and was ordered to repay the funds.

Mr Cox helped to grow Western Australia's pork industry by establishing agreements that allowed the states farms and processors access to overseas workers before his fall from grace.



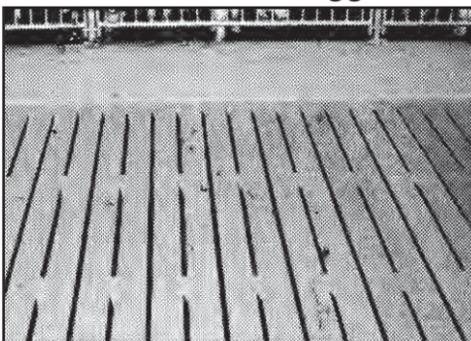
WAPPA president Graeme Dent said after seven years, the industry was relieved the issue had finally been concluded.

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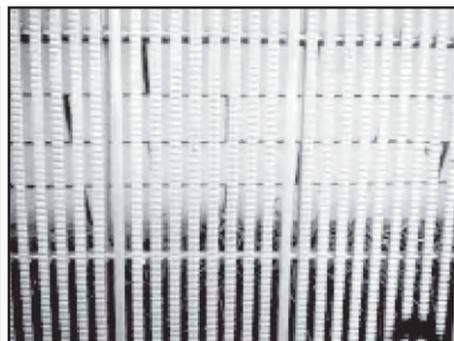
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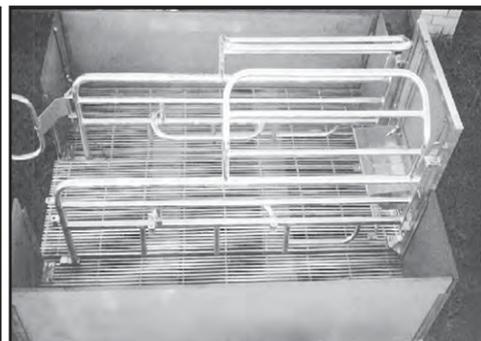
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Food Frontier and alternative protein labelling

FOOD Frontier, a self-described independent think tank and expert advisor on alternative proteins in Australia and New Zealand, has jumped into the spotlight as the debate around the labelling of plant-based protein alternatives to meat heats up.

It is an issue many in the meat sector take seriously and feel strongly about, expressing concern about seeing large commercial food manufacturers develop and market food products with labels including terms such as beef, chicken and pork – despite containing no meat.

From descriptions on its website and public statements by its leaders, Food Frontier is an educator established to champion plant-based and lab-grown alternatives to meat in Australia.

Since it was established in 2017, Food Frontier has funded a range of reports to support the uptake of plant and cell-based alternatives to animal protein, has positioned itself as a go-to source for media commentary in favour of plant-based proteins and has gained representation on agricultural working groups discussing truth in labelling policy.

How Food Frontier itself is labelled has also generated discussion, with the group objecting to being referred to as a lobby

group for the plant-based protein sector and an anti-meat activist group.

Food Frontier is a not-for-profit, independent think tank existing to promote alternative proteins and has been granted registered charity status by the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission.

Food Frontier is recognised as a 'health promotion charity' according to the ACNC and is listed as an institution "whose primary activity is to promote the prevention or control of diseases in human beings."

Supporting documents describe Food Frontier Institute Pty Ltd as a company established for the public charitable purposes of advancing health, ensuring future food security, reducing animal suffering and preventing environmental damage.

The principal activity will be to promote the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease, bowel cancer and type 2 diabetes, by increasing awareness of the research demonstrating consumption of animal products as a major contributing cause of these diseases, encouraging consumers to reduce consumption of animal products, and promoting and supporting the increase in supply of healthier alternatives.

Food Frontier explained that it is not a lobby group

and that it and a group of leading plant-based product manufacturers have collectively established a new representative group called the Alternative Proteins Council.

The intention of this group is to ensure the collective voice of the plant-based products sector remains strong and unified on matters of mutual interest, including the development of plant-based product labelling guidelines.

Plant-based meat alternatives stocked in the supermarket today carry highly visible product claims – 100 percent plant-based, beefless burger, veggie mince and meat-free sausages as examples.

Similarly, plant-based dairy alternative such as soymilk and coconut yoghurt use the same approach.

Food Frontier supports the use of these clear qualifiers on plant-based products, which are proven to work – just as chicken sausages, pork mince and lamb burgers are used by animal protein equivalent products.

While Food Frontier characterises its activities as non-threatening and even complementary to the meat industry, red meat industry leaders take a different view and believe there is more to the story of how Food Frontier operates and

what its true aims are.

The Red Meat Advisory Council drew attention to Food Frontier's close association with groups such as manufactured plant protein company Impossible Foods, which is a member of the newly formed Alternative Proteins Council.

Impossible Foods in a recent job advertisement described livestock as "the most dangerous technology on Earth" and its stated mission is to "completely replace the use of animals as a food-production technology."

RMAC also pointed to Food Frontier's Thomas King's background campaigning for Animals Australia, suggesting Food Frontier is at its heart an anti-meat activist group.

King launched Food Frontier as the plant-based and alternative proteins sector started to gain momentum.

Since then it has established itself as a key facilitator and educator in the category.

After four years leading Food Frontier, Thomas King is stepping down as chief executive officer to become its executive chair.

In the last two years it has delivered a series of reports, policies, and research.

Its state of the industry report is the industry go-to for the latest on the Australian market.

Mr King said he will

still provide strategy input but will move to a more guiding role.

"Since its inception, Food Frontier has taken a nimble yet wide-reaching approach to executing our mission of growing the young and promising field of alternative proteins," Mr King said.

"This key hire will enable us to further accelerate our reach and impact during the organisation's next critical phase of evolution."

"I will continue to provide considered input to Food Frontier's strategy, while at the same time gaining more space for deep work and thinking to help guide our new CEO and highly capable team."

The new CEO will expand Food Frontier's capacity to deliver a continually increasing scope of projects, partnerships, and thought leadership engagements, as well as furthering the organisation's fundraising and development.

The new CEO will gradually assume key responsibilities as Mr King transitions to executive chair within six months, ensuring a smooth change-over that best serves Food Frontier's partners across the agriculture and food industries, government and others engaged in Australia and New Zealand's alternative proteins ecosystem.



Food Frontier chief executive officer Thomas King.



Photo: LikeMeat

ASF vaccine launch for the Philippines

THE Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Industry in the Philippines has been testing two potential vaccines against African swine fever.

Tests were carried out at 10 locations across the country and the results will be released late August.

While pig owners are enthusiastic at the prospect of a vaccine against ASF, protecting their pigs from the devastation the disease causes, there is

concern the new vaccine could spread infection further.

More testing is required prior to the vaccine being rolled out to market – blood sampling is to be completed for the animals in the current trial and then the vaccine administered to ASF-infected pigs to test for recovery.

With the country being in a state of calamity due to the ongoing ASF situation, the outcome of the vaccine tests is greatly anticipated.



The outcome of the vaccine tests held in the Philippines is greatly anticipated.

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Pathogenicity of ASFV strain in Vietnam

AFRICAN swine fever is a highly contagious haemorrhagic viral disease that affects domestic and wild pigs in all age groups, causing substantial economic and production losses.

ASF has been included in the list of notifiable diseases by the World Organisation for Animal Health.

ASF is caused by ASF virus, a double-stranded DNA virus of the family *Asfarviridae* and the genus *Asfivirus*, having a diameter of 175–215nm.

The virus contains 151–167 genes in its 170–192kbp long genome and a total of 24 genotypes have been identified worldwide.

The virulence of different ASFV isolates in the same host may vary, and the ASF outbreaks in Asia have been caused by highly virulent strains.

These highly virulent ASFV strains caused mortality in 90–100 percent of cases.

A previous study reported that the Chinese ASFV isolates are highly lethal to domestic pigs even at low doses of the virus and that the clinical signs start showing very early in the period of infection.

A recent study revealed that a 10-nucleotide insertion was detected in all Vietnamese ASFV isolates, similar to that

detected in the ASFV isolates from China.

In Vietnam, the first ASF outbreak was detected in February 2019 at a family-owned backyard farm in Hun Yen province.

The pig farm was situated about 50km south of Hanoi and 250km from the China border.

Since then, the virus has rapidly spread across the country, leading to the culling of approximately six million pigs – 20 percent of Vietnam's pig production.

As of November 2020, ASF outbreaks have been reported in more than 20 of the country's 63 provinces.

Several molecular and pathological studies on ASFV-infected pigs from ASF outbreak farms were conducted to evaluate the characteristic lesions and examine the genetic properties of ASFV strains from Vietnam.

Because no virus inoculation studies have been conducted to evaluate the virulence and pathogenicity of ASFV isolates from Vietnam, the pathogenicity of these strains is not fully understood.

To address these knowledge gaps, collaborative research was undertaken by contributors from the International Livestock Research Institute and the National Institute of Veterinary Research, both

based in Hanoi Vietnam, and the National Institute of Animal Science based in Wanju Republic of Korea, published recently on *Porcine Health Management*.

Ten pigs were intramuscularly inoculated with an ASFV strain from Vietnam – titer, 103.5 HAD50/mL – and their temperature, clinical signs and virus excretion patterns were recorded.

In addition, herd and environmental samples were collected daily.

The pigs died five to eight days post-inoculation, and the incubation period was 3.7±0.5 dpi.

ASFV genome was first detected in the blood 2.2±0.8 and then in rectal 3.1±0.7, nasal 3.2±0.4 and oral 3.6±0.7 dpi swab samples.

ASFV was detected in oral fluid samples collected using a chewed rope from three days post-inoculation.

The liver showed the highest viral loads, and ear tissue also exhibited high viral loads among 11 tissues obtained from dead pigs.

Overall, ASFV from Vietnam was classified as peracute to acute form.

The rope-based oral fluid collection method could be useful for early ASFV detection and allows successful ASF surveillance in large pig farms.

Furthermore, ear tissue samples might be a simple alternative specimen for diagnosing ASF infection in dead pigs.

The research data provided valuable insights into the characteristics of a typical ASFV strain isolated in Vietnam and suggested an alternative, non-invasive specimen collection strategy for early detection.

The spread of ASF can only be controlled by early detection, meticulous surveillance, strict biosecurity measures and animal movement control.

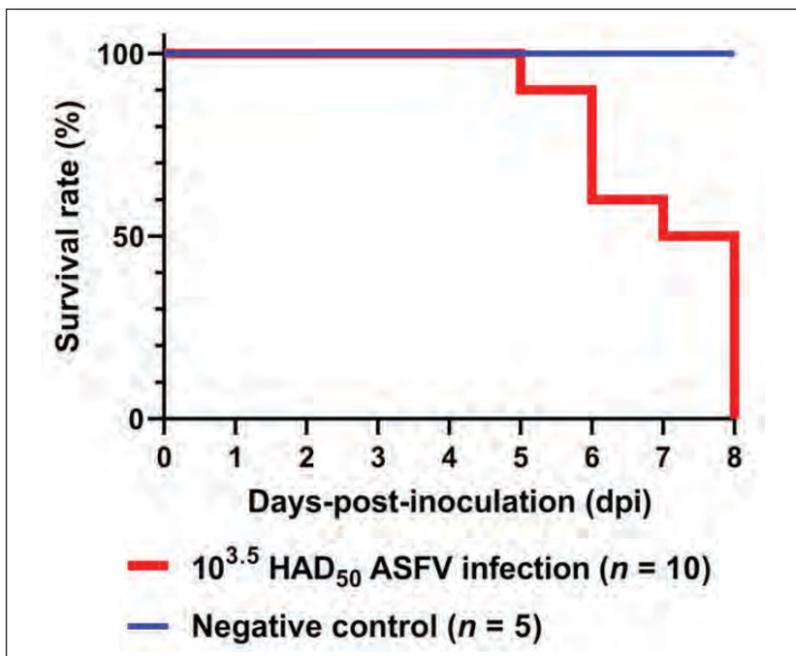
To perform successful ASF surveillance in farms, it is necessary to obtain relevant blood specimens from pigs with suspected ASFV infection.

However, the identification of such pigs is difficult because of the short incubation period.

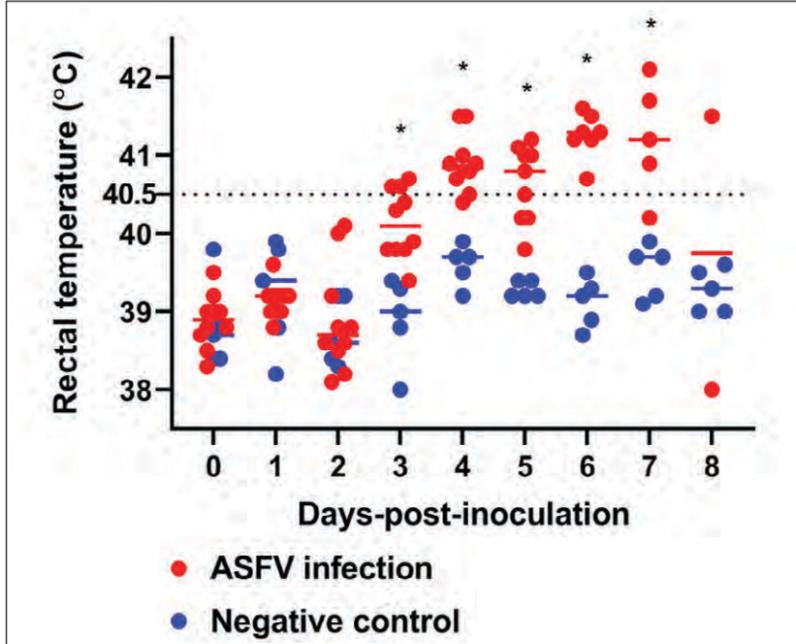
The appropriate surveillance might not succeed, especially in developing countries, due to the limited availability of veterinary services.

The time lag to initiate sampling enabled ASF outbreaks to rapidly spread across these countries.

More information on this research can be found at porcinehealthmanagement.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40813-021-00215-0



Pig survival rates in the ASFV infection (red line) and negative control (blue line) groups.



Individual rectal temperatures in pigs from the ASFV infection and negative control groups. Red and blue circles and horizontal lines indicate individual and mean temperatures of the ASFV and negative control groups, respectively. Red and blue short lines represent the average temperature of ASFV infection and negative control group, respectively, at each time point. * P < 0.05

Chinese pig farmers see livelihoods washed away by devastating floods

ON top of the ongoing issues with African swine fever, Chinese pig farmers must deal with devastating floods that have destroyed their herds.

Wangfan village farmer 47-year-old Cheng waded through knee-deep water, pulling dead pigs behind him one-by-one by a rope tied around their ankles to line up the bloated carcasses for disposal.

More than 100 of Cheng's pigs drowned in floods that paralysed China's central Henan province last week, and the outlook for those left alive is bleak.

"I'm waiting for the water levels to go down to see what to do with the remaining pigs," Cheng said.

"They've been in the water for a few days now and can't eat at all.

"I don't think even one pig will be left."

Cheng's farm is one of thousands in Henan, famous for agriculture, and pork production in particular.

The province was struck by heavy rains last week that sparked the worst flash flooding in centuries, catching many by surprise. "In an instant, we now

have no way of surviving," Cheng said.

"We have no other skills. "We have no more money to raise pigs again."

Cheng, who has raised pigs all his life, said, "This is as if the sky has fallen."

Across the village, where most of the 3000 other residents also raise pigs or chickens or grow grain, people were clearing debris left by the receding floodwaters.

Some carted out wheelbarrows and crates of lifeless chickens.

Dead pigs lay bloated in the water, tied to trees to stop them floating away.

Parts of the village smelled strongly of mud and rotting carcasses.

At least 200,000 chickens and up to 6000 pigs were lost in the flood, half of the village's herd.

Across Henan, rains have deluged 1678 larger scale farms, killing more than a million animals.

Though Chinese pig production has become increasingly intensive in recent years, millions of small farmers still play a major role in producing the country's favourite meat.

Even after a devastating epidemic of the deadly pig disease African swine fever swept the country during 2018 and 2019, many farmers returned to pig raising and expanded their herds to capitalise on high prices.

Cheng said he's facing losses and worries he won't receive any government compensation.

Concerns over disease outbreaks

The flooding also has many worried about fresh disease outbreaks.

Last summer, heavy rain and flooding across southern China was blamed for dozens of outbreaks of African swine

fever, a disease that usually kills pigs though is not harmful to people.

Rabobank senior analyst Pan Chenjun said: "The disease issue is a much more severe issue than the direct losses."

The swine fever virus lives for about 10 days in pig faeces and water, and can survive for up to 100 days in manure pits.

Beijing-based Enable Ag-Tech Consulting consultant and veterinarian Wayne Johnson said: "Whatever's in the manure pits will be washed out and spread around."

Last week, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs issued guidelines to local governments on how to prevent animal disease after flooding, including measures on disposal of carcasses and disinfection of farms.

For now though, Wangfan farmers are not even sure they'll return to farming.

Zhang Guangsi, who lost about half his herd, said, "After doing this for so many years, in a flash, everything is gone."

"I don't feel like raising pigs anymore."

First appeared in *Global Ag Media*



China's use of wheat in feed is expected to stay high as the grain retains a price advantage over corn.

China confirms 11 ASF outbreaks

OFFICIALS from China's agriculture ministry have reported that China's use of wheat in pig feed is expected to remain high and that the country has had 11 African swine fever outbreaks this year.

China's use of wheat in feed is expected to stay high as the grain retains a price advantage over corn.

Wheat prices in the central province of Henan, a top producer of the grain, were \$A527.73 per tonne on July 19, outstripping the price of corn at \$A609.40.

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Husbandry Bureau's Xin Guochang said China's 11 outbreaks

of African swine fever this year prompted it to cull 2216 pigs and there was a risk of the virus spreading from overseas.

"The control and prevention situation is still severe and complicated," Mr Xin said of the disease that reached China in August 2018, and warned that the risk of its rebound persisted.

China's herd of 439 million pigs at the end of June 2021 was 99.4 percent of the level at the end of 2017, as the country rebuilds the herd decimated by the African swine fever.

The sow herd of 456.4 million at the end of June 2021 was up 102 percent on the end-2017 figure.



Farmers were forced to think of creative ways to rescue pigs caught in the floods in China's Henan province. Photo: Simon Song



Support for WA to manage feral pigs

THE Australian Government is providing \$445,800 to Western Australia for a project to enhance the management of feral pigs and wild dogs, through a federation funding agreement with states and territories as part of the \$30.3 million Established Pest Animals and Weeds Management Pipeline Program.

Minister for Agriculture and northern Australia David Littleproud said that this funding will support the development of a sophisticated camera-trap network for feral pigs and wild dogs in the northern agricultural zone of Western Australia.

“Establishing an expansive camera-trap network will ensure that land managers can detect these pests and get on top of them before they cause further damage,” Minister Littleproud said.

“The project will also support training for the recognised biosecurity groups in the area to bolster their capacity undertake early and effective monitoring and control activities.”

West Australian Minister for Agriculture and Food Alannah MacTiernan said the project would improve feral pig and wild dog monitoring in the northern agricultural zone, which is often conducted on small scales and in isolation.

“Feral pigs and wild dogs have a significant impact on livestock and cropping systems in the northern agricultural zone.”

“This camera network will increase the capacity of three Recognised Biosecurity Groups in the area to work to detect and mount timely, coordinated responses to wild dogs and pigs.”

Minister Littleproud acknowledged the contribution of the Western Australian government and the recognised biosecurity groups who are providing more than \$500,000 of cash and in-kind support towards the project.

“The Australian Government’s \$5 million in funding, supported by cash and in-kind contributions from the states and territories, will deliver 11 pro-

jects across Australia to improve the management of established pest animals and weeds that have a detrimental effect on Australia’s agricultural competitiveness and the environment,” Minister Littleproud said.

The Australian Government’s \$30.3 million Established Pest Animals and Weeds Management Pipeline Program aims to deliver a lasting legacy to farmers, land managers and the wider community in the fight against established pest animals and weeds. 🐷

Fair trade agreement between Australia and the UK

FIVE negotiating rounds have been held since Australia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland launched negotiations for a free trade agreement on June 17, 2020.

On June 15, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson made an announcement on core elements of the free trade agreement negotiations.

The ‘FTA negotiations: agreement in principle’ sets out the main elements of the deal, which the UK and Australian negotiating teams have agreed should be included in the free trade agreement once finalised.

While setting out what in principle they have jointly decided should be included in the FTA, it should not itself be taken to be the finalised treaty commitments contained in the FTA.

Below are excerpts relevant to the industry from the ‘FTA negotiations: agreement in principle’.

Goods

Australia and the UK commit to establishing mechanisms to remove trade barriers, including tariff and non-tariff barriers, to make it easier for

both sides to trade with each other.

Australia and the UK commit to providing the most liberal possible treatment for goods of interest to both countries, while taking into account product sensitivities.

Goods market access

Australia and the UK commit to remove tariffs on trade in goods between our two countries.

Australia has agreed to remove tariffs on all goods exports that originate in the UK.

The UK has agreed to do the same for the vast majority of goods exports that originate in Australia.

This will include a general safeguard mechanism, which will provide a safety net for industry if they face serious injury from increased imports as a direct consequence of the FTA – this will apply to all goods.

The UK tariff treatment for pigs, poultry and eggs from Australia is not yet determined.

Animal welfare

The deal will have a

dedicated chapter specifically on animal welfare, including measures recognising the importance of high levels of animal welfare protection and non-regression.

This is the first time Australia has included a dedicated animal welfare chapter in any FTA.

Antimicrobial resistance

Australia and the UK commit to cooperation on the key issue of combatting antimicrobial resistance.

These commitments will boost efficiency, re-

duce costs and cut red tape by making it simpler for traders and customs authorities to prove the originating status of goods.

They will include rules for specific products that support each country’s economic and production interests.

The ‘FTA negotiations: agreement in principle’ document can be viewed in full at dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/negotiations/aufkfta/australia-uk-fta-negotiations-agreement-principle 🐷



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson made an announcement on core elements of the free trade agreement negotiations.

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UV light shows promise in mitigation of costly swine virus

THAT is the indication given by research conducted at Iowa State University regarding the use of ultraviolet light as a means of stopping the transmission of the virus that causes porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, a costly swine disease that can spread through the air.

Laboratory experiments showed that the radiation caused by some kinds of UV light kills the viral particles contained in aerosolised droplets, and the researchers hope to scale up their tests to show how their approach could work on a farm.

PRRS is an infectious swine disease that cost US pork producers around \$A788 million in 2016.

The virus spreads either by direct contact between pigs or by viral droplets carried in the air.

These droplets can re-

main in the air for days and can travel for miles on air currents, making it a difficult virus to contain.

A sow infected with PRRS is less likely to carry offspring to term, and young pigs affected by the disease suffer respiratory distress that slows their growth and makes them more susceptible to other diseases.

Some pork producers install costly air filtration systems in their barns to mitigate spread, but ISU researchers are looking for less expensive approaches.

Professor of agricultural and biosystems engineering, Jacek Koziel has studied the benefits of using ultraviolet light – a spectrum of light with wavelengths that are too short for the human eye to detect – to eliminate dust and odour-causing particles associated with livestock production.

Ultraviolet light has been shown to irradiate and scramble the RNA of some bacteria, and Koziel wondered if similar technology could address viral aerosols.

“Conventional UV is known to be bactericidal,” Prof Koziel said.

“UV has been used to kill bacteria in the food industry in many instances.

“The same mechanism is actually beneficial to kill the virus.”

Lab results

Prof Koziel is collaborating with Jeff Zimmerman, professor of veterinary diagnostic and production animal medicine, who has worked extensively with PRRS and other aerosolised viruses.

The research team ran experiments in a Sukup Hall laboratory, exposing the virus to three kinds of ultraviolet light.

The experiments in-

involved aerosolising samples of live viruses and then pumping the air through glass tubes that allow ultraviolet light to pass through.

The researchers then measured how much virus survived exposure to the light.

The three forms of ultraviolet light analysed in the study included conventional ultraviolet light, known as UV-C – light from novel excimer lamps that produce light with especially short wavelengths – and UV-A light, sometimes referred to as near-visible black light.

Both the conventional and excimer UV light demonstrated an ability to inactivate the virus and show promise as potential avenues to fight PRRS.

Exposure to ultraviolet light can pose a risk for people and pigs, but the excimer light involved in

the study has been shown to be less harmful.

The black light, which has been shown to be helpful in tamping down odour-causing gases, did not have a significant effect on the PRRS virus, according to the research.

Testing on a larger scale

Prof Zimmerman said ultraviolet light might offer pork producers and veterinarians a new tool for disease prevention or reduction.

Some farmers install expansive ventilation systems in their barns to keep aerosolised viruses out of their operations, but those measures come with a hefty price tag.

“It’s very costly to implement, and then there are ongoing maintenance concerns with making sure the buildings are airtight,” Prof Zimmerman said.

“The filters themselves are expensive and filter maintenance is not cheap.

“Ultraviolet fixtures could offer greater flexibility.”

The researchers hope to scale up their research to test the concepts under conditions that mimic a swine facility more closely.

Prof Koziel envisions a system where ultraviolet lamps are installed near ventilation intakes to make sure air that enters the area doesn’t carry aerosolised virus.

Prof Zimmerman said he expects interest to be high among pork producers if the team can demonstrate that the approach works as well in a barn as it does in a laboratory.

The research was funded by the US National Pork Board.



Prof Zimmerman said ultraviolet light might offer pork producers and veterinarians a new tool for disease prevention or reduction. Photo: Rich Smith

FMT launches world’s first industrial cultured meat production facility

FUTURE Meat Technologies, an industry-leading company developing innovative technology to produce cultured meat, has opened the world’s first industrial cultured meat facility.

With the capability to produce 500kg of cultured products a day, equivalent to 5000 hamburgers, this facility makes scalable cell-based meat production a reality.

Future Meat Technologies chief executive officer Rom Kshuk said, “This facility opening marks a huge step in Future Meat Technologies’ path to market, serving as a critical enabler to bring our products to shelves by 2022.”

“Having a running industrial line accelerates key processes such as regulation and product development.”

Currently, the facility can produce cultured chicken, pork and lamb, without the use of animal serum or genetic modification – non-GMO – with the production of beef coming soon.

Future Meat Technologies unique platform enables fast production cycles, about 20-times faster than traditional animal agriculture.

Future Meat Technologies founder and chief scientific officer Professor Yaakov Nahmias said, “After demonstrating that

cultured meat can reach cost parity faster than the market anticipated, this production facility is the real game-changer.”

“This facility demonstrates our proprietary media rejuvenation technology in scale, allowing us to reach production densities 10-times higher than the industrial standard.

“Our goal is to make cultured meat affordable for everyone, while ensuring we produce delicious food that is both healthy and sustainable, helping to secure the future of coming generations.”

The facility further supports Future Meat Technologies larger efforts to create a more sustainable future.

The company’s production process is expected to generate 80 percent less greenhouse emissions and use 99 percent less land and 96 percent less freshwater than traditional meat production.

Future Meat Technologies aims to reach shelves in the US in 2022 and is currently in the process of approving its production facility with regulatory agencies in multiple territories.

The company is eyeing several locations in the US for its projected expansion.

First appeared in *Global Ag Media*

Letters to the Editor

It is the responsibility of those making submissions to ensure the correctness of their claims and statements. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher.

HAVING spent many hours trying to trace the whereabouts of the NSW pork producers ‘swine compensation fund’, I can report the following – despite no assistance from the very people who claim to be there for the industry.

All government bodies contacted had no idea and no recollection, as all current employees weren’t alive when the Greiner Government ‘confiscated’ the funds in 1988.

‘Confiscated’ is the term used in parliament when Jack Hallam asked about the fund.

In my search, I must acknowledge the support of all the ex-piggery officers from the old NSW Department of Agriculture – in particular Anne Mabey without whose support the evidence of the fund’s existence would have never been found.

The fund was established in 1929 and continued a levy on all pigs slaughtered

until the early 1970s, when the levies were cancelled due to the fund deemed capable of supporting producers with funds held.

Interest from the fund was used for various purposes, in particular to support research done by Dr Ted Batterham at Wollongbar.

The last expenditure from the fund I recall was to build the boar test station at Wacol research station in the Hunter Valley in the mid 1980s.

The funds then sat idle until set upon by a cash strapped Greiner Government in 1989.

He took the funds with a promise to “support” NSW pig producers in the event of an exotic disease outbreak.

That promise was confirmed by a reply in NSW Parliament on June 13, 1990 when the Hon Robert Baron Rowland Smith said, “The transfer [swine compensation funds] was conditional on the government’s undertaking that in the event of a future

disease outbreak, the government will continue to provide appropriate compensation.”

“As such this sum of money constitutes partial compensation for the government underwriting any future loss from swine fever and is in consideration for the abolition of the levy on the industry.”

This promise seems to have been forgotten or altered in present day agreements, where NSW pig producers are still expected to fully cover their own contributions to any disease outbreak.

Back in 1990, this was promised to have been totally covered by the NSW Government – parliament.nsw.gov.au/search/pages/hansard-results.aspx?k=13%20June%201990

I ask all in positions of influence today to investigate exactly where NSW pig producers stand in light of this promise.

The actual amount held in the fund is hard to define as various amounts

were quoted in parliament – from \$1.2 million to \$1.8 million.

The question asked by Jack Hallam quotes \$1.5 million, so being in the middle of the two figures, let’s calculate that with interest and inflation, which would double that amount every 10 years.

After 35 years, the amount would be nearly \$18 million in today’s money and growing rapidly – all of it pig producers’ money.

When will the NSW Government begin to use their own money for the proposed compensation?

Now is the time for

clarity, especially with the ever-present threat of African swine fever.

A final fact... on December 10, 2008, the NSW Government repealed the Swine Compensation Act 1928 without consultation whatsoever with anyone in the NSW pig industry that I can find.

What this means for NSW pig producers is that our money is now legally placed into consolidated revenue for the NSW Government... forever.

Unless the promise made in 1999 is honoured, NSW pig producers have been hit with a ‘special’ tax.

Neil Unger

SWINE COMPENSATION FUND

The Hon. R. B. ROWLAND SMITH: On 29th May the Leader of the Opposition asked a question about the swine compensation fund. The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs has forwarded the following answer:

On the advice of the Auditor-General, the Premier closed the swine compensation fund in 1989 and instructed that the balance of funds be transferred to consolidated revenue. This transfer was in recognition that the fund would not be sufficient to meet claims in the event of a major outbreak of disease.

The transfer was conditional on the Government’s undertaking that in the event of a future disease outbreak, the Government will continue to provide appropriate compensation. As such, this sum of money constitutes partial compensation for the Government underwriting any future loss from swine fever and is in consideration for the abolition of the levy on the industry.

The Government supports the pig industry via research programs offered by NSW Agriculture & Fisheries and by this underwriting of compensation. Needless to say, the National Party endorses and applauds this support for the pig industry.

The promise to support NSW pig producers in the event of an exotic disease outbreak was confirmed by a reply in NSW Parliament on June 13, 1990 by the Hon Robert Baron Rowland Smith.

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1. Australian Veterinary Journal Volume 97 No 7, July 2019




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