



# Australian Pork

## NEWSPAPER



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Colin Fassnidge and influencer Nonna Fina brought 'Get some pork on your fork' and crackling to life with cheeky humour.

## A crackling Christmas and exciting new year

THERE'S something extra special about the experience of crackling and succulent roast pork that makes the shared Christmas occasion even more memorable.

The crunch of crackling is more than a taste sensation, it really is the sound of Christmas celebration itself.

For Christmas 2024, Australian Pork Limited set out to showcase this unique crackling and roast pork experience as the centrepiece.

The 'Get some pork on your fork' marketing was an evolution of our 'Por qué?' campaign, launched in June 2024.

It has been successful in helping us reach our annual targets already,

including lifting the perception that pork is 'used in everyday meals' to 36 percent of grocery buyers and lifting fresh pork consumption per capita to 10.5kg.

We recruited master food photographer and director Jon Bader to capture crackling and roast pork's unique qualities, and to take our advertising's appetite appeal to the next level.

The scene of Christmas lunch on the back deck saw our pink-suited charismatic ambassador Ramon Jamon asking "Por qué?"

"Why would anyone choose any other roast for Christmas?"

The campaign launched on November

25 and, with exposure from Foxtel to YouTube and drive-time radio to public relations, we ensured that pork's message reached Australians everywhere.

Segments on breakfast shows, magazine features, digital content and news coverage generated 64 million impressions.

The combination of roast pork and Christmas ham material and editorial enabled us to dominate Christmas coverage.

We also added further special ingredients this year, with social media activity starring chef Colin Fassnidge and influencer Nonna Fina breaking all benchmarks.

continued P2

## Standing firm on activists

ENOUGH is enough.

The tactics employed by activists at Premier Allan's office in Melbourne last month were deeply concerning.

The use of dead piglets as props not only misrepresents our industry's commitment to animal welfare but demonstrates a new low in protest ploys.

Using deceased animals for political theatre is not activism.

Our producers work tirelessly around the clock to care for their animals, while putting quality and affordable food on Australians' tables.

They deserve better than to have their life's work degraded by such shameful stunts.

When will enough be enough?

The latest spate of raids on 20 farms represents more than ideological conflict – these are direct attacks on the economic and social values of our industry.

These law breakers consistently breach property rights, compromise biosecurity protocols and deliberately target our people through trespass and harassment tactics that not only divert critical law enforcement resources but also harm our pigs and our people.

The mental, physical and economic toll on rural people and communities must be con-



Point of View

by MARGO ANDRAE  
CEO



sidered and greater support provided to those who feed our country against the intimidatory ploys used by these objectors.

We continue to work with governments on legislative measures that impose substantial penalties for agricultural trespass, providing farmers and business owners with legal protections that send a crystal-clear message that our businesses are not battlegrounds for activists.

Their latest behaviour follows December's Victorian Government response to that state's inquiry into pig welfare.

While we initially questioned the necessity of the inquiry, our industry engaged productively throughout the process, demonstrating our scientific expertise and high standards.

The government's response was to support 16 of the 18 recommendations in principle, emphasising what we have long advocated – the importance of science

over ideology in setting welfare standards.

We will continue to engage collaboratively with the government following its response to the inquiry.

We also saw the Victorian Government call out these actions, stating that it would not shut down an industry that supports thousands of jobs to appease those who pull distressing stunts, which only hurt their cause.

Our industry has invested millions in developing evidence-based welfare practices, with Australian standards ranking among the world's best.

The suggestion that our farmers operate without transparency is particularly offensive – we are a heavily regulated industry, consistently audited and maintain open dialogue with governing bodies and regulators.

No one cares more about animal welfare than our pig farmers, who dedicate their

lives to raising and caring for livestock.

The economic viability of our farms depends on maintaining high welfare standards – it is not only the right thing to do, it underpins good business operations.

Looking ahead, the next six months will provide crucial opportunities for producers to shape the future of industry standards and investments.

The national Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs remains the best framework for setting consistent evidence-based welfare standards.

We welcome this opportunity for continued improvement while ensuring farm viability.

To Premier Allan and the Victorian Government, stand firm against these theatrical tactics.

Our farming communities need your continued support now more than ever.

And to our farmers, keep holding your heads high.

The government's response to the inquiry can be read by scanning the QR code below.



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## Pork Industry Calendar of Events

2025

**MAR 12-14** – VIV Asia – Bangkok, Thailand. <https://www.vivasia.nl/>

**MAR 12-14** – National Pork Industry Forum – Orlando, Florida. <https://porkcheckoff.org/events/2025-national-pork-industry-forum/>

**MAR 24-26** – 2025 National Feral Pig Conference – Gold Coast, QLD. <https://feralpigs.com.au/>

**MAR 25-26** – London Swine Conference – London, Ontario. <https://www.londonwineconference.ca/>

**APR 8-9** – Animal AgTech Innovation Summit – Dallas, USA. <https://animalagtech.com/>

**JUN 4-5** – World Pork Expo – Des Moines, Iowa, USA. <https://www.worldpork.org/>

**JUN 18-19** – Ontario Pork Congress – Ontario, Canada. <https://www.porkcongress.on.ca/>

**AUG 15-16** – Kingaroy BaconFest – Kingaroy, Australia. <https://www.kingaroybaconfest.com.au/>

**NOV 17-19** – APSA Conference – Melbourne, Australia. <https://www.apsa.asn.au/>

### How to supply event details:

Send all details to Australian Pork Newspaper, PO Box 162, Wynnum, Qld 4178, call 07 3286 1833 or email [design@collins.media](mailto:design@collins.media)

**porknews.com.au**  
**07 3286 1833**

## AMIC introduces updated animal welfare standards with mandatory video surveillance

THE Australian Meat Industry Council has released updated standards for the Australian Livestock Processing Industry Animal Welfare Certification System, which now include mandatory video surveillance requirements for accredited processing facilities.

AMIC's acting chief executive officer Tim Ryan said this update reflects industry's commitment to best-practice animal welfare standards in the meat industry.

"The release of version 4.0 of the AAWCS standards – which includes mandatory video surveillance systems – highlights our dedication to ensuring the humane treatment of livestock throughout the processing chain."

"This technology is

already widely embraced by industry and is designed to help processors monitor and validate animal welfare in their facilities.

"Livestock processing establishments already address issues associated with food safety and meat quality using sophisticated quality assurance systems," Mr Ryan said.

"Animal welfare is no different and the application of quality assurance principles ensures a comprehensive approach and assists industry to continually improve and demonstrate animal welfare outcomes."

The updated standards were developed in consultation with the RSPCA, AUS-MEAT, Australian Meat Processor Corporation, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and an inde-

pendent animal welfare expert.

Compliance with these updated standards will become a mandatory component of AAWCS from January 1, 2026.

AAWCS, an independently audited certification program established in 2013, ensures adherence to best-practice animal welfare standards from the receipt of livestock through to processing.

AAWCS accredited facilities include over 80 percent of sheep, cattle and pigs processed in Australia.

AMPC said that benchmarking of AAWCS against global standards has previously shown that the program is world's best practice.

AMPC program manager markets and integrity Ann McDonald said: "AMPC

is now undertaking a benchmarking project assessing the updated AAWCS provisions against key global animal welfare standards to ensure the standards continue to be recognised as best practice internationally, and that we have the evidence to support that claim."

The processing sector continues to push the boundaries to ensure industry remains at the forefront of animal welfare.

The Casino Food Co-Op is investigating the use of artificial intelligence to support the monitoring of animal behaviour.

The Casino Food Co-Op's Kalani Moss said, "We are working with the CSIRO team to develop and test the use of AI models in lairage to detect and monitor animal behaviours related to both

wellbeing and quality." "The project has achieved successful results in identifying if animals are relaxed, drinking and displaying normal behaviours.

"Work continues to enhance the detection of animal behaviours where this information can be used for management decisions and ensure best practice," Ms Moss said.

To ensure a smooth transition, AMIC will provide ongoing support and resources to members implementing the updated AAWCS standards.

Detailed guidance, including the updated implementation guide, is now available for certified members.

To access the updated standards and implementation guide, visit the AAWCS website, [aawcs.com.au/standards/](http://aawcs.com.au/standards/)

## A crackling Christmas and exciting new year

from P1

Colin and Nonna brought 'Get some pork on your fork' and crackling to life with our signature cheeky humour.

The social reels generated a massive 2.1 million views, with an average watch-through time on Instagram that was more than three times our previous social influencer content – a new high for us.

Expect to see Colin and Nonna return for us later in 2025.

Strategic partnerships further amplified our message.

We joined forces with Gravox and Campbells and harnessed strong relationships with major retailers, butchers and foodservice distributors to create an integrated customer journey from inspiration to purchase and how-to-cook guides.

Early campaign tracking results were

encouraging, with consumer agreement that pork and ham were 'always served at Christmas' up 7 percent and 6 percent points respectively.

And Coles reported increases in roast pork and total pork volume sales when comparing December 2024 with December 2023.

As we look ahead for 2025, we're focused on building on this momentum.

In February, we'll begin the next phase of the 'Get some pork on your fork' campaign to increase demand and sales of pork in stir fry, with integrated efforts from advertising, PR and social influencers to aligned retailer and foodservice activity.

In March, we'll launch an innovative new partnership with the Nine Network to help us spark public conversa-

tion and lift awareness that most ham and bacon on shelves is made from imported meat and not Australian, as is commonly presumed.

Check the label!

And overseas, we're excited to be supporting fresh Australian pork exports to Singapore.

A retail poster campaign is about to begin, running for eight weeks across 172 sites and digital screens outside Singapore's major retailers.

'Flown in fresh, full of flavour' is the headline, alongside our Australian Pork logo and eye-catching pig with

cape icon, animating in flight.

Media support in this important export market will be ongoing.

With all this and more in the works, it's set to be an exciting year.

Bring on 2025! 🐷

**Rob Farmer**  
APL CMO

## Updated welfare standards for processing

THE Australian Meat Industry Council has released an updated version of the standards and implementation guide for the Australian Livestock Processing Industry Animal Welfare Certification System.

AAWCS is not regulated by government.

It is an independently audited certification program used by livestock processors to demonstrate compliance with the industry

best practice animal welfare standards from receipt of livestock to the point of humane processing.

One key change to the updated standards is a mandatory requirement for video surveillance and monitoring.

For pigs this means video monitoring of pigs entering and exiting the gondola where a controlled atmosphere stunning system is used.

Under the updated

AAWCS, there is no requirement for video surveillance inside the gondola.

Compliance with these updated standards will come into effect from January 1, 2026 for all certified AAWCS processing establishments.

For more information on the AAWCS program, visit the AMIC website, [aawcs.com.au](http://aawcs.com.au)

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**Australian Pork**

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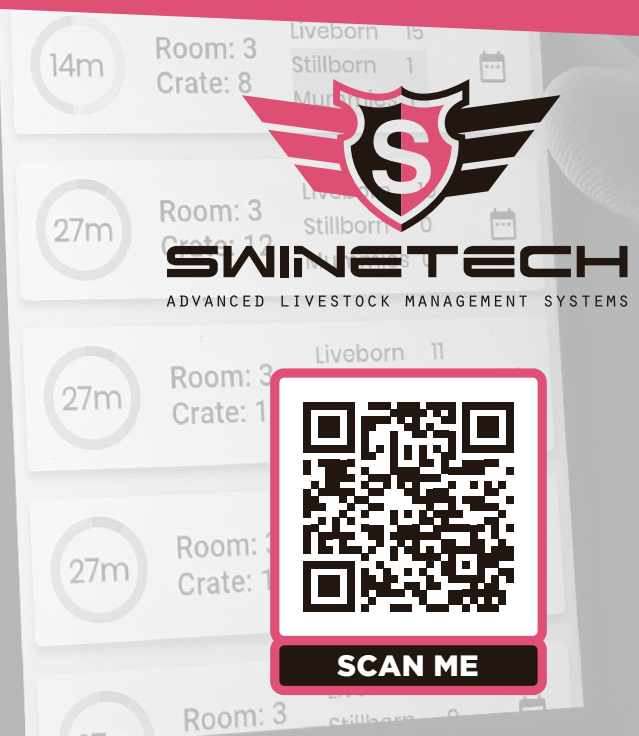


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## Hamming it up for Christmas and beyond

HAM, December and Christmas just happen to go together.

So too does ham, January and the new year – for leftover Christmas ham at least.

Such a versatile product that keeps so well for so long.

I was eating and enjoying my annual D'Orsogna Premium Leg Ham well into mid-January.

Ham also happens to 'come to life' again in some households at Easter.

More on that below. Curious as to the many and varied traditions associated with ham, especially at Christmas, I did a quick 'Google' – as one does – and here are a few slices of what I discovered.

The tradition of eating ham is thought to have evolved from the Germanic pagan ritual of sacrificing a wild boar, known as a sonargöltr, to the Norse god Freyr during harvest festivals.

Freyr was the god of fertility, harvest and boars.

Paganism also offered many traditions for Christianity, including Christmas trees.

And so, the tradition

of the Christmas ham was born.

The preserving of pork legs as ham has a long history, with traces of production of cured ham among the Etruscan civilisation known in the fifth and sixth century BC.

Cato the Elder wrote about the "salting of hams" in his *De Agri Cultura* tome around 160 BC.

Ham has long been a star of the table, with some historians suggesting that the pig was a symbol of good luck in pre-Christian European traditions.

The love for a Christmas ham dinner arrived in America with the pilgrims, becoming particularly popular in the US south, where pig farming flourished.

A traditional Christmas ham is usually ham on the bone – either a shank

or a slightly larger leg cut.

The meat from bone-in hams is usually more flavoursome and juicier than that from a boneless cut.

A Christmas ham, or Yule ham, is a ham often served for Christmas dinner or during Yule in northern Europe and the Anglo-sphere.

The style of preparation varies widely by place and time.

Ham holds symbolic significance for many people during Easter.

As a rich indulgent meat, it can represent the celebration of new life and the end of the Lenten season, during which many Christians abstain from certain luxuries.

So, no matter what you plated up at Christmas, I simply hope you enjoyed it shared with family and friends. 🍷

### Cant Comment

by BRENDON CANT



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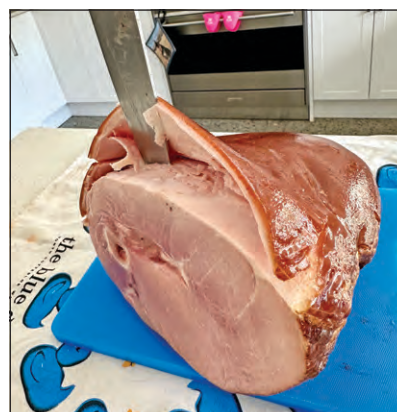
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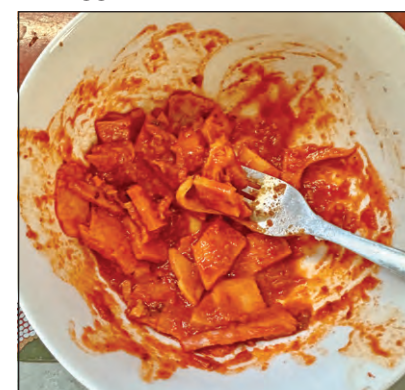
Ready to carve, delicious D'Orsogna on-the-bone leg ham.



A summer delight, ham with potato and egg salad.



Ham bags splashed with water and vinegar are essential for keeping Christmas ham a little longer.



Leftover ham goes with almost anything – in this case, leftover Indian vindaloo curry.

# Aussie's bargain trash pumps

FOLLOWING on from the huge success of the 50 percent discount factory subsidised 6" trash pump deal, Aussie Pumps has now introduced a similar deal for its big 4" self-priming pump.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said: "We know that self-priming is the key and are working on replacing submersibles in piggeries all over Australia."

The good news for piggery operators is these heavy-duty cast-iron 4" semi trash pumps will move over 2000 litres of water per minute and will draw through a vertical lift of 6m on the suction line.

Heads are good too. The B4XR-A model – Aussie's most popular 4" pump – has 32m vertical lift.

The engineering team keep improving these products.

The latest configuration of this self-priming centrifugal trash pump is with a 316 stainless-steel impeller and tungsten carbide viton seal.

The pump also features a front clean-out port that makes it easy to clear chokes promptly without any fuss.

The new pumps are available with either 15 or 11kW motors.

## Aussie Pumps

"The performance is similar but the 15kW motor gives a little more grunt," Mr Hales said.

### Piggeries special price

These pumps are supplied in a wide range of applications, including the 316 stainless-steel complete pump end versions for mining.

"The 15kW B4XR-A/ST has a list price of \$9695," Mr Hales said.

"The factory is subsidising special discounts to authentic piggery operators for only \$8480 each.

"That special price concession is really all about a thank you to the pork industry for the support it has given us and also an indication of our admiration for the people who work in the sector."

Over the past 30 years, Aussie Pumps has worked consistently with some of Australia's leading pork producers.

"It's not only the trash pumps we were able to supply that were so popular but also our heavy-duty professional pressure cleaner units," Mr Hales said.

"These petrol, diesel

and electric motor drive versions are available in a stainless-steel trolley frame with four wheels that are robust and ergonomic.

"The designs are particularly occupational health and safety friendly, with no sharps.

"What we've attempted to do is to listen, learn and apply what we have learned from working with piggery operators.

"Our motto is, we design and build machines as if we were going to use them ourselves."

Further information is available from Aussie Pumps' dealers throughout Australia – [aussiepumps.com.au](http://aussiepumps.com.au)



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The conference offers insights into successful feral pig management. Photo: Local Land Services Murray

## Getting feral pig fundamentals right

DON'T miss out.

The National Feral Pig Conference 2025 – being held on March 24-26, 2025 at the Mantra on View Surfers Paradise – is quickly approaching.

Conference delegates will be welcomed to Queensland by Minister for Primary Industries Tony Perrett.

This year's conference will focus on providing delegates with practical information to enable feral pig management to be more effective, and how this can be achieved.

An exciting line-up of invited speakers has been assembled, supported by 29 submitted abstracts addressing the conference theme 'Getting the fundamentals right'.

After an overwhelming response to the call for abstracts, the conference opening, Welcome to Country and plenary keynote session will now be held on Monday March 24, immediately prior to the welcome function.

We are thrilled that Professor Jim Hone from the University of Canberra accepted our invitation to be the conference's keynote speaker.

Jim will address the topic 'Managing feral pig damage for production and biodiversity' and discuss how the relationship between management effort and outcomes can be demonstrated.

Two sessions will be devoted to addressing benefits to land managers from effective feral pig coordination and collaboration.

Various state and regional coordinators from across Australia will present details of their programs, the



**NATIONAL  
FERAL PIG  
ACTION PLAN**

by **HEATHER CHANNON**  
National Feral Pig  
Management Coordinator



importance of relationships and how these coordinated programs are reducing feral pig impacts.

Our invited speakers are Local Land Services NSW feral pig coordinator Bec Grey, NAILSMA Queensland senior project coordinator Dr Angie Reid and Western Australia's Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association executive officer Linda Vernon.

They will be joined by Darling Downs South West Queensland feral pig program coordinator John Scriven – one of the five Queensland regional coordinators funded through Queensland Feral Pest Initiative Round 8a – on a discussion panel to provide delegates with further insights on the value, challenges and opportunities to land managers when feral pig management programs are conducted on a landscape-scale cross tenure basis.

The importance of establishing trust and engaging the community to enable feral pig management to be more effective to reduce their impacts will be covered by Local Land Services Murray regional pest coordinator John Nolan.

His presentation is one of two by invited speakers discussing the session theme 'Harnessing people power'.

A discussion panel will be held to gain

land manager perspectives on how to engage land managers to work together in coordinated ways, understand some of the key drivers that bring them together and how to maintain their involvement.

During feral pig management activities, carcass disposal may pose considerable logistical and biosecurity challenges.

Ausvet executive consultant Dr Brendan Cowled and Department of Primary Industries Biosecurity Queensland senior principal veterinarian Rebecca Ambrose will discuss this topic in relation to environmentally persistent viruses, such as African swine fever virus and foot-and-mouth disease virus.

Outcomes from their work investigating whether natural decomposition above ground under Australian conditions through the 'destroy and let lie' method can achieve ASFV and FMDV inactivation thresholds will be presented.

Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis Associate Professor Richard Bradhurst will present results from a recently completed Australian Pork Limited funded project conducted by Madeline Oberin, as part of her PhD, to understand disease transmission risks between feral and domestic pigs

using camera traps, develop a methodology to allow pork producers to assess the likelihood of feral pig encounters at commercial piggeries and optimise camera trap surveillance design for industry use.

These results provided the first large-scale data-driven insights into potential interactions between feral and domestic pigs in Australia.

Key outcomes from this project – including how these may support APIQ Voluntary Enhanced Biosecurity Standards ASF in relation to feral pig exposure assessment – will be presented in a future article in this publication.

Richard will also discuss recent work being undertaken to extend the Australian Animal Disease Spread Model to produce a decision support tool to enable the potential role of feral pigs in an FMD incursion to be assessed.

It also aims to assess regional and seasonal influences on the role of feral pigs in a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak and the potential benefits of feral pig culling as part of an FMD control program.

Epidemiological models such as AADIS can assist in the formation of policy for emergency animal diseases such as ASF and FMD, especially when local data does not exist and field studies are not possible or practical.

The preliminary program is available by scanning the relevant QR code below – note the timings are subject to change.

The National Feral Pig Conference 2025  
continued P7

# Gorman-Rupp pump solves choking issues

THE JBS Australian Dinmore operation is the largest beef processing plant in the southern hemisphere, and the plant is the largest employer in Ipswich.

The plant naturally uses a large number of varied pumps.

Some time ago it was having reliability problems with an end-suction centrifugal pump on a cattle yard run-off application.

Because of large suspended solids in the fluid, the centrifugal pump struggled with choking and also, because it relied on a foot valve to keep the suction line primed, was prone to losing prime if a solid caught in that foot valve.

It wasn't an easy application – the wastewater

pump was delivering 20l/s at a pressure of 800kPa because of the long discharge line it was pumping through.

Not only that, it was also on a suction lift in excess of 5m.

## The options

After a site inspection and hydraulic analysis of the system, Hydro Innovations suggested the plant look at a Gorman-Rupp VS3A60-B, which is the only two stage self-priming solids-handling centrifugal pump on the market.

The self-priming pump is of cast-iron construction, with a large inspection cover to allow access to pump internals for inspection and service.

It is capable of handling spherical solids up to 63mm in diameter

and internal clearance adjustments can be done in minutes, allowing operators to keep the pump at peak operating efficiency for the life of the asset.

This self-priming pump is also an excellent primer and re-priming, which means it cannot lose its prime, even if solids get caught in the system.

The VS360-B is part of a 'family' of Gorman-Rupp high-performance high-head self-priming wastewater pumps that can deliver flows from 10l/s through to 120l/s, and heads to 95m.

These Gorman Rupp pumps all have replaceable self-cleaning wear plates to assist in handling stringy materials such as rags and gloves and can operate on suc-

tion lifts up to 7.6m.

Being self-priming pumps, they are much safer to maintain than submersible sludge pumps because operators do not have to work over water or with cranes and heavy swinging weights.

## The solution

The self-priming pump was duly installed and has operated with minimal operator intervention for the past six years.

The large solids handling capacity solved the choking issues and, because the pump does not need a foot valve or any other 'add-on' priming device, it is an extremely reliable self-priming.

To find out more call Hydro Innovations on 02 9898 1800 or email us at [info@hydroinnovations.com.au](mailto:info@hydroinnovations.com.au)

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The Gorman-Rupp VS3A60-B pump has operated with minimal operator intervention for the past six years.

## Getting feral pig fundamentals right

from P6 is the perfect opportunity for those dealing with feral pig impacts across Australia to come together to:

- Share how different management approaches are being used to control feral pig populations and lessons learned
- Demonstrate benefits flowing from working in coordinated and collaborative ways
- Learn from others on how land managers are being supported to participate in local community-led management activities
- Discover how insights from routine monitoring and new and existing technologies can optimise the success of feral pig management programs.

For more details and to register, visit



Scan for conference details and to register.

the National Feral Pig Conference 2025 webpage by scanning the relevant QR code below.

Opportunities to sponsor the conference are welcomed and further details are provided in the Conference Sponsorship Prospectus, scan the relevant QR code below.

For questions related to the conference or to discuss feral pig management issues, contact me on Heather.Channon@feralpigs.com.au or 0423 056 045.



Scan for the preliminary program.



Scan for conference sponsorship prospectus.

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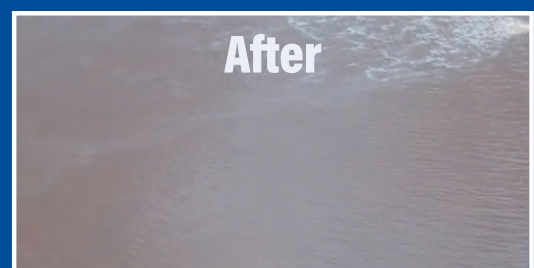
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APL research into non-straw enrichment for pre-farrowing sows has provided Coles' APIQ-accredited producers with valuable alternatives that maintain excellent farrowing outcomes.

# Research, innovation and extension review shows results

HAVING joined Australian Pork Limited in 2024, I am incredibly proud of the strides it has made in advancing the industry through targeted research and innovation.

The team's recent progress and achievements work to strengthen our industry's future, while pushing boundaries across our key focus areas.

Our animal welfare initiatives have yielded particularly promising results.

Our research into non-straw enrichment for pre-farrowing sows has provided Coles' APIQ-accredited producers with valuable alternatives that maintain excellent farrowing outcomes.

We've also gained crucial insights into commercial floor space utilisation, demonstrating how pigs naturally 'grow into their space' throughout their devel-



## Industry Advances

by REBECCA MORRISON



opment cycle, understanding tail biting in pigs and humane stunning methods for pigs.

The update of our ProHand Pig Abattoir program represents another significant step forward, building on its successful adoption to enhance the relationship between people and pigs across our processing facilities.

Environmental sustainability achievements continue to make waves.

We have made significant progress in manure management through our work on short hydraulic retention time systems, providing producers with practical guidance for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In a first for our industry, we've quantified veterinary plastic usage at 58 tonnes annually, establishing a crucial baseline for future waste reduction initiatives.

The imminent release of both updated 'National Environmental Guidelines for Indoor Piggeries' and 'Rotational Outdoor Piggeries' will further support our industry's proactive environmental stewardship.

On the biosecurity front, we are continuously taking proactive steps to protect our industry and contribute to national biosecurity pre-

paredness through continued engagement and relationship building at a Federal Government level – pushing back the borders.

We have been instrumental in developing site-specific African swine fever incident action plans for Australia's export-registered pig abattoirs, representing a significant advancement in our preparedness.

We are also making steady progress on Japanese encephalitis virus monitoring and vaccine development, working closely with industry and human health departments.

The ongoing collaboration with the University of Queensland on JEV vaccine development, though progressing gradually, demonstrates our commitment to long-term solutions for industry challenges.

Our commitment to product quality has led to valuable findings in intramuscular fat content and its relationship to eating quality.

This research has provided us with important benchmarks for Australian pork and deeper insights into the factors influencing consumer satisfaction.

The development of new shelf-life prediction tools for vacuum-packed fresh pork promises to

further reduce waste and improve supply chain efficiency, with initial results suggesting longer shelf-life than previously predicted.

I am particularly excited about our progress in digital innovation, including the development of PigPass 2.0.

Progressing into 2025, this new app – supported by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry funding – will overhaul our real-time animal movement tracking capabilities.

The extensive stakeholder consultation process – involving over 60 industry participants – has ensured that this tool will meet the practical needs of our industry and prove invaluable in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak.

Cost of production remains a key focus area, with ongoing projects aimed at improving gilt productivity, piglet viability and weaner performance during the critical transition period.

These initiatives, combined with other APL research programs, demonstrate our broader approach to industry advancement.

Looking ahead into 2025, our newly restructured team is well-positioned to support the industry's 2025-2030 strategic objectives.

As part of our ongoing efforts, in 2024, APL – in collaboration with the Australasian Pork Research Institute Limited – developed an inaugural green paper through the Pork Industry Insight Panel to guide the industry's future direction.

Led by chief scientist for the pork industry Dr John Pluske, the paper

identifies key challenges and opportunities, with a focus on disease control, biosecurity, social license and workforce shortages.

The document will also inform the research, innovation and extension direction of APL's 2025-2030 strategic plan, balancing practices with economic viability to ensure a sustainable and innovative future for Australian pork production.

The integration of APL's extension team with research and innovation will enhance our ability to disseminate research outcomes more effectively.

While we are currently recruiting for two new positions – extension manager and officer – our collaboration with APRIL on an industry extension strategy demonstrates our ongoing commitment to maximising the impact of our industry research investments.

Our dedicated research and innovation program managers – Dr Rebecca Athorn (farming and welfare), Tim Morley-Sattler (environment and sustainability), Dr Vaibhav Gole (integrity and quality) and Dr Raymond Chia (health and biosecurity) – continue to drive progression and innovation in their respective areas.

Their expertise and commitment ensure that APL maintains a comprehensive approach to industry challenges and opportunities.

Moving forward into 2025, I am confident that our collaborative approach to research, innovation and extension will continue to deliver valuable outcomes for our producers and supply chain.

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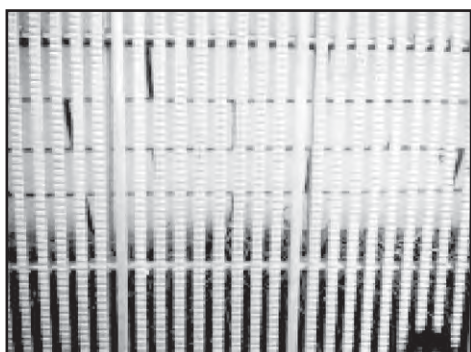
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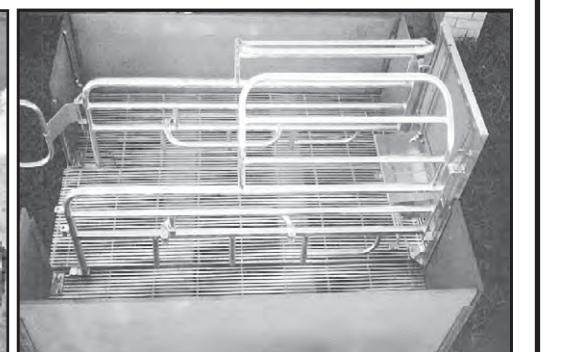
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# Dr Kit Parke awarded life membership of QPCG

IN recognition of his exceptional contribution to the veterinary and tertiary education sectors, Dr Kit Parke was awarded life membership of the Queensland Pig Consultancy Group at the annual general meeting held in December 2024.

This award was testament to Kit's decades of service to the pig industry and his enduring influence on both the academic and practical aspects of veterinary science.

Kit's journey with the QPCG began at its in-

ception in 1993, when a small group of industry professionals gathered with a shared mission to create a forum for the exchange of views, knowledge and experiences.

As one of the group's founding members, chair from 1998-2002 and regular committee member, Kit has played an important role in shaping the influence of QPCG and the benefits it imparts to pig producers in Queensland and beyond.

In the early days of his career, Kit worked in rural veterinary practices in Roma and Dalby, Queensland.

In 1983, he moved to Atherton in north Queensland to take on the role of veterinary officer with the Queensland Department of Primary Industries.

His principal responsibility was tackling the eradication of tuberculosis and brucellosis from extensive beef cattle herds in the region, an important project for Queensland's beef industry.

It was in Atherton and through his interactions with local pig producers that Kit developed an interest in pig health and production – a field that would soon become his true calling.

This new interest led him to pursue a Master of Science degree at James Cook University in Townsville researching porcine parvovirus.

In 1990, Kit's career took another step when he was transferred by the DPI to Toowoomba.

There he continued his work with the pig industry, investigating antimicrobial residues in pig meat.

His involvement in the development of the 'Do it right' pig medication program – which was adopted nationwide – led to improved medication practices across the industry.

He coordinated the Queensland arm of the national Pig Health

Monitoring Scheme, an initiative that brought together producers, veterinarians and researchers in the shared goal of improving pig health.

After leaving the DPI in 1995, Kit transitioned to the corporate sector as a technical sales representative for Elanco Animal Health.

In 1998, with strong support from pig producers on the Darling Downs, Kit launched his own veterinary practice, which would serve as the foundation for future ventures.

In 2004, Kit expanded his horizons by going into partnership with colleagues from the pig industry to create IAS Management Services and Techvet Animal Health.

This was a time of further growth, with Kit taking on additional responsibilities as an APIQ auditor and facilitator.

He also began teaching part-time at the University of Queensland's School of Veterinary Science, a role that would grow to become a central part of his career in the years to come.

In 2008, Kit took the leap into full-time academia at UQ, a position he held until the end of 2020.

As a lecturer, Kit inspired the next generation of veterinarians, sharing not only his scientific knowledge but

also his passion for veterinary science and his practical knowledge of the pork industry.

Kit's contributions extended far beyond the classroom, his research initiatives took him to Vietnam, the Philippines and Timor-Leste where he worked on projects aimed at enhancing pig production for small-holder farms through research and development initiatives.

By 2021, Kit found himself ready for a new challenge.

He joined Scolexia, the animal and avian health consultancy, as an intensive livestock veterinarian, working alongside Dr Josh Timmer in Toowoomba.

Despite this new challenge, Kit's inherent passion for teaching has not waned.

He continues to teach and inspire future veterinarians, sharing his wealth of scientific and practical knowledge with students at the University of Queensland's Gatton campus and James Cook University in Townsville.

In addition to his veterinary responsibilities, Kit has engaged in applied research for Scolexia, blending his scientific and practical expertise with his dedication to advancing veterinary science.

**Sara Willis**  
QPCG Chair



Dr Kit Parke was awarded life membership of QPCG, pictured with the author, in recognition of his exceptional contribution to the pork industry and veterinary science.

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# Letter 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.

FOLLOWING is a rejoinder to the Letter to the Editor from Andree Rowntree published in *Australian Pork Newspaper* Vol 29 No 1 January 2025.

This rejoinder responds to the various questions and thoughts posed by Andree Rowntree in relation to the SunPork's *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* study 'A five domains assessment of sow welfare in a novel free farrowing system' and the maternity ring feature on ABC's *Landline* program.

The research to develop the maternity ring farrowing system that spanned 10 years was undertaken to ensure a viable alternative to farrowing crates in commercial production systems.

The maternity ring was designed with careful thought and consideration for the sow, piglet and stockperson's well-being.

We are working our way to getting this significant body of research peer reviewed and published.

To the first point: *There were only 171 sows in the study and of those only about 30 were filmed.*

*This is a very small group on which to base decisions or describe as 'robust' science.*

The sample size used for behavioural observations in the maternity ring manuscript is adequate – the sample size used was determined using statistical power factor analysis based on the parameters being assessed.

The results presented were statistically significant and hence accepted for publication.

To the second point: *The study was conducted over only two short periods, both in summer.*

*Winter usually has higher pre-wean mortalities.*

Incorrect.

This is absolutely the opposite in free farrowing systems.

Summer is worse because you cannot get piglets to use the creep (stay in the creep), resulting in more overlays and higher mortality.

This is supported by numerous studies conducted in Australia.

To the third point: *The sows and piglets in the maternity ring crates had two heat sources – a lamp and a mat for piglets, whereas the piglets in farrowing crates had only one source of heat – a lamp.*

*Additional management practices used for the maternity ring crates make the study a*

*bit unbalanced.*

A light was used in the MR, not a lamp.

But yes, MR had a heat mat and crates a heat lamp.

We now know that actually, the lamps in the crates are better!

So, we no longer use the mats in current prototypes.

To the fourth point: *The group in farrowing crates are reported to have 70 percent with udder damage on leaving the crate.*

*I am not aware of udder damage to anywhere near 70 percent of sows in normal farrowing crates.*

We did not think this was the case, but you

will be surprised if you take time to inspect sows in farrowing crates.

The reported incidence does include minor to severe damage.

The accompanying table – taken from Sorensen et al (2016) using larger sample size, 57 Danish farms – aligns with our findings.

To the fifth point: *Another measure of sow welfare included in the study were facial scratches.*

*I am not aware of facial scratches being an issue within commercial herds.*

Again, you will be surprised.

This feedback is similar to that from some of

our farms, which, after we explained walking through a farrowing shed, is retracted.

We are more than happy to share many videos of redirected nesting behaviours that result in the injuries scored the day after farrowing.

We have an Australasian Pig Science Association paper on facial injuries where incidence of score > 0 is 60 percent – sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2772283X21003484

Accompanying is a photo that shows a sow with the type of injuries measured.

To the sixth point: *Other measures of wel-*

*fare used in the study – nesting and bar biting – are only suggestive of welfare issues, according to the study.*

We disagree.

There are too many publications to list that state not allowing the sows to nest build results in stereotypies such as bar biting and these are accepted welfare issues.

Stereotypic behaviours often develop in environments that independent evidence shows cause poor welfare.

Thus, the development of stereotypies indicates that well-being has probably been poor, with the animal motivated to show a behaviour pat-

tern that it could not perform normally or to completion.

To the seventh point: *The study states frustration behaviours were not different between the groups.*

*Nor were the presence of shoulder sores.*

Correct.

To the eighth point: *Is it correct that the sows weaned 1.5 extra pigs – though these were excluded from the study for being underweight and were fostered?*

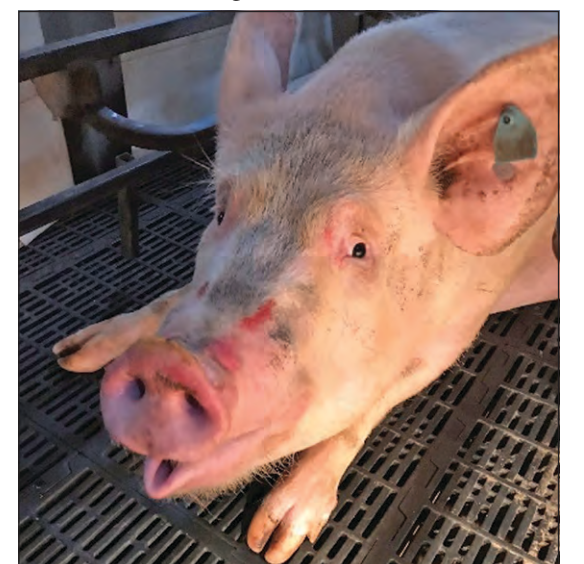
*This wasn't mentioned on Landline.*

The first paper was never intended to measure sow productivity, but

continued P12

	Frequency (%)		Odds ratio	Probability (P<)
	Nurse sows (n = 714)	Non-nurse sows (n = 1020)		
Thin (body condition score < 2.5)	4.5	2.8	1.34	0.2179
Swollen bursae on legs	77.3	73.2	1.30	0.0384
Dew claw wounds	40.0	36.3	1.17	0.1433
Vulva lesions	1.1	1.7	0.63	0.3047
Poor hygiene	41.8	42.0	1.06	0.6095
Skin condition	7.3	5.2	1.42	0.0898
Shoulder lesions	6.4	6.9	0.84	0.3948
Udder wounds	83.6	75.0	1.58	0.0006

Effects of being a nurse sow compared with a non-nurse sow on eight sow welfare parameters.



A photo that shows a sow with the type of injuries measured.

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## Letter to the Editor

from P11

we have reported this to provide context for the behavioural assessments.

The aim of this investigation was to use the Five Domains model to assess the welfare of sows in a novel free farrowing design – maternity ring – that preserves current sow space requirements in comparison to those housed in a farrowing crate.

Yes, PWM is an issue but becoming less so as we learn to manage these free farrowing systems.

Since conducting this work in 2021, we have made substantial performance improvements and now MR wean exactly the same number of piglets as farrowing crates.

A short list of these improvements includes the actual design of the MR, people and sow experience with the system, health status of the herd, the way sows are fed and a redesign of farrowing house procedures.

The scientific paper

reporting the performance traits of the MR compared to a farrowing crate will be submitted in 2025.

The design of this experiment does contain sufficient sample size for statistical comparison, unlike our first paper that was designed for sow welfare assessment.

To the ninth point: *Is it correct that piglet mortality was not recorded in the study?*

Correct.

To the tenth point: *I understand there are a number of further research projects underway to see if the results of this study are repeated – I thank you in advance for sharing the results.*

*It would be great to have access to the results of previous studies too, particularly the piglet mortality figures of these.*

*I hope others read the study too – it is interesting and quite different to what was reported on Landline.*

*I do not think the study supports the conclusion that “sows housed in the maternity ring experience higher animal welfare standards than those housed in farrowing crates” – as per page 13 of the research document.*

The results clearly support the conclusions.

We would argue that your statement reflects your opinion rather than being based on any scientific evidence.

To the eleventh point: *Further, the measures of sow welfare that the study states were different between the systems are not currently problems in sow crates, so I am not sure that the study can reasonably conclude that there were any significant improvements in sow welfare.*

*However, it does seem that more piglets died in the maternity ring crates.*

The conclusion states that the “Results indicated that sows housed in the MR had improved lactation efficiency, more ability to observe and interact with the environment both within and outside the pen, displayed reduced injuries, performed more species-specific behaviours such as nesting and piglet bonding, and exhibited an improved response to a startling test.

This all contributes to a substantial improvement in sow welfare, indicating a more positive affect when compared to sows in farrowing crates.”

Given these data, we question the logic to dispute the conclusions.

To the twelfth point: *Again, I thank SunPork for sharing the work, but it would be misleading to use this study as a basis for any welfare claims or change in specifications.*

*And to call it “cage free” suggests the rest of us keep our pigs in cages, which would be very insulting and should not be supported.*

Theoretically the farrowing crate is a cage – by definition, “a box or enclosure having some openwork for confining or carrying animals.”

Caged is the term being used to describe farrowing crates, whether we find this insulting or not, and we have no control over this.

SunPork refers to the maternity ring farrowing system as ‘close confinement free’, not cage free.

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# Letter to the Editor

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QUALITY assurance was introduced to the Australian pig industry about 30 years ago.

I was on the pilot program.

It was started so that we could prove there were no antibiotics or other drugs in the pig meat.

Plus check for any foreign objects, such as pieces of building material.

At the last audit done on my farm on July 25, 2024, I was pulled up for not proving – writing down – that I was doing daily checks in the piggery, for example physically checking all the water nipples.

I need evidence to prove these checks in case there is a prosecution.

As the boss of my own piggery, I do have a system on my farm that takes place, but nothing is recorded.

The staff on my farm, during their morning and afternoon walk arounds, open and close the shutters, look at every animal, feeder and water nipple, and look for dead and sick animals.

That is their job.

And every two weeks, I also get them to check all 500 water nipples in the grower and sow pens.

My sow stalls have a trough that gets filled

up when required.

The person in charge of farrowing feeds by hand and the first thing he does, if the sow is not eating, is check the water nipple.

My weaners on straw with the water bowls get checked morning and night, cleaning out the straw if needed.

The requirement when moving pigs while in the pen is to check the nipples.

No, nothing is recorded because, as daily checks, this is simply the routine on my farm.

So, the results of the audit on my farm prompts me to question where we're

heading as an industry.

I can understand a big multi-site operation having a checklist in place.

However, we as pig farmers know what it takes to produce and look after our animals.

For me on my farm, I can't be up at the top with the best of them in performance, produce Australia's best pork chop and have fast growing pigs if they are not being looked after.

It feels as though someone – or our APIQ system – is telling me that, for the past 40 years, me, my father and his father before him, were producing pigs

incorrectly because we didn't record anything.

This also questions my skilled piggery farm managers.

Or is our credibility and knowledge being questioned by the animal do-gooder tree-hugging he/she/them flag-waving vegans?

Why has the APIQ come to this?

Recording so much in case there's a prosecution – from whom will it come?

We have our vets who know what's in our fridges, there is a vet at the abattoir checking the pigs and we do an internal audit – mine is usually done by a vet.

For me on my farm, I am finding it hard – with all the political correctness and what's involved to do something that I love.

A 600-sow piggery was once a big family farm.

Now my 300 pigs a week at the abattoir is more of a nuisance.

I can feel all the rules and regulations sucking the passion out of me.

So, I will record what I have to, just to keep my APIQ certificate, but again, it will mean nothing to anyone.

And this leads me to ask, since as an industry we've gone with Aus-Meat to do our au-

diting – something that costs me over \$3000 a year now – why has it been six or so years with them?

They have now implied that because it's not recorded, I'm not looking after my pigs.

I say that three audits every two years by a different vet should be good enough for us small family farms.

Does anyone else hear what I am trying to say?

And our imported meat, does that have the same quality control on it as our Australian pork meat?

**Stephen Hoffrichter**  
**Shark Lake Piggery**  
**Esperance WA**



**TABLE 1. AusScan Early Harvest Report**

**Protein Moisture and Energy Values for Cereal Grains**



**Australasian Pork Research Institute Ltd** APRIL

**December 2024**

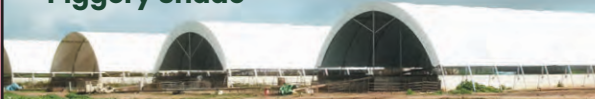
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Region*	Protein %				Moisture %				Pig Faecal DE MJ/Kg				Pig Ileal DE MJ/Kg				IDE/FDE Ratio			Broiler AME MJ/Kg				Broiler AME Index			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
NSW1	10.2	1.16	7.9	13.4	11.3	0.75	9.6	13.7	13.2	0.11	13.0	13.8	10.4	0.23	10.1	11.7	0.79	0.77	0.85	11.7	0.22	11.3	12.6	66.8	2.6	62.2	75.0
QLD	10.3	1.04	8.4	12.1	11.4	0.57	10.1	12.5	12.6	0.11	12.3	12.8	10.2	0.23	9.8	10.9	0.81	0.80	0.85	11.9	0.20	11.4	12.3				
QLD1	11.8	1.38	9.3	14.6	11.2	0.67	9.9	12.4	12.4	0.14	12.1	12.7	10.1	0.50	9.5	12.1	0.81	0.78	0.95	11.8	0.23	11.5	12.3				
QLD3	11.0	0.88	9.4	12.9	10.7	0.76	9.3	11.5	13.2	0.13	13.0	13.4	10.7	0.17	10.4	10.9	0.81	0.80	0.82	12.4	0.16	12.2	12.7	69.1	1.9	65.5	71.9
SA1	10.8	1.33	7.8	14.1	11.6	1.51	9.4	15.0	13.2	0.11	13.0	13.4	10.7	0.16	10.4	11.1	0.81	0.81	0.83	12.1	0.31	11.5	12.8	64.9	2.5	60.8	70.3
SA2	10.5	2.10	7.2	15.0	12.9	0.95	10.1	14.9	13.3	0.11	13.1	13.5	10.9	0.11	10.6	11.1	0.82	0.81	0.82	12.3	0.29	11.6	12.8	68.0	2.5	63.3	72.7
VIC	10.5	1.16	8.6	14.0	10.3	0.79	9.1	11.9	12.4	0.16	11.9	12.8	10.0	0.29	9.5	10.7	0.81	0.80	0.84	11.5	0.34	10.8	12.4				
VIC 1	10.8	1.59	8.4	13.9	10.8	1.41	8.2	12.8	12.8	0.56	12.0	13.8	11.4	1.01	10.1	13.8	0.89	0.84	1.00	12.0	0.67	11.1	13.2				
VIC 2	11.3	1.72	8.0	14.3	10.0	0.76	8.4	11.8	12.6	0.14	12.3	12.9	10.4	0.47	9.2	11.7	0.82	0.75	0.91	11.4	0.36	10.8	12.2				
VIC 3	10.3	1.15	8.0	12.3	10.6	0.88	8.3	11.6	12.4	0.23	12.0	12.9	10.8	0.99	9.7	14.1	0.87	0.80	1.09	11.7	0.42	10.9	12.6				
Sorghum																											
Region*	Protein %				Moisture %				Pig Faecal DE MJ/Kg				Pig Ileal DE MJ/Kg				IDE/FDE Ratio			Broiler AME MJ/Kg				Broiler AME Index			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
QLD	10.1	0.95	8.7	12.2	13.0	0.41	12.1	13.6	14.3	0.09	14.1	14.5	11.9	0.32	11.5	12.5	0.83	0.81	0.86	14.8	0.18	14.3	15.0				
Triticale																											
Region*	Protein %				Moisture %				Pig Faecal DE MJ/Kg				Pig Ileal DE MJ/Kg				IDE/FDE Ratio			Broiler AME MJ/Kg				Broiler AME Index			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
SA1	11.1	0.62	10.5	12.4	11.9	0.68	11.1	12.9	13.6	0.06	13.5	13.7	12.1	0.14	12.0	12.3	0.89	0.89	0.90	13.2	0.18	13.0	13.4	75.4	1.1	73.5	76.5
Wheat																											
Region*	Protein %				Moisture %				Pig Faecal DE MJ/Kg				Pig Ileal DE MJ/Kg				IDE/FDE Ratio			Broiler AME MJ/Kg				Broiler AME Index			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
NSW1	12.3	1.24	10.2	17.5	11.8	0.90	9.9	15.2	13.9	0.11	13.6	14.1	12.0	0.19	11.2	12.5	0.86	0.82	0.89	12.8	0.22	12.4	13.8	77.1	1.7	72.8	80.9
QLD	13.3	1.97	9.6	19.0	11.1	1.24	8.3	13.9	13.8	0.09	13.4	14.6	11.9	0.23	11.4	12.7	0.86	0.85	0.87	12.8	0.34	12.1	15.1				
QLD1	12.6	1.32	10.3	15.4	11.0	0.74	9.7	12.5	13.8	0.08	13.5	14.0	11.9	0.16	11.7	12.2	0.87	0.86	0.87	12.8	0.22	12.3	13.3				
QLD3	12.5	1.76	9.0	15.6	10.7	0.74	9.5	12.4	13.9	0.08	13.8	14.1	12.4	0.12	12.3	12.8	0.89	0.89	0.91	13.3	0.20	13.0	13.8	76.6	1.2	74.4	79.7
SA	14.5	3.38	9.5	17.6	11.8	1.71	9.6	13.7	13.8	0.33	13.4	14.4	12.2	0.56	11.6	13.1	0.89	0.86	0.91	13.3	0.95	12.4	15.1				
SA1	13.0	1.23	9.7	16.3	10.7	1.74	7.2	14.7	13.9	0.09	13.6	14.1	12.3	0.16	11.9	12.7	0.89	0.87	0.90	13.1	0.37	12.2	13.9	74.8	2.2	69.5	79.2
SA2	12.3	0.91	10.3	16.0	10.0	1.63	7.3	16.0	13.9	0.12	13.3	14.0	12.3	0.29	10.8	12.6	0.89	0.81	0.90	13.3	0.32	12.1	13.8	75.5	1.9	67.0	78.2
VIC	12.7	1.23	9.7	15.6	10.3	0.97	8.6	12.6	13.7	0.06	13.6	13.9	11.9	0.13	11.5	12.1	0.86	0.85	0.87	12.6	0.23	12.2	13.1				
VIC 1	12.3	1.47	9.1	17.9	10.7	1.07	8.0	13.5	13.7	0.08	13.3	13.9	12.2	0.22	11.6	13.4	0.89	0.87	0.96	12.8	0.28	12.0	13.8				
VIC 2	11.5	0.88	9.3	14.1	10.4	1.06	8.4	13.5	13.8	0.06	13.7	14.0	11.9	0.18	11.5	12.5	0.86	0.84	0.89	12.7	0.26	12.2	13.5				
VIC 3	11.8	1.02	8.4	15.4	10.8	1.17	8.3	15.3	13.7	0.09	13.2	14.6	12.1	0.31	8.6	12.7	0.88	0.65	0.87	12.8	0.42	11.4	17.8				

\* Each row represents a Feed Mill in the Region, for example QLD and QLD1 represent different feed mill companies within the state.

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