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These year 11 students from Catholic Agricultural College Bindoon enjoyed the WA Pig Day Out 2017. They were pictured with, at left, college staff Stacey Carter and Brett Nelson and at right, WAPPA representatives Graeme Dent and Jan Cooper.

Free ranging WA Pig Day Out

FREE ranging discussions on everything from pig reproduction to pig health management, pig welfare, pig transporting, pork prices, pork marketing and global competitiveness highlighted a lively 2017 WA Pig Day Out.

Attended by about 100

people at Technology Park, Bentley, it was hosted by the West Australian Pork Producers' Association and sponsored by Pork CRC, Australian Pork Limited, MSD Animal Health, Elanco and Zoetis.

After a revealing presentation on post-cervical

artificial insemination by Dr Vanessa Morris of Portec Veterinary Services, Portec principal Dr Kim Nairn built on his 2016 talk on biosecurity by running through a list of emerging on-farm health issues.

He warned of the threat

continued P8

Ben Hawkes receives Bridget Dunn Memorial Award



Bridget Dunn Memorial Award winner Ben Hawkes and Pat Mitchell of Australian Pork Limited at the Victorian Pig Fair. Stay tuned for more Victorian Pig Fair coverage in the May edition of APN.

Turmoil in markets and weather

SINCE my March article, we've received the latest statistics available on pig production and trade from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

I mentioned last month that Australian Pork Limited was acutely aware of the pig pricing issues in the market, and it has become even more acute since then.

The latest ABS statistics show that in January 2017, compared to the previous January, processed pig numbers were up by close to 11 percent and in terms of pork volumes, up by 14 percent.

In terms of year on year pigs processed numbers, growth was 3.6 percent and in pork volumes 4.6 percent, year on year.

I've been involved in the pork industry for approaching 12 years, and in this time I can't remember a level of growth against the previous year as high as this.

Further investigation of production numbers and volumes reported over the past more than a decade confirm that



Point of View

by ANDREW SPENCER CEO



penditure forward and from APL reserves.

You'll find further details on the advertisements being run and associated promotions in the weekly APL communiqué.

Recently we saw some amazing visuals through the news of the impacts of cyclone Debbie in Queensland and northern NSW.

We've been in touch with the local departments of Agriculture/Primary Industries, the state farming organisations and some of the local APL delegates.

Fortunately in most cases, damage appears to be limited but we're still gathering information.

There's a feeling of some helplessness in providing support from here in Canberra, but any producers who would like to discuss their own ideas on how we might be able to do this would be welcome.

Affected members are also encouraged to contact their local delegates (contact details can be found on the APL portal).

this is an unprecedented growth level in recent history.

The graph of processed pig numbers by month and for a rolling 12 months is shown below.

So it would seem that the supply of pigs to the market is a key factor influencing prices.

As mentioned last month, we see no indicators pointing towards any weakening in demand at an overall level.

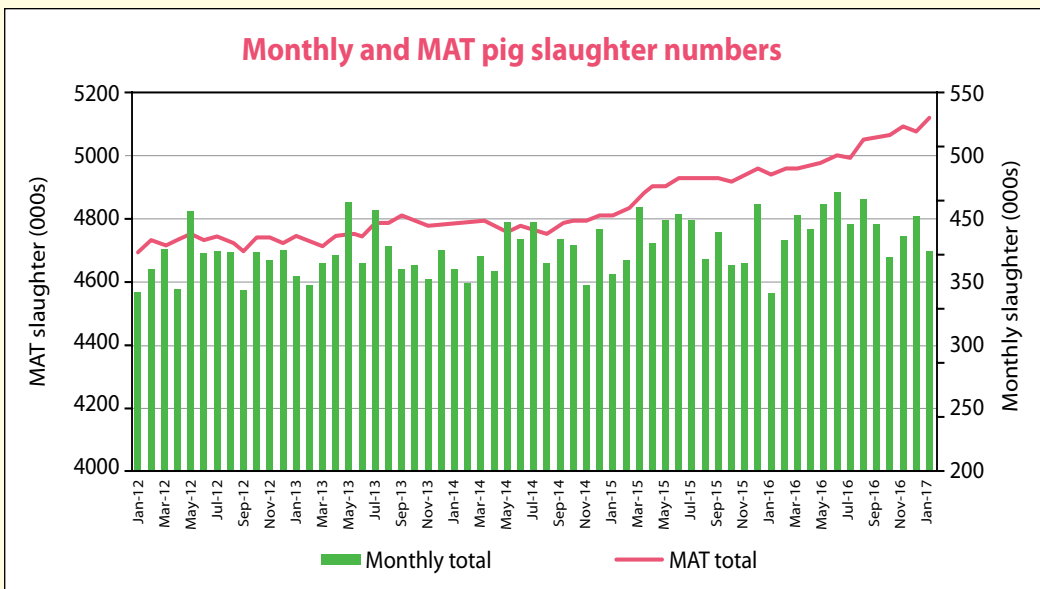
The question is whether the January numbers are a one-off big production spurt or the commencement of a consistent and higher level of growth for our industry.

The definitive answer will only come with time: waiting on statistics for coming months.

I also mentioned last month that we can't turn demand on and off like a tap, but we can bring forward our demand-creating activities to ensure they have an impact as soon as possible and this is what the APL Board has recently approved.

In this financial year, 2016/17, the Board has approved about an additional \$1 million in advertising expenditure to commence later this month.

It is being funded out of a combination of bringing next year's ex-



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Pig Industry Calendar of Events

2017

APR 24 - 26 – Livestock Philippines 2017, Passay City, Phillipines www.livestockphilippines.com

MAY 3 - 5 – ESPHM European Symposium on Porcine Health Management, Prague, Czech Republic www.esphm2017.org

MAY 18 - 20 – China Animal Husbandry Expo, Qingdao International Expo Centre, China www.caaa.com.cn

MAY 18 - 20 – VIV Russia, Moscow, Russia www.vivruussia.nl/en/Bezoeker.aspx

JUN 7 - 9 – World Pork Expo, Des Moines, Iowa, US www.worldpork.org

JUN 11 - 14 – 10th International Conference on Pig Reproduction, Columbia, Missouri, US www.muconf.missouri.edu/ICPR2017/Index.html

JUL 21 - 25 – AVMA Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana, US www.avma.org

AUG 29 - 31 – SIAVS - International Poultry and Pork Show, São Paulo, Brazil www.siavs.org.br/?lang=en

SEP 5 - 8 – International Conference on the Assessment of Animal Welfare at Farm and Group Level, Wageningen, The Netherlands www.wafl2017.com

SEP 12 - 15 – SPACE, Parc-Expo de Rennes, France uk.space.fr/en/welcome.aspx

SEP 16 - 19 – Allen D. Leman Swine Conference, Saint Paul, Minnesota US www.cceevents.umn.edu/allen-d-leman-swine-conference

OCT 22 - 24 – Leman China Swine Conference, Nanjing, China www.vetmed.umn.edu/news-events/leman-china-swine-conference

NOV 7 - 9 – Pig Welfare Symposium, Des Moines, Iowa US www.pork.org/pig-welfare-symposium

NOV 19 - 22 – Australasian Pig Science Association (Inc) conference, Melbourne, Victoria www.apsa.asn.au

NOV 20 - 22 – International Tropical Agriculture Conference, Brisbane, Queensland www.tropagconference.org

2018

MAR 3 - 6 – Annual Meeting of the American Association of Swine, San Diego, California, US www.aasv.org/annmtg

Jun 18 - 20 – IPVS, Chongqing, China

Jun 20 - 22 – VIV Europe 2018, Utrecht, The Netherlands www.viveurope.nl/en/Bezoeker.aspx

How to supply event details: Send all details to Australian Pork Newspaper, PO Box 387, Cleveland, Qld 4163, fax: 07 3821 2637, email: ben@porknews.com.au

porknews.com.au

Genomic selection – opportunities for industry

TRADITIONALLY, breeding programs have been based on the evaluation of phenotypes in several environments.

Why is evaluation of phenotypes important? Can't we just rely on genotypes?

What's the difference between the genotype and phenotype of an animal?

The genotype is the genetic make-up of an animal or plant for a particular inherited trait, while the phenotype is the visible or observable expression of that trait resulting from the interaction between its genetic makeup with the environment.

In Australia, the estimation of genetic merit in pig breeding is done using Best Linear Unbiased Prediction methods for analysis of pedigree and performance data.

To do this, records of

each animal's pedigree and some performance data are essential.

While the existing methods are very successful, reliable and support good economic returns when implemented in appropriate breeding and production structures, the evaluation of phenotypes can be time-consuming as the lag time between generations can slow down the ability to select for improved

phenotypes.

Geneticists have long searched for, and trialled, various methods to reduce this lag time while not affecting the accuracy of the prediction of breeding values.

Genomic selection was first described in 2001 and is an approach that will allow more accurate breeding values much earlier in the life of our breeders, which then reduces the lag

time for change between generations.

Genomic selection is the selection of animals based on genetic markers and involves reading DNA and analysing data to estimate associations between genotypes and phenotypes to increase the accuracy of selection and reduce the generation interval – hence generating faster genetic progress.

The most widely used approach is to have a reference population of animals' phenotype (performance records) and genotype data recorded.

During 2016, a discussion paper was prepared by the Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit to inform industry of the opportunities and challenges around genomic selection and what is likely to be involved in utilising genomic selection technologies

in the Australian pork industry.

From the discussion paper, scope for improvement in rates of genetic progress in Australian pig populations through the use of genomic selection was identified.

If genetic gain increased by 10 to 50 percent through the use of genomic selection, profits of \$0.25 to \$1.25 per pig for superior breeding programs could be realised.

However, implementing genomic selection will increase costs of a breeding program, mainly due to the cost of genotyping and a benefit cost analysis should be conducted before implementation.

Recently, this discussion paper was sent to key influencers in the pork industry and has also been placed on the Australian Pork Limited website.

R&D priorities for 2017/18

Several weeks ago, the Research and Development Advisory Committee met to discuss and prioritise recommendations for funding in 2017/18.

As part of our process, four business plans have been prepared that detail priorities recommended for funding following meetings of each of the four Specialist Groups held in February 2017, as well as for Technical Transfer and Industry Capability.

I thank all of the Specialist Group members for their time, involvement and contributions to our R&D process to assist us with identifying RD&E priorities.

This Board Committee is an important part of our R&D process: it enables transparency in our systems and ensures that APL's research and development portfolio includes projects that address the needs of the industry, both now and into the future.

Dr Brian Luxford chairs this Board Committee.

This year, as part of the

continued P3

Research priority	Key objective
Specialist group 2 – Production and Welfare	
Seasonal infertility	Genetic effects on seasonal infertility, including investigations into a disparity between sows housed outdoors compared to indoors.
Heat stress	Consequences of heat stress on progeny and ongoing effects throughout life.
Specialist group 3 – Environmental Management	
Bubble column purification development	Application of bubble column water purification technology specifically for the pork industry.
Development of planning resources	Develop sets of standard planning conditions for conventional and outdoor piggeries for use by planners when approving planning applications. Develop and run a training course for planners, regulators and consultants for assessment of planning applications.
Pork Water Balance Model	Develop piggery specific water balance model to assist in designing secondary storage ponds that meet spill or overtopping frequencies specified by regulatory agencies.
Soil nutrient loss index	Explore a risk based approach as an adjunct or replacement of the trigger level approach for interpreting soil nutrient levels.
On-line training package for outdoor rotational piggeries	Develop an online training package, utilising existing outdoor environmental workshop materials together with production information, for outdoor rotational piggeries.
Odour emission rate validation study	Develop a program to generate new odour emission rate data that is representative of current infrastructure and management and recommend key parameters when using these models to assess odour impacts from Australian piggeries.
Australian pork industry life cycle assessment (LCA) trends	Generate a LCA time trend of the Australian pork industry to demonstrate the industry's sustainability and production initiatives over time.
Environmental pathogen review	Undertake a literature review to determine potential environmental health risks of effluent reuse and knowledge gaps.
Specialist group 3 – Quality assurance, biosecurity and food safety	
Update review of emerging animal diseases	Review current scientific literature to determine the risks of carriage of exotic pig pathogens and subsequent infection of the domestic herd.
Physi-Trace	Support market access and differentiation of Australian fresh pork, ham, bacon and liver in export and domestic markets through industry adoption of this cost-effective product traceability system.

Table 1

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Turbulent time in US and global pork markets

I SPENT a week in the US in mid-March to attend the Midwest animal science meetings and catch up with some of the key industry players. Although bitterly cold in Omaha, I warmed to some interesting experimental outcomes and industry trends.

Despite low and variable margins in the past 12 to 24 months and declining domestic demand for pork, producers are expanding production and investing in packing (processing).

The investment in packing is probably encouraged by the excellent margins made by packers in the past five years when their margins have ranged from \$20-\$50 per pig processed.

Trump futures

Producers were buoyed by an unseasonal increase in pig futures since the election of Donald Trump, but these have fallen more recently in response to the increasing number of pigs being produced.

Profitability in 2017 will therefore be questionable, probably unlikely and dependent on exports.



Initiatives

by DR ROGER CAMPBELL
CEO



An economist who presented at the meeting believes there will be more change to the US industry in the next three years than there has been in the past 20.

With the possible exception of China, most other pork producing countries are in a similar position for 2017 and competition between the major exporters will be fierce, with China being the prime target.

The country most affecting the status quo in the export stakes is Spain, which has grown considerably as an exporter in the past five years.

In Australia our feed

costs have fallen compared to 2015 and 2016, with estimates for the eastern states of \$370-\$390/tonne (compared to \$420-\$440/tonne in 2015 and 2016).

Costs, however, seem considerably higher in Queensland and I am not sure about Western Australia.

This is a major relief, but with feed cost higher than might have been anticipated, margins in 2017 will depend on how much further pork price might decline and, of course, the type of supply contract producers have.

In the last week of March, the average east-

ern seaboard price, including sow meat, was around or under \$3.15/kg and varied by state.

This would have been a problem in 2016 when feed cost was about \$430/tonne but we will have lower margins in 2017 and could have a problem if price continues to fall – let us hope the latter is not the case.

On trend

I will soon send everyone on my producer database a summary of the more interesting outcomes from the meetings, but the general trends obvious during the visit were a continual improvement in reproduction, more judicious use of antibiotics driven by veterinarians and the continual impact of disease on grower-finisher efficiency.

On average, survival post-weaning is about 86 percent, with most losses associated with porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome and swine influenza virus.

We do not want PRRS! Despite the inefficiency caused by these diseases, COP in 2016 was about \$A1.80/kg carcass weight and will likely be lower in 2017.

Semen additives

A 12-month study in

Brazil investigated the effects on reproduction of adding materials to semen 15 minutes before insemination.

The materials investigated were PGF2 alpha, oxytocin and GnRH.

The additives were only included in the first dose of semen administered to sows.

Otherwise, the procedure was common across treatments.

AI was intra cervical.

The treatments:

1) 87µg of cloprostenol (Planate, Schering-Plough Animal Health; n=158) – source of PGF2 alpha;

2) 5 IU oxytocin (Ovivet, S.P.Veterinaria; n=154);

3) 0.2µg buserelin acetate (Receptal, Merck; n=93) – source of GnRH;

4) 5 IU oxytocin + 0.2µg buserelin acetate (n=81); and

5) Control (n=605).

I am not sure what se-

continued P4



The author believes born alive of about 14-14.5 might be achievable in Australia.



All eyes need to be on feed.

Genomic selection – opportunities for the Australian pork industry

from P2

Specialist Group meetings, technologies that would positively disrupt the Australian pork industry and lead to transformational change were discussed.

The RDAC considered that the objectives of a number of strategically important priorities, namely Bigger Pigs (Specialist Group 1), International Market Development (Specialist Group 1), Transformational Technologies (Specialist Group 2) and Antimicrobial Resistance Stewardship (Specialist Group 4), are to be redefined to become more disruptive in their approach and scope to better address future industry needs.

To support our endeavours to identify transformational (high risk, high reward) projects, the involvement of influencers from outside the pork industry to provide input into how new technological developments and/or innovative approaches are being applied in other sectors is being considered as we look to revise APL's R&D process.

The key RD&E priorities across Specialist Groups 2, 3 and 4 for funding in 2017/18 and management by the R&I division are detailed below.

The timeline for our R&D process for 2017/18 is also provided below.

Calls for tender for R&I projects to address these key priorities will be distributed to research providers on April 10, 2017.

APL's standard contract agreement will also be distributed (as well as it being available on our website) with the call for tender document this year to enable research organisations to understand and accept our funding terms and therefore enable the timely execution of project agreements between APL and research organisations.

This is to overcome delays that continue to be experienced with the signing of agreements by research providers.

Round 3 Rural R&D for profit submissions

Project applications for the Department of Agricul-

ture and Water Resources' Round 3 Rural R&D for Profit Program were submitted in December 2016.

Outcomes are expected to be announced within the next couple of months.

In Round 3, APL expressed support in three proposals, as detailed in the table below.

Identifying opportunities for collaboration as well as sources of external funding, to leverage our R&D investment dollars to address industry priorities, remains a key focus for the R&I team.

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

Call for tenders opens	April 10, 2017
Call for tenders closes	May 8, 2017
Tender reviews complete	June 12, 2017
AOP budget endorsed (June board meeting date)	June 22, 2017
Secretariat evaluations complete	June 23, 2017
SG/RDAC chair review complete	June 30, 2017
Successful and modify letters sent	July 10, 2017
Modified proposals resubmitted	July 24, 2017
Modified proposals reviewed by APL Manager	July 31, 2017
Unsuccessful letters sent and successful contracts sent	August 7, 2017
Contract negotiation completed and contracts executed	August 28, 2017
RDAC & SG's notified of call for tender outcomes and full BCA's	October 31, 2017

Project	Lead RDC	Collaborators	Total project budget (cash and in kind)
High throughput technology for defining antimicrobial resistance status of pork and chicken meat enterprises leading to a competitive advantage in the global market place	APL	RIRDC Chicken Meat	\$2,921,433
Forewarned is forearmed: equipping farmers and agricultural value chains to proactively manage the impacts of extreme climate events	MLA	GRDC, Sugar Research Australia, Cotton RDC, RIRDC, APL, Wine Australia, Dairy Australia	\$14,662,435
Wastes to profits: Technologies and business models for the management of wastes in the animal industries	MLA	AMPC, Dairy Australia, APL, MLA Donor Company	\$13,953,729



JOB VACANCY

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Turbulent time in US and global pork markets

from P3

men additives are used in Australia and previous research tended to show positive outcomes generally only in 'underperforming' herds.

This study was conducted in what the authors termed an average performing herd in Brazil and the control results tend to confirm this.

While the results suggest using one of these might be worth investigating, it's probably best to discuss with your semen supplier and veterinarian.

There were no interactions with parity or season.

Lactation length

We are all aware of the effects of weaning weight on pig performance to sale, but we tend to forget the 'natural' variation in lactation length, which occurs within a weekly production system and how this might contribute to variation in lifetime pig performance.

Researchers in Spain investigated this in a study to observe the effect of the lactation length of sows (belonging to the same batch) on the subsequent performance of piglets at weaning and at 165 days of age.

Seven hundred and two male and female cross-breed piglets [Pietrain x (Landrace x Large White)] from 70 multiparous sows (parity ranging from 2 to 10) were used and individually weighed every three weeks (from birth to slaughter).

Lactation length within the group ranged from 18 to 22 days and had a considerable effect on the weight pigs were weaned and their weight at 165 days of age.

Results are shown below.

The outcome is not so surprising and the difference in sale weight would be reduced if all pigs were sold at the same age, which is encompassed in the close-out strategies used by producers.

The results, however, suggest that technologies such as Ovugel and others to synchronise ovulation after weaning would help reduce this variation in weaning and sale age and weight, which occurs within production systems.

Reproduction targets

There were several presentations on gestation and lactation studies, generally conducted within commercial operations.

I will report later on what new technologies were tested, but in this APN column I just want

to highlight the levels of performance being achieved.

The Danes reported the results of a study on dietary protein levels in lactation on sow and piglet performance.

Sows started with 14 piglets and weaned 13.

Sow weight loss and piglet growth performance were affected by dietary protein, as was subsequent litter size.

Subsequent total born averaged 18.5, with born alive around 16.5 – a target I think is way beyond us and not necessarily desirable.

For US herds, total born was around 15, with born alive about 14-14.5, which I think might be achievable.

Sow studies

Results of one large study to monitor feed intake, growth rate and feed efficiency in group housed pregnant sows is shown in Table 3.

The study involved 712 PIC Line 1050 sows mixed on day five after mating, housed in dynamic groups of 260 and fed from ESFs (six per pen).

Sow weight was recorded as sows exited the ESFs.

Gilts were offered 2kg/day feed through to day 112 of gestation.

Older sows were offered 2.26kg/day during the same period – no sows were bump fed during gestation.

Thin sows (12 in total) were allowed 3kg feed/day.

Feed intake, growth rate and feed efficiency were measured over different periods of gestation.

During gestation all sows failed to consume their allocated feed allowance during the first 10 days after mixing, but ran along their allocated allowance thereafter.

I will include these results in my producer summary of the meetings.

Feed intake in gestation had little effect on lactation performance, although there was a small but significant positive effect of weight gain in gestation on litter size and a small significant negative effect in parity three and older sows between P2 gain in gestation and litter size.

The performance of sows during gestation and lactation, as summarised in Table 3, was generally excellent and something we should aim for.

The NZ herd in our benchmarking project uses US genetics and reports 15 total born in sows and 13.45 in gilts.

The corresponding born alive figures in 2015 were 13.73 and 12.3 respectively, so quite a large difference in litter size of gilts (gilt total born in the US herd was 14.8) and the BA/TB ratio between the US and NZ herds, but clearly opportunities for improvement in NZ and Australian herds.

I understand a number of Australian herds achieve 14 born alive, so there is hope.

COP bashing

So, it's an interesting time in Australia and globally and you can never take things for granted.

The pursuit of efficiency and cost reduction is ongoing and may be in need of acceleration in Australia.

The summary of the US meetings will be with you soon.

Meanwhile, I remind all producers, once again, to keep working at reducing COP.

www.porkcrc.com.au



Variations in feed costs and additives significantly impact cost of production.

Trait	Mean	Range
Parity:	2.3	1-6
Feed intake (kg/sow in gestation)	228	181-310
Body weight gain (kg)	56.8	8-116
P2 at day 5 (mm)	16.1	8-26
P2 at day 112 (mm)	16.6	7-28
Farrowing rate (%)	95.0	0-100
Total born	14.9	1-25
Born alive	14.2	1-23
Number weaned at 23 days	13.3	0-17

Table 3

Lactation length (d)	18	19	20	21	22	Probability
Weight at weaning (kg)	4.54b	5.31a	5.50a	5.64a	5.53a	0.001
Weight at 15 days (kg)	93.2b	96.5ab	96.8a	98.0a	100.1a	0.004

Table 2

Changes to gestation stall standards

THE 10-year anniversary of the endorsement of the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs has a direct impact on producers in 2017.

The Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs includes one standard that is only activated after a decade.

Under the systems guidelines in the code, 4.1.5 states that 'from 10 years after the endorsement of the Code, a sow must not be confined in a stall for more than six weeks of any gestation period'.

An exception is noted – any individual sows that are under veterinary advice or special care by a competent stockperson.

The Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs has been ratified through NSW, Western Australian, Queensland, Victorian, South Australian, and Tasmanian legislation.

This means that the standard around gestation stalls will be a legal obligation for all pig producers from April 20, 2017.

The exception is for NSW, where it will become a legal obligation on July 1, 2017.

Some states and territories have already legislated these provisions or provisions requiring even shorter confinement times in stalls for gestating sows.

The delayed activation of this standard was included to ensure that producers had enough time to alter their production systems to comply.

Twenty-four percent of commercial sow sites, which cover 71 percent of all commercial sows, are already meeting the optional APIQ✓ Gestation Stall Free standard and Customer Specifications for supply standards (confined in a stall for no longer than 24 hours).

This standard requires gestation stalls to be used for no longer than five days after last mating.

For more information on APIQ✓ standards and certification, visit apiq.com.au

Sixty-four percent of sites and around 24 percent of commercial sows need to be aware that the legal expectations around gestation stalls have changed and they may not be compliant.

A review of the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs is commencing in 2017.

For further information about the change or if you have any concerns, contact Deb Kerr, General Manager Policy at Australian Pork Limited on 02 6270 8803 or email deb.kerr@australianpork.com.au

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Working to subdue our growing pains



Marketing Matters

by **PETER HAYDON**
General Manager Marketing



IT is probably fair to say that from a commercial perspective, 2017 so far has been the opposite of 2016 for pig producers.

In particular, it's hard to stomach reductions in price from close to \$4 per kilo to close to \$3.20 as an average.

From the evidence available, it appears that volume produced in January 2017 was 14 percent higher than January 2016.

Retail sales however, grew by 12 percent in January and by 18 percent in March.

January 2017 was the first time in a number of years that supply growth has exceeded demand growth, hence the fall in prices.

As the prices have continued to fall in February and March, it is likely that supply has maintained its strong growth.

Unsurprisingly, there have been quite a few calls from producers asking me what's going on, what Australian Pork Limited is doing about it and why the hell did I say we needed to grow by between 12,720 to 20,000 sows (4.8 to 7.6 percent)?

If I may, I'll respond to those in reverse order.

Why the hell did I say expand by at least 12,720 sows?

There are two reasons.

For the first one I have to take you back to August 2007.

That was when I joined APL.

I spent six of the first eight weeks at APL travelling around the country meeting producers.

Many of those meetings happened at kitchen tables where producers outlined just how much money they were losing.

They explained, sometimes in tears, how worried they were that they would lose their farm, their way of life and their self respect.

You can't witness that and not have it stay with you.

When I got back from my travels, the price and import data reinforced what I had been told by producers.

Imports were growing because they were cheaper than Australian pork; this increased supply and that decreased pig price and producers' margins over a number of years.

When the drought spiked grain prices it resulted in the industry contracting by 17 percent and many producers going out of business.

To reduce the 'imports are cheaper' problem we needed modern facilities.

To get those we needed strong balance sheets and confidence.

Over time, balance

sheets did indeed get repaired and 2015 and 2016 were good enough years for confidence in investment to return.

That appears to have started to come through in both increased productivity and new capacity (and some filling of previously retired capacity).

It has come through in a bigger lump than we hoped for but if this improved productivity in the hot months stays, we are a step closer to international competitiveness.

The second reason I said we want an increase in sows was that future sales will be more certain if pork gets into the regular meal repertoires of more consumers.

We need to be a habit for more people.

In order to do that we needed more volume.

What is APL doing about it?

Clearly, people who are making less money than they were a year ago are stressed; those who are making less money and have invested are doubly stressed.

As is hopefully widely known, we have increased marketing activity over the March to June period.

The new versatility adverts (there are six and will soon be eight of them) each feature a specific pork cut and show the consumer an array of different recipes they can make with that cut.

There is an example at youtu.be/PgVSdgnCHSs

These are customisable, so if there is a particular special promotion on in a particular channel in a particular state, we can integrate the advertising to make consumers aware of that special.

Finally, while demand has been strong, it has been converted into both volume sales and consumer price increases.

The level of premium charged for pork has increased on average.

Figure 1 shows pork price premium (the orange line) versus all fresh meat has increased from about 105 percent in 2011 to over 120 percent in February this year.

The blue bars represent volume sales growth (and decreases) by period, compared to the same period the year before.

The first signs of decreasing pig prices being reflected in reduced consumer prices have been seen in butcheries.

This should start to transfer to other retail shops for both at-home and out-of-home sales, which should accelerate sales, and is exactly what we want right now.

Fresh pork retail volume growth and price trends

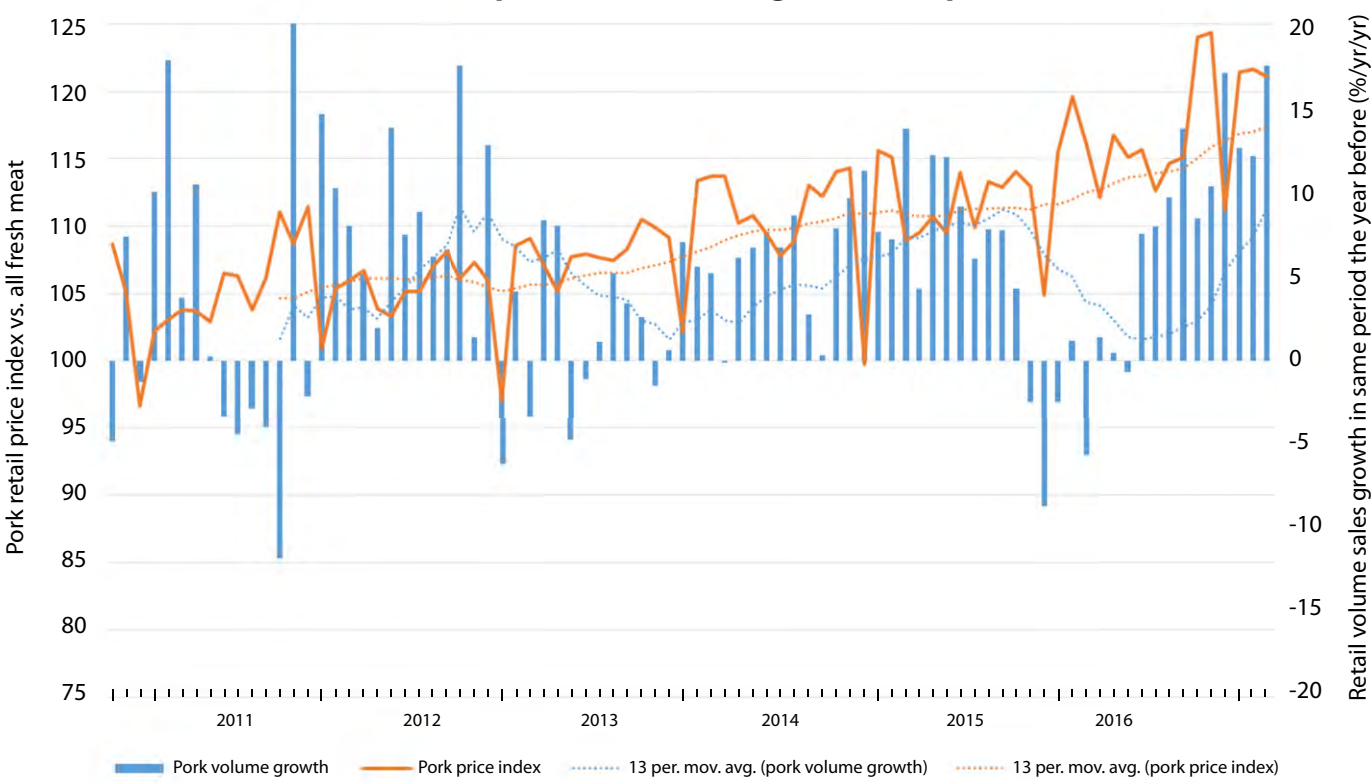


Figure 1



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How quickly the tide turns

TWELVE months ago, pork producers in Queensland and around the country were investing in their businesses, renovating sheds and increasing production on the back of increased demand and good market prices.

Over the past few weeks, the key question and concern of Queensland pork farmers was: "Where are prices going to end up?"

As everyone knows, price in the marketplace is a relationship between supply and demand, and while there has and continues to be growth in demand for pork as one of the main protein sources, there have been a number of counter-impacting influences.

The increase in production on almost all farms to take advantage of increased prices seen last year has resulted in a slight over-supply, giving rise to reduced prices at the farm gate, however there is an additional factor adding pressure to the supply side of the equation.

That is the increase of imported pork into the foodservice side of the market, not only for ham and bacon, which has been the case for some years now, but also for a range of cooked and ready to reheat and serve products, such as ribs and pulled pork.

The compounding impact hits the domestic market when wholesalers can't sell cuts that have now been replaced by imported fresh and cooked products.

Traditionally, primal cuts not sold the week of slaughter would be frozen pending use later in the year by smallgoods

pork
QUEENSLAND INC.
President's Perspective

by JOHN COWARD



operators and foodservice providers.

Now with more of these imported value-added products hitting the market, frozen stocks have built to levels not previously seen.

To be competitive against the value of the imported products, prices for carcasses have dropped dramatically across the domestic market, with producers being offered prices below the cost of production.

Queensland has had the additional impact of high grain prices, with the state experiencing another severe drought and now just when early summer rains had provided a glimpse of good-value local grain, especially in central Queensland, cyclone Debbie has flooded many such crops.

A number of producers have reported they will or have reduced production because they cannot sustain the impact of current carcass prices.

As for the longer-term position, additional marketing by Australian Pork Limited and key Australian players on the use of Australian pork is essential, as is support for the development of overseas markets to provide greater balance to support a growing pork industry.

Producers who have contractual arrangements with their wholesalers

have had some relief to falling prices but now find themselves back at the negotiation table.

It is an interesting and dynamic industry with as few as a thousand extra pigs in the weekly Australian east coast market having the ability to move the market pressure.

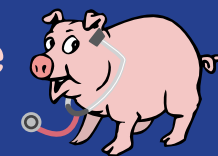
While contract pricing has flattened the seasonal price curve, this new impact from additional imported product will have a longer-term result.

Some relief may also come from producers who are not intending to adopt the new regulations around the limited use of gestation stalls and as such with the pressure of reduced returns will exit the industry and provide more balance to the market, resulting in a more sustainable position.

Heading further into 2017, Pork Queensland Inc will continue to advocate for producers in Queensland and will maintain the pressure on government to revise the fees relating to pig farming and other areas such as the recovery of biogas.

Pork Queensland Inc maintains its association with Queensland Farmers' Federation and together with other intensive farming operations pushes for the review of energy and other costs.

Pig Farm Perspective by Bruce the brainy pig



OF late, there has been some discussion within the pig industry regarding the impact of circovirus on breeding herds.

Porcine circovirus is the agent causing porcine circovirus-associated disease.

While PCVAD has long been recognised as a cause of reduced growth rates and increased mortality leading to significant economic losses in growing pigs, there is very little Australian data available on the effect of PCV2 on breeding herds.

PCV2 is relatively stable in the environment and can be transmitted vertically during gestation (in-utero) or lactation.

It can also be spread between pigs through nasal secretions and faeces.

Internationally, there are reports from as early as the 1990s linking reproductive failures and abortions to PCV2-

related disease within the breeding herd, manifesting predominantly as increased rates of mummified and still-born foetuses, late-term abortions and weak/non-viable piglets at birth.

In all these cases, PCV2 has been either isolated as the sole cause or in conjunction with other reproductive disease causes.

Most incidences of reproductive failure as a result of PCV2 have been due to a change in gilt source or other adjustments to the breeding herd.

It has also been shown that experimental infection of sows naive to PCV2 can result in reproductive disease.

Diagnosis of PCV2 as a cause of reproductive failure relies on:

- Increased late-term abortions/stillbirths/mummified piglets;
- Microscopic lesions consistent with PCV2 in the heart of the foetus; or

- Detection of PCV2 within the foetus.

When should you think about PCV2 and the risk that it might pose to your breeding herd?

Well, vaccination of replacement gilts to PCV2 should be considered if:

- Source of replacement gilts is changing;
- The breeding herd has low immunity to PCV2;
- The breeding herd is at high risk (such as gilt herds or herds with a low-parity structure);
- Herds have high replacement rates;
- There are any undiagnosed causes of reproductive failure within the herd; and
- Virus is detected in umbilical cords of newborn pigs.

While often not identified as a cause of reproductive failure, it is well worth considering circovirus as a possibility if you are having issues with reproductive losses.

Showing the way in WA

I MUST say I was delighted to walk into the West Australian Pork Producers' Association Pig Day Out recently at Technology Park and see a couple of tables of secondary school students up the back of the room.

With some agenda topics admittedly a little bland for 15 and 16 year olds, I wasn't surprised to see a few vacant looks and some headphones filling fresh young pink ears.

But, in general, the Bindoon Catholic Agricultural College students looked engaged and engaging, as did a few Murdoch University students I made a point of introducing to a couple of WAPPA heavyweights who otherwise may have left these vets and animal scientists of tomorrow to go it alone on the day.

Clearly, with pork producers and those up the chain so often lamenting that they can't attract good staff and/or keep them once they have them, it surprises and disappoints me a little that producers and other industry players don't welcome with open arms any opportunity to interface with the pig industry workers of tomorrow.

Having said that, congratulations to WAPPA for getting them along, I understand with help from former WAPPA president Steve Martin's daughter Stacey who now teaches at Bindoon.

I was pleased to be able to briefly chat with Brett Nelson, one of the College's three aboriginal



Cant Comment
by
BRENDON CANT

teacher's assistants, who along with Stacey accompanied the students, some indigenous, from Bindoon for the day.

With indigenous Australians having a long and proud history as outstanding stockmen, especially as horsemen, drovers, musters and station hands, there may simply be a natural fit here as innate stockmanship skills are surely highly sought after and valued at any piggery.

While admittedly some stock handling skills can be taught, having an affinity for animals and an inner understanding of nature is a big advantage and some of these fine young indigenous kids might just find they have a head start, given a heads-up and an opportunity.

For young people to be attracted to work in the pig industry, which, let's face it, can, subject to different production systems and work environments,

be not exactly a glamorous gig, key industry players need to get out and about and proactively promote the positives of a porcine workplace.

So, what are those positives, at least those that I see might appeal when marketing to a young potential workforce.

I use the word marketing deliberately, because clearly our industry competes with others and must, therefore, market its benefits and features.

Here's my top 10, in no particular order:

- Pigs are intelligent animals, capable of responding positively to positive handling.
- Piggeries offer consistent work, that is, seven days a week every day of the year. Not seasonal, unlike other on-farm jobs such as shearing, seeding and harvesting, for example.
- The industry is vertically integrated, meaning newcomers could begin work on-farm and then move up the chain to processing, packaging, sales and marketing.
- Industry is national and international, so career advancement and travel is possible.
- Industry is well backed by established, resourced marketing (Australian Pork Limited) and R&D (Pork CRC) bodies, which actively support students and those seeking pork career paths.
- WA's pork industry, particularly the free range sector, is on the move, with new piggeries planned or being established, all of which require a fresh workforce.
- A relatively small agriculture industry, at least compared to the likes of grain, beef and sheep,

WA's pig/pork industry is willing and able to embrace and nurture newcomers.

• The end product, pork, is the most consumed meat in the world, so there'll always be a ready market for the product you help produce.

• Of all livestock production industries, the pig industry is universally regarded as the most technologically advanced, especially in terms of objective measurement of inputs and outputs, right up to carcass classification and food product development.

• Free range pig farming, which offers an attractive open air work environment and a clearly trending consumer enthusiasm, is an increasingly popular production system, with WA showing the way. 🐷



Brett Nelson (second from left), an aboriginal teacher's assistant at Bindoon Catholic Agricultural College, was well aware that the photographer, yours truly, was well aware one of his students was giving him a set of rabbit ears. Our logic: it had been a good Friday and it was almost Easter, so let the kids have some fun. On a more serious note, WA's pig industry needs these kids.



Australian pork industry in safe hands with dedication to research

EVAN Bittner, Pork CRC supported PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, was recently pictured with his supervisor Prof Frank Dunshea, who last year was honoured with the title of Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor.

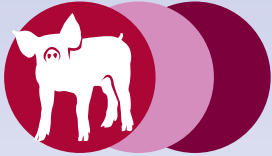
Prof Dunshea is understood to be the only member of the Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences to presently hold the award, which is a great achievement considering the distinction of some of his colleagues.

This significant achievement recognises professors who demonstrate outstanding leadership in the

University of Melbourne and the wider community, coupled with pre-eminence in their research, teaching and creative activity.

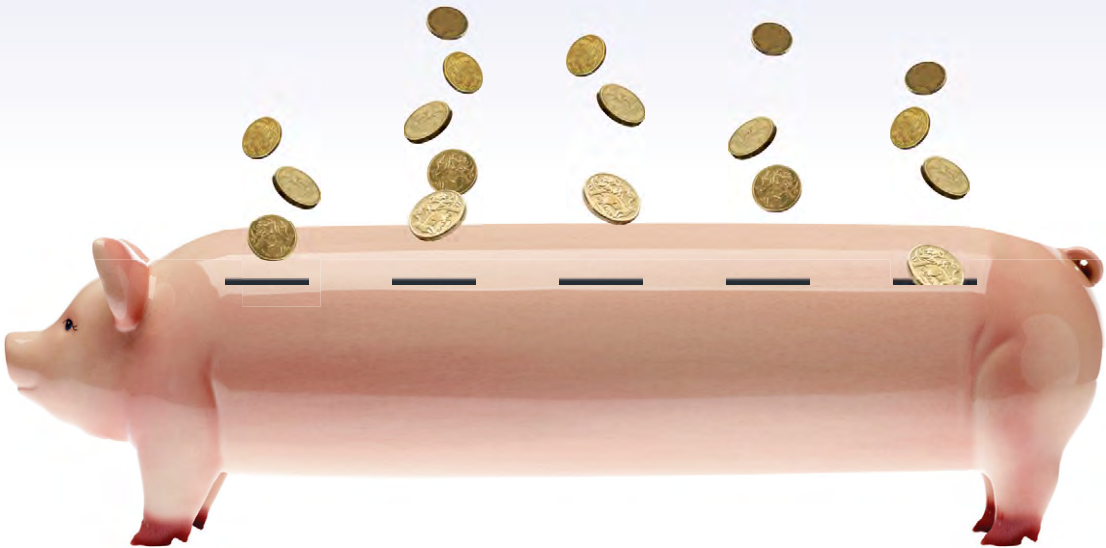
Congratulating Prof Dunshea on the award, Pork CRC CEO Dr Roger Campbell said he had not only made an outstanding contribution to teaching and developing students, many of whom have subsequently made substantial contributions to Australia's pork industry, but he had also undertaken and supervised often ground-breaking, globally recognised research which Pork CRC acknowledged and appreciated on behalf of its stakeholders. 🐷

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After addressing the Pig Day Out, Crawford Taylor of Rabobank and WAPPA President Dawson Bradford of Cuballing caught up with Ashley Norval of APL and Bruce Mullan of DAFWA.



Catching up at the Pig Day Out were Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Meat Exports Branch area technical manager and veterinarian Ran Tal, Narrogin-based DAFWA senior compliance officer Alex Stewart and Cuballing producers Graeme Dent and Angie O'Hara.



It was lunch time after all, at WA Pig Day Out 2017, so Pork CRC CEO Roger Campbell 'sandwiched' himself between Pork CRC PhD candidate Diana Turpin of Murdoch University and former Pork CRC honours student Ingunn Stensland, who started as an R&D officer with Linley Valley Pork on March 1.



Hungry but happy at the conclusion of the Pig Day Out were Narrogin pork producer Mark Conley and Sue Skirrow, Albany-based senior veterinary officer with DAFWA Livestock Biosecurity.



Pork CRC CEO Roger Campbell updated attendees on Pork CRC's high-priority R&D projects and over-viewed the global pig landscape.

Free ranging WAPPA Pig Day Out

from P1

posed by unwanted water-birds, especially ducks, when their faeces could contaminate pig feed and subsequently infect pigs with salmonella.

The risk was magnified in the increasingly popular free range and ecoshelter systems, which offered unwanted intruders relatively easy access to pig feed and pigs.

Avian influenza and swine dysentery were other threats, along with mycotoxins from grain and straw harvested in wet conditions.

Having just returned from animal science meetings in Des Moines, US, Pork CRC CEO Dr Roger Campbell revealed that the six-million-sow US industry was growing quite rapidly in terms of production and packing plants, with domestic demand increasing slower than population growth, which meant additional production had to be exported.

Currently about a quarter of production is exported.

"Trends apparent during my visit were continual improvement in reproduction, more judicious use of antibiotics, largely being driven by veterinarians and piggy disease loads remaining high for porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome and swine influenza virus and, to a lesser extent, porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus," Dr Campbell said.

Turning his attention to Australia, Dr Campbell

said the position for Australia's pork producers was changing and challenging, with their future dependent on how much further price slipped and how well they managed cost of production.

Australian Pork Limited general manager Policy Deb Kerr updated attendees on a range of industry statistics, including: national slaughterings up 11 percent in January 2017 on January 2016, resulting in national meat production rising by 14 percent on January 2016; and breed-

ing herd and fresh pork per capita consumption continuing to increase.

She also announced that an additional \$964,000 had been committed nationally to market the versatility of pork, with WA's share commencing with a roast promotion in April and the WA campaign concluding at the end of June.

WAPPA executive committee member Dean Romaniello, a senior manager with Linley Valley Pork, generated a spirited debate when he intro-

duced and addressed his agenda topic 'fit to load and abattoir protocols'.

A few producers vigorously debated perceived issues surrounding the new meat notice issued by the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Covering animal welfare concerns at export registered pork slaughtering establishments, it was effectively unveiled at the Pig Day Out by the De-

continued P9



Paying plenty of attention at the Pig Day Out were these year 11 students from Catholic Agricultural College Bindoon.



Something had amused Richard Evison and Taya Clarke, both of Westpork, and Wannamal producer Brendan Howard during a session at the Pig Day Out.



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WAPPA Pig Day Out

from P8

partment's Meat Exports Branch area technical manager and veterinarian Dr Ran Tal.

Dr Tal did his best to answer the many queries fired at him, as did Department of Agriculture and Food, WA senior compliance officer Alex Stewart, a 38-year DAFWA veteran based at Narrogin.

Much less controversial was an update on the research activities of Pork Innovation WA delivered by Emalyn Loudon, PIWA's secretary/treasurer and a WAPPA executive committee member.

Aside from finalising Pork CRC and APL projects PIWA inherited from DAFWA in June last year, its most significant new project hopes to establish WA as the Australian centre for the production of high-quality free range pork.

The two-and-a-half-year project will specifically tackle cooling system design for farrowing huts and nutrition protocols for supplementing essential fatty acids and betaine in lactating sows and develop a management toolkit for free range operatives.

PhD candidate Karen Moore of PIWA addressed the topic of optimising production of male pigs using Improvac, admitting that summarising six years of work into six minutes was a difficult task.

Her key take-home messages were: most fat deposition occurs in the second two-week period after the second dose of Improvac; Improvac males should be fed the same level of SID lysine as entires for two weeks after the second dose and following this the SID lysine should be decreased; light entires can still have boar taint; mineral salts reduce feed intake and improve FCR but have no effect on backfat or whole carcass fat; and albus lupins may reduce feed intake, improve FCR and reduce backfat.

The Pig Day Out's final speaker, Rabobank Food

and Agribusiness WA manager Crawford Taylor, unveiled his crystal ball to deliver a measured commodity outlook: world economy to improve in 2017; and grains, oil and freight to see price improvement, but only limited recovery due to significant stock and capacity overhang.

Mr Taylor said the US was expanding pork production, with a forecast 3 percent growth and, in the process, bringing five new plants online in the next two years.

China's domestic pork production was expected to rebound by 2 percent in 2017, while the EU's was tipped to decline by 1.5 percent.

Speaking after a very successful Pig Day Out, WAPPA president and Popanyinning producer Dawson Bradford said highlights were the robust discussions on all topics, but especially the hot button issues of animal welfare and codes of practice and the attendance of year 11 students from Catholic Agricultural College Bindoon.

"As we continue to grow our industry in WA, our future is increasingly dependent on developing, nurturing and accessing an available pool of quality, committed piggery staff," Mr Bradford said.

"We therefore encourage secondary and tertiary students to seriously consider making their careers in WA's pork industry and WAPPA commits to helping ensure pathways are both accessible and attractive."

WAPPA's executive committee comprises Dawson Bradford (president) of Popanyinning, Graeme Dent (vice president) of Cuballing, Torben Soerensen (treasurer) of GD Pork, Dean Romaniello of Craig Mostyn Group and Emalyn Loudon, consultant to the pork industry.

Front page footnote

Stacey Carter, then Stacey Martin, daughter of WA pork producers Steve and Sharon Martin of Wannamal, was the in-

augural Ron Collins Memorial Award winner in 2004.

Her award involved travel to the US and Canada to study auto-sort/weigh machines and to investigate how their piggeries attempted to alleviate labour costs.

After that, she managed her parents' farm until 2008 (when she took time out to have children), handing the reins over to her husband Jarrad.

He is the current manager after taking some time out of the industry.

Stacey started her Graduate Diploma in Education (secondary science and maths) in 2015, doing it part time.

She graduated at the end of 2016 and gained employment as a Science/Ag Science/Biology and Animal Production Systems teacher at Catholic Agricultural College Bindoon this year. www.wappa.com.au



Veterinarian Sarah Kahn, recently appointed DAFWA animal welfare director, discussed welfare and bio-security issues over lunch with WAPPA executive officer Jan Cooper.



Hungry men circled the food and OJ at the Pig Day Out.

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David Plant of Milne Agritech spent the lunch break doing some one-on-one networking.



Murdoch University students Lauren Oakden (animal science), Nicole Rutledge (veterinary science) and Bastian Ness (veterinary science) attended their first WA Pig Day Out where they welcomed one-on-one chats with veterinarian Kim Nairn of Portec and WAPPA president Dawson Bradford of Popanyinning. www.porknews.com.au

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Tim Croagh and Holly Sterne visited a Danish farmer with farm veterinarians Dr Laura Jensen, Dr Niels Hjørholm and Dr Claus Larsen from Boehringer Ingelheim.

Global Symposium on Sustainable Pork Production

IN March, Tim Croagh from Western Plains Pork in Victoria and Holly Sterne from Patoa Farms in New Zealand attended the Boehringer Ingelheim Global Symposium on Sustainable Pork Production in Krakow, Poland.

Fifty pork producers and veterinarians from around the world were invited to

participate in the three-day forum to meet and exchange their expertise and experiences about pork production, sustainability and the marketing of their pork.

The theme of the symposium was 'The global pig market: What do your cards look like for the future?'

Topics covered included

animal welfare, retail and market trends for food and the success of the Chilean pork industry in its efforts to export pork into Asia.

In addition to the opportunity to learn from world-leading experts at the forum, there was also plenty of time for the participants to share their experiences with each other.

A unique feature at the

end of each session was the presentation of the views expressed by everyone, both in areas of commonality and divergence, which was very useful to participants.

Tim said, "The Sustainable Pork Production conference in Krakow was very good and gave me a great understanding of where our industry here is expecting to focus on in the next few years."

"The range of speakers and their topics was of great value."

Another key highlight for Tim and Holly was a two-day farm tour in Denmark looking at outdoor and organic pig production.

The farm tour provided insight into the similar challenges that Danish, New Zealand and Australian farmers all face in farrowing sows outdoors, as well as the considerable differences in the regulation of Danish farming practices compared to Australasia and the different interpretations on what constituted free range pork.

To conclude the tour, the group visited the Danish Crown slaughter facility in Horsens, which slaughters and processes 20,000 pigs a day.

During the tour, the group was impressed with the efficiency of the slaughter and processing freely visible through windows alongside the company office.

Those at Danish Crown pride themselves on the full disclosure of the slaughter process to their consumers, demonstrating very clearly where their food comes from.

Holly Sterne said, "The Sustainable Pork Production conference and subsequent visits to pig farms in Denmark gave me an understanding of the appetite for addressing growing consumer focus on animal welfare."

"It was also good to see first-hand how farmers are shortening the supply chain and overcoming challenging environmental factors on the farm."

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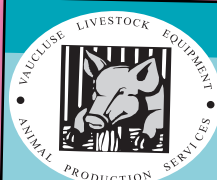
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Is biogas a viable option for smaller piggeries?

WHILE the economic viability of installing biogas collection and use systems at large piggeries has been well documented, the viability of installing biogas systems at smaller piggeries (less than 500 sows farrow to finish or 5000 SPU) has not yet been confirmed or documented.

A reported payback period of less than three years for a 2000-sow farrow-to-finish piggery in NSW was an impressive outcome and one which encouraged several larger piggery operators to install on-farm biogas systems in recent years.

This month's column is devoted to examining the feasibility of installing a biogas system at a typical 500-sow farrow-to-finish piggery.

On-farm costs

On-farm energy costs are influenced by the mix of energy sources (grid electricity, natural gas, LPG, diesel generator, solar), climate, building design, shed heating and cooling systems, lighting, water supply, effluent management and the presence of on-site feed milling.

The proximity of the piggery to reliable grid electricity and supply tariffs is also important.

Because no two farms are alike in terms of energy use and costs, the economic feasibility of biogas systems should be assessed on a site-specific basis and the examples outlined in this column can only provide general guidance.

For a typical 500-sow farrow-to-finish piggery, on-farm electricity consumption has been estimated to be from 90MWh/year (gas heated sheds) to 280MWh/year (fully elec-



by **ALAN SKERMAN**
Leader, Pork CRC Bioenergy Support Program



trically heated sheds plus feed mill), resulting in annual electricity costs of \$23,000 to \$70,000 a year, respectively.

If LPG is used for shed heating, consumption may be 41,000 litres/year at a cost in the order of \$33,000/year.

Consequently, total on-farm energy costs are likely to range from \$45,000 to \$80,000/year.

System costs

PigBal modelling suggests the 500-sow farrow-to-finish or 5000 SPU piggery would require construction of a covered 4.4ML-capacity anaerobic pond at a construction cost of \$121,000, including earthworks.

This CAP could produce an estimated 442 cubic metres of biogas on an average daily basis.

Assuming a methane content of 65 percent, it could provide 10GJ/day of total primary energy.

This biogas could be used to run an engine-driven generator, to produce electricity, or a combined heat and power system, producing electricity and hot water from the engine cooling and exhaust system.

The cost of a 50kWe CHP system, which could operate for about 20 hours a day, on average, is estimated at \$150,000, while a generator system (with-

out heat recovery) may cost about \$125,000.

Other biogas system components include a flare to burn excess biogas, a biogas cleaning system and safety and control systems.

The resulting total cost for installing a typical biogas system at the piggery is estimated at \$314,000 to \$344,000.

Ongoing operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$10,000/year.

Rather than using biogas to generate electricity, another alternative would be to install a biogas-fired hot water boiler, which may be feasible at piggeries that currently use hot water boilers burning LPG for heating farrowing and/or weaner sheds.

The total system cost (including the CAP) would be about \$166,000, which is less than half the cost of a CHP system.

The ongoing operation and maintenance costs would also be substantially less.

System returns

Depending on the pattern of on-farm energy use, the electricity and heat generated by the biogas system could potentially offset the entire grid-electricity and LPG consumption at the piggery, resulting in annual energy cost savings from \$44,000 to \$80,000 and simple payback periods of five to nine years.

However, it should be noted that biogas engine generators don't operate efficiently at less than about half their full operating capacity.

Consequently, close examination of hourly power consumption records may indicate it is preferable to install two 25kWe generators rather than the proposed 50kWe unit to more effectively meet base and peak loads.

However, there may be relatively few small-capacity units available on the market and the cost per kilowatt generally increases for smaller units.

The payback period for the alternative biogas boiler system was estimated at six years.

Exporting electricity

The value and complexity of exporting surplus electricity to the supply grid is often difficult to justify, given the relatively low typical sale price of \$0.03/kWh and the significant capital investment often required to upgrade the supply grid to receive the exported electricity.

However, the ability to

export electricity to the grid may improve the economic viability of running the generator at full capacity during periods of low on-site electricity demand.

Carbon credits

Assuming that all biogas is burnt in an engine, hot water boiler or flare (rather than being vented to the atmosphere), it is estimated that carbon emissions of 1495 tonnes CO₂-e can be prevented annually for the 500-sow farrow-to-finish piggery example.

Under the Australian Government's Emissions Reduction Fund, this represents 1495 Australian Carbon Credit Units.

The average ACCU price at a recent ERF auction was about \$10/ACCU, resulting in a potential further income of \$14,950/year for the sale of ACCUs earned by the proposed biogas system.

However, it should be noted that mandatory monitoring and auditing costs are likely to substantially reduce the net income from the ERF.

Piggeries that generate electricity, offsetting the use of grid supplies, may be eligible to trade Renewable Energy Certificates.

One REC is equivalent to one megawatt-hour of electricity generation.

RECs can be traded for cash and their value fluctuates according to market conditions.

Historically, RECs have roughly paid for the generator maintenance costs for some existing piggery installations.

Careful considerations

The examples provided in this column suggest that biogas systems may be viable at relatively small piggeries, giving simple payback periods of five to nine years.

These estimates do not include any income from the sale of RECs and ACCUs.

In general, comprehensive, site-specific assessments that consider the mix of existing on-farm energy sources and use patterns are recommended before proceeding with biogas system developments.

If you require further information regarding the feasibility of biogas systems at smaller piggeries, contact me on 07 4529 4247 or email alan.skerman@daf.qld.gov.au

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Aussie's oldest Fire Chief pump

ALTHOUGH Aussie Pumps is a relative newcomer to the Australian pump market, the Aussie Fire Chief has actually been in service in this country for a number of years.

Previously marketed under the Pacific brand name before Aussie Pumps started, the Fire Chief set new standards for performance and longevity.

Now Aussie Pumps is running a competition to find the oldest operating Fire Chief in the country.

The prize is a brand-new Aussie Fire Chief with a 6.5hp GX200 Honda petrol engine.

Aussie Pumps' Brad Farrugia said, "Since we started the competition early in the year, we have found machines that are 28 and even 30 years old that have been operating continuously and providing great customer service."

"They are fitted with the original Honda GX140 engine, the first of the

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John Paul Jordan from Capertee Valley said, "Our old Fire Chief has never missed a beat in 28 years."

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That is probably a record in machinery longevity and low-cost maintenance.

"What I like about the Chief is that it still performs just as well as when it was new," JP said.

"The Honda engine never misses a beat and the heavy-duty skids supplied as standard on all Fire Chiefs mean it provides a stable platform to work off the back of the ute or even in rough terrain."

Aussie's pumps are superbly match-tested to the Honda engines to ensure the engines are not overloaded when the pump is in operation.

This extends the life of the engine and improves fuel economy.

The pump's hydraulic designs ensures high efficiencies and performance levels.

JP's pump is in the competition and now Aussie dealers around the country are looking for anybody with an Aussie Fire Chief pump that is older and still in operating condition who would like to enter the competition.

Winners will be decided by the end of April 2017 and the new pump awarded to the lucky winner.

"JP is in with a big chance," Farrugia said.

"Aussie and Honda, what a combination."

"It's that Honda-approved engine match program that really gets the best out of the product."

Further information on the Aussie Fire Chief is readily available from aussiepumps.com.au and Aussie Pumps distributors throughout Australia.



John Paul Jordan from Capertee Valley with his 28-year-old Fire Chief.

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less than 145 days

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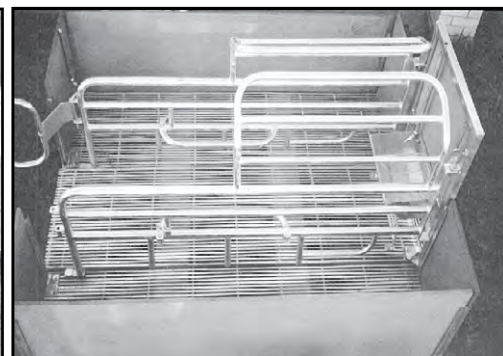
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