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# Australian Pork

## NEWSPAPER

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Vol 30. No. 5 May 2026 Australian Pork Newspaper PO Box 162 Wynnum 4178 Phone 0450 672 553 Email ben@collins.media



Dr Charles Rikard-Bell provided an overview of APRIL's current and upcoming farrowing house projects.

## APRIL reviews APL's 2026 Pork n Talk roadshows

AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited's annual Pork n Talk roadshow has wrapped up after five events across the country, with this year's program putting research, both current and emerging, front and centre.

Under the theme of 'Farrowing house success', the series brought together pig veterinarians, researchers and producers to share practical insights aimed at lifting sow and piglet outcomes in commercial farrowing systems.

Across the country, guest speakers returned to a consistent message – strong results start with fundamentals.

Industry veterinarians highlighted the importance of sow body condition and getting the essentials right in the farrowing house – that is, principles that underpin piglet survival, sow

recovery and overall litter performance.

The roadshow also featured a strong peer-learning focus, with producers presenting outcomes from in-house trials on changes in management practices.

Topics included split suckling, creep feeding, pain relief, day-one care, fostering strategies and late-gestation and lactation nutrition.

Each event opened with insights from Australian pork industry chief scientist Dr John Pluske, following the International Conference on Pig Livability in Nebraska last November.

His key takeaways echoed the same theme – day one piglet care, colostrum intake and strong nursery management are critical to all-of-life survival.

Dr Pluske also outlined how some US farms are rethinking

and reprioritising day one care tasks in response to ongoing labour constraints.

### APRIL IPP awardees showcased practical nutrition and feeding findings

Australasian Pork Research Institute Limited past and present Industry Placement Program awardees featured strongly, with Dr Max Muller from the University of Queensland outlining his research into using low crude protein diets during lactation to help sows better cope with summer heat.

The work reported measurable benefits for sow comfort and performance, including increased feed intake and reductions in body temperature and respiration rate.

The project also identified shifts in metabolic indicators associated with heat stress.

➔ continued P2

## Reflecting on seven years of progress for Australian pork

THIS month, I am formally announcing that after nearly seven years as chief executive officer of Australian Pork Limited, I've made the difficult decision to step down in August this year.

I've often said I'm lucky to have the best job in the world, representing the best protein in the world – but I feel the time is right for someone else to have the opportunity to lead, and for me to explore other opportunities.

It has been an absolute honour to guide this industry through a period of real growth and progress.

Over the past seven years, Australian Pork Limited and industry have worked together to strengthen our strategic direction and deliver meaningful outcomes for producers and stakeholders across the value chain, and to continue enabling pork to be the progressive protein – nutritious, sustainable and always improving.

While I'm still here for another three months, I've spent a lot of time reflecting lately and wanted to share some highlights of all we've achieved together during my time as CEO.

I also think that in the current climate with global trade disruption impacting



Point of View

by MARGO ANDRAE  
CEO



our industry, it's important to reflect on our united approach, which has underpinned our resilience and demonstrates how far we've come in recent years.

**Taking care of our pigs, our people and our planet**  
I am especially proud of the way our industry has strengthened community trust. From evidence-based welfare practices to transparent sustainability frameworks and national leadership on biosecurity preparedness, we have consistently demonstrated what responsible modern agriculture looks like in Australia.

This has included being endorsed to lead the first national standards and guidelines for pig welfare, bringing together stakeholders across industry, government, welfare and science to develop nationally consistent evidence-based guidelines that are right for our

farmers and our animals – a milestone achievement for our industry.

Australian pork also remains a national leader in biosecurity protection and preparedness.

We've continued to enhance our traceability systems, including the forthcoming PigPass 2.0 app, a huge lift from the APL team.

As an industry, we've also made strides in environmental sustainability, reaching 73 percent reduction in emissions intensity, becoming one of the lowest emissions proteins.

### Championing Australian pork and Team Australia on the national stage

During my time as CEO, pork has become the second-most consumed meat in Australia and continues to be a critical part of the national diet, especially as consumers navigate ongoing cost of living pressures.

Our 'Get some pork on your fork' campaigns and the evolution of valuable provenance branding have grown consumer awareness, built confidence in Australian pork and enhanced recognition of the quality, integrity and innovation behind every product.

Also, I've been proud to have had the opportunity to promote our product as a critical part of Australia's food security.

Australian pork continues to prove its value where it matters most to consumers, as a protein that's great for your health, the planet and the hip pocket.

That value is delivered by all of you, so I want to acknowledge the unity, professionalism and heart of the APL team and our producers.

It has been a privilege to stand alongside people who care deeply about their animals, their communities and each other.

Recruitment for the next CEO is currently underway.

I look forward to welcoming them in due course and supporting them through the transition period before watching the industry continue to lift the bar and move forward under new leadership.

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## ATTENTION

### Clarification

The Australian Pork Newspaper is a wholly independent publication owned by Collins Media.

APN does not receive any funding or financial support from Australian Pork Limited.

APN works with APL in providing a medium between producers and industry representatives.

As an independent publication, APN also aims to provide a wholistic view on all issues impacting the pork industry.

APN encourages feedback on published articles in either written form or via phone.

Contact Ben Collins on [ben@collins.media](mailto:ben@collins.media) or call 0450 672 553.

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## Pork Industry Calendar of Events

2026

**MAY 12-14** – Food with Purpose – Gold Coast, Queensland. <https://www.pix.au/conf26>

**MAY 13-14** – British Pig and Poultry Fair – Birmingham, UK. <https://pigandpoultry.org.uk>

**MAY 13-15** – 17th European Symposium of Porcine Health Management – Florence, Italy. <https://www.esphm2026.org>

**JUN 2-4** – VIV Europe 2026 – Utrecht, The Netherlands. <https://www.viveurope.nl>

**JUN 3-4** – World Pork Expo 2026 – Des Moines, USA. <https://www.worldpork.org>

**JUN 16-19** – IPVS 2026 – Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. <https://ipvs2026.vn/>

**AUG 19-21** – VIV Select China 2026, Shanghai, China. <https://china.viv.net>

**AUG 25 & 26** – Minitube Porcine TechDays, Golden Point, Victoria. <https://form.jotform.com/260257675984068>

**SEP 19-22** – Allen D. Lemans Swine Conference 2026 – St Paul Minnesota, USA. <https://lemanconference.umn.edu>

**SEP 22-24** – Expomeat 2026 – Sao Paulo, Brazil. <https://www.expomeat.com.br/>

**OCT 6-8** – International PRRS Symposium 2026 – Barcelona, Spain. <https://iprrs2026.org>

**OCT 21-23** – Pork Expo Mexico – Aguascalientes, Mexico. <http://pork-expo.org/>

**How to supply event details:**  
Send all details to Australian Pork Newspaper, PO Box 162, Wynnum, Qld 4178, call 0450 672 553 or email [design@collins.media](mailto:design@collins.media)

**porknews.com.au**  
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# APRIL reviews APL's 2026 Pork n Talk roadshows

from P1

Inflammatory and heat stress markers such as arachidonic acid and cholesterol were lower in sows fed the low-protein diet, suggesting less metabolic strain when the temperature rises.

Dr Katelyn Tomas spoke on the role of creep feeding in preparing piglets for weaning.

While creep feeding can support stronger performance at weaning, she emphasised that success depended on proper implementation, including when to introduce creep to piglets, pellet size and daily replacements.

She highlighted that creep composition did not need to be expensive or complex as pre-weaning intake was low.

Producers should be aiming at not only increasing creep intake but also improving the percentage of piglets consuming it.

### APRIL update highlights farrowing house projects with on-farm outcomes

A broader research update was delivered by Dr Charles Rikard-Bell, who provided an overview of APRIL's current and upcoming farrowing house projects, with an emphasis on outcomes that can be translated into day-to-day practice.

One project highlighting cost of production was 'Heating up the house (5A-116)', led by Dr Jessica Craig from JBS Pork Australia.

The study investigated which piglet heating source delivered the best overall performance.

Of the three heating sources evaluated, Hog Hearth heat mats demonstrated multiple advantages over conventional heat lamps, including reduced piglet mortality, improved cost-effectiveness and greater energy efficiency.

Technology also

featured in farrowing house research through 'Use of thermographic technology to detect reproductive state in sows and improve piglet performance (6A-104)', also led by Dr Craig.

This work explored whether infrared thermal cameras could be used in commercial farrowing environments to identify lactating sows at risk of common health issues. Findings suggested devices such as the FLIR E8 thermal camera may offer a non-invasive alternative to traditional temperature measurements.

Another project, 'Escaping the daily grind (5A-111)', led by Dr Kate Plush from SunPork Group, examined whether gestational feed grind size influenced subsequent litter performance.

Results showed that coarser particle size increased sow production of short-chain fatty acids and was

associated with fewer low birthweight (less than 1.1kg) piglets.

New studies underway target colostrum, farrowing duration and heat stress management

Dr Rikard-Bell also highlighted several projects now underway, including investigating whether providing sows with a salt enrichment block increases colostrum production and in turn improves piglet performance to weaning, led by Dr Lauren Staveley at SunPork Group.

At Adelaide University, Thien Dihn Van is researching whether the inclusion of ammonium chloride in late gestational diets can reduce farrowing duration and subsequently improve litter survival to weaning.

Dr Kate Plush is examining the impacts of heat stress on farrowing duration and subsequent litter performance and whether these impacts can be managed through di-

etary or water additives.

Formerly of SunPork Group, James Langley is investigating whether novel creep feed delivery designs that promote natural behaviours improve creep feed intakes.

While the series covered a wide range of topics, a recurring theme emerged – farrowing house improvement often comes from simple well-timed changes, backed by science and tested under commercial conditions.

From nutritional strategies that help sows maintain feed intake during hot spells to improved heating options for piglets and new tools for monitoring sow health, it was clear that APRIL-supported research is exactly where it needs to be – delivering practical industry-driven results that can be adopted on farm simply and cost-effectively. 🐷

APRIL

# Surveillance project highlights JEV exposure in commercial pig herds

AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited has concluded its Japanese encephalitis virus surveillance project, which began in November 2025 and involved collection of samples from commercial pigs to provide up-to-date information on JEV exposure in pigs across Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

The purpose of the project was to help producers better understand and manage JEV exposure and risks during the 2025-26 summer period.

The project collected 1266 serology samples from pigs across all states involved in the study and confirmed some evidence of JEV exposure in domestic pigs across

multiple states.

Detection results – positive/total samples – were as follows:

- Queensland 69/568
- NSW 70/439
- Victoria 10/199
- South Australia 8/60.

In addition to domestic pigs, JEV was also detected in a range of other sources, including piggery effluent in Queensland and Victoria, feral pigs

in NSW, mosquitoes in Victoria, sentinel chickens in NSW and human cases in NSW and Victoria.

While surveillance activities differ between states, these findings collectively indicate the presence of JEV across multiple regions.

APL would like to thank all those involved in sample collection and processing.

The support of industry and government partners was essential to the success of this program, and APL thanks everyone involved for their collaboration and support.

Following conclusion of the project, the JEV surveillance detection map will no longer be included in routine APL updates until the next high-risk period, however monitoring and reporting of any new detections will continue.

Producers are encouraged to maintain a proactive approach to biosecurity, particularly through effective mosquito management practices – as outlined in the APL resource 'Integrated Mosquito Management Prin-

ciples for Piggeries', available on the APL website.

Vaccination is also strongly recommended for individuals working on, living near or visiting pig farms and abattoirs.

Producers should remain alert for clinical signs consistent with JEV, including reproductive losses, increased returns to service, abortions and weak or deformed piglets.

Any concerns should be reported promptly to a veterinarian.

Further information and previous surveillance updates are available via the APL website, scan the QR code below. 🐷

**Mandy Bowling**  
APL Program  
Manager Health and  
Biosecurity



Scan for more information and previous updates.



## Integrated Mosquito Management Principles for Piggeries

Producers are encouraged to maintain a proactive approach to biosecurity, particularly through effective mosquito management practices.

**Australian  
Pork**

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Big Dutchman Agriculture (Australia) Pty Ltd  
For further information, contact  
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Mobile: 0459 852 004, Email: [jvgent@bigdutchman.com](mailto:jvgent@bigdutchman.com)

**MS Schippers**

# Piggery pump breakthrough

IT'S no secret that pumping effluent into a piggery can be very tough on pumps.

Both abrasion and corrosion are the big enemies of pumps that are manufactured from cast iron and sometimes even those made from 304-grade stainless steel.

One Australian company, Aussie Pumps, has put a lot of work into developing a range of 316-cast stainless-steel pumps that provide long trouble-free operation.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales

said: "Working with piggeries around the country, we learnt that nothing really lasts like casings and internals of 316 stainless steel."

The company started out with cast-iron pumps and then graduated to installing them with 316 stainless-steel impellers.

"The difference in the wear and reliability was very obvious, and we found the impellers were lasting longer than the bodies," Mr Hales said.

The company made a major decision to invest heavily in 316 stain-

less-steel pumps for tough applications where abrasion and corrosion were rampant.

Aussie Pumps is now satisfied that by using castings of 316 stainless steel for the body as well as the impeller and other key components is a much better solution than any cast-iron pump.

The pumps are all self-priming and can be either electric motor driven with 240V 2" and 3" models, with bigger 4" ports that can handle up to 2200LPM flow.

"It's a breakthrough for the pork industry," Mr Hales said.

"As volume goes up, our prices become more competitive against cast-iron pumps that will last a fraction of the time a genuine 316 stainless-steel pump will."

Further information on the stainless-steel revolution is available from [aussiepumps.com.au](http://aussiepumps.com.au) or from Aussie Pumps' head office at Norwest in Sydney or dealers throughout Australia.

**Aussie Pumps**



A 4" 316 stainless-steel pump being prepped before shipment at Aussie Pumps' Norwest factory.



# Developing pork industry's future – Food with Purpose 2026

FOOD with Purpose 2026 will provide an important platform for Australia's pork industry to come together around a shared commitment to progress, innovation and long-term sustainability.

Held as part of the broader Food with Purpose framework, alongside the Poultry Information Exchange and Australian Milling Conference, the Australian Pork Limited program will maintain a clear focus on the priorities and opportunities shaping the pork sector.

This structure will enable valuable cross-sector collaboration while ensuring pork industry outcomes remain central.

The conference and exhibition will be held from May 12-14 at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event will reflect the strength of an industry built on practical knowledge, shared expertise and strong

partnerships across the supply chain.

From production technologies and housing systems to health management, feed solutions and processing innovation, Food with Purpose 2026 will create space for new ideas to be examined in a practical and commercially relevant context.

A defining strength of the event will be the depth of support from partners, sponsors and exhibitors.

More than 160 companies and organisations will contribute across the broader exhibition, representing every stage of the supply chain and reinforcing the importance of industry collaboration in driving future progress.

Their involvement will represent more than participation, it will be a direct investment in the continued advancement of Australian pork production.

This collective support will ensure that Food with Purpose remains grounded in its core purpose – creating an environment where producers, suppliers, researchers and service providers can exchange knowledge, strengthen relationships and address the challenges facing the industry together.

We extend our sincere thanks to all partners, sponsors and exhibitors whose commitment will make Food with Purpose 2026 possible.

Their contribution will play a vital role not only in the success of the event itself but in

supporting a resilient and forward-looking pork industry.

As the sector continues to respond to evolving pressures – from sustainability expectations and workforce challenges to biosecurity and market demands – events such as Food with Purpose will remain essential in helping shape a stronger future for Australian pork.

Registrations are still available, with day registrations available from the registration desk during the event.

For more information and future event updates, visit [www.pix.au/conf26](http://www.pix.au/conf26)



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1 - Meta-analysis 2021.02-TON-META-PWM (\*P < 0.0001; 70 studies; N = 148,170 pigs; various genetics). 2 - Study 18-014 (\*P < 0.01; N = 2,193 pigs). 3 - Studies 16-009, 16-003, 18-126 (\*P < 0.05)



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For further information about Tonistry Px, please contact **CCD Animal Health**.

Rebecca Jamieson, CCD Animal Health. National Key Account Manager – Swine

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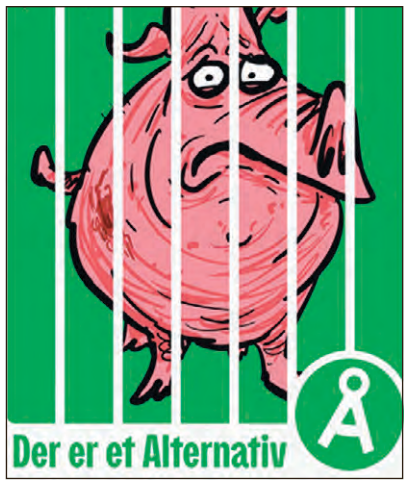
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# Denmark's national pig election



Seeing pig farmers and their staff targeted and shamed for being cruel and uncaring to their animals was disheartening.



ON March 24, the national general election was held in Denmark, this year being referred to as 'Svinevalg' – that is, the 'pig election'.

Though it was predicted to be a major topic of debate, it was surprising that the focus of most parties was the pig industry in Denmark, regardless of which electorate they were representing.

Most of the discussion was related to the animal welfare and environmental management aspects – often inaccurately intertwined – of the pig industry, noting that all other Danish agricultural industries remained free of such intense scrutiny.

Of course, it was to be expected that parties with a green and/or vegan agenda would have their campaign focused on abolishing animal production, but for this election most parties seemed to have an opinion on the way forward for the Danish pig industry, either expressing support or proposals for reduction.

Nordic News  
by ASHLEY NORVAL



I don't think I have ever seen so many politicians have their pictures taken with piglets.

Interestingly, most arguments with regards to animal welfare were related to the number of stillborn piglets and transport, instead of the farrowing conditions of the sow.

Though some parties still mentioned that "Denmark must abolish farrowing crates" – which was behind the times since it was legislated on January 1, 2026.

The pig industry was also blamed for the reduced quality of Danish drinking water via pesticide contamination – though, of course, the fact that the highest water contamination area was the capital Copenhagen, where no pigs are produced, escaped most debates.

There is no denying that there is room for improvement in the industry – and in fact any agricultural commodity produced in

Denmark and beyond – but to see this play out so personally, whereby pig farmers and their staff were targeted and shamed for being cruel and uncaring to their animals, was quite disheartening.

At the 2024 Food with Purpose event on the Gold Coast, I gave a presentation titled 'Current issues facing the Danish pig industry in relation to welfare changes', and in it I included examples of Danish politicians who had marked the closing or reduction of the pig industry on their agenda.

In that presentation, I highlighted that this plan to reduce or close the pig industry was becoming much more mainstream, with the issues of animal welfare and the environment being misrepresented and conflated to scare the Danish public into pressuring the government into closing the industry.

My prediction for this

intensifying – especially with little to no pushback from the agricultural sector to correct such misconceptions – could be seen in this national election.

Such was the intensity of the debate that even companies with nothing to do with agriculture used this to their advantage.

Though the social democrats – led by the outgoing Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen – won the general election with 21.9 percent, they failed to secure a majority and in fact lost 12 seats.

The split of the seats in parliament is now 84 seats for the red block, 14 for the moderates and 77 for the blue block.

Coalition negotiations are ongoing to form the new government, with the timeline likely at least another month before a decision is made.

While it has been quiet since the election, I think it is important to remember that it is political agendas and not scientific facts that drive legislative changes.

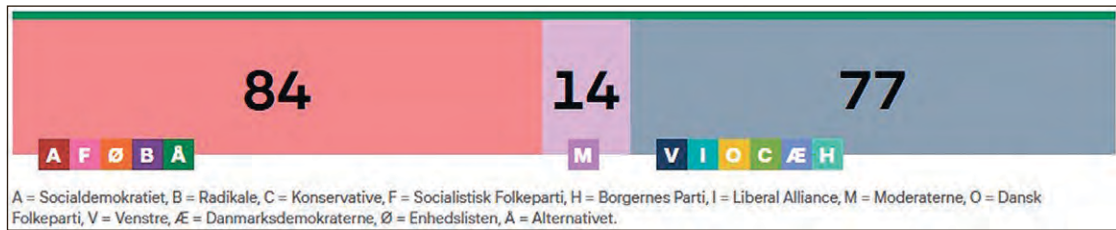
It is clear that this political pressure is not going away and it will be interesting to see what the new government's view is on the future of the Danish pig industry.



Some companies with nothing to do with the industry used the intensity of the debate to their advantage.



For Denmark's svinevalg, issues of animal welfare and the environment were conflated to scare the Danish public.



Denmark's recent 'pig election' results. Photo: dr.dk/nyheder/politik/folketingsvalg/resultater

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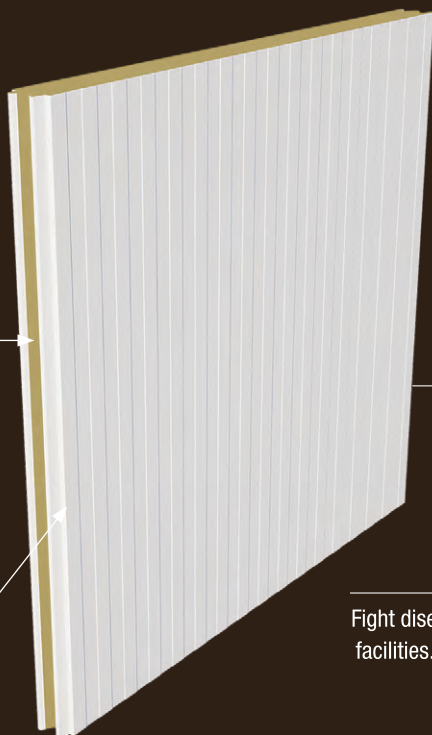
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# Producer leadership wanted

**Cant  
Comment**  
by BRENDON CANT



the Western Australian Waterways Commission and a member of the senate of the University of Western Australia.

His experience and excellent foresight and judgement were recognised by the award of an 'Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire' in 1977, a knighthood in 1981 and selection as 'Australian Man of the Year in Agriculture' in 1979.

While not suggesting today's farm industry leaders pale into insignificance when compared with those of old, such as Sir Donald, I can and will say that they no longer have the eyes and ears of those who count and they rely far too much on consultants and intermediaries to deliver their messages to where it counts.

Here of course it would be remiss of me to not reveal that I jumped from journalism to the arguably dark side (of public relations) in 1984.

But I maintain with informed and sincere conviction that, more often than not, today's farmer leaders far too often are far too complicit and obliging when it comes to how they deal with politicians.

They need to be bold, brave and proud of their convictions and lobby for them strongly and unapologetically.

Anything less will be and is being dismissed, discarded and ignored.

Pork producer politics sadly fits this bill at state and federal levels.

very real experience of this was when, in 1980, I moved to Canberra with the *Farmers Weekly*, the paper manifesto of the then WA Farmers' Union, later to transition to Primary Industry Association of WA and most recently WA Farmers Federation.

Seated next to inaugural president of the National Farmers' Federation and favourite Harvey, WA son Sir Donald Eckersley on my transfer flight to Canberra, I was privy to his considerable vision and wisdom, effectively enjoying an inside seat to the power that was about to ultimately matter.

Sir Donald was convinced, and convinced me, that the only way for farmers to enjoy the attention and indeed respect of Australian parliamentarians – in particular those who counted in Canberra – was by speaking with a united voice, with a national perspective, rather than mumbling state colloquialisms as had been the way for way too long.

Impressive man he was and I was privileged to share and consume his considerable wisdom.

It would soon give me a perspective and

balance, which I did my best to utilise as a 23-year-old journo, to debate and engage with the likes of Bob Hawke at the National Press Club of Australia over... you guessed it... a few beers.

Bob was then president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Labor Party, and about to pull the pin to become a Federal MP and ultimately Prime Minister in 1983.

Anyway, back to Sir Donald who, after service with the Royal Australian Air Force in World War II, commenced dairy farming in the Harvey District in 1946 and gave a lifetime of service to primary producers' associations in and beyond WA.

His celebrated offices included president of Farmers Union of Western Australia 1972-75, president of Australian Farmers' Federation 1975-79 and inaugural president of the National Farmers' Federation 1979-81.

Sir Donald also served 10 years as president of the Harvey Shire Council, was chair of the South West Development Authority, chair for three years of the Artificial Breeding Board, a member of

HAVING spent pretty much my professional lifetime working in and around agriculture, after commencing relatively fresh out of university as a journalist with the then *Elders Weekly* in Western Australia in the late 1970s, I have developed and grown a mix – I think at least – of cynicism and wonder at the weird and wacky ways of the cycles of agriculture and farming in the Land Down Under.

In particular, my journalistic eyes and ears have often curiously focused on the vagaries of grower and producer politics – irrespective of whether my brief was to research, write and inform on matters research and development, for example.

Farmers being such independent strong-willed souls and go-it-alone workers of the land, it's no surprise that when it comes to matters of levies, government support and, dare I say it, subsidies, and the likes of non-governmental organisations and farm lobby groups, they rarely visualise let alone adopt a unified stance.

And of course it's a single voice that governments welcome and want.

Without that single voice, farmers typically will be lobbying against a brick wall.

My inaugural and



## Our man in Canberra

The Stock Journal has appointed a full time staff reporter in Canberra. Mr. Brendon Cant (pictured) will cover rural news in the national capital from this week. Mr. Cant is jointly employed by the Stock Journal and the WA rural newspaper, the *Farmers Weekly*. He was educated at Aquinas College, Perth and studied journalism at the WA Institute of Technology before entering rural journalism. Stock Journal managing editor, Mr. Richard James, said this week that Mr. Cant's appointment would strengthen the Journal's coverage of vital national farming news. Canberra had become increasingly important to Australian farmers, particularly as all the nation's farmer organisations, under the umbrella of the National Farmers' Federation, were now strongly represented there.



Mr. Brendon Cant

## Man on the spot for Farmers Weekly

Mr Brendon Cant has been appointed Canberra correspondent for *Farmers Weekly* and the *Adelaide Stock Journal*. Mr Cant, who was educated at Aquinas College, Perth, studied journalism at the WA Institute of Technology before entering rural journalism. The Managing Editor of *Farmers Weekly*, Mr. Brian Nelson, said the successful launching of the National Farmers Federation had underlined the need for a man on the spot in Canberra. "Over the past few years the *Farmers Weekly* has earned a reputation of being first with important news stories and Mr Cant's appointment should strengthen the newspaper's overall coverage of primary industry affairs," he added.



The author heading for Canberra 1980.

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Brendon with some of his rural friends

Ward Holt Account Manager, Brendon Cant, has been re-elected unopposed to a second term as President of the Rural Press Club of WA.

Brendon joined Ward Holt in February 1984 and is one of the company's longest-serving consultants.

He manages an extensive rural portfolio, which includes Wesfarmers Rural, Australian Wool Corporation, Grain Pool of WA, Monsanto, TPW, a number

of studs and several smaller companies.

Prior to joining Ward Holt, Brendon was a leading rural journalist with newspapers and magazines in WA, SA and Canberra. He regularly contributes freelance articles to various magazines.

He also has practical farming experience and, in partnership with his father, runs one of WA's leading deer farms, supplying venison to Australian and overseas markets.

The author working on the 'dark side' 1988.

# Gorman-Rupp pump efficient with pig waste recycling

MIDWEST Piggery has been breeding pigs for over 30 years.

A mid-size enterprise, the piggery raises the animals and then sells them to market.

As part of the piggery's recycling philosophy, all pig waste is collected and broken down before being used as fertiliser on the grounds.

Midwest Piggery principal partner and manager Mat Collier said, "We collect the pig waste in what we call sump pits."

"The effluent is then pumped from the sump up to a holding dam.

"It then moves progressively through a series of dams before the effluent is eventually ready for use as a fertiliser."

### The problem

To move the pig waste from the sump to the holding dam, the piggery was using three market-leading helical rotor pumps – also known as progressive cavity pumps.

Located at ground level operating on a suction lift, the pumps were proving increasingly inefficient and costly to maintain.

"After we bought the helical rotor pumps, we quickly discovered that they have a very fine tolerance," Mr Collier said.

"The suction hose started to block continuously and, if the pumps ran dry, the motor would burn out and the rubber stator melted.

"Not only did we have to remove the choke, we had to replace the stator, which was incredibly awkward and frustrating.

"Getting to the stator was difficult enough, then we had to literally peel away the melted rubber that had stuck to the equipment.

"Every time we had to clear the choke and replace the stator, it took a good three to four hours of our precious time."

The process not only proved time intensive, but it was also very costly.

According to Mr Collier, a new stator cost about \$1000 and, because the pumps were choking and burning out with increasing regularity, the cost to replace the stators also grew.

In one year alone, the piggery spent around \$10,000 on new stators.

Fed up and frustrated with the helical rotor pumps, Mr Col-

lier started to search for a far more efficient solution.

Coincidentally, his father-in-law had just read an article on Hydro Innovations and the Gorman-Rupp pumps that it supplies and drew his attention to it.

After reading it, what particularly appealed to Mr Collier was the fact that Hydro Innovations was happy to provide prospective customers with a trial period.

### The solution

"Having paid and used a series of pumps including submersible ones in the past, I didn't want to spend any more money on pumps that could not do the job," Mr Collier said.

"So coming across a supplier who was happy to let the pump prove itself before I bought it was great."

After reviewing the piggery's requirements, Hydro Innovations suggested that a Gorman-Rupp T2A3-B wastewater pump fitted with a 4kW motor be installed – a compact model that would provide both the flow and the pressure needed.

According to Hydro Innovations general manager Garry Grant, the Gorman-Rupp T2A3-B is a rugged self-priming centrifugal solids-handling pump.

Very easy to maintain, the pump has an external removable flap valve that can be removed and inspected without the inconvenience of disconnecting the piping or draining the pump casing.

In addition, if any choking does occur, the pump can be easily and quickly unclogged via the removable cover plate.

The design of the pump also allows users to adjust the clearance externally to ensure optimum performance without having to pull it apart.

The removable rotating assembly allows the rotating parts to be inspected or replaced by simply loosening four bolts from the drive end of the pump, eliminating the need to disturb the pump casing or piping.

Mr Grant was more than happy to have Mr Collier trial the pump for 90 days, yet within 60 days, convinced the Gorman-Rupp T2A3-B could effectively do the job, he purchased the pump.

### The results

"Within two months of having the pump

installed at the piggery I knew that it was capable," Mr Collier said.

"It moves more liquid than the previous pump and it's extremely easy to maintain, which for me is the major bonus.

"The open impeller design makes it very simple to remove any blockages.

"I only have to loosen two bolts to get inside the pump and clear it, which takes me only 15 minutes.

"And of course, an added bonus is that we no longer have to waste money purchasing stators."

So impressed was he with the performance of the Gorman-Rupp T2A3-B that Mr Collier purchased a second pump and

is now considering a third pump.

"It's great to see that there are still suppliers out there who will stand behind their products and let you trial them before buying," he said.



"If Hydro Innovations hadn't let me trial the pump, I doubt I would have bought it upfront because I have been burnt so many times before."

More information on these pumps may be obtained from Hydro Innovations at [info@hydroinnovations.com.au](mailto:info@hydroinnovations.com.au) or call 02 9898 1800.

**Hydro Innovations**




The Gorman-Rupp T2A3-B is a rugged self-priming centrifugal solids-handling pump.

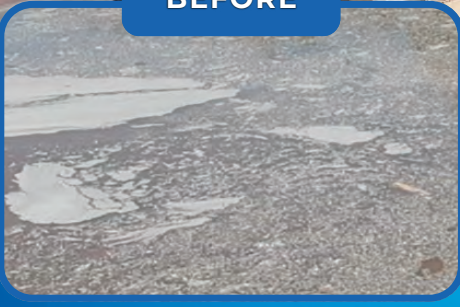
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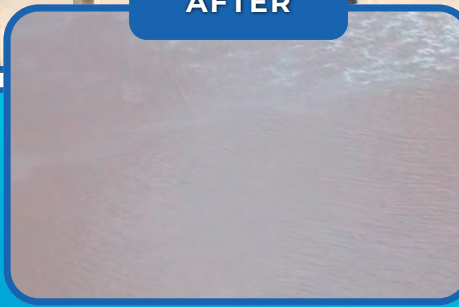
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Early in the process, Scolexia undertook an effluent capacity assessment, confirming that the existing system could accommodate the return of pigs to the home farm.



Despite challenges, Midland Bacon remained focused on its goal – to modernise infrastructure and consolidate pigs currently grown off-site.

## Midland Bacon planning success

### ■ Piggery navigates negative perceptions

MIDLAND Bacon has successfully navigated a complex and challenging planning process, ultimately securing an 8-1 council vote in favour of modernising its operation and increasing space allowances through the construction of three new sheds.

Throughout the process, the project was impacted by widespread misconceptions, myths and in-

accurate reporting, which led to a significant misunderstanding of the proposal's intent.

This situation was further complicated by other issues unrelated to planning and not associated with the owners, followed by extensive publicity and unfounded allegations from highly organised animal activist groups.

These groups continued to trespass on the property, causing

distress to both the pigs and farm owners John and Kim McEwen.

Despite these challenges, Midland Bacon remained focused on its goal – to modernise infrastructure and consolidate pigs currently grown off-site, enabling a fully integrated farrow-to-finish operation.

Importantly, contrary to claims made in media and activist communications, the

continued P11

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# Midland Bacon planning success

from P10  
number of sows permitted on-site was not proposed to increase.

This misunderstanding was unfortunately reinforced by the erroneous public advertisement of a 1992 permit relating to sow number increases.

Midland Bacon engaged Scolexia to support the planning amendment and approvals process, including facilitating site visits with council representatives to demonstrate existing systems and management practices.

Early in the process, Scolexia undertook an effluent capacity assessment, confirming that the existing system could accommodate the return of pigs to the home farm.

This proactive approach contributed to the project receiving a development licence exemption without the need for further information – reflecting the robustness of both the data provided and the farm's operations.

While the planning process involved several requests for information from the Department of Agriculture and the Catchment Management Authority, Midland Bacon's willingness to provide detailed responses, adjust aspects of the proposal and engage constructively ensured that no objections were raised by these agencies.

Some RFI queries also highlighted a broader lack of understanding around piggery design and management.

Scolexia's Janine Price said, "It has been a pleasure working with Midland Bacon."

"Their willingness to provide information, consider recommendations, adapt practices (particularly in nutrient reuse), undertake earthworks promptly and engage constructively with objectors has contributed to a smoother process.

"While at times frustrating and protracted due to factors beyond our control, their approach was instrumental in achieving a positive outcome."

The proposal attracted over 4000 objections, many originating from outside the local area, including internationally – as far away as Canada.

As anticipated, a large proportion of these were submitted via proforma campaigns coordinated by activist groups.

Throughout this period, Scolexia maintained regular communication with council to understand how objections would be assessed and to support community engagement efforts.

In reality, only one objection originated locally, with the next closest located approximately 1.5 hours away.

Janine Price met with the local objector alongside councillors to discuss concerns and later attended a meeting at the objector's property with the new owner of Midland Bacon.

Through respectful and open dialogue, it became clear that the objection was based on the misconception that pig numbers would increase – an issue stemming from incorrect public notification.

Following clarification, the objection was withdrawn.

Midland Bacon's approach to planning and approvals exemplifies best practice.

In Scolexia's view, the business not only met but exceeded planning requirements.

This case demonstrates that preparation, expert guidance and genuine community engagement can deliver positive outcomes for the pig industry, even in the face of significant external pressures.

Council acknowledged the high standard of documentation and reporting, as well as the respectful and constructive manner in which community concerns were addressed.

Midland Bacon has overcome considerable challenges and should be commended for its professionalism, resilience and commitment to continuous improvement on farm.

Scolexia

## Gas pipeline dispute puts pressure on Qld pork producers

AUSTRALIA'S largest pork producer is facing a legal challenge from a major gas company over proposed pipeline development through a working piggery on Queensland's Western Downs.

Arrow Energy, a joint venture between Shell and PetroChina, has taken action in the Land Court of Queensland regarding access to SunPork's Tong Park piggery near Kogan, west of Brisbane.

The case centres on Arrow's plan to install multiple gas pipelines beneath the piggery, part of its broader coal seam

gas operations across the Surat Basin.

While the project has already received state and federal approvals, the dispute now focuses on the conditions of a 'conduct and compensation agreement', a key requirement when resource companies operate on agricultural land.

Under Queensland law, producers cannot refuse gas development on their properties.

However, companies must negotiate terms that address impacts on farm operations, infrastructure and biosecurity.

If agreement can't

be reached, the Land Court steps in to determine the outcome.

For pork producers, this case underscores the practical challenges of coexisting with resource development – particularly for large-scale high-biosecurity operations such as Tong Park, which has capacity for around 142,000 standard pig units.

The proposed infrastructure includes two 17km pipelines carrying coal seam gas and 'produced water' (a by-product of gas extraction), along with a 59km line transporting treated water to Ar-

row's facilities.

Such developments can raise concerns around land access, disruption to daily operations and potential risks to livestock systems.

The Surat Basin has experienced rapid growth in coal seam gas development over the past decade, with thousands of wells already operating and further expansion expected by 2030.

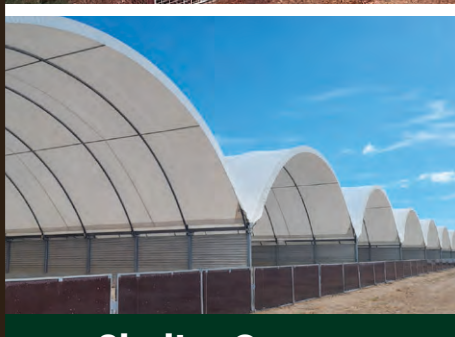
As this footprint grows, the energy and livestock sectors are increasingly operating in close proximity, creating new challenges for managing shared land use.

SunPork's owner-

ship, now fully in the hands of the Cameron family, has previously voiced concerns about nearby resource projects, particularly where they may affect farm viability or environmental conditions critical to pig production.

The outcome of this case, scheduled for review in May, will be closely watched across the pork industry as it may set important precedents around how compensation, risk and operational impacts are assessed when gas developments intersect with intensive livestock enterprises.

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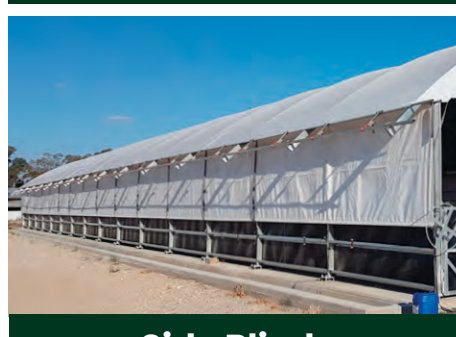
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# Farm-related Needlestick Injuries



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The seriousness of a needlestick injury depends far more on the substance than the needle itself.

## Recognising, responding to and preventing needlestick injuries on Australian farms

NEEDLESTICK injuries are so common in livestock work that they're often brushed off as part of the job. That's a mistake.

While many are minor, others can lead to serious complications, including permanent tissue damage, systemic poisoning or emergency surgery.

For Australian livestock farmers, recognising the difference and responding quickly is what protects you.

### Why needlestick injuries matter

Across Australia, the majority of livestock farmers report having experienced a needle-

stick injury at some point.

These incidents typically happen when several risk factors combine – unpredictable animal movement, fatigue, poor restraint, rushed technique or handling high-risk products such as oil-based vaccines.

A key problem is delay, both in recognising the seriousness of the injury and in seeking treatment.

Many people keep working, assuming it's nothing.

Sometimes it is. Sometimes it isn't.

### First response – stop and assess

If you accidentally

inject yourself, don't push through to finish the job.

Stop immediately.

Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water, then take a moment to assess what happened.

The level of risk depends on details – what product was involved, how much entered your body and where the injection occurred.

A shallow prick is very different from a deep injection into a finger.

Before seeking care, gather critical information:

- The product name and label
- The amount injected

• The time of exposure

• Take the container or label with you to the doctor.

Most medical professionals are unfamiliar with livestock pharmaceuticals and treatment decisions rely heavily on knowing exactly what substance is involved.

You can also:

• Call the Poisons Information Centre on 11 11 26 for immediate advice

• Contact the product manufacturer using the number on the label

• Access the Safety Data Sheet from the manufacturer's website.

➔ continued P13

The flyer from the National Centre of Farmer Health contains all the relevant information required for a needlestick injury.

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# Recognising, responding to and preventing needlestick injuries on Australian farms

from P12  
**When to seek urgent medical care**

Some exposures should always be treated as urgent.

- These include:
- Oil-based (oil-adjuvanted) vaccines
  - Sedatives such as xylazine
  - Hormonal products, for example prostaglandins
  - Any injection into a finger, hand or joint
  - Increasing pain, swelling, numbness or colour change.

Do not adopt a 'wait and see' approach in these cases.

**Why some injections are more dangerous**

The seriousness of a needlestick injury depends far more on the substance than the needle itself.

Oil-based vaccines are among the highest risk.

They can trigger severe inflammation and rapidly increase pressure in confined areas such as fingers.

This may lead to compartment syndrome, tissue death and surgery if not treated quickly.

Sedatives can be dangerous even in tiny amounts.

Accidental exposure may cause dizziness, slowed breathing, low blood pressure or collapse.

Hormonal products, particularly prostaglandins, can have strong effects on the human body and are especially hazardous for pregnant women.

Modified-live vaccines may pose infection risks depending on the organism involved.

Antibiotics and long-acting formulations can cause allergic reactions or prolonged inflammation, especially depot (slow-release) products that remain in tissue.

The takeaway is simple – never assume an injection is harmless until you've identified the product.

**Challenges in getting the right treatment**

One of the biggest issues in Australia, and globally, is that doctors and emergency departments may not recognise livestock medications or understand their risks.

Without clear product information, treatment becomes guesswork.

That's why bringing the label or SDS is so important.

It allows healthcare providers to assess toxicity, formulation (such as oil-based versus water-based) and likely complications.

Ensuring this information is easy to ac-

cess – whether in the ute, shed or digitally – is a practical safety step.

**Prevention – reducing the risk on farm**

While needlestick injuries are common, many are preventable with consistent habits and safer systems.

High-risk moments include:

- End of long processing days (fatigue)
- Poorly restrained animals
- Rushed injections or recapping needles.

Practical ways to reduce risk:

- Avoid recapping needles whenever possible

- Use proper animal restraint every time

- Keep your free hand away from the injection site

- Use the correct needle size for the job

- Dispose of sharps immediately in proper containers

- Consider two-person handling for

high-risk products

- Maintain good lighting and safe facilities.

Simple technique changes, such as one-handed vaccination and not 'tenting' the skin, can also make a significant difference.

**Reporting and follow-up**

If a serious exposure occurs, report it.

In Australia, incidents involving animal health products can be reported to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

This helps improve safety data and guidance.

Health professionals are also encouraged to report adverse outcomes, though they can only do so if they're aware of the exposure – another reason to clearly communicate what happened.

**The bottom line**

Needlestick injuries are a predictable part of livestock work, but

serious outcomes don't have to be.

The priority is straightforward:

- Stop immediately
- Identify the product
- Seek medical care
- Build safer habits to reduce the risk.

Treat every injection seriously until proven otherwise.



Scan for the APVMA portal.



Scan for the National Centre of Farmer Health information.

# Identifying opportunities for improving emissions reduction in pork industry

AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited has completed a comprehensive gap analysis of emissions reduction opportunities within the pork sector.

The project – supported by funding from the Australian Government's Carbon Farming Outreach Program – included an extensive literature review, industry workshops, interviews and producer case studies to map knowledge gaps and identify practical pathways for action.

The project identified more than 70 opportunities for research, development and extension to support on-farm emissions reduction.

Key priorities include standardised anaerobic

pond designs, improved measurement tools and enhanced cross-industry collaboration.

The report recognises that most low-cost options have now been implemented, meaning future progress will rely on targeted investment, better tools and stronger collaboration.

It also highlighted key barriers such as high capital costs, skills shortages and the Australian Carbon Credit Unit scheme's complexity.

The report also identified opportunities and barriers to lower-cost options, including short hydraulic retention time systems, solids separation and pond additives that require further demonstration,

clearer guidance and policy support.

Importantly, industry consultation highlighted the need for practical tools, updated case studies and decision support that link emissions reduction with productivity and cost of production benefits.

This project provides APL and the industry with a strong evidence base to guide future research, extension and investment, supporting continued emissions reduction while maintaining the commercial realities of pork production.

For further information about this project, contact APL via email at [extension@australianpork.com.au](mailto:extension@australianpork.com.au)

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# South Burnett Regional Council green lights Windaera piggery expansion



A Wilson Pork Co staff member at its Windaera piggery. Photo: Nathan Wilson

WILSON Pork has secured approval to become one of Australia's largest pig operations after a years-long battle that saw residents flood council with objections over smell concerns.

South Burnett Regional Council recently unanimously voted in favour of an application from Wilson Pork piggery at Windaera, about 10km north of Murgon, to double its output to 57,000 pigs a year.

Jamz & Co Investments Pty Ltd needed council approval to build new infrastructure and take the number of pigs at the intensive indoor piggery west of Goomeri from 28,500 standard pig units to 57,000 SPU.

Wilson Pork Co operations manager Nathan Wilson told Queensland Country Life the construction work as part of the expansion would create 25-30 jobs.

"We burn through about 15,000 tonne of commodities a year for feed, and that's all local – naturally,

that will double too," he said.

In order to do this, it will build 12 sheds, a workshop, staff amenities, associated effluent management earthen structures, staff parking and an internal access road.

Windaera and the surrounding South Burnett area are prime locations for piggeries due to their proximity to grain growing regions – providing easy access to feed – and established processing plants in Kingaroy and Murgon.

Wilson Pork is one of several large-scale operations in the area, alongside others such as Wattlebrae and Vilydo Piggery.

The council voted to let the application lay on the table several years ago, after a staff report recommended it be approved "subject to reasonable and relevant conditions" but the council received thousands of submissions.

It has since been sold and council staff recommended ahead of the recent meeting the matter be lifted from the table and a

decision be made.

The history of the business as outlined in its most recent expansion application reveals a piggery was first approved for the site back in 2001 by the then Murgon Shire Council for up to 5200 pigs.

In 2018, that number was expanded to 28,500.

Then in 2021 the development application was first lodged to double that number to 57,000.

An extensive staff report on the matter said public notification was undertaken between February 4-25, 2022.

A notice of compliance was received on February 28, 2022 stating that public notification had been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2016.

A total of 3280 properly made submissions were received (comprising 3269 proforma submissions and 11 other submissions), the report stated.

Among the many concerns raised was the smell.

"The proposed use will generate odour due to the nature of the operation," the report stated.

"The site is appropriately located in the Rural Zone and will be minimum 1.975km from a sensitive use.

"It is considered that the development can maintain rural amenity and character.

"The EA issued by DAF includes conditions relating to odour management."

It also stated that, "In the event that bonafide complaints are received by council in relation to odour emissions produced from the site ... Council reserves the right to require the applicant to re-assess waste and odour management procedures already in place.

"In this instance, the applicant may be required to undertake a further assessment on waste and odour management through a third party and implement any recommendations by a date agreed by the Council."

Townsville Bulletin



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## RSPCA's farm animal welfare program update

RSPCA's higher-welfare farm animal certification program has been operating for over 30 years and during this time we've improved the lives of more than five billion Australian farm animals and worked with producers, restaurants and retailers to implement countless positive changes. To best achieve our vision of a world where animals and people live together with dignity, respect and compassion in what is an increasingly demanding environment, going about business as usual without considering future impact is unacceptable for such an important program.

Just like the companies we work with, we're on a path of continuous improvement so that we can positively impact the lives of more farm animals.

To do this it's crucial that we look to the future and ensure that the program is as well-equipped as it can be to raise the bar for farm animal welfare.

To envision this, we've embarked on a transformation program and over the coming years you'll see some changes, but rest assured, fundamentally our mission will remain the same – to improve the lives of animals through care and evidence-based welfare advancements that change attitudes, behaviours, practices and laws.

Our transformation will focus on lifting and diversifying our standards, improving our governance and operating model and the introduction of our new brand identity.

Our first step is to share our new name 'RSPCA Certified' and a new logo, designed to be more impactful, easily recognised, clearly visible on packaging and importantly, clearly conveys who we are and what we do.

We know RSPCA Approved has been a recognised and respected brand, however our new name goes further to better communicate the strength of RSPCA's farm animal welfare certification, helping to harness a strong future for the program.

The new logo fea-

tures three farm animals as a collective on top of the brand name, our statement that animals come first.

Poultry, monogastric and aquaculture make up the three icons to represent farm animals as a whole.

The certification program prioritises improving farm animal welfare in Australia, while also providing guidance and a trustworthy choice for consumers who want to purchase higher-welfare products.

While it will take some time for brands and retailers to transition packaging to the new brand identity, wherever you see RSPCA Certified or RSPCA Approved, they reflect the same robust higher-welfare certification you've come to know and trust.

It's still a certification program with regular rigorous assessments by specially trained RSPCA assessors and a robust certification process on top.

It's still backed by stringent science-informed animal welfare standards, developed by the RSPCA Australia science and policy team.

It's still all about raising the bar for farm animal welfare – giving producers a higher-welfare standard they can strive to achieve and a logo that consumers can rely on to mean better animal welfare.

It's still independent from industry and government and still provides a better standard of welfare than what's legally required in Australia.

Importantly, the certification will remain independent from industry and government and continue to provide a better standard of welfare than what's legally required in Australia, meaning millions of animals raised to a better welfare standard than if the program did not exist.

RSPCA Australia



# Return of Minitube Porcine TechDays

MINITUBE Australia is pleased to announce that the Minitube Porcine TechDays are returning to Australia on August 25 and 26, 2026.

This conference is open to anyone working in the pig industry wanting to increase their knowledge level and hear about the latest innovations regarding pig reproduction.

This information will be presented by both local and international speakers.

Let's introduce a couple of them now.

Professor Simon de Graaf from the University of Sydney will be speaking on the topic 'CASA vs manual

semen assessment: Strengths, limitations & common pitfalls'.

His work focuses on practical and objective evaluation of semen quality across livestock species, with a strong emphasis on improving consistency and decision-making in artificial breeding programs.

In this session, Prof de Graaf will compare traditional subjective assessments with computer-assisted sperm analysis, highlighting where each approach performs well and where limitations arise.

The presentation will focus on how these methods can be applied in commercial settings to improve

confidence in semen evaluation outcomes.

Simon also runs The Reproduction Company, which provides independent semen testing and training services to industry, supporting producers and artificial insemination centres in achieving reliable and repeatable reproductive performance.

Dan Hollingworth is the managing director of Minitube Australia and will be presenting on two topics.

He has been involved in the Australian pig industry since 2010, working closely with producers to improve reproductive outcomes through practical on-farm solutions, before joining

Minitube Australia.

Mr Hollingworth strongly believes that information sharing is key to industry success and has spent time across numerous farms advising on semen collection and preparation.

The first topic he will be speaking on is 'On farm collection – Tips for small boar studs', presenting practical knowledge and procedures for efficient processing.

The second topic will be 'The economics of pregnancy detection'.

The session will be discussing the bottom-line value of pregnancy testing and its impact on farm profitability.

Early bird registrations are closing on

July 7 – lock in the early bird pricing of \$175+GST by registering via the QR code below or contacting Minitube via admin@minitube.com.au

After July 7, pricing increases to the standard cost of \$300+GST and registration closes on July 11.

Minitube Australia looks forward to seeing you there.

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## Wean-to-finish survivability drives performance and profitability

WEAN-to-finish survivability has become a growing point of pressure for the swine industry.

As pigs grow, the financial impact is significantly greater than losses earlier in life, eliminating value already invested through genetics, feed, labour and facilities.

Across the industry,

recent survivability trends show a mixed picture.

Many systems have made progress in early post-weaning phases, reflecting stronger preparation and early pig care.

At the same time, finishing mortality continues to trend upward.

PIC wean-to-finish technical services director Nat Stas said, "Finishing mortality is the most concerning from a cost standpoint."

"By the time pigs are lost later in wean-to-finish, a lot of feed and resources have already been invested, which is why understanding when losses occur is just as important as how many pigs are lost."

### Accurate mortality analysis creates focus

Farms that make progress in survivability often begin by taking a closer look at when and why pigs are being lost.

Reviewing timing, patterns and contributing factors within specific stages of production narrows where attention and resources can make the greatest difference.

Mortality data is most useful when it helps explain what is happening during a specific window of production rather than serving as a summary after the fact.

When losses are evaluated this way, teams can focus their efforts more effectively.

Instead of reacting broadly, teams can prioritise the factors influencing survivability

during that stage of growth.

This approach does not eliminate challenges but helps turn concern into targeted action.

### Building a strong foundation after weaning

The first days and weeks after weaning are a critical and stressful time in a pig's life.

During this transition, pigs are adapting to new environments, new social groups and new feeding and watering systems all at once.

Effective early pig care reduces stress, supports growth and improves performance through finishing.

Strong early performance does not guarantee success through finishing, but it does raise the baseline.

Pigs that start well and begin eating and drinking consistently in the first days after placement are better positioned to handle health, environmental and management challenges later in life.

### Communication supports survivability

Wean-to-finish survivability is influenced by sow farm factors before pigs arrive at the wean-to-finish site.

These include pig health, wean weight efficiency and group variation coming out of the sow farm.

Clear communication before placement helps wean-to-finish teams prepare more effectively.

Advance awareness

of pig quality or variability allows sites to plan space, labour, nutrition and care strategies, reducing surprises once pigs arrive on site.

"Even small pieces of information shared before placement can make a difference," Mr Stas said.

"When wean-to-finish teams have a better understanding of the pigs they're receiving, they can prepare resources more effectively and get pigs off to a stronger start."

### Looking ahead

Survivability remains one of the most meaningful opportunities to improve both efficiency and profitability in wean-to-finish production.

New tools and technologies may support earlier detection of issues.

However, the largest gains continue to come from fundamentals – understanding when and why pigs are lost, investing in early pig care and communication between the sow farm and wean-to-finish teams.

Ultimately, wean-to-finish survivability is not driven by a single decision or solution.

It reflects how effectively genetics and management work together to protect value and support pigs from placement through market.

To enhance wean-to-finish performance on your farm, explore PIC's management resources.

PIC



Pigs that start well and begin eating and drinking consistently in the first days after placement are better positioned to handle health, environmental and management challenges later in life.

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# Study outcome shows animal resilience can be predicted and positively influenced

MEETING the natural and physiological needs of animals has a positive impact on their resilience.

This is the outcome of a study for which Ingrid van Dixhoorn obtained her PhD from Wageningen University & Research.

Moreover, the degree of resilience animals display in the face of disruptions can be predicted.

Dr Van Dixhoorn studied the transition period cows experience from the dry period (the farmer ceases milking them so that the udders can recover) to lactation (producing milk, starting when the calf is born).

During the first two weeks of this period, cows are very vulnerable.

“Diligently safeguarding a proper day-night rhythm increases the cows’ resilience,” Dr Van Dixhoorn said.

“Moreover, they need copious amounts of food to help them get through this period.”

## Extreme enrichment

Dr Van Dixhoorn studied how pigs respond to lung infections.

The scientist provided an extreme level of enrichment in part of the barn.

All manner of materials were added to enable the pigs to express their natural behaviour, such as chewing and rooting.

“The pigs in the enriched barn visibly benefited from the enrichment and proved to be more resilient because they recovered faster and were less affected by the disease,” she said.

Disease and other disruptions are caused by a variety of factors and can never be completely prevented.

Hence, resilience in animals is important so that they can recover more easily.

Enriching the pig living environment and encouraging a proper day-night rhythm in cows are two examples of strategies farmers can deploy to enhance their livestock’s resilience and positively impact their health.

## Predictive factors

In addition to influencing resilience, Dr Van Dixhoorn’s dissertation also shows possible predictive factors

for resilience can be identified.

“You may determine an animal’s sensitivity before a problem arises,” she said.

“That makes timely interventions possible, thus supporting these animals and preventing health and wellness issues.”

Resilience in animals is best described as the capacity to overcome disease and other disruptions and the recovery speed.

This study forms an excellent example of how Wageningen University & Research works to support animal health and wellbeing by bolstering their natural abilities and in doing so contributing to their health and humane livestock farming.

Wageningen University & Research



Dr Ingrid van Dixhoorn



Resilience animals display in the face of disruptions can be predicted. Pigs in an enriched barn proved to be more resilient – recovering faster and less affected by lung infections.

## Acid blends are a long-standing approach to intestinal health in pork production

INTESTINAL health remains central to efficient pork production, particularly as producers manage rising feed costs, performance variability and reduced antibiotic reliance.

Recent industry engagement has reinforced the importance of structured nutritional strategies, especially at key stages of the production cycle.

During recent Intestinal Health focused visits, Kemin product manager Pamela Canlas highlighted how Kemin solutions support gut health through premium acid blends and targeted essential oil solutions as part of an integrated farm management approach.


Within this framework, Acid LAC Premium Dry and Acid

LAC Premium Liquid continue to play a central role.

Both products are staples of the Kemin Australia portfolio and are widely recognised as trusted organic acid blends targeting intestinal health.

With both dry and liquid available, the Acid LAC range supports all production systems and feeding programs, offering

flexibility across on farm and feed mill applications.

Used at crucial times during the production cycle, Acid LAC Premium supports a balanced microbial environment, contributes to overall system efficiency and provides a cost effective acidification solution as part of broader intestinal health programs.  **Kemin**





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## Five reasons to consider subclinical mycotoxin contamination in pig feed and how to mitigate it

MYCOTOXINS are secondary metabolites produced by fungi when they infect cereal plants during growth and grain storage.

They pose a persistent and complex challenge in pig production.

Despite improvements in agricultural and storage practices, contamination of feed ingredients with mycotoxins such as deoxynivalenol, zearalenone, fumonisins, aflatoxins and ochratoxin A remains almost unavoidable.

While severe mycotoxin contamination of animal feeds leads to clear clinical signs – including feed refusal and organ failure – low-level or subclinical exposure, even at levels below regulatory limits, can silently undermine animal health, growth and productivity, impacting herd profitability without presenting any visible symptoms.

Emerging research and industry data show that subclinical mycotoxin contamination is widespread and that its effects extend far beyond the published regulatory guidelines for contamination levels.

Fortunately, scientific advances particularly

in enzymatic detoxification offer new strategies to mitigate these hidden costs and protect both animal welfare and farm profitability.

### Understanding subclinical mycotoxin exposure

Subclinical exposure refers to toxin levels below official guidance thresholds, such as those defined by the European Union.

At these concentrations, pigs show no obvious symptoms, yet physiological and metabolic disruptions occur.

These often go unnoticed but can significantly impair performance and immune competence over time.

Mycotoxin contamination is rarely limited to a single toxin.

Multi-mycotoxin contamination is the norm, not the exception.

Data from the ds-firmenich global survey program (January to December 2025) showed that 83 percent of the over 25,000 feed samples analysed contained more than one mycotoxin.

These toxins can interact additively or synergistically, amplifying the negative consequences even when each toxin alone is at a 'safe' level.

### Hidden impacts on pig health and performance

#### Growth and feed efficiency

One of the earliest and most economically relevant consequences of low-level mycotoxin exposure is a reduction in average daily gain and feed efficiency.

Though pigs may continue eating normally, feed conversion rates decline subtly.

Over time, this leads to lower final weights, longer finishing periods and higher feed costs per kilogram of gain.

#### Gut integrity and function

The intestine is a key target organ for many mycotoxins.

Even low concentrations can increase gut permeability, alter villus morphology and weaken barrier function.

These changes allow bacteria and endotoxins to translocate from the gut into tissues or the bloodstream, fuelling chronic low-grade inflammation that saps growth and immunity.

#### Immune suppression and vaccine response

Subclinical mycotoxin exposure is known to impair both innate and adaptive immune responses.

Pigs fed contaminated

diets may show reduced lymphocyte proliferation, lower antibody titers after vaccination and increased susceptibility to infections.

The immune-modulating effects of DON have been widely documented, highlighting how hidden contamination can erode disease resilience in apparently healthy herds.

#### Organ and cellular effects

Microscopic examination often reveals lesions in the liver, kidneys or lungs and oxidative stress at the cellular level.

Such damage, though invisible in day-to-day herd management, can reduce organ function and limit the pig's ability to metabolise other toxins or drugs.

#### Reproductive disruption

Toxins with estrogenic activity, especially ZEN, pose specific risks for gilts and sows.

Even at low levels, ZEN can disturb oestrous cycles, delay puberty, lower conception rates and reduce litter sizes.

Chronic low exposure can therefore have cumulative reproductive costs across production cycles.

continued P19

Scientific advances in enzymatic detoxification offer new strategies to mitigate hidden costs and protect both animal welfare and farm profitability.

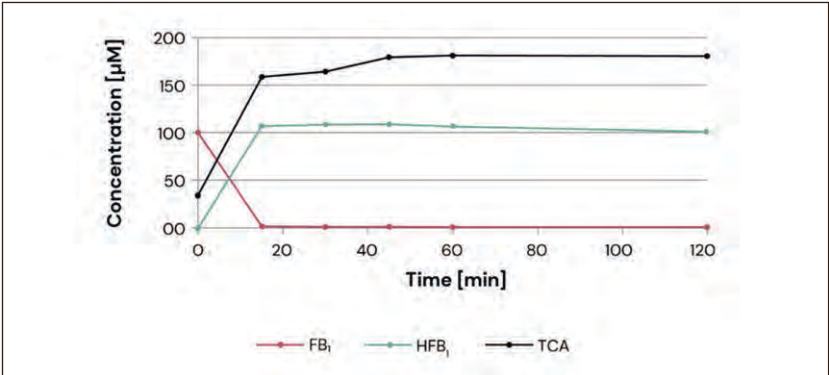


Figure 1. Degradation of FB1 to TCA and HFB1 (time 0 to 120min) with FUMzyme (activity 17.7 U/L).

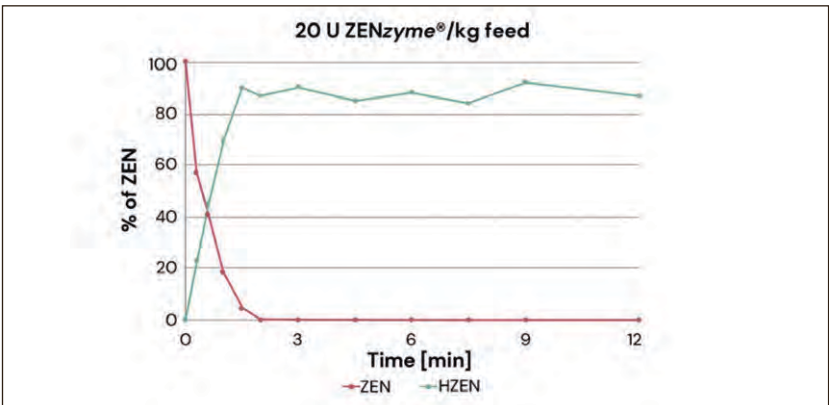


Figure 2. Degradation of 10ppm ZEN to the detoxified form (HZEN) by 20 U ZENzyme/kg feed (corresponds to 1kg MPL 5.Z per ton of feed). Complete biotransformation after 2 minutes.



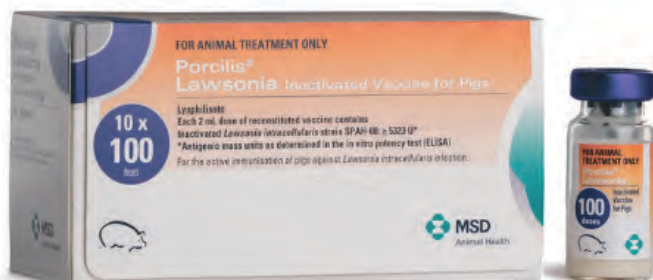
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# Five reasons to consider subclinical mycotoxin contamination in pig feed and how to mitigate it

from P18

## Why traditional mitigation is not enough

Conventional mycotoxin management strategies such as improved crop storage, toxin binders and periodic testing have clear benefits but also limitations.

Adsorbents are effective primarily against aflatoxins, which bind readily to clays and other materials.

However, most non-adsorbable toxins such as DON, ZEN and FUM remain biologically active even in the presence of binders.

Given that low-level exposure is often undetectable and multi-toxin interactions are common, a more targeted and reliable approach that neutralises toxins before absorption and supports the animal's natural defence systems is required.

## Enzymatic detoxification the next generation of mycotoxin control

Recent advances in biotechnology have enabled the development of specific enzymes capable of irreversibly degrading mycotoxins into harmless compounds within the pigs' gastrointestinal tract.

Unlike general binders, these enzymes act through biotransformation, breaking down the toxin's molecular structure and rendering it non-toxic.

The discovery process often begins with screening environmental microorganisms that naturally metabolise mycotoxins such as bacteria or fungi.

Once identified, the enzyme responsible for this activity is isolated, expressed, optimised through enzyme engineering and formulated for stability in feed.

## The economic and welfare benefits

Addressing subclinical mycotoxin exposure yields measurable returns.

Producers who reduce toxin-related growth suppression and immune compromise can expect:

- Improved feed conversion and faster growth rates
- Better vaccine response and reduced medication costs
- Higher reproductive performance and litter consistency
- Lower chronic inflammation and improved animal welfare.

## Conclusion

Subclinical mycotoxin contamination in pig feed represents a hidden but substantial threat to productivity, health and profitability.

Even when levels remain below legal limits, chronic low exposure can undermine gut function,

immunity, organ health and reproduction.

Traditional mitigation strategies alone are insufficient to address the full complexity of multi-toxin contamination.

The advent of enzyme-based detoxification technologies marks a breakthrough in precision mycotoxin management.

By directly and irreversibly neutralising key toxins within the gastrointestinal tract, these enzymes protect pigs from the silent toll of subclinical exposure, while enhancing overall performance and welfare.

As global feed contamination data continue to highlight the prevalence of multiple mycotoxins, integrating broad-based scientifically validated solutions is no longer optional but essential for sustainable, high-performance pig production.

dsm-firmenich

# Science-led update to MHA 3 delivers practical outcomes

## Win for Australian pork industry

THE Australian pork industry has achieved a positive and practical outcome, with updates now approved to the 'Meat hygiene assessment – product monitoring' guidelines.

This result was delivered through close collaboration between Australian Pork Limited, export pork abattoirs and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

After MHA 3 was introduced, processors raised concerns about increased labour, trimming and compliance issues caused by single pig hair strands being treated as food safety defects.

In response, APL

worked with all seven export accredited pork abattoirs to commission a national DAFF-aligned research project to assess the real food safety risk.

The research clearly showed that single or scattered pig hairs do not pose a food safety risk.

Based on this science, APL provided evidence-based recommendations to DAFF, which have now been accepted.

The updated MHA 3 guidelines reclassify pig hair contamination – excluding single hair strands from defect scoring for pork.

This change will reduce unnecessary

trimming, lower labour costs and ease compliance pressure, while maintaining Australia's high food safety and export standards.

It demonstrates the value of science-led decision making and strong industry collaboration.

For more information about this project, contact APL program manager integrity and product quality Dr Vaibhav Gole on vaibhav.gole@australianpork.com.au



TABLE 1. AusScan Early Harvest Report

March

2026

Protein Moisture and Energy Values for Cereal Grains

Barley																											
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	10.7	0.88	9.1	13.4	10.4	0.53	9.4	11.6	13.4	0.19	13.2	14.3	10.7	0.36	10.2	12.6	0.80	0.78	0.88	12.1	0.22	11.8	13.0	69.7	2.3	65.8	79.0
QLD	9.7	0.98	8.1	11.9	10.7	0.49	9.8	11.6	12.5	0.13	12.2	12.7	9.9	0.26	9.1	10.2	0.79	0.75	0.80	11.7	0.25	11.2	12.0				
QLD1	10.3	1.73	8.3	14.0	10.7	0.72	9.4	11.7	12.5	0.11	12.2	12.6	9.4	0.21	9.0	9.7	0.75	0.74	0.77	11.5	0.40	10.7	12.4				
SA1	11.5	0.99	10.0	13.6	10.4	1.26	7.7	11.7	12.9	0.18	12.6	13.1	10.8	0.28	10.5	11.3	0.84	0.83	0.86	11.8	0.24	11.5	12.2	71.4	3.0	67.8	78.5
VIC	10.0	0.91	8.8	13.8	10.6	0.84	8.8	11.9	12.5	0.13	12.1	12.8	10.4	0.19	9.9	10.8	0.83	0.82	0.84	11.5	0.27	10.9	12.0				
VIC 1	11.0	1.03	9.1	14.1	10.9	1.21	8.0	13.4	12.4	0.14	12.2	12.8	10.5	0.29	9.8	10.8	0.84	0.80	0.84	11.9	0.45	11.1	12.9				
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	9.4	0.62	8.4	10.6	13.0	0.71	11.2	13.6	14.4	0.28	13.6	14.7	11.5	0.72	9.8	12.3	0.80	0.72	0.84	14.5	0.56	13.2	15.1				
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	13.1	0.82	9.9	14.3	9.9	0.36	9.1	10.8	14.2	0.24	13.3	14.5	12.3	0.47	10.6	12.8	0.87	0.80	0.88	12.9	0.29	11.9	13.5	77.0	2.5	68.5	82.9
QLD	12.2	1.21	8.9	22.8	10.3	0.89	8.6	12.5	13.8	0.16	12.5	14.4	11.6	0.31	9.8	14.4	0.84	0.78	1.00	12.6	0.50	11.0	17.6	77.1	2.1	64.7	81.4
QLD1	12.1	1.24	10.7	15.2	10.3	0.86	8.9	12.3	13.9	0.05	13.8	14.0	11.5	0.11	11.3	11.7	0.83	0.82	0.84	12.7	0.24	12.3	13.2	77.4	0.9	75.7	79.0
SA1	12.7	1.57	8.7	19.0	8.4	1.30	6.5	12.2	14.1	0.14	13.6	14.4	11.8	0.25	10.3	12.2	0.83	0.75	0.85	12.4	0.18	11.9	12.9	82.1	3.9	71.8	94.8
SA2	13.5	2.27	9.1	18.0	8.8	1.68	5.5	15.3	14.1	0.07	13.9	14.2	11.7	0.34	10.7	12.3	0.83	0.77	0.87	12.1	0.44	11.4	13.2	81.5	2.9	77.4	88.9
VIC	11.3	0.99	9.4	15.4	9.6	0.73	8.4	11.4	13.8	0.06	13.6	13.9	11.6	0.15	11.2	12.0	0.84	0.82	0.86	12.5	0.27	11.7	13.4	77.2	1.3	72.7	81.4
VIC 1	12.0	1.35	9.9	25.6	9.8	1.08	7.9	14.3	13.7	0.06	13.5	13.9	11.8	0.18	10.5	12.3	0.86	0.78	0.88	12.7	0.37	12.0	14.6	77.7	1.2	74.0	81.2
VIC 2	11.2	1.03	8.7	15.1	9.7	1.05	7.5	12.2	13.7	0.06	13.6	13.9	11.7	0.14	11.4	12.1	0.86	0.84	0.87	12.5	0.30	11.8	13.7	77.6	1.2	74.5	81.1
VIC 3	11.3	0.77	9.0	13.8	9.9	0.79	8.2	12.1	13.7	0.12	12.4	13.9	11.8	0.16	10.5	12.3	0.86	0.85	0.88	12.6	0.31	11.6	13.8	77.5	1.6	66.7	84.5

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



The gilt development process requires significant investment in resources, including feed, genetics, management and such.

A fully developed gilt is not profitable with her first litter.

## Benefits of investing in gilt care

### ■ How development drives lifetime sow productivity

GILTS represent the future of your breeding herd, so being equipped to care for them at key life phases is critical.

There's a lot that goes into developing robust gilts – from their growth, body condition and structural soundness to reproductive potential and health.

Gilts live in distinct production phases in a relatively short period of time.

Because of this, gilt development is not a single step but a complex program that leads gilts through several key stages –

growing, selection and acclimation, breeding and farrowing – with distinct needs at each step.

The gilt development process requires significant investment in resources, including feed, genetics, management and such.

However, gilts are often the most frequently culled female from the swine breeding herd, with between 38.5-51.1 per cent of gilts not being retained in the herd.

Culled gilts are not able to contribute to breeding herd performance, so the investment is lost and doubly costs more to bring in yet another gilt.

The gilt development process sets the foundation for everything that happens downstream as she enters the breeding herd.

She needs to be provided everything possible for her to meet her full potential and become a successful sow.

#### From gilt to sow – laying the foundation for success

Gilt development can be divided into three phases – the developing gilt, the selected/bred gilt and the farrowing/lactating gilt – each with its own requirements and management practices.

During the growth phase, the gilt needs to develop the physical and skeletal framework to not only carry herself but also carry and care for her progeny, either in utero or during lactation.

Skeletal development should be robust to support the gilt and litter.

Her feet and legs are also key, so she can get up and move around, which is especially important in

pen-based gestation systems.

During growth, the gilt must maintain good body condition, which needs to be adequate to supply her energy needs but not so much as to impede the farrowing process.

The gilt continues to grow and develop through her first lactation, so her body fat reserves need to help her maintain her growth pattern and nourish the group of piglets she's carrying and feeding.

Mammary development is also important – not only the uniformity of the underline and proper teat anatomy but also the glandular tissue that produces milk and duct development.

A sow's total milk production can rival that of a dairy cow because she's letting milk down every hour for her piglets.

Once pregnancy occurs, the mammary gland will see a great deal of glandular development because of pregnancy-related hormones, but its potential is preset during the gilt's growth phase.

From a health standpoint, there can be short-term impacts of disease on developing gilts.

To overcome the challenge, a gilt will

divert body resources toward resolving the infection and clinical disease, which can limit her growth or future performance.

The other health impact is the colonisation or establishment of certain bacterial or viral diseases.

Some diseases need a certain amount of time to be cleared before the gilt stops shedding.

As an example, if a mycoplasma-negative gilt is going into a mycoplasma-positive sow farm, she needs to be exposed to mycoplasma by about 80 days of age, so she has time to clear the pathogen and not infect her first litter.

This acclimation period varies by pathogen, but it is an important step in gilt development to stabilise herd disease status.

Successfully transitioning a gilt through her first gestation and first lactation and remaining in the herd for another parity can be a fairly big feat, which is why producers should focus more on the gilt during growth and development.

#### Understanding profitability and parity

A fully developed gilt is not profitable with her first litter.

On average, she will

➤ continued P21



Gilt development doesn't stop when she becomes a parity 1 sow.

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## Investing in gilt care

from P20

not break even until she's had over three litters (parities), whether she was raised on farm or if she was purchased from a genetics company.

There are management practices that can help set up a gilt for breeding herd success, such as boar exposure and heat/no service.

Boar exposure stimulates gilt reproduction by inducing puberty and oestrus through a combination of olfactory (smell), visual, auditory and tactile stimuli that activates the gilt's hormonal system to advance sexual maturity.

With HNS, after a gilt has her first confirmed heat cycle, she is typically bred on her second heat cycle, which can lead to higher farrowing rates and more pigs born over her lifetime.

This means she may become profitable sooner.

### Optimising the wean-to-rebreed interval

Gilt development doesn't stop when she becomes a parity 1 sow.

She will continue to grow through her first lactation, possibly leading to metabolic stress if she loses body condition while growing.

These parity 1 sows may require extra attention and monitoring before they return to the breeding herd.

As this is her first time in the farrowing house, she may also need to adjust to a new type of feeder or water drinker.

Throughout the gilt development process, gilts have unique needs that caregivers should provide to ensure gilts' success in the breeding herd.

Caregivers working with gilts should be trained on specific management practices, such as boar exposure and monitoring for puberty.

Spending extra time caring for gilts and putting specific management practices in place will ensure longevity of the gilt in the herd and ultimately profitability from investing in her.

**Dr Kimberly Vonnahme and Dr Micah Jansen**  
Zoetis

# High stocking density negatively impacts pigs' night-time rest

HIGH stocking density, where large numbers of animals are housed within limited space, is a common practice in conventional pig farming systems.

This can affect pig welfare in multiple ways – increasing tail biting and pen fouling, impacting growth and restricting pig ability to express highly motivated behaviours.

Night rest is an especially important behavioural component of animal welfare.

However, high stocking density may disrupt this behaviour.

In mammals, sleep deprivation has been linked to immunosuppression, increased sensitivity to pain, hormonal changes and increased risk of death.

This study, conducted in Denmark, focused on pig night rest during an 11-week fattening period and investigated how different stocking densities affected where pigs rested.

One hundred and ninety-seven pigs were assigned to three different stocking density treatments – 0.7m<sup>2</sup>/pig (18 pigs per pen), 1.4m<sup>2</sup>/pig (9 pigs per

pen) or 2.1m<sup>2</sup>/pig (6 pigs per pen).

On weeks two, five and 10, overnight videos were collected and scanned every 10 minutes to record the proportion of pigs resting on different floor types (solid, drained, slatted) and the proximity to other pigs (alone, close contact, full contact).

Findings showed significant differences in night rest between groups.

While all groups spent

around 95 percent of the time lying down, pigs in the lowest density treatment (2.1m<sup>2</sup>/pig) and therefore with the highest agency to choose where to sleep, were more likely to rest alone on the preferred solid floor with a scattering of straw, while pigs in the highest density treatment (0.7m<sup>2</sup>/pig) were more likely to rest in full body contact on the least preferred slatted floor.

These results suggest

high stocking densities (low space allowances) may negatively impact pig rest quality by reducing the availability of preferred clean/dry resting areas and forcing pigs into closer proximity than preferred when space allows.

These findings add to existing evidence that legal space minimums for pigs require reconsideration to better support pig welfare.

For more on the

'Space density affects resting location and proximity of fattening pigs at night' study, scan the QR code below.

**RSPCA Animal Welfare Science Update**

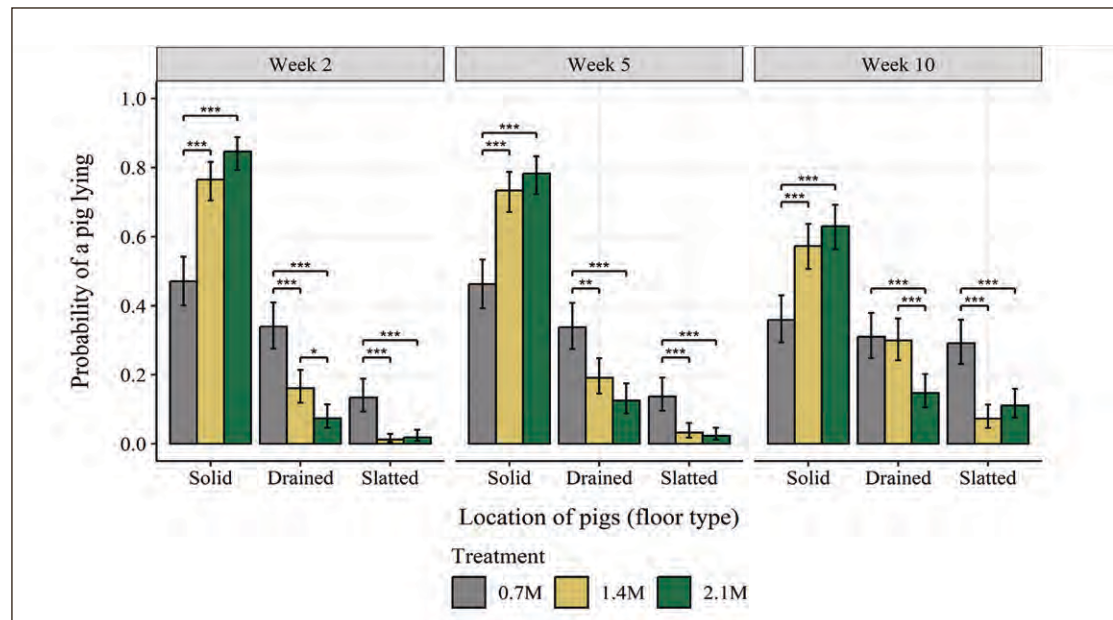


Fig. 1: Probability of a pig lying on the solid, drained or slatted floor for each treatment at week 2, 5 and 10. Model estimates  $\pm$  95 % confidence intervals. 0.7M: 18 pigs per pen (0.7 m<sup>2</sup> per pig), 1.4M: 9 pigs per pen (1.4 m<sup>2</sup> per pig); 2.1M: 6 pigs per pen (2.1 m<sup>2</sup> per pig). Post-hoc analysis was conducted to compare treatments within each location for each week, while only the significant pair-wise comparisons are shown. \* P < 0.05, \*\* P < 0.01, \*\*\* P < 0.001.

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