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One of the 18 recommendations by the committee was that the Victorian Government recognise the development of the lab-grown meat industry as having the potential to significantly contribute to the Victorian economy.

Inquiry into pig welfare in Victoria

■ 18 recommendations for government

THE following is an edited extract taken from the inquiry into pig welfare in Victoria findings.

The original report in its entirety can be viewed by scanning the QR code above.

Chair's foreword – Georgie Purcell

Pigs are one of the most remarkable animals on the planet.

They are smarter than the dogs we share our hearts and homes with and have a similar cognitive ability to three-year-old children.

They can comprehend, remember and empathise.

They are clean, they nurture lifelong friendships and are strongly motivated to care for and protect their young.

They are also one of the world's most intensively farmed species.

Their strong intellect is undoubtedly linked to their capacity to experience fear, distress and pain.

In recent years, harrowing footage of pigs in Victorian factory farms and slaughterhouses has been released, resulting

in increasing alarm from consumers towards the conditions animals are raised to be killed in.

Most recently, world-first footage was released of the most common stunning method before slaughter, carbon dioxide gassing systems.

It showed pigs being lowered by a gondola into carbon dioxide across three Victorian slaughterhouses.

Despite being described as 'best practice' by the industry, the vision showed pigs thrashing and gasping while slowly losing consciousness.

The passion for improved protection for pigs was evidenced by the engagement with this parliamentary inquiry, which received a combined 10,000 submissions and survey responses.

Of those respondents, regardless of whether they consumed pork products or not, there was a consensus that industry and governments can and should do more to improve the lives of pigs in Victoria.

The codes of practice, regulations and legislation that govern pig welfare in Victoria are complex, with many different farms adhering to different levels and standards of care.

A clear theme throughout the inquiry process was concern surrounding self-regulation.

Despite the pork industry acknowledging pig cruelty and committing to a voluntary phase out of sow stalls by 2017, there are still farms that have not complied.

Without oversight, consumers are misled into purchasing products they might falsely believe are sow stall free.

Another concern to many witnesses who gave evidence were so-called 'routine practices' regularly performed without pain relief, such as teeth clipping, ear notching and tail docking, mostly done on young piglets.

In this report, the committee makes 18 recommendations to improve the welfare and protection of pigs including a complete and permanent

continued P2

Launch of Ramón Jamón in new brand campaign

IT'S fantastic to share the exciting news of our 'Get some pork on your fork' latest brand campaign launch.

The campaign aims to address the common barriers to pork consumption, increase awareness of pork as an everyday protein option and breathe new life into our longstanding 'Get some pork on your fork' tagline.

Collaborating with the talented team at Dig, we have introduced a vibrant new character to our marketing efforts – Ramón Jamón – the pink-suited man of mystery with an undeniable passion for pork.

Ramón Jamón, with his charming Spanish flair, tackles the common barriers to pork consumption by simply asking, "Por qué?"

Translation – why? This clever and re-



by MARGO ANDRAE
CEO



latable question aims to spark curiosity and encourage Australian families to explore the many delicious ways they can incorporate pork into their meals.

Launched nationally, reaching consumers through TV, radio, out of home advertising, press, print, digital, social media, retail and PR activities – the campaign also has a strong regional presence, ensuring Ramón Jamón is visible to all lovers of pork.

Consumers will see advertising of pork's new man in pink on retail, roadside, train

station, furniture and supermarket placements, through a series of fun and creative artworks to encouraging Australians to think, why not pork?

The Australian Pork Limited marketing team, along with Dig creative directors Anna Paine and Owen Bryson, have done an exceptional job in delivering a campaign that truly embodies the tasty twist that pork offers to everyday meals.

Their innovative approach and dedication have been instrumental in bringing Ramón Jamón to life,

and we are confident that this will not only drive results for Australian pork but perhaps also make pink suits a new trend!

We are immensely proud of the collaborative effort that has gone into this campaign.

The strength and creativity of this new direction were evident from the very beginning and the campaign launch last month marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the 'Get some pork on your fork' program.

Together, we are positioned to inspire Aussie families to rediscover the versatility and deliciousness of Australian-grown pork.

Here's to the successful launch of a campaign that celebrates innovation, creativity and the joy of pork.

We hope you enjoy.



New character, Ramón Jamón, was recently introduced to the 'Get some pork on your fork' campaign.

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Pork Industry Calendar of Events

2024

JUL 17-19 – PorkAmericas, Centro de Convenciones Cartagena, Colombia. <https://porkcolombia.co/>

AUG 17-18 – Kingaroy BaconFest 2024 – Kingaroy, Australia. <https://www.kingaroybaconfest.com.au/>

SEP 4-6 – 2024 Australian Pig Veterinarians Conference – Wollongong, Australia. <https://www.ava.com.au/education-events/education-and-events-search/event-detail/?eid=EV001648>

SEP 21-24 – Allen D. Leman Swine Conference – Minnesota, USA. <https://lemanconference.umn.edu/>

OCT 16-17 – Dutch Pork and Poultry Expo – Evenementenhal Hardenberg, Netherlands. www.porkpoultryexpo.nl/

OCT 25-27 – The 13th Leman China Swine Conference & World Swine Industry Expo – Chengdu, China. <https://www.lemanchina.com/>

NOV 12-15 – EuroTier 2024 – Hanover, Germany. <https://www.eurotier.com/en/>

NOV 20-21 – Pig Research Summit 2024 – Copenhagen, Denmark. <https://pigresearchsummit.com>

2025

JAN 7-9 – Banff Pork Seminar – Banff, Canada. <https://www.banffpork.ca/>

FEB 11-12 – Minnesota Pork Congress – Mankato, USA. <https://www.mnporkcongress.com/>

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

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Inquiry into pig welfare in Victoria - eighteen recommendations

• from P1

ban on sow stalls and farrowing crates.

It calls for mandatory CCTV in farming facilities to be made available for independent auditing and the establishment of an Independent Office of Animal Protection to appropriately and effectively monitor animal welfare.

It acknowledges the inherent cruelty in CO2 systems and recommends research into sustainable alternatives.

As part of the solution to improving the welfare of pigs, this report also recognises the innovation and development of the cultivated meat industry and its potential to provide safe, ethical and environmentally considered food to Victorians.

Many of these recommendations can be incorporated into the government's new and modernised animal protection laws in the Animal Care and Protection Bill.

I encourage the Victorian Government to take up this legislative opportunity to ensure the plight of pigs is reduced.

As a final remark, it is clear that our growing population and its demand for protein has resulted in farming practices prioritising efficiency and production growth at the expense of animal welfare.

It is imperative upon us all to reconsider our relationship with meat, and more so animals, and the extent of suffering we inflict upon them.

I would like to thank all stakeholders who made high quality and thoughtful submissions and those people who gave their time and expertise appearing before the committee in public hearings to give evidence.

We heard from pig farmers, animal advocates, welfare experts, veterinarians and more.

The evidence received was of a high standard and significantly enhanced the committee's understanding of this complex issue.

I would also like to thank my committee colleagues for the professional and courteous way they approached the inquiry.

This was a difficult inquiry for many, with strongly held views and different perspectives across committee members.

For the most part, there was a collegiate approach and collaboration.

I greatly appreciate the way the committee members conducted themselves throughout the inquiry.

Findings and recommendations

Introduction

• Finding 1: While trespass remains a biosecurity risk, there are no recorded incidents within Victoria where animal activists have harmed agricultural biosecurity

• Finding 2: The cultivated meat industry offers a potentially viable, ethical and environmentally sustainable alternative to traditional pork, with the exact molecular composition and taste of traditional pork

• Recommendation 1: That the Victorian Government recognise the development of the lab grown meat industry in Victoria as having the potential to significantly contribute to the Victorian economy.

The regulatory framework

• Finding 3: The pig industry plays a significant role in the development of legally enforceable animal welfare standards, giving rise to the perception that it is self-regulated

• Finding 4: In light of concerns around the transparency of Victoria's regulation and audit processes, inspectors under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Vic) and Livestock Management Act 2010 (Vic) should be given the power to instigate unannounced and ad-hoc inspections

• Recommendation 2: That the Victorian Government grant welfare inspectors the power to instigate unannounced and ad-hoc inspections of facilities

• Finding 5: In conjunction with other work done by the pork industry, mandating closed-circuit television in processing and farming facilities would increase transparency in the regulation and audit processes

• Recommendation 3: That the Victorian Government impose mandatory closed-circuit television in all processing and farming facilities to be made available to regulatory bodies for independent audit(s)

• Finding 6: Due to a delay in updating and replacing the national Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals, the Victorian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Pigs is outdated

• Recommendation 4: That the Victorian Government participate and contribute to updating and replacing the 2008 Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs through the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines process

• Finding 7: The decision-making principles proposed in the Victorian Government's initial plan for Victoria's new animal care and protection laws would have improved decision-making outcomes for animal welfare

• Recommendation 5: That the Victorian Government include decision-making principles in the new Animal Care and Protection Bill in relation to the development and adoption of animal welfare standards and guidelines in Victoria

• Finding 8: An independent appropriately funded statutory authority has the potential to significantly improve outcomes for farmed pigs in Victoria

• Recommendation 7: That the Victorian Government consider the establishment of an Independent Office of Animal Protection to ensure compliance with animal protection laws, streamline complaints, provide expert, evidence-based reform and monitor animal welfare conditions within Victoria.

Stunning methods before slaughter

• Finding 9: CO2 gassing as a method of stunning is aversive to pigs who experience high levels of pain and stress

• Recommendation 7: The use of side-loader (single file) carbon dioxide stunning systems must be phased out to minimise pre-slaughter stress in pigs

• Recommendation 8: That the Victorian Government work with industry to innovate research and development opportunities to commercially viable alternatives to the use of CO2 in stunning pigs prior to slaughter and report on alternatives with a reporting date no later than May 2026.

Confinement practices

• Recommendation 9: That the Victorian Government mandate reporting on the methods of procurement and extraction of semen from boars, and the frequency of each boar used, the method, dates and frequency of the artificial semination of each sow

• Finding 10: The Victorian Government mandate straw bedding substrate to stimulate natural pig behaviours to prevent injury and abrasion

• Recommendation 17: That the Victorian Government investigate enrichment aids for farmed pigs for inclusion in the Animal Care and Protection Bill

• Finding 14: Biodiverse

torian pork industry is yet to fully comply with their volunteer phase out of the use of sow stalls, which was set to be completed by 2017

• Finding 11: The committee considers that the voluntary phasing out has not worked and that legislation is required to ensure they are removed from the industry completely

• Recommendation 10: That the Victorian Government legislate a complete ban on the use of sow stalls

• Finding 12: The close confinement and isolation of sows within farrowing crates leads to stress, discomfort, poor muscle development and prohibits maternalistic behaviours

• Finding 13: Evidence presented to the committee indicates that mortality rates in piglets that are confined to farrowing crates are similar compared to those that are pasture raised

• Recommendation 11: That the Victorian Government support farmers to transition to outdoor group housing

• Recommendation 12: That the Victorian Government legislate a complete ban on the use of farrowing crates

• Recommendation 13: That the Victorian Government mandate a complete ban on the use of boar crates, mating stalls and any other restrictive confinement

• Recommendation 14: That the Victorian Government support a national standards framework including enforceable welfare guidelines.

• Recommendation 15: That the Victorian Government work with industry to find an alternative to the use of blunt force trauma as a suitable method of piglet euthanasia

• Recommendation 16: That the Victorian Government mandate straw bedding substrate to stimulate natural pig behaviours to prevent injury and abrasion

• Recommendation 17: That the Victorian Government investigate enrichment aids for farmed pigs for inclusion in the Animal Care and Protection Bill

Finding 14: Biodiverse

farm systems and genetic diversity reduce disease spread on pig farms

• Recommendation 18: That the Victorian Government require industry to implement the regular surveillance monitoring and public reporting of antibiotic use on Victorian farms.

What happens next?

There are several stages to a parliamentary inquiry.

The committee conducts the inquiry

This report on the inquiry into pig welfare in Victoria is the result of extensive research and consultation by the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

The committee received written submissions, spoke with people at public hearings, reviewed research evidence and deliberated over a number of meetings.

Experts, government representatives and individuals expressed their views directly to the committee as members of Parliament.

A Parliamentary committee is not part of the government.

The committee is a group of members of different political parties (including independent members).

Parliament has asked this committee to look closely at an issue and report back.

This process helps Parliament do its work by encouraging public debate and involvement in issues.

The report is presented to Parliament

This report was presented to Parliament and can be found by scanning the QR code on page 1.

A response from the government

The government has six months to respond in writing to any recommendations made in this report.

The response is public and put on the inquiry page of Parliament's website when it is received.

In its response, the government indicates whether it supports the Committee's recommendations.

It can also outline actions it may take.



Piglets in a farrowing crate on a farm in central Victoria. Photo: Farm Transparency Project

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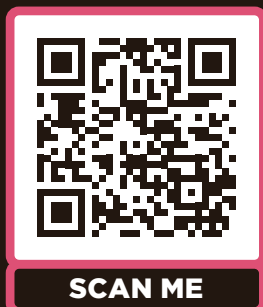


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Lower cooking temperatures for tender pork

RESEARCHERS are suggesting lower cooking temperatures for some cuts, to ensure more tender pork on Australians' forks.

The scientists recommend a final internal temperature of 65C rather than 70C for cuts from the longissimus muscle to avoid shrinkage, cook loss and toughness.

"Adjusting the recommended cooking temperature for specific muscles could help avoid unnecessary shrinkage, reduce cook loss and improve tenderness," the researchers said, adding

that food safety needs to be checked against the lower temperature advice.

The researchers from the University of Melbourne, the University of Leeds and the Sun Pork Group studied various cuts across the carcass subjecting them to different treatments and studying the responses.

According to the researchers, of the four muscle groups studied, protein denaturation peak for the longissimus muscle starts at a lower temperature compared to the other muscles, which indi-

cates shrinkage occurs at a lower cooking temperature.

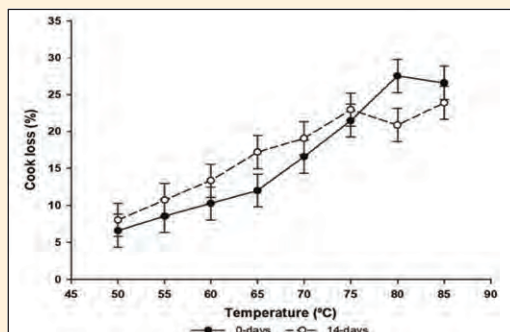
Protein denaturation impacts cooked pork quality by changing the structure of proteins and can cause muscle fibre shrinkage, affecting cook loss and tenderness.

"The pork industry has anecdotal evidence of a decline in pork quality, expressed as a lack of tenderisation ... resulting in increased toughness," the scientists said.

The aim of this research, according to the scientists, was to investigate the influence of muscle fibre proportion and diameter on pork quality and a further investigation was conducted on the effect of cooking temperature.

The research team, led by Professor Robyn Warner, included Michelle LeMaster, Minh Ha, Frank R. Dunshea, Surinder Chauhan and Darryl D'Souza.

Australian Meat News



Cook loss, for the longissimus muscle meat at 0 days and 14 days ageing shows 65C cooking temperature optimises meat quality.

Life cycle assessment published

AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited is pleased to announce that the recent life cycle assessment for the pork industry has now been published in the *Animal Production Science* journal.

This is the culmination of several years of work and we would like to sincerely thank all industry participants who made this possible.

This article, and a second upcoming report that reviews trends over time, is a cornerstone piece of validated peer-reviewed data to support the industry's communication around our environmental credentials.

This study collected data from approximately 70 percent of production across 2020 and 2022 using a stratified design to ensure a representative selection of farm types, manure management systems, locations and sizes were included.

The research consid-

ered the carbon footprint, fossil energy usage, freshwater consumption, water stress and eutrophication potential (a measure of expected nitrogen and phosphorus impacts on waterways).

The eutrophication potential itself is a new measure for a pork life cycle assessment that hasn't been investigated previously.

The method for this measure was developed to help track nutrient impacts associated with pork production, which is becoming increasingly of interest to both local environmental regulators as well as resulting in overseas restrictions on agriculture, such as in Europe.

The eutrophication potential reported in this study was low compared with grazing systems and European pigeries, which is a good baseline.

Other key results from the study included:

- Greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 were

3kg carbon dioxide equivalent per kilogram liveweight and 3kg in 2022

- Land use and direct land use change emissions in 2020 were 0.4kg carbon dioxide equivalent per kilogram liveweight and 0.3kg in 2022

- Total greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 were 3.4kg carbon dioxide equivalent per kilogram liveweight and 3.3kg in 2022

- Freshwater consumption in 2020 was 93.8 litres of freshwater consumption per kilogram of liveweight and 52.5 litres in 2022

- Fossil fuel use in 2020 was 12.9MJ of energy use per kilogram liveweight and 13.4MJ in 2022

- Land occupation in 2020 was 12sq m of land occupation per kilogram liveweight and 12.7sq m in 2022.

Overall, these results are either tracking as expected or better, in the case of fossil fuel use and freshwater con-

sumption, when considering the long-term trends.

The freshwater use decreased significantly between the two years, as 2020 was still drought affected, meaning more water was being used to support crops, which reversed in a wetter 2022.

When considering the very topical carbon emissions, it was noted that there were three production systems that produced the lowest carbon pork.

First farms with 100 percent of manure treated with a covered anaerobic pond and high proportions of waste and residual feed used.

Second, outdoor systems.

And third, conventional breeder systems with deep litter grow out farms where more than 80 percent of manure was generated in the deep litter systems, with sows on litter for a portion of the year.

These farms showed lower carbon footprints overall and demonstrate potential pathways for lower carbon pork farming that may need to be considered as the pressure mounts to get to net zero emissions by 2050.

Manure management continues to be the biggest determination of greenhouse gas emissions and the industry is in a good position to be able to make gains in this space, unlike ruminants, which are battling to change an inherent biological system.

As the environmental credentials of food products become more important to supply chains, customers and consumers, the ability of the pork industry to quantify these environmental impacts and trends over time becomes increasingly important.

While the industry has reduced its carbon footprint by 75 percent between 1980 and 2022, fossil fuel energy use by 61 percent, freshwater consumption by 90 percent and land occupation by 42 percent, it is important to note that the rate of change has slowed in recent times.

APL is continuing to invest in research to look for additional opportunities for the industry to improve, as well as the productivity gains that help over time, but the industry needs to stay proactive and continue to invest to maintain its position as a low impact animal protein.

Gemma Wyburn

APL Climate

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Thick piggery sludge no problem for Ragazzini pump

BLANTYRE Farms is a highly productive mixed farming and livestock business situated near Young in NSW.

It needed a reliable pump to transfer sludge from the covered methane gas dam.

In other words, the business found itself faced with a very old Australian conundrum... pushing slurry uphill.

That's when the maintenance manager at Blantyre Farms, Mark Schulz, contacted Hydro Innovations to find a suitable pump for the application.

The problem

The issue for the farm was that the slurry had the consistency of molasses and pumping it a kilometre uphill to the

ponds was no easy feat for standard pumps.

Hydro Innovations NSW regional manager Phil Rothheudt said: "Ordinary pumps just couldn't handle the slurry."

The solution

Phil's solution was to use a Ragazzini peristaltic pump model MS3.

The operation of this style of pump derives from human 'peristalsis' intestinal muscle movements – an alternating contraction and relaxation of muscles around a tube to coax the contents through.

"Peristaltic pumps are usually found in medical situations, often used to pump blood," Phil said.

The results

Mr Schulz was happy with the outcome and

said: "The information supplied by Phil to select the correct pump for our application was great, as was the communication for the actual purchase."

Phil said, "Our success is due to a team with many years of expertise."

"We can turn around an enquiry same day and offer a solution – we know the specifics, that's what matters."

The benefits

Ragazzini pumps use a roller-on-bearing design, so the casing does not have to be filled and re-filled with expensive lubricating fluid.

This means that hose changes are quicker and cleaner, and also that owners are able to take advantage of Ragazzini's fast leak detection system, which warns

owners when a hose needs replacing.

Pumps can be used on suction lifts up to 9m and can produce pressures to 15 bar.

More information on these pumps may be obtained from Hydro Innovations on 02 9898 1800 or info@HydroInnovations.com.au



Hydro Innovations select the pump suitable for the application. In this case, pushing slurry uphill.



The Ragazzini peristaltic pump model MS3 was the perfect solution.

Shoppers fooled into buying fake meat products

LEADER of The Nationals David Littleproud has accused Labor of being too slow to act in the labelling of meat and non-meat products amid a cost-of-living crisis.

Mr Littleproud said despite Labor's election commitment to deliver accurate and clear labelling, Labor has only just announced \$1.5 million in its latest budget to improve labelling of plant-based and alternative protein products over the next two years.

"In a cost-of-living crisis, Australian families are being fooled into thinking they are buying meat products because Labor has failed to act on its election commitment," Mr Littleproud said.

"Lack of clarity under current labelling laws means families are tricked into thinking they are buying 'cheap' meat products, when in reality they are plant-based.

"Labor promised to support meat and plant industries and improve regulations but has completely dropped the ball."

Mr Littleproud added the failure to fix inaccurate labelling is confusing for families who are already struggling with prices at the supermarket checkout.

The former Coalition Government led the way with providing accuracy in labelling, introducing Country of

Origin, to help Australian consumers make informed choices.

"How can families know what they are buying at a time when many are trying to save money on meat products, but current standards allow alternative protein or plant-based manufacturers to exploit the standards and confuse consumers," he said.

The Department of Agriculture told Estimates it was working on a response to the meat definitions inquiry, led by The Nationals Senator for Queensland Susan McDonald.

"Agriculture Minister Murray Watt said labelling would be finalised, but the industry has been forced to wait, despite a Senate inquiry recommending mandatory meat labelling laws and improving labelling regulation."

"Labor has been too slow to act on supermarket price gouging and is now too slow to act on accurate meat labelling.

"The fact Labor hasn't even responded to the Senate inquiry isn't good enough, especially when the price of meat has skyrocketed under Labor's watch," Mr Littleproud said.

"Labor must now use common sense and introduce practical measures that will help families at the checkout as soon as possible."

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Australian Pork Newspaper, July 2024 – Page 5



The author has fought doggedly for more than 40 years to ensure nothing is wasted when it comes to pigs.

Waste not want not

**Cant
Comment**
by BRENDON CANT



combine both Fight Food Waste CRC and Stop Food Waste, the two merged to create End Food Waste Australia.

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The evolved entity promises to continue to deliver world-leading research and support bold industry action and collaboration through the Australian Food Pact and Sector Action Plans.

Its vision is an Australia without food waste, starting with halving food waste by 2030.

Let's waste no more time and start utilising the massive mountains of food waste we produce.

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And use it productively in pig production – with appropriate safety and biosecurity measures in place of course.

Waste not want not, surely?

While there is welcome movement in the fighting food waste space in Australia, let's hope accordingly there'll be downstream benefits for pig production.

As an example, I'm aware of a two-year project led by the South Australian Research and Development Institute 'Food waste to pig feed', which concluded in December 2022.

Australasian Pork Research Institute Limited supported the project – APRIL Project 6A-105 – yet, as with too many of APRIL's projects, appropriate targeted extension of outcomes and indeed recommendations have been

scarce to say the least.

On a more positive note, Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre and Stop Food Waste Australia have come together to become End Food Waste Australia.

In 2018, an initiative called Fight Food Waste CRC was facilitated and funded to undertake research to find new strategies for reducing food waste.

In 2020, a subsidiary called Stop Food Waste was established as a platform for businesses to collaborate and roll-out new systems to reduce their food waste.

Realising that it would be more beneficial to

ACCORDING to the National Food Waste Strategy Feasibility Study baseline, Australia produces 11.3 million tonnes of food waste per annum and diverts 3.9 million tonnes of it to animal feed.

Of the remaining 7.3 million tonnes, up to 60 percent of the wastage is avoidable, by directing it to food rescue and animal feed.

These are currently the only two destinations that count towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Target 12.3 of halving food waste by 2030 under the Australian National Food Waste Strategy.

A considerable proportion of the cost of rearing pigs in Australia is related to feeding.

In Australia, pig feeds are predominately based on cereals and cereal by-products, pulses and/or oilseeds, rendered animal products, and dairy products for young pigs.

Currently, there is some use of manufacturing and dairy waste streams in the pork industry, however the use of other forms of recycled food waste – which potentially has a significantly lower input cost than other feed ingredients – is limited.

Presently, only 10-20 percent of Australian herds are accessing manufacturing waste, largely due to a lack of business-to-business awareness.

In countries such as Japan and South Korea, feed costs have been reduced by 40-60 percent against standard feed by the use of treated mixed food waste.

In Japan, the eco-feed – animal feed made from recycled food-waste scraps and leftovers – industry has successfully and safely produced nutritious feed for pigs from surplus food for more than 15 years.

It is a global pioneer in this field, recycling 52 percent of food industry surplus into animal feed to date.



There are no half measures when it comes to pigs. And fighting food waste is part of that. Appropriately treated food waste can play its part in producing quality pork while driving down input costs.



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NFF president David Jochinke said the biggest funding allocation for closing down the live sheep trade was a bitter blow. "Reverse the ban, keep your money and we'll call it even."

Farmers plea at painful budget

THE Federal Government twisted the knife into Australian agriculture, with the biggest allocation of new funding for the sector allocated to shutting down the live sheep trade.

National Farmers' Federation president David Jochinke said while at a glance at the budget, it would appear the biggest spending spree for agriculture was for the Future Drought Fund, only \$42.2 million is new money.

"Peel back the surface and the disappointment appears," Mr Jochinke said.

"The biggest spend in 'agriculture' is not even for farmers, it's appeasing the extreme activists and to generate inner city votes at the next election.

"The budget confirms \$107 million to cancel the trade and, to add insult to injury, only \$64.6 million will go to producers and the supply chain."

Farmers from across the nation are reeling from the announcement that the live sheep trade will be wiped out in only four years.

"This is a bitter blow," he said.

"What we say to the government is reverse the ban, keep your money and we'll call it even.

"This is a painful budget for Australian farmers and this is a kick in the guts when we are already down."

Climate change announcements a positive to help shape the agenda, but we await detail

The NFF awaits more detail on the \$63.8 million over a decade to support initial emission reduction efforts in the agriculture and land sectors as part of Australia's transition to net zero by 2050.

"This announcement should prove a solid down payment on investing in agriculture's approach to addressing climate change," Mr Jochinke said.

"We look forward to understanding the detail.

"We welcome funding for the Nature Positive Plan and improving the Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme, we will continue to unpack these and what they mean for agriculture over the coming days."

Regional infrastructure spend welcomed

The \$1.7 billion spend for roads is welcome news from this budget.

Farmers are fed up with Australia's crumbling road network.

"We hope this indicates a renewed focus on creating more efficient and safer freight routes," he said.

Fund for community-destroying buybacks concealed

The budget includes an undisclosed amount for progressing controversial water buybacks in the Murray Darling Basin.

"We'd love them to come clean on exactly what that slush fund contains," Mr Jochinke said.

"Communities deserve transparency about how many farms will be shut down in the blind rush to complete the plan."

Little to support careers in agriculture

In a disappointing blow to workforce, the government has cut the Harvest Trail Services and Harvest Trail Information Service programs to save \$47.3 million and it's drastically slashed funding for the gap-year program AgCareerstart.

"AgCareerstart has received a pitiful \$500,000 across two years," he said.

"While it's a start, it falls far short of the \$4.4 million needed to keep the program's momentum going.

"This program has revolutionised bringing fresh feet into the industry, connecting young people with jobs on farms, as well as helping solve farm workforce shortages.

"It's been one of the few positive improve-

ments amid a slashing of visa programs and degrading of workplace laws that has characterised this government, and now its future remains uncertain."

Community engagement on renewables

"A \$20.7 million provision for the continued funding of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner is a good start to improve community engagement and social licence for renewables projects," Mr Jochinke said.

"However, the package doesn't go far enough, only supporting voluntary national developer standards.

"The NFF will continue to fight for better consultation and solutions that don't sacrifice food and fibre production."

The NFF also noted and welcomed additional announcements relevant to the farm sector, including:

- Extension of the \$20,000 instant asset write-off until June 30, 2025

- \$519.1 million across four years for the Future Drought Fund only includes \$42.2 million in new money

- An additional extra \$13.9 million for the department to respond quickly to drought events and ensure drought is always high on the policy agenda

- \$2 million boost to help Australian agricultural exporters rebuild trade with China and diversify into other markets, as well as a \$14.4 million commitment to expand the Australia-India Business Exchange to promote Australia's trade and investment with India and across south Asia

- \$400,000 across three years for Farmsafe Australia to extend the National Farm Safety Week campaign

- \$1.5 million to improve accurate and clear labelling of plant-based alternative protein products.

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Zoetis has partnered with Beyond Blue to once again champion mental health initiatives in rural Australia.

Empowering rural Australians

■ Zoetis supports mental health initiative

IN recent years, Australians in rural and regional areas have faced unprecedented challenges that have taken a toll on mental health and well-being.

Factors such as inflation, cost-of-living pressures, climate change and the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the importance of mental health support, particularly for farmers and rural communities.

Recognising the critical need for support, Zoetis has partnered with Beyond Blue to once again champion mental health initiatives in rural Australia.

With a commitment of \$800,000 over the past eight years, Zoetis has been a steadfast supporter of Beyond Blue's vital services, which have seen more than 300,000 individuals reach out for assistance in 2023 alone.

For 2024, Zoetis has set a goal to raise an additional \$100,000 by the end of the year by donating \$5 from each sale of the company's livestock, pig and poultry vaccines and drenches.

Zoetis senior vice president Australia and New Zealand Lance Williams said, "Our partnership with Beyond Blue is more than just financial support."

"It's about fostering a culture of hope and resilience, ensuring that those facing mental health challenges know they are not alone and that help is available."

Over 3.4 million people in Australia are dealing with anxiety or depression and nearly half of the population will face mental health issues in their lifetime.

Not only are Australians living in rural and remote areas disproportionately affected by stress and anxiety, accessing services is significantly harder due to attitudinal, financial and digital barriers.

Derek Schoen, a Corowa farmer and Beyond Blue board member, emphasised the importance of maintaining hope amidst adversity.

"Country people are resilient and tough, but the many challenges we face can take a toll on our mental health."

"The repeated extreme weather events we've seen at the start of this year have added to these stresses," he said.

"I would encourage people to not lose hope and to seek support early."

According to research from the National Farmers Federation, nearly a third of farmers have reported a decline in their mental health, citing weather-related disasters (47 percent), financial stress (36 percent) and inflation and cost pressures (35 percent) as top contributors.

Alarming, close to half of Australian farmers have experienced thoughts of self-harm or suicide, with feelings of loneliness and limited access to mental health services compounding these challenges.

The Beyond Blue Support Service has been instrumental in providing a lifeline to those in distress.

After contacting the service, a significant majority of individuals reported feeling heard, understood and less distressed, highlighting the positive impact of early intervention and support.

The journey to mental health is a collective effort that relies on a foundation of compassion, understanding and support.

Support can be given in many ways, including lending a listening ear.

"Every act of kindness, no matter how seemingly small, carries immense significance," Mr Williams said.

"It's crucial to remember that this journey doesn't have to be a lonely one.

"By fostering connections and creating safe spaces for open dialogue, we can collectively normalise conversations about mental health and encourage help-seeking behaviour.

"It's about recognising that each person's experience is unique and valid, and that seeking

support is a sign of strength, not weakness."

As Australia continues to navigate various challenges, Zoetis remains committed to promoting mental health awareness and supporting initiatives that strengthen the well-being of rural communities.

Together with Beyond Blue, Zoetis is harnessing the power of hope to navigate through difficult times and build a brighter healthier future for all Australians.

People can support the Zoetis initiative between July 15 and October 31, 2024.

For each sale of the company's livestock, pig and poultry vaccines and drenches, Zoetis will donate \$5, up to \$100,000, to Beyond Blue.

"The money raised goes directly to the Beyond Blue Support Service, to continue helping people living in remote areas," Mr Williams said.

"To date, thanks to Zoetis' donation, over 15,500 people have been able to get the support they need through the service.

"Together we have made strong progress in supporting the mental health and well being of those who live in rural Australia, and we are passionate about helping again this year."

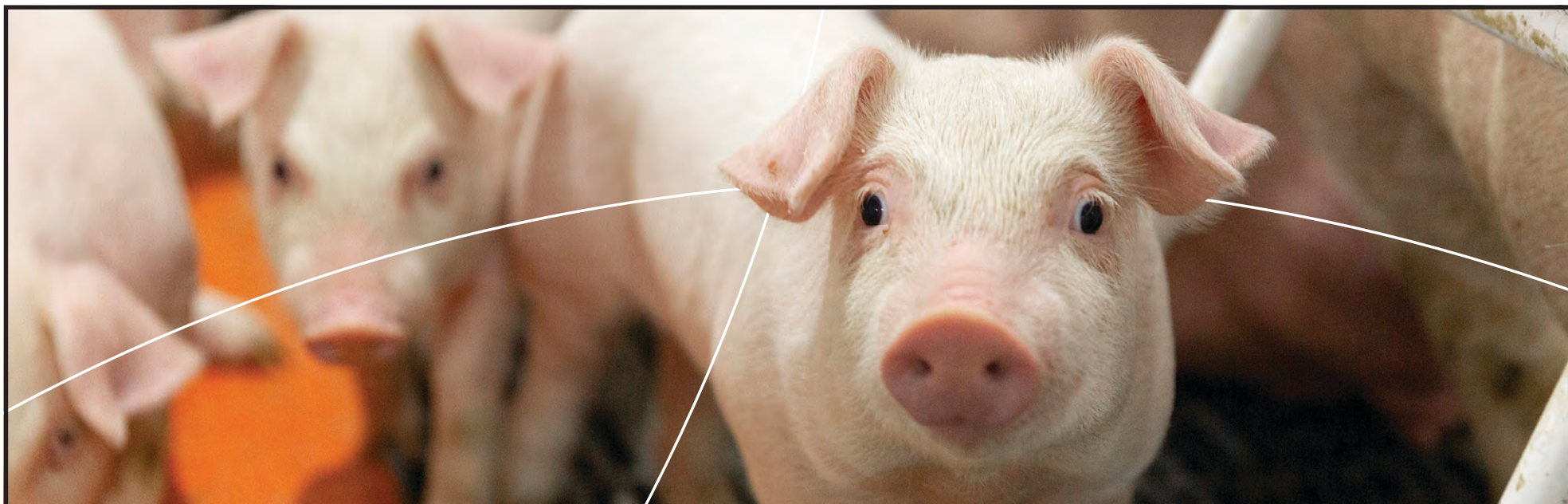
For more information on how you can help Zoetis to raise vital funds to support mental health in rural communities through its partnership with Beyond Blue, visit zoetis.com.au

For more information about depression and anxiety, visit beyondblue.org.au

The Beyond Blue Support Service offers free and immediate counselling, advice and referrals via phone, webchat or email.

To talk to a mental health professional for free, contact the twenty-four seven Beyond Blue Support Service on 1300 22 46 36.

Free web chat is also available twenty-four seven at beyondblue.org.au/support-service/chat and you can join the online forums for free.



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BUILDING IMMUNE HEALTH

If pigs aren't eating well, gut health may be compromised, which can affect their overall health and make them more vulnerable to disease challenges.

Environmental impacts of Australian pork

THE following extract is taken from the study 'Environmental impacts of Australian pork in 2020 and 2022 determined using life cycle assessments' by Mary-Frances Copley, Eugene McGahan, Kate McCormack, and Stephen Wiedemann of Integrity Ag, commissioned by Australian Pork Limited and recently presented at Food with Purpose 2024.

The research paper in its entirety can be found at doi.org/10.1071/AN23352

The Australian pork industry has experienced substantial growth over the past four decades, resulting in a national herd of approximately 2.25 million pigs in 2019–2020.

The pork industry makes a significant contribution to the Aus-

tralian economy, valued at \$5.3 billion in 2020–2021.

Production occurs in each state in Australia, with the eastern seaboard – Queensland, NSW and Victoria – responsible for two-thirds of the national herd.

Pork is typically a lower environmental impact protein, but life cycle assessments (LCAs) in Australia have focused most strongly on greenhouse gas emissions, energy and water and not on other relevant impacts such as nutrient losses.

Environmental impacts arise within the farm boundary and from upstream feed production.

Most feed production occurs outside the operational boundary of the piggery, where there is less control over reducing impacts.

It is important for industry to understand both the direct impacts (within operational control) and indirect impacts (outside operational control) when developing environmental improvement plans.

Baseline environmental impacts (GHG emissions, fossil energy use, freshwater consumption, stress-weighted water use, and land occupation) for Australian pork production were determined previously for 2010–2011.

The study covered 14 farms in four major production regions, finding that impacts were strongly influenced by housing and manure management systems and feed systems.

The study concluded that, particularly in conventional systems, improvement in feed conversion ratios should result in lower impacts over time.

Compared with international production, baseline environmental impacts of Australian pork tended to be higher than northern hemisphere production for carbon footprint and land occupation but

lower for fossil energy use.

In 2022, the Australian Government legislated an economy-wide 43 percent emission reduction target (from a 2005 baseline) by 2030 and a target for net zero emissions by 2050.

To align with the 2030 target, the Australian pork industry requires an approximate 41 percent reduction in GHG emissions from its 2010 baseline.

Also in 2022, the Australian Government joined the Global Methane Pledge, committing to a minimum 30 percent reduction in methane emissions across all sectors of the economy by 2030 from a 2020 baseline.

The commitment has implications for pork production and its methane emissions from enteric fermentation, manure handling and uncovered effluent ponds at both farms and processing plants.

Under the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative – Animal Effluent Management) Methodology Determination, methane destruction and avoidance at piggeries, such as covered anaerobic ponds and solids removal, can be registered with the Clean Energy Regulator and earn Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs).

The ACCUs can then be held, sold to the private market or sold to the Australian Government.

The implications around ACCU sales, when this abatement leaves one sector for another – for example, if ACCUs were generated by pig farms but sold to the mining sector to meet government requirements – have not been explored previously.

In the context of publicly communicated targets and commitments, to avoid double counting abatement, these reductions need to be removed from the pig industry account when being traded out of the sector, but not

where they are sold to the Federal Government.

In addition to GHG, other priority indicators for Australian agri-food production include fossil energy use, land occupation and freshwater consumption, scarcity and stress.

In addition, nutrient losses are an area of concern for pig production but, though commonly assessed in overseas studies, eutrophication potential (EP) has not previously been assessed for pork using LCA in Australia.

While the pork industry is responsible for impacts across all of these indicators, it is also exposed to impacts arising outside its operational control in other industries, most notably via feed grains.

It is anticipated that, as industry continues to improve performance, the relative contribution to environmental performance of external sources, such as feed grain production, will increase over time, unless substantial intervention is undertaken to achieve equivalent environmental improvement in other industries.

The shift both in Australia and globally to public commitments to long-term environmental improvement targets necessitates ongoing monitoring and reanalysis or interpretation of past results to understand trends and counter-trends.

In response to this, recent studies of pork production have explored and reported on trends over time.

This study provides two updated benchmarks (financial year 2020 and financial year 2022) for the environmental performance of the Australian pork industry and discusses the short- and long-term performance of the industry drawing on past studies of Australian production.

The updated analysis is fundamental to reporting improvement trends, sustaining improvement

• continued P13



Dr Stephen Wiedemann presented the findings of the study at Food with Purpose 2024.



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Environmental impacts of Australian pork study

from P12 by identifying priority areas for industry to address, and identifying and managing emerging counter trends.

Whole of supply chain impacts

All impacts were higher at the retail shelf than at other stages of the supply chain for multiple reasons.

Mass losses that occurred in the product flow between stages uniformly increased impacts across all categories.

Additional GHG emissions and energy use were attributable to fossil energy inputs in transport, at distribution centres and retail operations.

Retail operations and logistics accounted for 13 percent of GHG emissions (including land use and direct land use change, LU and dLUC) per kilogram of retail pork in FY22.

Of this, grid electricity consumption at retail operations was the major source of emissions.

There were no significant differences between the two analysis periods for impacts at primary and further processing.

Per kilogram of pork at the retail shelf, energy inputs at processing and post processing accounted for 15 percent of the total and fossil energy at the retail level accounted for 27 percent of the total.

This demonstrates that though primary production may dominate the emission profile, distribution and retail networks are considerable contributors to energy consumption.

Between 2020 and 2022, freshwater consumption and stress also declined per kilogram of pork ready for distribution to retail and per kilogram of retail pork, however this was overwhelmingly attributable to upstream feed production rather than reduced water consumption at processing or retail.

In 2022, water consumption at retail represented only 1 percent of the total freshwater consumption per kilogram of pork at the retail shelf, whereas consumption at primary and further processing accounted for 9 percent.

Any additional direct EP at primary processing was attributable to irrigation of treated wastewater on-site, which was a minor contribution.

Total emissions

Though the carbon account (total industry emissions incl. LU and dLUC) in 2022 was 56 percent lower than in 1980, industry expansion to increase food production resulted in higher total GHG emissions in FY22 compared to the previous analysis period.

Net GHG emissions for

the industry (that is, total emissions including LU and dLUC plus ACCUs generated and sold on the private market) also increased between FY20 and FY22 by 10 percent, a combination of a 6 percent increase in total emissions from expanded production and the sale of more than 70,000 carbon credits to private enterprises outside the Australian pork industries.

Where ACCU Scheme project holders sell to the Federal Government, as the credits are not retired against a claim, it is not double counting to account for these reductions in the pork industry.

This market dimension is a new consideration for agricultural industries including pork, where the apparent environmental benefits from interventions may not be attributable to the industry because these are

sold to other sectors.

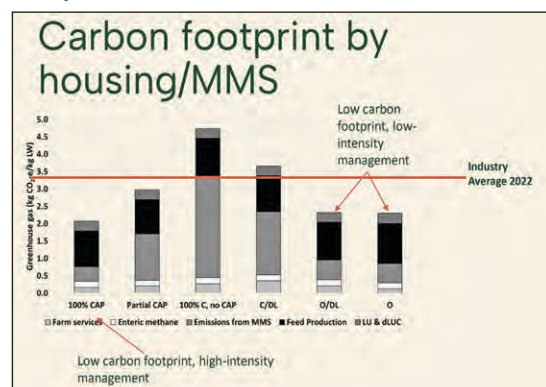
In FY22, ACCU sales outside the industry accounted for 6 percent of the sectoral (Scope 1 and 2) net emissions.

Sectoral emissions (not adjusted for ACCU sales) represented 54 percent and 53 percent of the industry's net carbon account in FY20 and FY22.

Scope 1 emissions from manure management systems were the greatest contributor to the sectoral carbon account, accounting for 78 percent and 75 percent of the emissions in FY20 and FY22 respectively.

This finding demonstrates that the potential for the greatest emission reduction lies in the transition of to lower emission intensity housing systems (for those producers not already operating CAPs, with high proportions

continued P14



Carbon footprint by housing and manure management systems compared to 2022 industry average.

Background

- APL commissioned the first industry LCA in 2008 and has continued this program to track performance of industry over time: 1980 to 2022.
- LCA provides quantified environmental performance of the industry and underpins Sustainability Framework reporting.
- Project commissioned in 2021 covered two time steps (2020 and 2022) with the most extensive industry coverage to date, and the broadest set of indicators:
- Carbon footprint, fossil energy, Freshwater consumption, stress, and scarcity, Land occupation, Eutrophication potential.



The first industry life cycle assessment was commissioned by Australian Pork Limited in 2008.

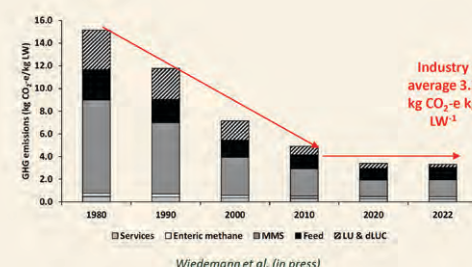
42 Years of improvement in carbon footprint

GHG emissions (excl. LU & dLUC) fallen by 74% since 1980

LU & dLUC emissions fallen by 92%

Equivalent to a 1.9% reduction in carbon footprint per year

But... no improvement between 2020 and 2022



Industry improvement in carbon footprint over the 40 years since 1980, however no improvement between 2020-2022.

Key findings and conclusions

1. Industry has demonstrated a long-term trend in reduced impacts on the environment leading to low impact production systems.
2. Stalled improvement in 2020-2022 – suggests focused effort needed to improve productivity and MMS conversion.
3. Variation reveals opportunity for further improvement in CF and two paths:
 - Intensive management and engineering – **CAP + waste feed**, and
 - Low intensity engineering – **litter based housing/outdoor**.
4. Irrigation exposure is high and uncertain because of limited traceability of water in grain commodity markets.

Conclusions include a focused effort was needed to improve conversion.

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Porcilis®
PCV M Hyo

MSD
Animal Health

Environmental impacts of Australian pork

from P13

(>85 percent) of deep litter, or outdoor production).

The contribution of the major gases to total industry emissions (excluding LU and dLUC) did not change between FY20 and FY22.

For net emissions however, the contribution of methane increased in both percentage and absolute terms between the two years in response to a decrease in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from LU and dLUC.

Comparison with other proteins

The present study analysed impacts to the retail shelf, which was an extended supply chain compared with most protein LCAs reported to date.

To aid comparability, we compared results excluding the retail and distribution stages for pork, that is per kilogram of boneless fat-corrected pork ready for distribution to retail.

Environmental impacts were higher than retail-ready boneless chicken meat and shell-and protein-corrected eggs for GHG, LU and dLUC, fossil energy use, freshwater consumption, water stress, and land occupation.

Compared with protein and fat-corrected lamb, boneless retail-ready pork had lower impacts for GHG excluding LU and dLUC, freshwater consumption and stress, and total land occupation but higher impacts for fossil energy use and

arable land occupation.

Boneless fat-corrected beef had higher GHG emissions (excluding LU and dLUC), freshwater consumption and stress and total land occupation impacts per kilogram than pork, but lower fossil energy use and arable land occupation impacts.

None of the comparison Australian studies for poultry, beef or lamb reported EP.

Piggeries may lose a small proportion of nutrients from the site in run-off losses even under best management practices but comparatively, total meat production is very high.

Conclusions

As the environmental credentials of agri-food products become more important to customers and consumers, the ability of the Australian pork industry to quantify, understand and communicate performance and long-term trends is increasingly important for the industry's social licence.

This study was the most comprehensive of its kind in Australia based on industry coverage, which represented 70-72 percent by volume.

Between 1980 and 2022, the industry has reduced product carbon footprint (including LU and dLUC) by 78 percent, fossil energy use by 61 percent, freshwater consumption by 90 percent and land occupation by 42 percent.

However, the rate of change was found to

have slowed in the most recent period for GHG emissions, suggesting interventions and concerted effort will be required to continue emission reduction.

Scope 1 emissions from housing and manure management systems were the greatest contributor to the sectoral carbon account (Scope 1 and 2 emissions), accounting for 78 percent and 75 percent of the emissions in FY20 and FY22 respectively.

This finding demonstrates that the potential for the greatest emission reduction lies in the ongoing transition to lower emission intensity housing systems.

Piggeries with CAPs, high proportions (>85 percent) of deep litter or outdoor housing produce pork with lower GHG emissions, providing a range of options for the industry.

Advancing progress towards low-emissions pork would be enhanced by a structured emission reduction pathway for industry, developed with broad input from stakeholders extending from suppliers to retail and from government and finance.

Further, pork is a relatively low impact meat production system with significant potential to further reduce environmental impacts by implementing sustainable practice change.

Mary-Frances Copley, Eugene McGahan, Kate McCormack and Dr Stephen Wiedemann Integrity Ag

Piggery chokes no joke

EFFECTIVE drainage is essential for any piggery.

Without that, the build-up of liquid waste will not only cause health problems for sows and their progeny but can also result in disease.

Everybody is conscious of the need for effective drainage, though not all piggeries are aware of the need to regularly clear drains from build-up of material inside the pipes.

Over time, that build-up can reduce flows, effectively turning a 4" pipe into what amounts to a 3" pipe or smaller.

Aussie Pumps, creator and perfecter of the Aussie Cobra drain cleaning Jetter, has produced a 'piggery special' that not only enables the drains to be cleaned easily and effectively but does it quickly and cleanly.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, "Using 4000 or 5000psi Aussie Cobra Jetters can clear blocked drains in a fraction of the time taken by the old mechanical eels or similar devices."

"Not only is the Jetter much faster in clearing the chokes but it even has the ability to cut through serious impediments based on the range of nozzles provided with the machine."

Aussie Pumps produced the first high pressure drain cleaning Jetters almost 20 years ago.

They were first used by plumbers to clear blocked drains in metropolitan areas in Australia's four biggest cities.

Later they were adopted by leading piggeries to clear blocked drains on a regular basis.

Machines can be either trolley mounted or even

vehicle tray mounted.

The machines feature Big Bert Bertolini heavy duty triplex pumps with solid ceramic pistons, forged brass heads and crank-cases that are heavily 'finned' for additional cooling.

The machines are normally driven by a Honda engine, though can also be equipped with three-phase electric motors or even diesel engines where required.

Aussie's latest range of Jetters, called the Deluxe Mk3 versions, all come with heavy duty stainless-steel frames, 30-litre stainless-steel break tanks and, in the case of the Honda engine powered versions, a 12-litre fuel tank.

"Most of the chokes are easily cleared within a matter of 10-15 minutes, depending on the length and complexity of

the system," Mr Hales said.

All machines come with an Aussie Nozzle Box.

The nozzle box includes seven pieces, with a range of nozzles capable of clearing almost anything.

The Jetter itself is equipped with a stainless-steel hose reel and 60m of R8 high-pressure super-flexible drain cleaner hose, rated to 5000psi.

Portable reel for extended control

The addition of a portable mini reel, which enables the operator to access difficult to reach locations, extends the reach of the Jetter a further 60m.

Called the Aussie Viper Mini Reel, the stainless-steel hose reel comes complete with an integrated on/off valve that allows the operator to control the Jetter remotely.

Debris flushed away

These powerful machines, in a range of up to 31LPM flow and with pressures as high as 5000psi, can provide virtually instant cleaning.

The big advantage of Aussie's Jetter design is that when the choke is cleared, the debris is flushed down the pipe, leaving the work site clean.

A washdown gun kit comes with the machine, enabling to Jetter to double as a very effective high-pressure water blaster too.

For more information, contact the factory at Norwest in Sydney on 02 8865 3500.



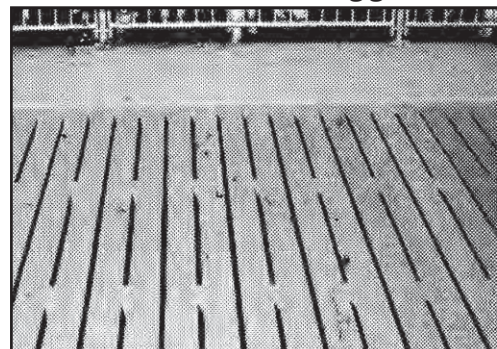
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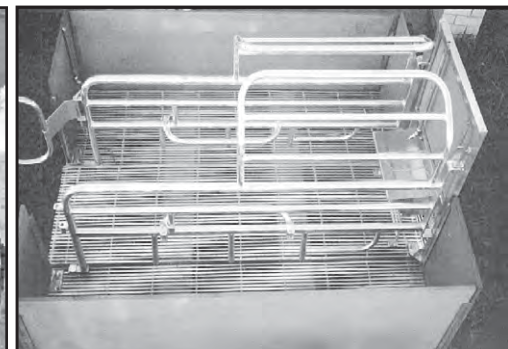
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How consumers can choose higher welfare pork

BEING an educated consumer and choosing higher-welfare products is one way in which Australians can improve conditions for farm animals and support farmers raising animals to better welfare standards.

The choices we make and the products we buy are a vote for the system that produces them, and Aussies are increasingly sending the message they want higher-welfare products from farms that prioritise better animal welfare.

One area of ongoing concern for Australians is pork, and people particularly want to know how to purchase pork that is higher welfare.

As with egg-laying hens, the vast majority of pigs reared for pork in Australia are kept in barren conventional systems, with a smaller percentage in outdoor systems.

Unlike eggs, pork products aren't generally required to clearly label the type of farming system, which is a big problem.

But there are some fairly consistent terms you can look for that are used to describe how pigs are reared.

Here's how to make sense of pork labels to help you choose higher welfare.

Identifying higher-welfare pork products

All fresh pork sold in Australia comes from pigs that are farmed in Australia.

What consumers may not realise is that many pork products such as processed ham, bacon, deli meats and pre-cooked products such as pulled pork are imported, most commonly from the US, Canada and some European countries.

Why does this matter?

Pig welfare standards vary greatly between countries and pigs are often not raised to the same standard overseas.

Though Australian conventional production of pork isn't entirely good for pig welfare, there are attributes that put it ahead of production in the US.

The Australian pork industry has phased out sow stalls and now about 80 percent of sows are housed in groups during their pregnancy.

However, most sows are still confined in narrow farrowing crates during and after the birth of piglets.

In Australia, Country of Origin Labelling has also been introduced, requiring all businesses selling packaged food products to ensure packing includes a product label stating the percentage of Australian ingredients and the country of origin of those ingredients.

www.porknews.com.au

Be sure to check the bar to see what percentage of ingredients are Australian.

If its low, it's unlikely the pork is Aussie grown. **RSPCA Approved**

When you see the RSPCA Approved certification on pork this means the pig has come from a farm that meets the RSPCA Approved farming scheme's detailed and publicly available standard for pigs – and that the farm is regularly assessed to make sure the standard is being met.

The RSPCA standard for pigs has 322 requirements on farm and 88 at slaughter.

Whether an indoor, outdoor-bred or free-range farm, there is a focus on providing for pigs' behavioural and physical needs.

Sow stalls, traditional farrowing crates and painful husbandry procedures – such as tail docking and teeth clipping – are not allowed under the RSPCA Approved farming scheme at all.

Pig farms with RSPCA Approved certification are assessed twice a year and abattoirs once a year by specially trained RSPCA assessors.

Any brand marketing their product as RSPCA Approved also undergoes traceability assessments by the RSPCA to verify the products supply chain.

Coles has long been working with the RSPCA Approved farming scheme on pig welfare, and excitingly all Coles free-range pork is now RSPCA Approved and available nationally.

Free range

Free-range pork comes from pigs born and raised with free access to outdoor areas or paddocks with vegetation and the freedom to move, forage and socialise.

Sows are not confined to traditional farrowing crates or sow stalls and have access to a farrowing hut to nest with their piglets.

It's important to understand however, that a free-range housing system does not automatically mean higher welfare – how the pigs are raised, handled, kept and managed is also crucial to achieving better welfare.

Outdoor bred

Not to be confused with free range, this label is used to signify pigs that have been born in a free-range environment but then subsequently raised indoors.

Outdoor-bred pigs may be raised in enriched indoor systems with large open sheds and comfortable straw bedding or in small pens with concrete floors in more conventional farming systems.

From the label alone

there is little way of knowing, so gathering further information from the brand is a good way to find out more.

Sow stall free

'Sow stall free' is the term used to define pigs that have been born from sows that are group housed during their pregnancy.

While the growth of sow stall free pork is an important development, the label of 'sow stall free' alone does not indicate higher welfare production.

Sow stall free farms still confine the sow to a farrowing crate prior to and for the weeks following the birth of her piglets.

In a farrowing crate, a sow can only stand up and lie down.

She can't turn around

or engage with her environment.

Sows are strongly motivated to seek a nest site and build a nest before giving birth.

They cannot do this in a farrowing crate, and they cannot interact with their piglets.

Piglets born in sow stall free systems are still raised in barren intensive systems, often with no enrichment or bedding.

Painful husbandry practices such as tail docking or teeth clipping can also still be used.

Not sure if your pork stacks up?

Here at the RSPCA, we actively engage with the pork industry and producers to encourage uptake of higher welfare farming practices.

We welcome the oppor-

tunity to talk with forward-thinking producers.

So, if you have a favourite pork brand that isn't RSPCA Approved, get in touch with them and let them know you would like to see them achieve RSPCA Approved certification.

RSPCA



All Coles free-range pork is now RSPCA Approved.



The label of 'sow stall free' alone does not indicate higher welfare production.



Consumers particularly want to know how to purchase pork that is higher welfare.

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Summary of 2023-24 Early Harvest Data



**Australasian
Pork Research
Institute Ltd
APRIL**

THIS month's report includes box plot graphs that show the variation of pig faecal digestible energy, broiler apparent metabolisable energy and protein percentage for barley and wheat samples by region as predicted by the AusScan Online NIR calibrations.

The mean values for each variable and grain type across all regions are shown in Table 1 and are derived from 2030 barley and 8040 wheat samples.

The graphs represent predicted values from different regions over a five-month period, November 2023 to April 2024.

The mean pig faecal DE values for barley were significantly different between the regions but showed little variation within a region and, including the outliers (denoted by coloured symbols outside the quartile markers), the range was 2.2MJ/kg across all regions and excluding outliers the range was

1.2MJ/kg (see Figure 1).

In contrast, the mean pig faecal DE values for wheat are similar across all regions with a range of 3.5 MJ/kg (including outliers).

However, excluding outliers, the range in predicted DE values reduced to approximately 0.5MJ/kg (see Figure 2).

The range of predicted values for broiler AME was greater than pig faecal DE and varied within and between regions more notably for barley (see Figure 3) than wheat (see Figure 4).

The trends for barley and wheat for broiler AME values are similar to the previous 2022-23 season.

Excluding outliers, the protein percentage of both barley (see Figure 5) and wheat (see Figure 6) showed less variation

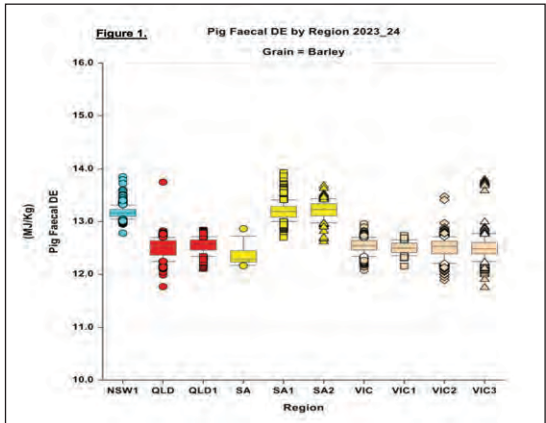
within a region compared to the previous season and both grains showed similar variations between regions.

Outliers are included in all graphs and indicate the importance of scanning grains for these key parameters.

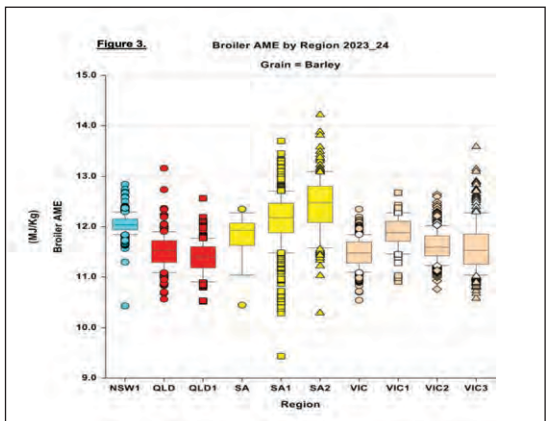
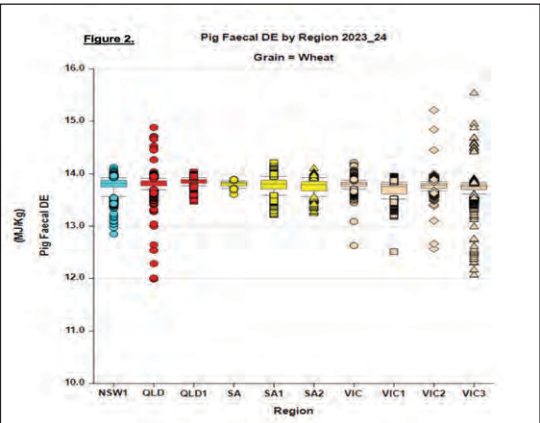
This will be the last Early Harvest Report for the 2023-24 season.

Many thanks to the mills across Australia for contributing their AusScan Online data.

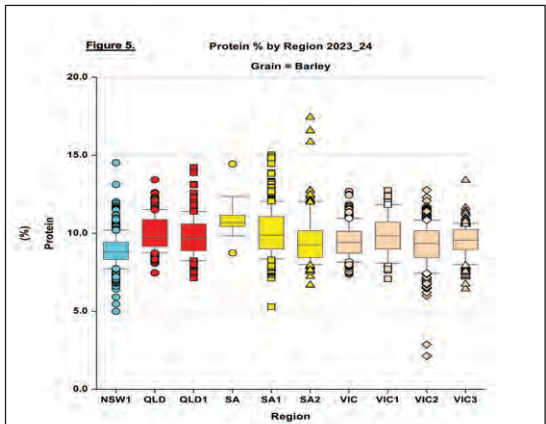
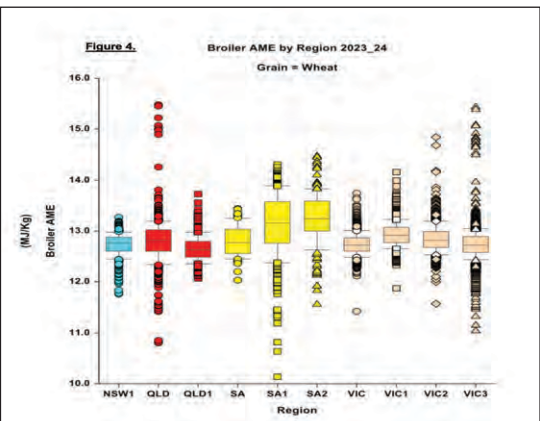
For more information, email Dr Charles Rikard-Bell at c.rikardbell@april.org.au



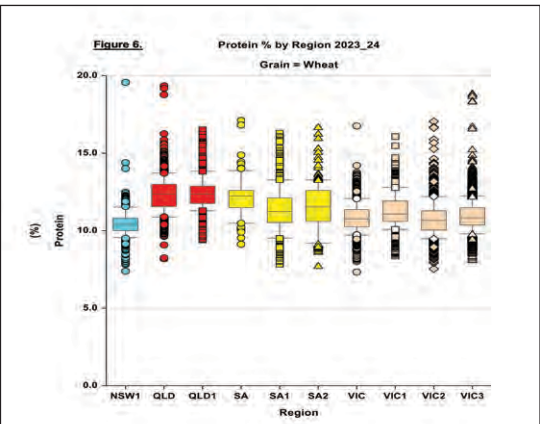
Distribution of Pig faecal DE (MJ/kg) by region for barley samples (Figure 1) and wheat samples (Figure 2) from November 2023 through to April 2024 as predicted by AusScan Online.



Distribution of Broiler AME (MJ/kg) by region for barley samples (Figure 3) and wheat samples (Figure 4) from November 2023 through to April 2024 as predicted by AusScan Online.



Distribution of Protein (%) by region for barley samples (Figure 5) and wheat samples (Figure 6) from November 2023 through to April 2024 as predicted by AusScan Online.



Grain	Sample Number	Pig faecal DE (MJ/kg)	Broiler AME (MJ/kg)	Protein %
Barley	2,030	12.77	11.78	9.56
Wheat	8,040	13.76	12.81	11.20

Table 1: Mean values for Pig faecal DE, Broiler AME and Protein % for wheat and barley samples using AusScan Online NIR calibrations.



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Ag is more than traditional farming

WORKFORCE needs to be a priority for Australian agriculture as we face widespread shortages across the entire industry.

We need to attract and retain more agricultural employees and leaders, and we need to understand and respond to the future workforce needs of Australia's rural industries.

These priorities are at the forefront of AgriFutures Australia's strategic plan.

AgriFutures Australia, Training Services NSW and TAFE NSW recently hosted over 300 students at the Ag Industry Days, an event that showcased the diverse career opportunities in Australia's agricultural industry.

The events challenged the idea that 'agriculture is just farming' and showcased to students the opportunities in the industry right on their doorstep.

AgriFutures Australia manager workforce delivery Abbey O'Callaghan said the workshops were developed in response to recommendations from

a recent community perceptions and worker experiences report.

The report emphasised the need to broaden the conversation about roles in the industry and showcase new technology as a selling point.

"Some of the world's biggest challenges are directly related to agriculture – food security, sustainability and climate change," Ms O'Callaghan said.

"The Ag Industry Days challenged perceptions of the agriculture industry and galvanised the next generation of agricultural innovators.

"Importantly, we wanted to inspire students to embrace science, technology, engineering, mathematics and agricultural subjects as they progress into their senior school years."

During the Ag Industry Days, attendees were challenged to answer the question, how do we rethink agriculture?

Participating students could refine their answers and submit their 'pitch' to AgriFutures Australia.

The responses will offer important insights into the perspectives of young people considering their career options.

Innovative food waste management company Goterra was one of the diverse local industry organisations that hosted students for field trips during the event.

Goterra chief executive officer and 2023 ACT Australian of the Year Olympia Yarger recognised the role of such events in dispelling misconceptions about the agriculture industry.

"One of the biggest challenges startups in the agritech space are facing is how to attract talent that hasn't necessarily grown up in agriculture but is passionate about its future," Ms Yarger said.

"A contributing factor to this challenge is the belief that agriculture is old-fashioned or stuck in the past.

"The reality is Australian agriculture remains on the forefront of innovation in the sector and is so diverse in opportunity, it can almost be difficult to

choose where to put one's attention.

"Events like the Ag Industry Days are critical in showcasing the opportunities available and, as always, I'm so pleased Goterra is able to support and participate."

Training Services NSW senior project officer Katie Friedlieb said the workshop provided students insights into an industry that may not be on their radar.

"Agriculture is no longer just about the traditional farmer, and we need professionals working in the sector in an off-farm capacity," Ms Friedlieb said.

"The Ag Industry Days were an informal and interactive day for students to see the bigger picture."

The field trip locations included CSU Global Digital Farm, TAFE Primary Industries Centre, Riverina Oils and My Chef in Wagga Wagga, while Goterra, TAFE NSW National Environment Centre and Wolki Farm were the field trip locations in Albury.

AgriFutures Australia



Farmers are reporting a fresh surge in feral pig numbers, prompting a call to escalate funding to fight the state's feral pig problem. Photo: Terry Cooke, NSW DPE

NSW pig problem escalates

NSW farmers president Xavier Martin said there was a golden opportunity for funding in the state budget to get feral pigs under control as numbers explode across the state.

"There's reports of feral pigs weighing well over 100kg charging through the paddocks, trashing food crops and killing calves and lambs at the drop of a hat," Mr Martin said.

"These pests are bigger than the people trying to control them – and they are costing landholders many thousands of dollars in lost production and control costs that they simply can't keep up with.

"They're super-spreaders of disease and reproduce at a rate that means we need to cull many millions a year to break the breeding cycle, so we have a fight on our hands that we simply can't face alone."

While recent efforts by the Minns Government to support baiting, trapping and aerial shooting of feral pigs had been warmly welcomed by farmers, Mr Martin warned funding for pig control must be scaled up significantly in this year's NSW budget to get on top of the problem.

"More than 77,000 pigs have been culled by the state's Feral Pig

Program since October last year – and while this has made a dent in the population, we've still got millions of pigs ruining production on our prime agricultural land," Mr Martin said.

"Farmers have been outnumbered, paddocks have been destroyed and, despite our best efforts, no one-man band can get on top of these animals when the numbers are just so wildly out of control.

"If we want to fend off these pests for good, we need to see some serious funding for feral pig control in the NSW budget – or else we simply don't stand a chance."

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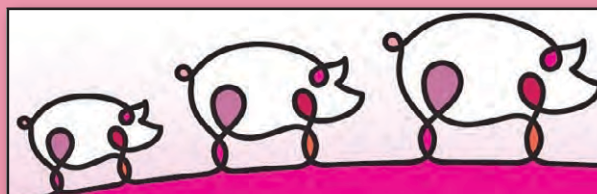
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¹ AVERAGE OF 13 PUBLISHED STUDIES. Assumptions for the calculation: FCR improvement = 0.141, Live weight = 100 kg, Number of animals sold per year = 3000, Vaccination costs: \$7,139.
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