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Pork leaving pigs and people behind

OUR industry's pricing problems have now endured for more than six months, and no one is prepared to call that prices have even hit the bottom, let alone have started to increase again. The problem persists and won't turn around overnight.

As I have written earlier, our production levels/increasing supply is one of the causes of the present pricing problems.

If we look backwards to 2012 (see Figure 1), we can see the relatively consistent growth since then, albeit with a few bumps along the way.

This is roughly the period through which pork per capita consumption has been increasing, beforehand this being limited by lower pig production.

If we index pig slaughter numbers against population growth over this time, the end result is approximate parity, meaning our



Point of View

by ANDREW SPENCER CEO



industry, in relative terms, hasn't grown.

However, due to the increase in the average sizes of our carcasses, if we do the same with pork production numbers in tonnes, we can see we have started to leave population growth behind us, and this is the key to our present supply issues.

If we had indexed the two production measures from the start of 2015, the picture would have shown even more aggressive growth.

Thanks to those producers who have supplied

their forward plans for production numbers, we have a reasonable insight into where production levels will be going up until February 2018.

In short, our moving annual total slaughter number is expected to remain more or less at present levels (5.15 million pigs) until October or November this year, after which it is showing again, relatively aggressive growth.

Flat numbers for the next five or six months is good news for prices; aggressive growth thereafter will be a challenge.

These forward projections have also been aided through the support of the export abattoirs that have been providing weekly data on numbers processed, helping us to have a feel for the short-term shifts in slaughter numbers.

It seems clear that we are in the seasonal high processing numbers at present, with about 105,000 pigs being processed per week.

As little as two years ago, this number was well below 100,000.

The one very important positive fundamental we continue to measure is strong consumer demand in the retail sector (representing at least half our market).

This has recently been verified through comparing retailer scan data with an independent market research source.

One of the other quoted reasons for the present pricing difficulties is the increase in pre-cooked

imports competing with our fresh pork business.

These imports are continuing but we are improving our understanding of the volumes involved and the reaction of the market to them, which in many cases is not very positive.

Retorted imported ribs for example have been losing business due to quality issues and in an effort to quit stocks, importers are now trying to sell them direct to consumers online.

At lower prices, Australian ribs and bellies are now competing effectively with the imported alternative, helping to reduce stocks.

Additionally, higher-volume processors in the ham and bacon sectors are using higher proportions of Australian-sourced middles and legs, reducing their requirements for the imported option.

The big unknown is where grain prices will end up considering the very dry conditions being experienced in many winter cropping areas.

The last thing we need right now is a hit on cost while our prices are depressed, so we pray to the rain gods.

Recently I attended a meeting with Queensland pig producers where there were still a lot of questions around biosecurity issues and how the imported pre-cooked ribs are allowed into the country with bones included, for example.

I encourage you to read the article in this edition of *Australian Pork Newspaper* by Deb Kerr explaining more around our import risk assessment for pork.

New Biosecurity Act impacts NSW producers

THE NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 was passed by the NSW Parliament in 2015 and on July 1, 2017, replaced 10 whole existing Acts and parts of four others.

The new Act provides a flexible and responsive statutory framework for the prevention, elimination and minimisation of biosecurity risks.

It is an enabling piece of legislation that includes numerous tools and powers that can be used regardless of what the biosecurity risk is or where the risk is occurring.

A key tool of the Act is the general biosecurity duty that supports the principle of shared responsibility, and means everyone is doing what is reasonable and practicable for them to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks.

This means that any NSW pig farmer or person working with pigs has a responsibility for managing biosecurity risks that they know about or could reasonably be expected to know about.

This duty can be discharged in a variety of ways such as implementing 'come clean - go clean' practices or an on-farm biosecurity plan.

The National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Pork Production lays out a minimum set of biosecurity and provides a good guide for the development of biosecurity plans.

The Act is supported by the Biosecurity Regulation 2017.

It establishes requirements known as mandatory measures that are applicable to a biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing to which it relates - in relation to pig production - this could include: pigs, the transport vehicle and/or dealings by the stock agent or abattoir selling or slaughtering pigs.

The Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017 gives legislative effect to the existing national system for the identification and tracing of the movement of pigs, sheep, goats and cattle.

In addition to these arrangements, a range of exceptions continue to apply with regard to requirements for permanent identification of pigs (for a full list, please visit the NSW DPI website).

To find out more about how this new Act affects you, including fact sheets relevant to your industry, please visit dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact

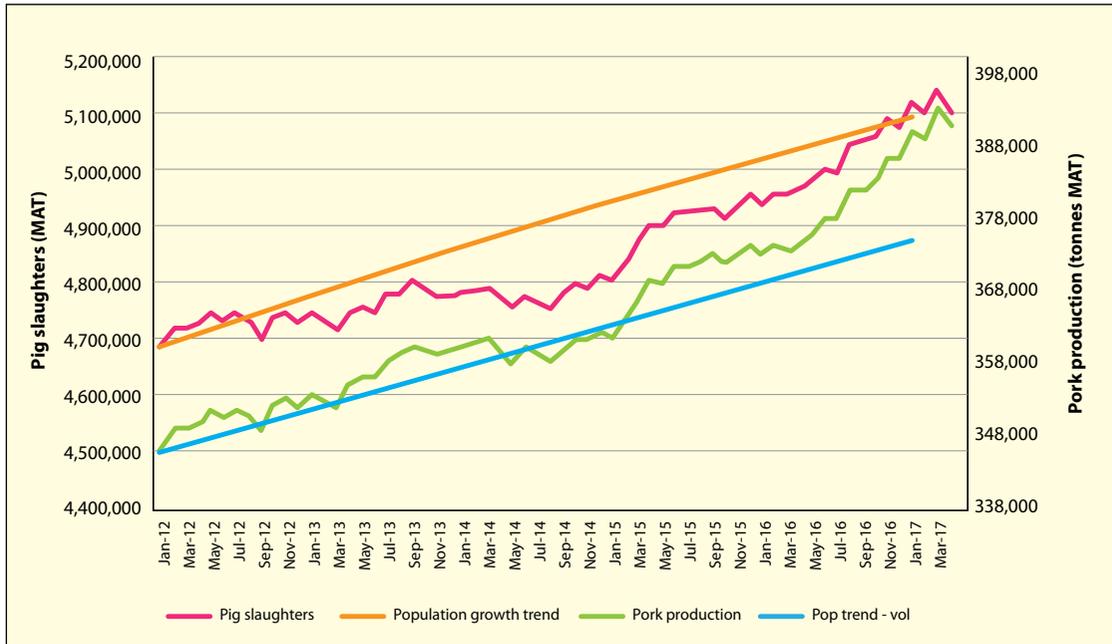


Figure 1



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Pig Industry Calendar of Events

2017

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

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

SEP 11 - 12 – Australian Pig Veterinarians (APV) annual conference, Fremantle, WA www.ava.com.au

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

SEP 19 - 22 – Allen D. Leman Swine Conference, Saint Paul, Minnesota US www.ccevents.umn.edu/allen-d-leman-swine-conference

SEP 20 - 22 – Animal Genetics and Disease 2017, Cambridge, UK <https://coursesandconferences.wellcomegenomecampus.org/register/conferences/form1.aspx?e=635>

SEP 25 - 27 – PackExpo Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, US www.packexpolasvegas.com

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

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

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

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

How to supply event details: Send all details to Australian Pork Newspaper, PO Box 387, Cleveland, Qld 4163, call 07 3286 1833 fax: 07 3821 2637, email: ben@porknews.com.au

porknews.com.au

Interesting production management observations from Denmark

AS you may be aware, Australian Pork Limited's Technology Adoption and Industry Capability manager Ashley Norval is currently in Denmark for six months working in the pig industry.

In this article, I would like to highlight some of the key learnings she has so far observed during her time on farm.

Well-sealed sheds prevent rodents

Breeding units are completely sealed and temperature controlled, with of course the main issue for most of the year being to keep the heat inside the unit.

However, this coupled with being diligent with feed storage (including covering up open bins of feed) has the bonus of making it very difficult for vertebrate pests to enter the shed.

Across all of Denmark, rodent bait stations may only be used if they are kept outside.

Nurse sows

Due to the high numbers of piglets born alive, there is an absolute need for nurse sows – often they take up a quarter of the farrowing shed.

However, it is the selection and management of the nurse sows that was of particular interest.

As per the latest SEGES (Danish farmer-owned agricultural knowledge and innovation centre) recommendations, it is preferable to use the youngest sows as nurse sows – generally only parities one, two and three are used.

It is considered that extending their lactation time will encourage the young sow's mammary development – therefore using her as a nurse sow is beneficial to her the next time she farrows.

Shoulder pads can prevent shoulder sores

Shoulder pads are commonly used for sows that are considered at risk for developing shoulder sores while in farrowing accommodation.

The pads are made from high-density foam and are stuck (via double-sided tape) to the sow's shoulders while in



by **HEATHER CHANNON**
Acting Research and Innovation
General Manager



In the more-efficient farms, as soon as a sow starts farrowing, farm staff begin to record the farrowing progress of the sow, which is then updated by any attending staff until the sow has finished farrowing.

the farrowing pen.

Those farms that use the pads find there are very few animals in the gestation pens that have any kind of mark on their shoulder as a result of their time in the farrowing pen.

They are inexpensive (about \$A3 per pair) and easy to put on the sow.

However, the pads can only be used once.

While this is not a treatment for shoulder sores, it could be a preventative measure if shoulder sores are an issue on your farm. **'Cake mix' is fed to sows around farrowing to maximise milk production**

During the first two days prior to and after farrowing, in addition to their daily feed ration, sows may be fed a mixture known as 'cake mix'.

This is a sweet, dry feed that is designed to assist the sow in developing the maximum amount of milk she can, so she is able to feed the piglets straight away.

It is generally described as giving the sows 'the power to bloom from the start'.

Although it is only given just before and just after farrowing, it is considered

a vital part of mammary development.

Interestingly, while the main purpose for the feed is the delivery of vitamins to the sow (with ingredients including vitamin A, calcium iodate, copper sulphate, vitamin D and lysine), the mix also contains dry cake mix to entice the sows into eating the sweet feed.

Staff begin recording sow progress as soon as farrowing begins

In the more-efficient farms, as soon as a sow starts farrowing, farm staff begin to record the farrowing progress of the sow, which is then updated by any attending staff until the sow has finished farrowing.

The recording is designed so that whoever walks past the pen can easily see when the sow was last checked and how many live and stillborn piglets she had – all this information helps to ensure sows are given a manual examination in a timely fashion if required, therefore helping to reduce stillbirths.

Weaner accommodation

Feeding troughs are often the entire length of the weaner pen to ensure maximum opportunity for

weaners to eat and minimise aggression at feeding time – this system works particularly well when weaners are fed a liquid diet, though it is still useful when fed a pellet diet ad libitum.

Also common in the weaner sheds are covers over the creep area at one end, which can be raised once the animals are older and require less heat or on the rare occasion that the sheds are too hot.

It is common for pigs to be grown out in eco-shelters once they are into the grower (>30kg) stage to be finished.

LED lighting used for gilt stimulation

As per the law in Denmark, sows and gilts must be housed in groups from four weeks after service until seven days before expected farrowing.

In some farms, LED lighting strips above the stalls that house the gilts are being trialled for gilt stimulation – so far with positive results.

These lighting strips are not specially designed for this purpose but rather are bought from the local hardware store.

The farms that have had the most positive results are those where the mating sheds do not have enough windows/natural lighting – particularly in winter.

Please note that this does not replace boar exposure – rather it complements it.

Keeping long tails

While this is currently not common, some farms are not docking tails of piglets.

As a result of new 'high-welfare' branding opportunities (and subsequent higher prices), this practice is likely to grow in popularity.

Although there have been some issues of tail biting, reducing the number of animals in the pen seems to work well at eliminating the problem.

Some producers have also found success with hanging chains and blocks of wood from the ceiling in the weaning shed because it is considered that if the weaners are occupied, they will not develop the tail biting habit.

Interestingly, once past the weaner stage they are often not provided with 'toys' in the new accommodation.

Staff engagement between farms is beneficial to productivity

Many of the production staff are from countries outside Denmark, with similar skilled visa programs to that of the now-redundant Australian temporary work (skilled) visa (subclass 457).

Often these workers do not have piggery training prior to beginning work, with most of the training being delivered on site by either the owner or manager.

Commonly, all production staff are generally engaged in a 'working group' that meets twice a year to discuss and learn about their production area.

For example, a group for farrowing shed staff discuss any issues they have had in the shed over the past six months and other members of the group are able to offer advice or comment on it.

Often, the groups meet at a farm so they can see a different production system other than the one they work in.

The owners of farms that have staff participate in these groups speak very highly of the program – it gives the staff a sense of independence while learning, sparks new ideas for their own workplace, not to mention the networking opportunities – particularly those who have moved from another country.

Ultimately these key learnings highlight that the key to production success is efficiency in pig management.

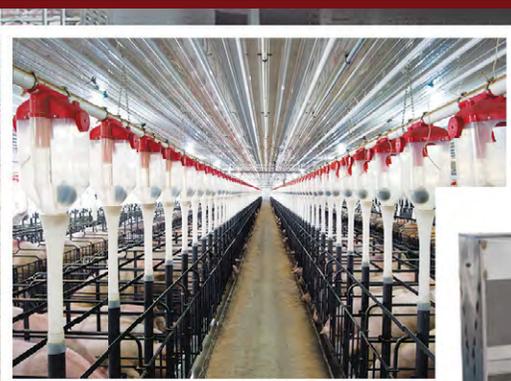
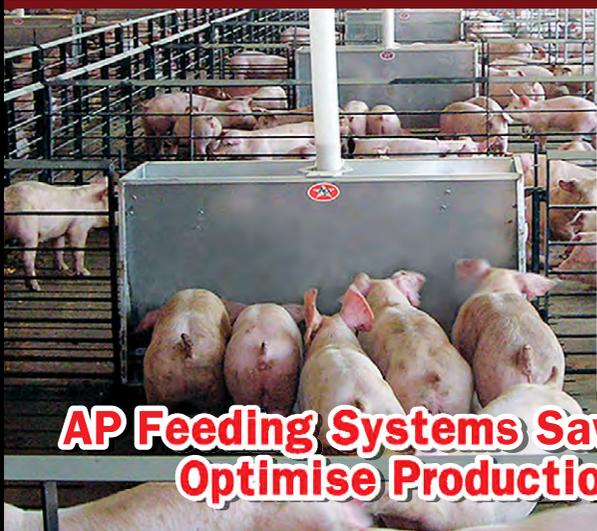
While I appreciate that the matters discussed in this article are not game-changing ideas for our industry, if applied correctly they could mean an increase in revenue, a decrease in cost or mitigation of risk for an individual farm.

If you would like to discuss any of these ideas in further detail, please contact me on 0423 056 045 or heather.channon@australianpork.com.au



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Pork CRC research for all to see

THIS month I highlight some very interesting research outcomes from Pork CRC Program 1 'Reduced confinement of sows and piglets', which reflect the high level of science being conducted by our researchers.

Sorting sows

The first is Project IA-115 ('The feeding behaviour of sows and its relationships to sow welfare and reproduction'), conducted by Dr Megan Verdon and colleagues from the University of Melbourne and Rivalea.

Megan observed the feeding behaviour of group housed sows over two pregnancies in a system where sows were provided 2.5kg of feed daily, delivered equally over four feed events on the floor.

She found dominant/aggressive sows fed close to or under where the feed was dropped, subdominant sows fed around this area and submissive sows spent more time in areas of low feed availability.

All sows spent more time in each area but this was clearly delineated by their social status.

Interestingly, based on measured cortisol levels, the dominant and submissive sows were more 'stressed' than subdominant sows, which adopted an opportunistic feeding strategy and despite the dominant, more aggressive sows gaining more weight than the others, all received adequate feed to maintain pregnancy and gain some weight.

Sows clearly work it out, but it's interesting that



Initiatives

by DR ROGER CAMPBELL
CEO



the subdominant sows appeared less stressed in employing their feeding strategy because the strategy was associated with them receiving more aggression.

The relationships between sow feeding strategy and 'stress' and aggression received are shown in Figure 1.

The costs paid by less dominant sows in getting adequate feed should be considered when designing floor feeding systems.

Results also suggest we need strategies to extend the feeling of satiety and/or appropriate enrichment strategies.

Pork CRC has a number of projects on the latter.

Aggressive groupings

In an earlier project (Project IC-102), Megan and her colleagues investigated what would happen if you took sows all known to be aggressive and grouped them together.

The behaviour, welfare

and reproduction of these seemingly strange pen mates was compared with that of sows selected randomly.

Surprisingly, there were no differences.

Sows in both treatments sorted out their hierarchy and exhibited very similar levels of aggression and reproduction.

The researchers concluded that although individuals vary in their tendency to be aggressive to conspecifics, they show flexibility regarding this behavioural tendency, depending on the group composition.

Socially experienced sows better predict the fighting ability of others and understand their own fighting capabilities.

Thus, manipulating group composition has negligible effect on aggression and welfare in socially experienced sows housed in mixed-parity groups.

Experience counts

An unexpected finding of this experiment was that the coefficient of variation for sow parity was a more significant determinant of aggression post-mixing than treatment, variation in sow weight, average parity or average weight.

Aggression post-mixing is largely associated with the establishment of new dominance relationships, whereas aggression after this is delivered in competition over a resource.

Thus, ensuring there is variation in the age and experience of sows at mixing may actually play an important role in stabilising the social structure of the group.

The effects of the coefficient of variation in sow parity on aggression received are shown in Figure 2.

You will note the effect was quite marked.

continued P4

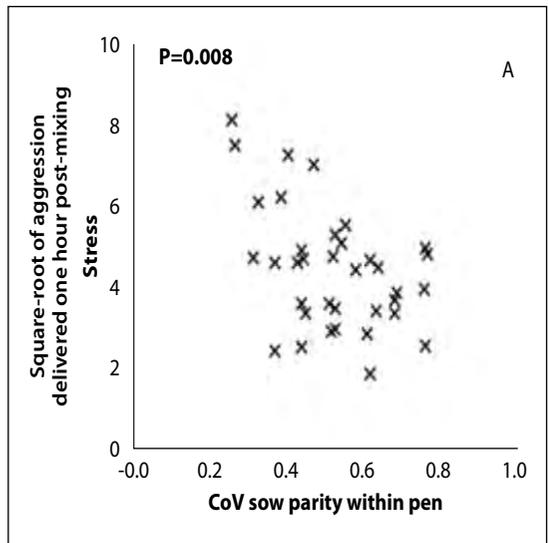


Figure 2: Scatterplot showing the relationship between the coefficient of variation in sow parity at day two and aggression delivered for one hour post-mixing.

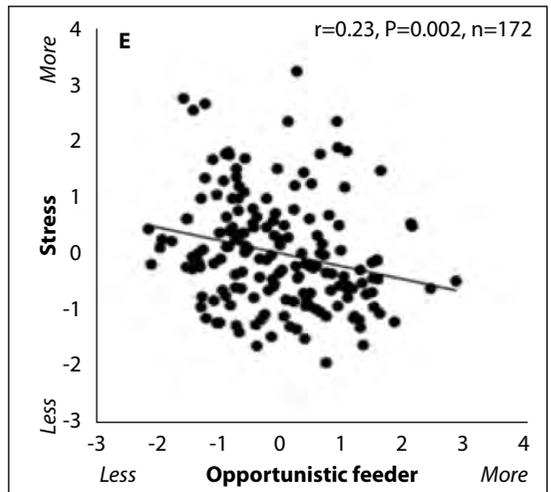
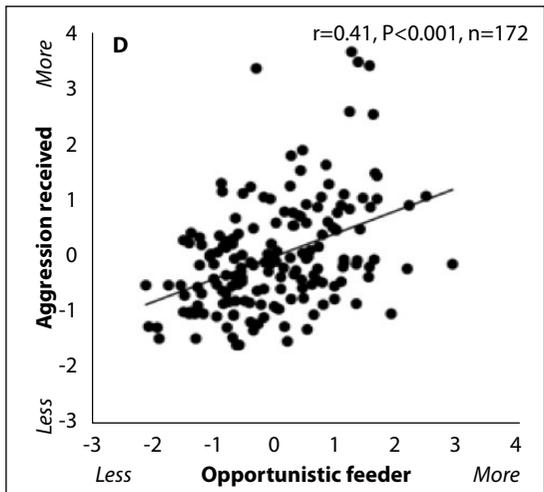


Figure 1: Characteristics of opportunistic feeders in terms of aggression received and stress experienced (based on cortisol).

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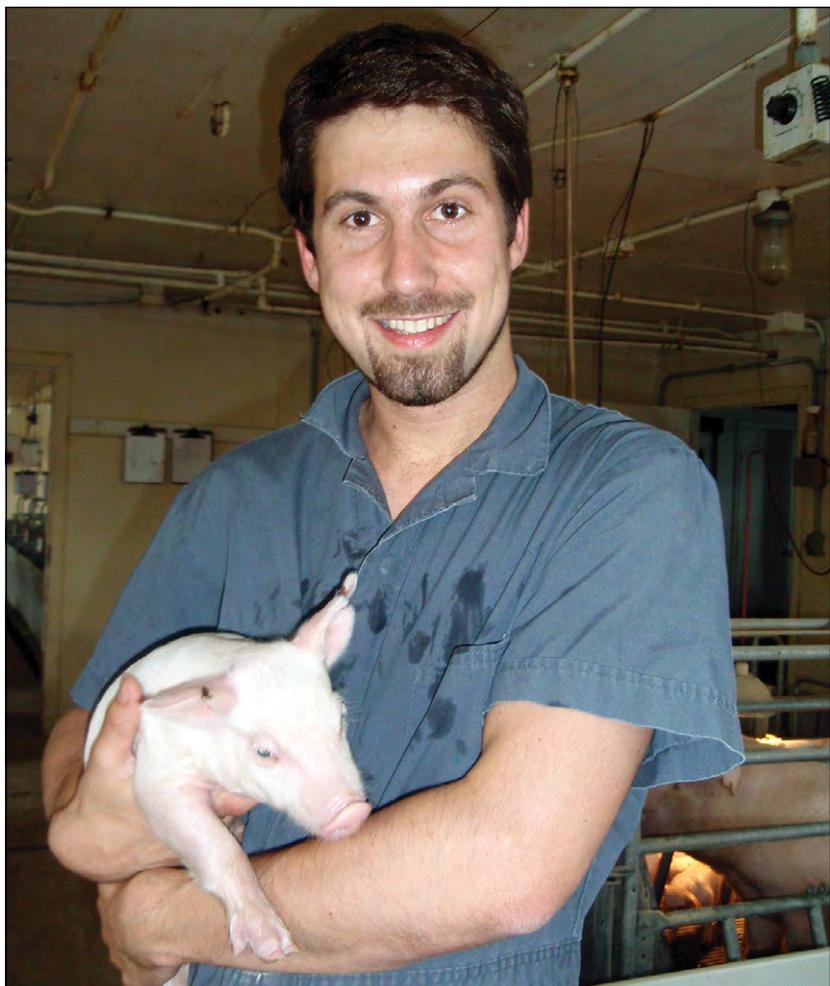
Pork CRC research for all to see



Dr Kate Plush of SARDI led Pork CRC Project 1C-103, 'Optimising the management of group housed sows'. She was pictured here with SARDI colleague Dr Cameron Ralph at the 2015 Pork CRC Stakeholders Meeting in Melbourne.



Laurie Brosnan and his team kindly made their farm facilities available for some important Pork CRC creep research. He also addressed Pork CRC's 2012 Toowoomba Group Sow Housing Solutions Workshop.



An exceptional scientist, Dr Jean-Loup Rault has contributed significantly to Pork CRC R&D and Australia's pork industry in general.

from P3

Fascinating research and the findings likely extend beyond the pig.

Creepy research

Pork CRC Project 1A-116 led by Dr Jean-Loup Rault investigated the effects of creep light intensity (bright 300 lx v dark 4 lx) and mat temperature (30C v 35C mat surface) in SWAP pens on the time piglets spent in the creep area and in other areas of the pen.

The research, which involved 113 sows and their piglets, was conducted at Laurie Brosnan's farm.

I thank Laurie and his team for making their facilities available.

The results showed that piglets with access to the bright creep spent on average 7.2 percent more time ($P < 0.01$) in the creeps than piglets in pens with dark creeps.

For each degree increase in mat temperature, piglets spent on average 2.1 percent more time ($P < 0.01$) in the creep.

While the treatment effects on creep use were associated with time spent in areas with the sow,

there were no effects of treatment on weight gain to 72 hours or on piglet mortality.

Room temperature

Ambient temperature had a major effect on creep use and piglet survival ($P < 0.01$).

The time spent in the creep area for the two replicates is shown in Figure 3.

The ambient temperature in replicates 1 and 2 was 23.8C and 27.3C, respectively.

Piglets spent 50 percent of their time in the first 72 hours after birth in the bright creep area in replicate 1 and considerably less time in replicate 2.

Mortality in the first 72 hours after birth was 9 percent and 12.7 percent in the bright and dark creeps in replicate 1 and 7.4 percent and 4.3 percent, respectively in replicate 2.

All the results suggest ambient temperature is a major factor affecting piglet behaviour, performance and survival.

They also show that the bright creep area was preferred when the environmental temperature was low (R1).

A bit of a conundrum in that, as it appears you can drive piglets to a well-lit creep area by having the shed temperature low, but this increases the risk of piglet death.

I'm not sure how the findings might relate to farrowing crates, but one other finding was the set mat temperature and actual mat temperature often differed and there's really a need in any system to ensure creep areas are effectively heated.

I think you will agree we have excellent researchers and that the science is quite fascinating.

Au revoir

Sadly, Dr Jean-Loup Rault is leaving the Animal Welfare Science Centre for a position as professorial head of the Institute of Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna.

An exceptional scientist, he has contributed significantly to our R&D program and industry in general.

He will be missed and we wish him all the best in what seems an exotic place and position.

There is much more to come in the next six months and I look forward to the outcomes of a recently commissioned project on the effects on subsequent reproduction of grouping sows in the last week of lactation.

Different treatments

You may remember a previous Pork CRC project (1C-103) led by Dr Kate Plush, working with Prof Paul Hughes, Dr William van Wettere and our postgraduate student Ms (now Dr) Emma Greenwood, which compared the welfare and reproduction of sows with different treatments before mixing.

They found that sows grouped with their litters in the last week of lactation and given daily boar contact (MS), exhibited next to no aggression when grouped after weaning and had a larger subsequent litter size.

They were compared with sows separated daily from their litters in the

last week and weaned into groups (SEP), sows managed normally in the last week of lactation and grouped immediately after weaning and those weaned into stalls and grouped after mating.

The overall treatment means for subsequent total litter size were 13.8, 12.2, 12.3 and 11, respectively.

For sows mated after weaning (rather than in lactation), for the MS and SEP treatments, total litter size was 15 and 14 respectively, with the MS average significantly higher than for sows in the two more-conventional weaning and grouping strategies.

These are big differences, with important commercial implications, given how much our relatively low numbers born and weaned impact volume and cost of production.

The findings are being followed up in a large study at Rivalea.

All the reports mentioned here are on Pork CRC's website and I encourage you to look at 1C-103 in particular.

It has many scientific and commercial implications for the management of group housed sows, some simple enrichment strategies and potential means of improving reproduction.

If you want me to send you a copy, email me at Roger.Campbell@porkcrc.com.au

Price pointers

Confusion remains over exactly what prices producers are receiving, with buyers and sellers often reporting markedly different values, but the bottom line is the average price on the eastern seaboard has fallen some 80 cents and in some states by more than \$1 since January.

WA, where prices have held up better than in the ES, has recently come back by about 30 cents.

The most telling graph is that for pig and grain prices reported by Australian Pork Limited.

Recently, the pig price line fell below the grain price line, which unfortunately is now moving north.

In the past, this has been a good indicator that things could be better and of future consolidation of our industry.

The other interesting graph reported by APL is that for slaughter numbers.

On a moving annual total, these have increased linearly since August 2014 and exceeded 5.1 million on a moving annual basis in April 2017.

The same graph was published as graph of the month by Whole Hog in July 2017.

It seems to me that we have exceeded demand and while the imports of cooked ribs have had some effect, we have an oversupply situation.

COP out

This might not be the case if our COP was closer to \$2 than \$3/kg, but then numbers would have exceeded 5.1 million some time ago and prices probably would have never reached the very high levels experienced in the past two to three years and particularly in 2016.

We have been here be-

fore, but this time when we come out of it I hope it's with an even more efficient and competitive industry.

We need to get COP closer to import parity and initially target \$2.20/kg carcass weight.

While I acknowledge this is tough with feed costs at \$350-plus/tonne, until someone comes up with a viable alternative for grain this is where we should start.

With feed around \$350/tonne, COP is about \$2.60.

That is, assuming a HFC of 3.8, 21.5 pigs sold/sow/year and a 75kg carcass.

Increase carcass weight by 3kg - COP \$2.52.

Increase pigs sold/sow/year by 1.5 - COP \$2.45.

Reduce HFC to 3.5 - COP \$2.34.

While we'd still need 14 cents, all improvements from the base line above are doable with current knowledge and technology and the targets are being achieved and exceeded by better producers.

Average values for Pork CRC benchmarking participants in 2015-16 were 3.78, 22.5 and 77.4kg.

The best three herds for each KPI averaged 25.1 for pigs weaned/sow/year, 3.44 for HFC and a carcass weight of 85.7kg.

Diet dilemmas

I haven't even discussed tweaking diet specifications or the number of diets used to reduce the average cost of feed, or anything you can do to reduce feed wastage, but note that with feed at \$350/tonne, COP could be considerably less than \$2.60.

In the US, feed costs \$A277/tonne and COP is \$A1.70/kg carcass weight.

With feed at \$400/tonne (as it was in 2015 and could be again), COP would be around \$2.74 and a somewhat different matter and we really need cost plus type contracts with those you supply and these will always be a component of success and sustainability.

Nevertheless, reducing COP benefits the whole supply chain and helps buffer the industry from imports.

If we get very good, maybe we can recapture some of the market(s) taken by imported pork.

Researcher challenge

The immediate challenge, from a Pork CRC perspective, is for our researchers to do their bit, as I've tried to explain what I think producers and their advisors have to consider.

First, our researchers must understand the situation Australian producers face and genuinely strive to change this with their research.

Great science and indus-

try outcomes are not mutually exclusive.

Second, we need a better mix of shorter-term (why do we not try this?) and longer-term research projects, with the latter needing to be potentially system changing.

I want to see one of our researchers, or one of our teams, increase the number of piglets weaned per Australian sow by two (to 12) and the number of piglets weaned per 100 sows mated from 900 to 1100.

There's plenty of ways to achieve the latter, but none likely to involve what we've done previously.

If they can't do it, then let us get someone who can safely change the sow.

The New Zealanders, Danes and US can do it.

A similar situation exists with feed efficiency.

We probably don't have to get new genetics, though some producers might want to consider this, but we do need new ideas and new science on how to improve feed efficiency in grower-finisher pigs.

Little has happened in the area globally in the past 10 years.

Targeting a feed: gain of two from weaning to 100kg is a good place to start.

This would give a HFC of just under three, assuming no mortality and minimal wastage.

So, there's plenty of room to move to get to 3.3-3.5 commercially.

We just need the ideas and science.

Similar challenges and opportunities exist with improving health and reducing medication costs.

Ditto for improving how grain and feed is utilised with processing technologies, new science on enhancing digestion, and with some advances in nutrition in general.

Steering scientists

My feeling is we have made real advances in the past five to six years in the science of animal welfare and improving sow welfare on farm, in developing technologies for reducing antibiotic use and in improving eating quality and carbon reduction, but we've seen few advances in production efficiency.

This has to change and the opportunities are endless, but will not be realised without new ideas and new science.

I think we have the scientists, so we just need to steer them in the right direction and ensure they have the support to lead us to a markedly more competitive and more productive industry.

This will be the driving force for Australasian Pork Research Institute Ltd.

www.porkcrc.com.au

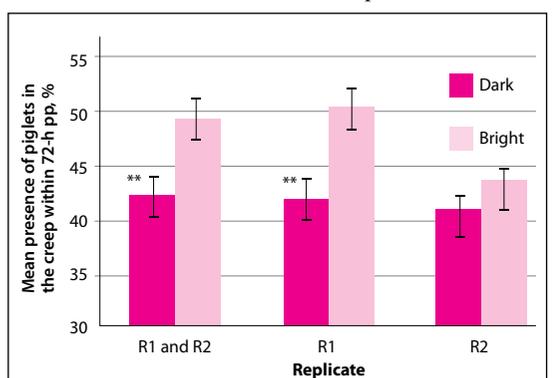


Figure 3: Mean time spent by the piglets inside bright and dark creep areas in first (R1) and second (R2) replicates.

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Pork becomes more popular as consumer prices soften

THE trend that has been apparent for some time has continued into July, with fresh pork prices to the Australian shopper continuing to soften.

While this always occurs slower than we would like it to, more consumers are choosing fresh Australian pork more often as our consumer prices return to 2013 levels.

The difference between pork prices and red meat prices continues to help drive consumer volume and has driven up per capita fresh pork consumption to 10.81kg (carcass weight equivalent) per Australian.

Historically, the volume and demand forecasts we have made (for example at the levy increase justification in 2010 and again in the APL Strategic Plan 2015-20 in 2015) were conservative.

So we set out in November 2015 to get more accurate at forecasting and also to stop underestimating.

As you can see in Figure 2, we have now started overestimating a bit, in an overcorrection.

In Figure 2, the grey line is our actual demand growth each period versus the same period the year before.

The red dotted line is what was forecast at the delegates' meetings and



Marketing Matters

by PETER HAYDON
General Manager Marketing



the green dotted line is my latest estimate.

The cause of the overestimates has been primarily an assumption that retailers would adjust their prices downwards more quickly than they actually have.

The purpose of forecasting is mainly to have a view of the future situation – a side benefit is to learn how to forecast more accurately.

So, while it is good that demand is now being converted more into volume sales than it is into increased prices, we must remain mindful that retailers do not change their prices quickly.

The outlook for volume sales in the immediate future should remain positive based on lower prices and continued in-market activity.

You will have seen that the export abattoirs have allowed the pooling of their weekly data.

In the past two weeks, this has been used to publish estimates of weekly supply to Australian Pork Limited members.

Figure 3 focuses on market pigs (that is, excludes sows and boars).

Early indications from this weekly data are that production in slaughters is higher than the latest forecast (June production survey), perhaps reinforcing what producers have said – “that there are more animals on farm” than would normally be expected from the production survey estimates.

The graph also shows a gradual reduction in average carcass weight, perhaps indicating a return to more normal weights.

We are continuing to work on a new option for supply forecasting and working with supply chains to get additional demand information.

We will keep you posted. 🐷

Average retail consumer prices by species



Figure 1

Total demand forecasts have been too optimistic

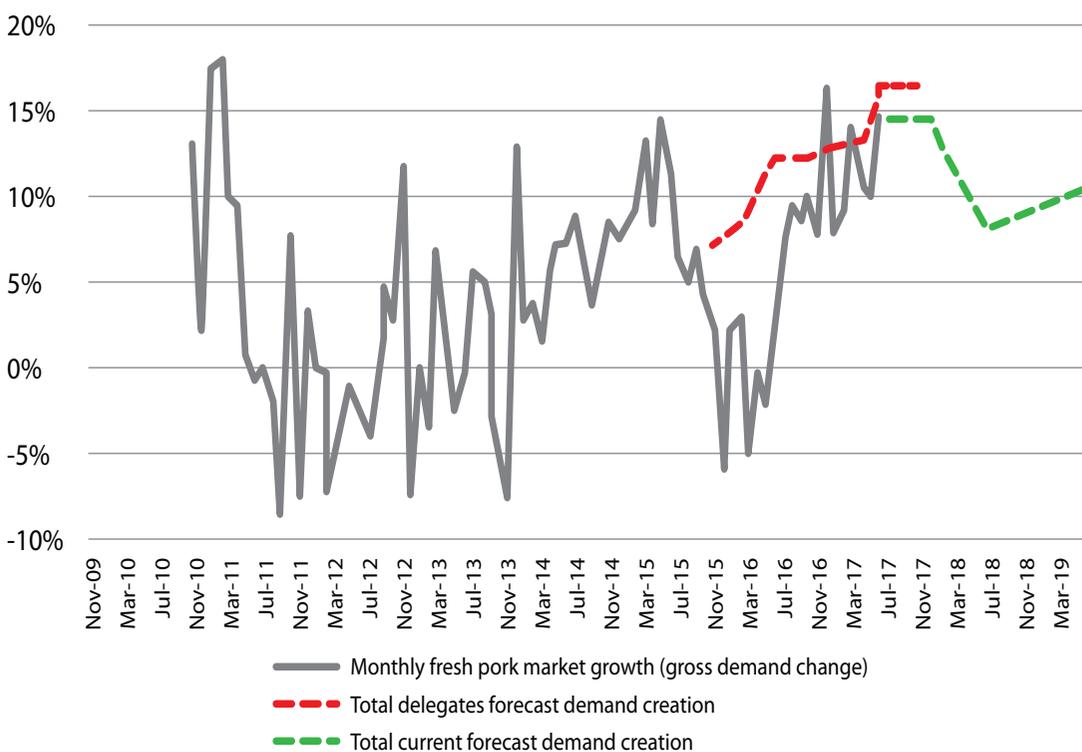


Figure 2

Weekly slaughter trends (excluding sows and boars)

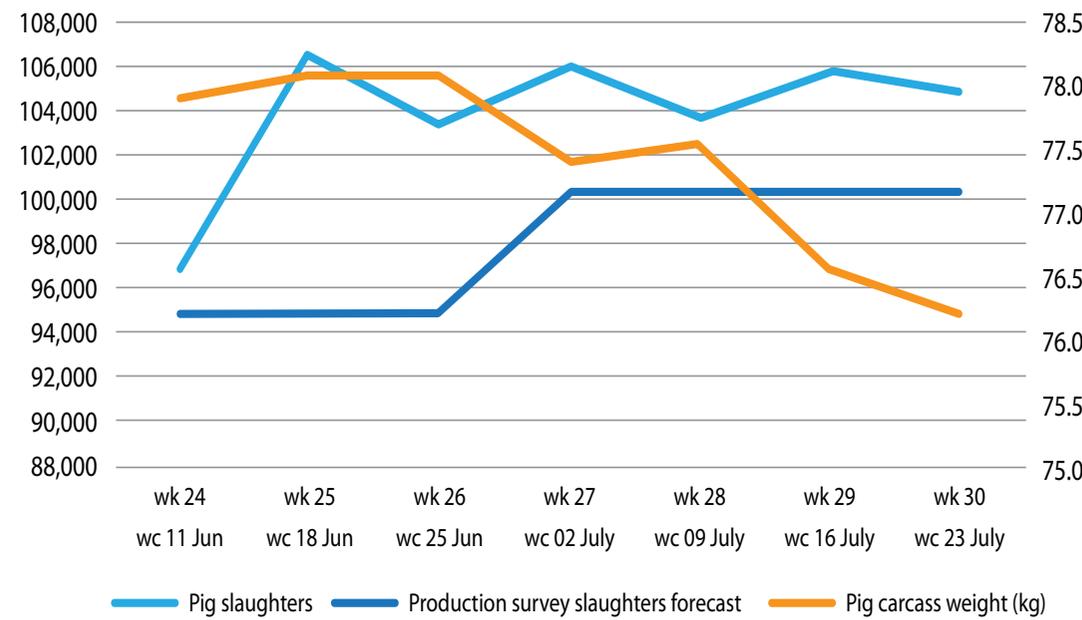


Figure 3

Pig Farm Perspective by Bruce the brainy pig



“A SECOND shot of iron – don’t be ridiculous!”

This has been the general response to recent publications touting the benefits of administering two shots of iron to piglets.

However, it is something that has been widely discussed over the past few months after the release of a study from the US finding there is a positive association between haemoglobin and average daily gain after weaning.

The study found that a 10g increase in haemoglobin per litre of blood corresponded to an improvement in weight gain of 17.2g per day for the first three weeks post-weaning.

That’s an increase in live weight of 362g for the three weeks after weaning just by having more haemoglobin!

On hearing this, many producers’ eyes lit up, and soon led to the question: “What if we give these pigs more iron?”

Why then, is iron so important to pigs and haemoglobin?

Piglets are born with

low iron, and sow’s milk is particularly low in iron.

But a large amount of iron is required by the piglet, particularly those piglets which grow rapidly.

This is because iron is essential for the production of haemoglobin, which is responsible for carrying oxygen around the body in red blood cells.

Without enough iron, the piglet is unable to carry as much oxygen throughout its blood.

If the piglet does not have enough oxygen, then growth will be stunted!

This means that the fastest-growing (that is, the best) piglets are at the greatest risk of being iron deficient and not realising their full potential.

This is particularly applicable to piggeries where creep feeding is not practised, as creep feed often contains increased levels of iron for the growing piglet.

To find out if more iron would be beneficial to piglets, researchers in Denmark ran a trial on 236 piglets where half the pigs were injected with an additional

200mg of iron dextran at 20 days of age.

All piglets received 200mg of iron dextran at three days of age.

Interestingly, it was found that the piglets given the additional 200mg of iron dextran at 20 days of age had a growth rate about 20g per day faster than those piglets only receiving one shot of iron.

Blood tests also found that these piglets had a significantly higher concentration of haemoglobin than those only receiving a single shot of iron.

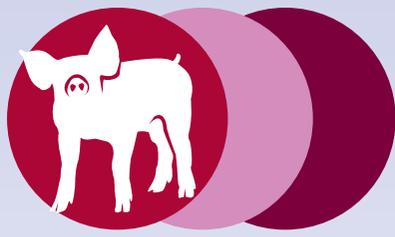
Based on these results, it was recommended that fast-growing and healthy pigs would benefit from additional iron supplementation in addition to a shot of iron at processing to reach their full potential.

What’s the verdict then?

Well, more studies are currently being undertaken in the US, however from these studies there is strong evidence that a second shot of iron in strong, fast-growing piglets will result in increased growth rates.

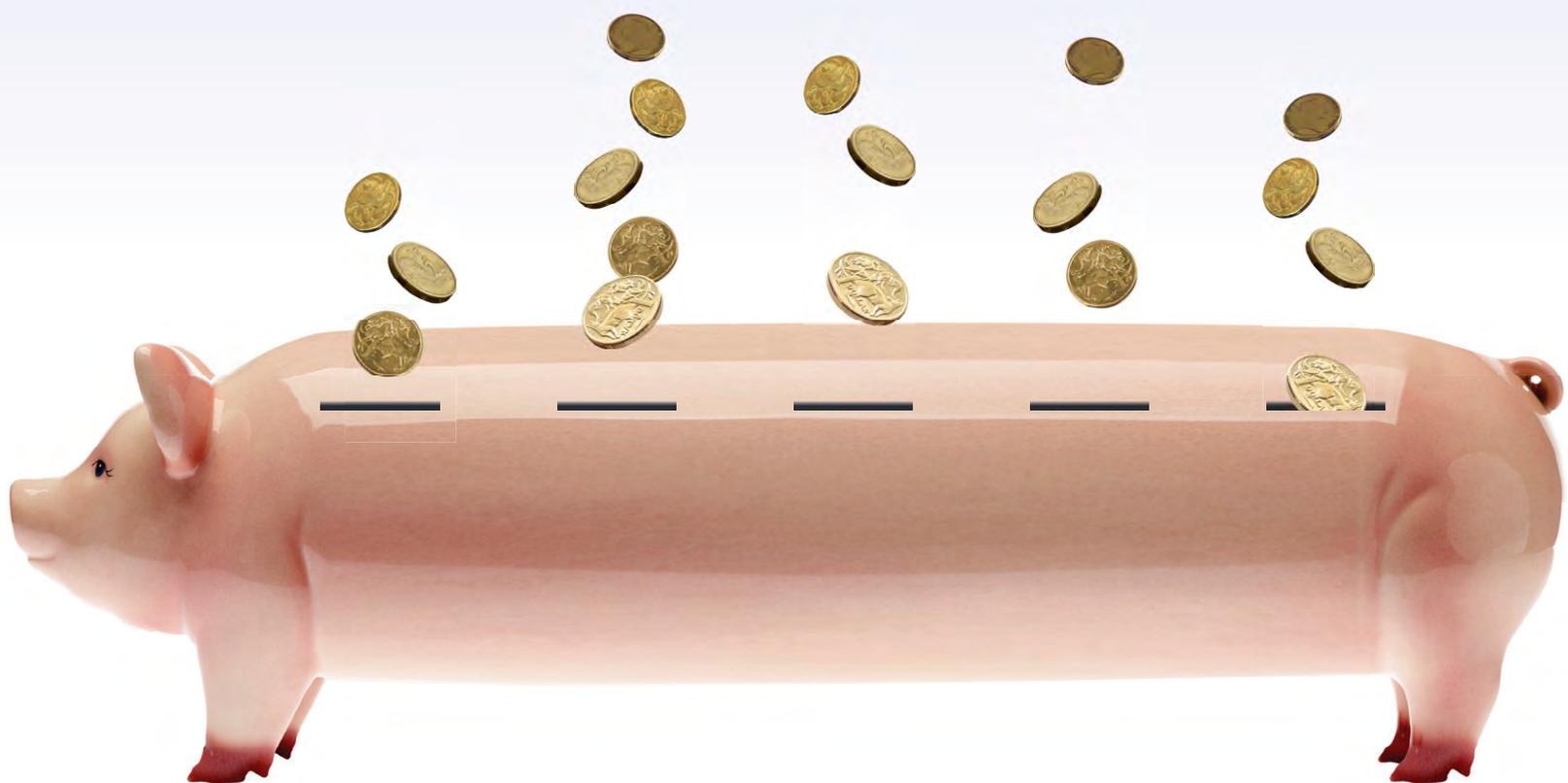
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Pork import protocols – the good, bad and ugly

"I THOUGHT bone-in cooked pork, like ribs, was prohibited?"

This is one of the many queries Australian Pork Limited has received over the past few months.

Many people do not quite understand how this import thing works.

When it comes to imported pig meat, here is some useful information you might like to know.

Pork import protocols

The Australian Government agreed to new pork import protocols in 2004.

These protocols were based on a biosecurity risk assessment of 26 diseases identified as of quarantine and human health concern.

Ten diseases were identified as unacceptable risks to Australia, with the other 16 diseases identified as acceptable, manageable risks.

The 10 diseases that hold unacceptable level of risk for Australia were: foot and mouth disease, African swine fever, classical swine fever, rinderpest virus, swine vesicular disease, Aujeszky's disease, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, trichinellosis, Nipah virus and post-weaning multisystemic wasting syndrome.

Risk management measures were required to address human health concerns with trichinella, Nipah virus, salmonella (DT104) and brucella suis.

The Pork Biosecurity Import Risk Assessment outlines the specific risk mitigation measures for each of these diseases.

These measures reduce the unacceptable level of risk and include country or zone freedom, testing of the carcass, cooking, freezing, curing, canning/retorting and removal of certain tissues or parts of the carcass.

How does all this translate to import policies for pork meat?

Specific types of pig meat products are permitted to be imported into Australia.

However, they must be accompanied by an import permit and all import conditions must be met.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources currently has import conditions for:

- Cured pig meat from Italy and Spain;
- Cooked pig meat from Canada, Denmark, Sweden and the US;
- Uncooked pig meat from Belgium, Cana-

da, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the US (uncooked pig meat must be cooked in Australia before being released from biosecurity control); and

- Retorted pig meat from all countries.

Some producers have raised concerns about imports of some categories of foreign pork coming to Australia via New Zealand – a market that has allowed the importation of fresh pork from overseas.

However, the idea that transshipping foreign pork through New Zealand to Australia constitutes a kind of 'back door' for suspect products is not accurate.

The government has not issued any import permits for the importation of pig meat from New Zealand.

Pig meat sourced from other countries cannot be imported into Australia via New Zealand.

Pig meat must be retorted before being imported into Australia from New Zealand.

So what exactly is a 'retorted' product?

To meet Australian import conditions, retorted products are those that are sealed within an airtight can or vessel and heated.

The products are heated to a minimum core temperature of 100C for a time which is sufficient

to sterilise the product and/or kill off many exotic diseases.

This also enables the final product to be shelf stable without refrigeration.

Think of the product as being massively overcooked and may be why the product has a strong odour when opened.

When the Pork BIRA was finalised in 2004, tinned/canned meat was the primary retort option.

Investment in packaging research and development now allows countries alternative ways to retort and import their products, such as soft packs.

And finally the issue of bone-in products

There are two main disease agents of concern for bone-in pork products: Aujeszky's disease and PMWS.

Importers can manage the disease risk through a number of acceptable ways.

For example, removing the bone and importing the meat for further processing in Australia or retorting the meat and bone product offshore.

Import competition has been a fact of life for Australian pig farmers for more than 25 years.

New technologies and changing consumer preferences have brought us new challenges, but our industry remains resilient and adaptable.

Deb Kerr
APL General Manager Policy



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Nothing anonymous about an AA breakfast

HAVING recently joined Agribusiness Australia, I must say I felt right at home attending my first breakfast function, albeit I 'fess to not being a big fan of corporate breakfasts.

There's something decidedly not to my liking about getting out of bed at 6am or earlier, especially in the middle of a cold winter, despite the obvious appeal of a cooked breakfast being served up to me and the subsequent dishes whisked away for someone else to wash.

The reason I felt at home was the guest speaker was none other than Australian Pork Limited CEO Andrew Spencer.

Earlier I'd called by the Mosman Park home of fellow AA member (yes, I get the questionable acronym) and fellow 'pork person' Rob Wilson.

Rob wears numerous pork hats, including chair of Pork Innovation WA and Westpork.

He previously wore other pork hats, such as PRDC chair, Pork CRC Program 4 leader, Wandalup Farms GM and the list goes on.

The diners (appropriately perhaps, given the Duxton Hotel was once the ATO's head office in Perth) included such types as bankers, farm advisors and agribusiness journalists.

Not surprisingly, given the speaker, pork business heads also turned up, including Craig Mostyn Group's Patrick Walsh, who recently transitioned from CMG Board member to acting CEO upon the sudden and some would say surprising departure of CEO Mark Wray.

CMG is, of course, the parent company of the very successful Linley Valley Fresh/Pork.

Mark Wray's predecessor as CMG CEO, David Lock, also an AA member and a man so sickeningly fit looking he clearly barely touches an alcoholic drink (at least not at breakfast!), was also at the big brekky.

Always good company (and yes, I've shared a few red and amber fluids with him over the years), David these days heads another high-performing company, albeit with seafood to the shore, rather than pork to the fore.

For the past 18 months David has been CEO and

Cant Comment

by BRENDON CANT



managing director of Mareterram, a vertically integrated ASX-listed agribusiness headquartered in my hometown of Fremantle and a significant player in the fishing industry... think tasty WA prawns, crabs and scallops.

Its chair is Peter Hutchinson, a former Beverley farm boy and brother of a good mate of mine, Kim Hutchinson, the recently retired national chair of RSM Australia.

The big national financial services and accounting company was previously badged as RSM Bird Cameron, hence Kim is affectionately known to me and other schoolmates as 'Big Bird'.

So, on matters figures and financials, what did Andrew Spencer actually have to say about the current state of Australia's pork industry, especially in relation to price?

Well, there was no misunderstanding about the nature of his talk, when his PowerPoint presentation first flashed up on the screen with this for a title, 'Booming and Busting – the vagaries of being an Australian Pig Farmer'.

Andrew continued to push the APL line that the rapid and unexpected downturn in the price Australian pork producers were receiving was attributable to factors such as increasing pork volumes and a glut of imported processed ribs, bellies and other pre-cooked pork.

Effectively, Andrew also admitted he, like most other industry players and commentators, was a little mystified at the quantum of the price drop and its sudden onset.

APL clearly has a job to do to return confidence to the producers who pay it levies, but it's a tough gig, as Andrew would freely declare.

When the reasons aren't entirely clear and readily identifiable, it's tough to

come up with solutions.

Of course, while many producers are hurting, many also are coming off a period of very good returns, albeit many were simply banking on that helping to pay for the considerable capital expended

on transitioning from sow stalls and undertaking an expensive but necessary makeover of how piggeries of size have been built and managed in Australian for a long time.

On an optimistic note, farmers, like no others, understand and accept, although grudgingly, that agriculture generally and livestock production particularly, is every bit a cyclical business.

So, if you pedal hard enough when the going is uphill and don't relax and glide too much when things have peaked, the wheels should once again spin in the right direction.

That's my spin on things, anyway. 🐷



The author enjoyed last year's CMG Agribusiness Leaders' Dinner, as did Westpork CEO Neil Ferguson, CMG chair Jim Kennedy and Mareterram CEO and managing director David Lock.

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The author's good mates accountant Kim 'Big Bird' Hutchinson and architect Gavin 'Kirkalocka' Lee fighting over who pays for a long macchiato. Just kidding... it was a flat white!

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SA pig breeders gear up for sensational show

AN international pig breeder will judge in the Royal Adelaide Show's pig section for only the second time this year.

Nigel Overend is from Deerpark Pedigree Pigs in northern Ireland.

Deerpark is a family business started by Robert Overend, Nigel's father, in the 1950s.

Robert was the first international judge in the RAS's pig section, attending the show in 2014.

As well as breeding pedigree pigs including Large Whites, Landrace, Durocs, Berkshires and Hampshires, Deerpark also runs its own artificial insemination centre.

SA Pig Breeders Association member Shaun Blenkiron said Nigel would be the sole judge for the pig section this year, rather than the usual two.

"We'll have one judge covering all the breeds in the one ring this year," he said.

"Having all the judging in the one ring will mean we can make the ring a bit bigger and it will also mean we can have more undercover seating for people watching the judging."

Judging of the pig breeds will occur on Sunday, September 3, with the commercial classes and junior sections held the next day.

The shed housing all the pigs at the show will be made more eye-catching this year to help draw the crowds in.

A mural is being painted on the side of the shed, which will feature all the pig breeds in Australia, including Large White, Landrace, Duroc, Berkshire, Saddleback, Hampshire, Tamworth and Large Black.

Mr Blenkiron said good entries had come in so far for the show judging.

"We've got 17 Berkshire entries, 10 any other breeds, which includes Durocs and Hampshires, 22 Landrace and 34 Large Whites," he said.

Any other breed is the feature breed at this year's RAS.

There are three interstate exhibitors travelling to SA for the pig judg-

ing this year, including Richard and Heather Cole from Forbes, NSW; Joyce Wilkie and Michael Plane from Allsun Farm, Gundaroo, NSW; and Daniel Lloyd from Berks Creek, Mangoplah, NSW.

All three are Berkshire breeders.

The schools competition, which has been running for the past two years, has also attracted plenty of attention, with 25 teams of two from universities and high schools taking part.

With the schools competition, pigs are not judged, rather the judging is based on how the students handle their animal.

This competition will take place on Friday, September 8.

There will be a new look to the RAS purebred pig sale this year, with Landmark Fawcett Mount Pleasant taking on the running of the auction.

Landmark stud stock manager for SA Gordon Wood will be auctioneering the sale.

Mr Blenkiron said there was an easy way for prospective buyers to inspect the pigs available before the sale.

"On the Stud Pig Sales Australia page on Facebook there will be pictures of all the pigs available in the sale," he said.

"The pictures were put up on Facebook before the sale last year, and it worked really well.

"There was a lot of people looking at the pictures before the sale."

To help attract interstate bids, the SA Pig Breeders Association is offering free freight to Forbes, NSW, as a central site for people to pick up their pigs.

A catalogue will be available the week of the show and prospective buyers can contact Landmark Fawcett Mount Pleasant to get a copy sent out.

The sale is being held on Wednesday, September 6, starting at 1pm.

For further details, contact David Schultz on 0408 816 943 or Colin Fawcett on 0417 867 035.

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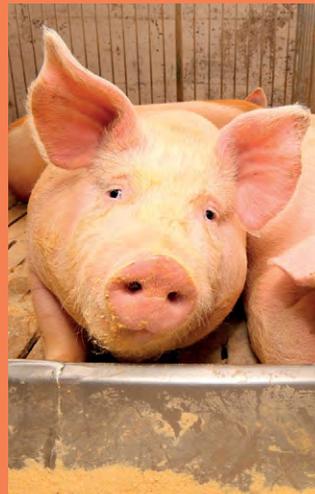
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RD16413

Producers meet in Kingaroy



President's Perspective

by JOHN COWARD



MORE than 35 producers and industry stakeholders met at a meeting in late July at the Kingaroy RSL to listen to a presentation by Australian Pork Limited CEO Andrew Spencer and GM Marketing Peter Haydon.

The focus of the meeting was to provide producers insights into the current and prolonged depressed price cycle and when and how things may be turned around.

While there was an acknowledged negative impact from the capacity limitations at Swickers as a result of the fire late last year, there has been a huge impact on prices as a result of the increases in imported pork products, especially ribs and belly products, which are pushing domestic products out or significantly down in prices.

These issues plus high grain prices, skyrocketing energy prices and general drought flow-on effects have left Queensland pork farmers with significant farm gate losses.

While all price issues are related to the 'supply and demand' balance, producers listened to the marketing approaches APL is employing to support an increase in demand for Australian pork products.

It was clearly evident that 12 months back, projected increases in demand and continued strong prices saw many producers increase production outputs and with less than projected growth and increased imports, prices would be negatively impacted.

Producers urged APL to support all possibilities and actions to open new export opportunities, grow domestic demand and to maintain strict biosecurity requirements on all imported pork products.

Producers were clearly concerned with the threats that any increases in the volumes of imported pork had on the viability and biosecurity risks to the growth of the Australian pork industry.

On the positive side, Swickers presented a summary of the fire and actions taken to support slaughtering in Queensland and the new plans that were immediately put into action post-fire.

Producers saw photos of the new boning and distribution facilities well under way and expected to be in operation before the Christmas rush.

Producers also heard about the plans to provide greater slaughtering capacity and improved efficiencies for Queensland pork farmers.

Pork Queensland Inc also attended the meeting and continues to offer producers a lobbying and advocacy role around defending the production and sale of Australian pork.

PQI, together with APL, continues to challenge the Queensland Government fees covering pig farming and is currently developing a co-regulatory model in an attempt to reach a more equitable fee structure and at the same time reduce the need for current regulatory fees and oversight.



A fire broke out and caused significant damage at the Swickers Kingaroy pork processing plant late last year. Photo: South Burnett Online



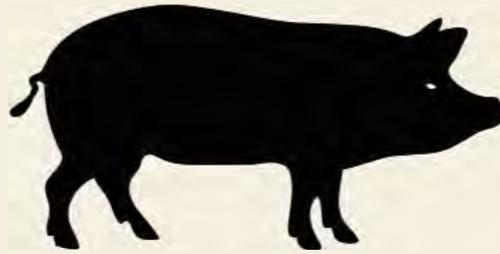
Workers on the production line in the temporary boning room at Swickers Kingaroy. Photo: Katherine Morris

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Corn key to closed-loop Deniliquin piggery



Giles Cunningham of Advanta Seeds, Matt Barker of Rodwells and farmer Tristan Donaldson.

A CLOSED-loop farming system whereby pig manure is used to grow corn that is fed back to pigs is paying off for a pork producer at Deniliquin.

Donaldson Farming flushes the effluent from the pig sheds into a slurry pit every day, and from there it is pumped via a pipeline and mixed with irrigation water in nearby fields.

Tristan Donaldson, who manages the 445ha irrigated and dryland livestock and cropping business said the system provided high crop yields, a high-energy diet and reduced feed and fertiliser costs.

"Last summer we grew 64ha of PAC 606IT corn,

which produced 1000 tonnes of grain," Mr Donaldson said.

"Considering half the crop was patchy and the other half was amazing, overall we achieved 14.6t/ha at 12 percent moisture average, which is fantastic.

"Some of the corn was looking you in the eye driving the header.

"With an IT corn, we also have the option to spray herbicide in-crop to tackle our biggest weed, caltrop."

Mr Donaldson planted from late-October into early November and harvested from late-April to early May; though a small amount of crop did not come off until June 5.

His previous season, 2015-16, was even better, with his corn averaging 15.5t/ha.

All this has been achieved while dealing with the property's hard pan – a compacted layer of soil just below the soil surface that inhibits water and nutrient movement.

This was made more difficult last year when unlike previous years, the wet winter made it impossible to deep rip the soil before planting the corn.

"Because of our clay soils, we can get stunted growth in crops as the roots struggle to get down deep," Mr Donaldson said.

"Our agronomist Matt Barker from Rodwells is looking at ways to tackle the issue.

"Last season he did a leaf tissue test and sent it away for analysis to see what the plant was lacking.

"He then made up a special brew to address this.

"Strangely enough, our first block of corn sown was the last to be harvested due to hard pan.

"It took so long to grow in those tough spots."

Corn provides the pigs with high digestible energy grain in the feed, where other proteins and vitamins are also supplemented to provide a balanced ration for their growth.

"Corn grown for grain provides the energy but we also grow our own wheat, barley, peas, baled vetch and canola meal, which provides the protein and fibre," Mr Donaldson said.

Mr Donaldson said the home-grown feed program helps keep the business profitable, because freighting in feed can cost \$25/tonne.

"Paying for feed doesn't make it worthwhile," Mr Donaldson said.

"We have bore water and Murray channel irrigation water, so it makes sense to grow our own crops.

"We usually budget on 10ML/ha each season.

"By using the pig manure we're also cutting down the amount of synthetic fertilisers needed.

"I find growing a nitrogen crop like vetch in front of corn really gives it a boost too."



Tristan grows corn in a closed-loop system at his Deniliquin piggery.

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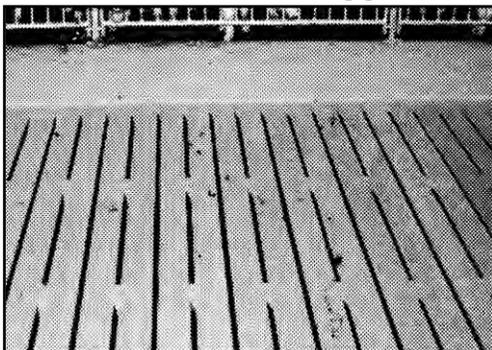
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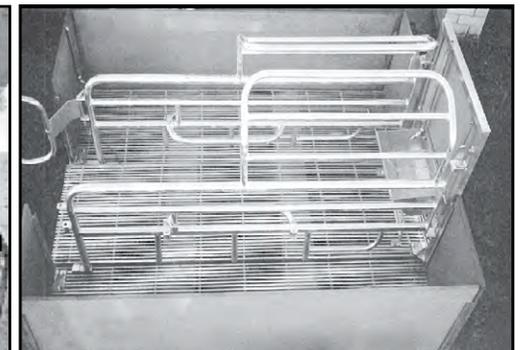
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Aussie Field Day blitz

THE Aussie Pumps team is psyched up and ready to go to support dealers in this season's Field Day program.

The company has been developing new products over the past two years, many of them originating from ideas presented by farmers at the 2015 and 2016 Field Day seasons.

Aussie Pumps' Brad Farrugia said, "Field Days are a fabulous opportunity for our team to get orientated towards what farmers want."

"Our program also works hard to support the 'Drought Proof Australia' program.

"We are backing Barnaby Joyce with a plan to provide water security for farmers across this fabulous country."

New offerings for this year include a full range of Honda-powered self-priming pumps.

They range from high-pressure firefighting gear to trash pumps for piggeries, all backed by Aussie Pumps' unique five-year warranty and Honda's four-year engine warranty.

"To get those special warranty deals, farmers will need to move fast!" Farrugia said.

"This unique joint offering of Honda and Aussie Pumps ends, so far as Honda's extra year of free warranty is concerned, on September 1, 2017.

"It's a good reason for making buying decisions promptly."

Aussie Pumps has launched a new program called 'Big Pumps Make Sense'.

The team is introducing farmers to the huge benefits in moving to bigger Aussie QP pumps.

These pumps deliver high pressure and high flows with fuel savings, improved efficiencies and convenience.

The Brigade Boss range from Aussie Pumps can deliver up to 100psi of pressure and flows of up to 1800l/pm.

They come with either 3" or 4" ports and will be shown at Field Days across the country.

"We've teamed with Yanmar to bring farmers a package of reliable diesel-drive options," Farrugia said.

"QP pumps are carefully match tested to the range of Yanmar L series engines to provide compact and efficient pump packages."

The machines are designed to run at up to 3600rpm and are fully warranted and supported by the Yanmar Australia distributor, Power Equipment.

Power Equipment has diesel engine service outlets all over Australia and the South Pacific.

Other new offerings include Aussie's pressure cleaner range expansion and a great new line-up of agricultural sprayers powered by Honda.

"New Aussie Pumps sprayers handle everything from weed control through to chicken shed disinfection units, with flows of up to 150l/pm
www.porknews.com.au

and 50 bar pressures," Farrugia said.

Aussie Pumps knows that reliability, factory support and competitive prices are what farmers need.

The team has increased production volumes and is

putting these units on the market at great prices; all supported by an extended warranty on pumps and Honda engines.

The Aussie design team members get inspiration from the farmers' feedback

received at these shows.

They then work with the world's best engine suppliers to come up with petrol or diesel-drive machines that can not only be sold in Australia but exported all over the world.

Further information on Aussie Pumps products is available at Aussie Field Days displays across the country or from Aussie Pumps Gold Distributors.

Check online for details at aussiepumps.com.au



The Aussie Pumps team prepared to hit the road with a national field day program that collects farmer feedback to inspire future product development.



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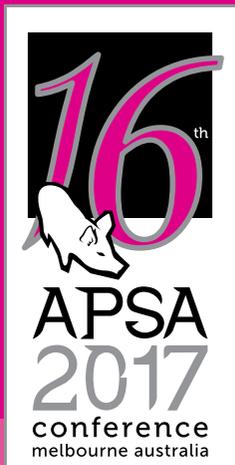
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19th - 22nd November 2017

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Non-Member	Full Registration	1025.00	1325.00
	Day Registration	555.00	555.00
Student APSA Member	Full Registration	380.00	380.00

Visit the website for more details

www.apsa.asn.au



What's cooler than being CoOL?

THE clock is ticking for businesses to adopt Australia's new Country of Origin Labelling changes for food products, which become mandatory in less than one year on July 1, 2018.

Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister Luke Hartsuyker encouraged food businesses to follow the lead of their counterparts who were already on board with CoOL and giving consumers the information they had been calling for.

"We have now passed the halfway point in the transition to the mandatory labelling scheme that is designed to give clearer and more meaningful information to Australian consumers about the origin of the food they buy," Minister Hartsuyker said.

"Australians are seeing the labels on a growing number of food products in their supermarket aisles, ranging from Woolworths packed salad mixes to the iconic Chiko Roll and Wicked Sister Rice Pudding.

"The new labels are easy to identify, meaningful and clear – consumers are able to easily access Australian origin information and are liking what they see.

"The labels also make it easy for families to see how much of their food is grown in Australia and make it easier to support Australian farmers at the checkout."

Businesses were given a two-year period before mandatory compliance and it is fantastic to see so many are adopting the labels well ahead of the deadline.

"I have visited businesses right across Australia who have adopted the labels early, and I encourage remaining businesses to follow suit and make it clear where an item has been produced, grown, made or packed," Minister Hartsuyker said.

"Now, more than ever, consumers have access to clearer country of origin labelling when selecting what goes in their shopping basket.

"Under the changes, imported goods cannot claim to be made in Australia just because they

underwent canning, slicing or reconstitution in Australia.

"For most food made, grown or produced in Australia, the new labels feature the kangaroo in a triangle symbol and a bar chart indicating the percentage of Australian ingredients."

The tool and other support for business can be found at business.gov.au/foodlabels or by calling the contact centre on 13 28 46.

More information for consumers can be found at foodlabels.industry.gov.au



Pig industry scientists encouraged to apply for the 2017 APSA Batterham Memorial Award

FOR the younger generation of Australasian pig scientists, Ted Batterham is the name linked to the prestigious award presented to an up-and-coming scientist at the biennial Australasian Pig Science Association conference.

For the generation before, the name Ted Batterham is synonymous with a world-leading and respected pig scientist, promoter of industry collaboration, an authority on amino acid nutrition and a mentor who had a major influence on pig science and its people over three decades, especially with new and young scientists.

Ted passed away in 1994 and the then APSA committee sought to honour his contribution with the inauguration of the Batterham Memorial Award in 1995.

Eleven well-known identities in Australasian pig research have since received the honour of being the recipient of the Batterham Memorial Award.

Past recipients are listed in Table 1.

A common thread amongst all the recipients of the Batterham Memorial Award is their ability to work with industry to deliver significant industry outcomes.

Every one of these recipients has gone on to achieve great success within the pig industry.

Therefore, what could you do with the award to further your research career, benefit the Australian pig industry and join this list of distinguished pig scientists?

Research scientists in the pig industry are encouraged to apply for the 2017 Batterham Memorial Award.

The award consists of a plaque and a \$5000 cash prize to stimulate and develop innovation and initiative in the pig industry.

It is anticipated that the

award will enable the recipient to broaden their exposure to national and/or international pig science and may include:

- Travel;
- Research development (visiting relevant laboratories, learning new techniques);
- Professional development (for example, a communication course);
- Development of research capabilities (design and construction of a new piece of equipment); and
- Any other purpose that, in the opinion of the selection committee, represents the best opportunity to promote the development and initiative of the recipient.

To be eligible to receive the Batterham Memorial Award, you must be:

- A current APSA member;
- Be within five or 10 years of graduating from

Masters/PhD studies or an undergraduate degree respectively, or currently undertaking postgraduate studies;

- Have delivered research outcomes to the Australasian pig industry; and
- Can demonstrate successful contributions through publications, col-

laboration and innovation in pig research and development.

For the full list of criteria and how to apply, please visit apsa.asn.au/Awards/BatterhamAward

Applications open on August 14 and close at midnight on September 29, 2017.

Dr Robert van Barneveld	1995
Dr John Pluske	1997
Dr Kaye Coates	1999
Dr Darryl D'Souza	2001
Dr Patricia Mitchell	2003
Dr Eva Ostrowska	2005
Dr David Cadogan	2007
Dr Rebecca Morrison	2009
Dr Cherie Collins	2011
Dr Robert Smits	2013
Ms Heather Channon	2015

Table 1: APSA Batterham Memorial Award recipients.

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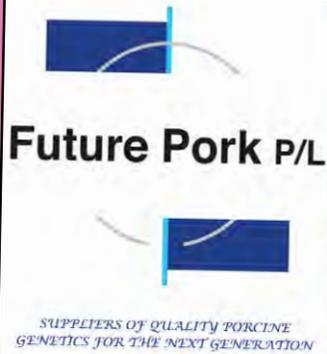


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URINE samples are an effective but underutilised diagnostic tool for evaluating the nutritional, physiological and health status of gilts and sows.

The challenge is how to collect quality urine samples efficiently and reliably on the farm.

The free-catch option, where a person collects a free-flow urine sample from the animal, is challenging and time consuming.

Consequently, Iowa State University veterinary student Megan Nickel investigated two alternative methods: the tampon technique and the Whirl-Pak technique.

Her goal was to develop urine-collection methods that were reliable, reproducible and economical.

Nickel also wanted to determine if any of the options altered the urinalysis or calcium, phosphorus and creatinine values.

For the study, she obtained urine samples from 14 sows using all three collection options:

- A 120ml urine cup was used for the free-catch sample.
- The tampon technique used a super-sized, unscented tampon with a plastic applicator and umbrella absorbency. Once inserted into the gilt's or sow's vestibule, the exterior string was secured to the outside of the animal with waterproof tape. Following urination, the tampon was transferred to a urine cup.
- The Whirl-Pak technique used a 700ml bag positioned around the vulva and secured with elastic tape. Following urination, the bag was removed and the sample was transferred to a urine cup.

From there, Nickel used 15ml of urine from each sample for the

UA evaluation, which included blood, bilirubin, urobilinogen, ketones, protein, nitrite, glucose, leukocytes and ascorbic acid, as well as pH, specific gravity and sediment.

She sent an additional 5ml of urine from 10 samples to the Iowa State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for calcium, phosphorus and creatinine ratios.

Nickel concluded that either of the two new methods – tampon or Whirl-Pak – offered a practical, in-field urine-sampling option.

She noted that tampon placement took 19 seconds, while the Whirl-Pak method took 104 seconds, with workers placing both effectively after just one example.

Nickel said the tampon provided an adequate sample 89 percent of the time at a cost of 23

cents (US) per sample.

The Whirl-Pak cost \$US1.19 per sample and had a 59 percent success rate.

There was no significant difference between the UA results or the calcium, phosphorus and creatinine ratios across the three sampling methods.



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Strain	Propionic acid	Butyric acid	Formic acid	MCFA
Bacillus cereus	>10	>10	>10	2.5
Campylobacter jejuni	5	5	5	0.5
Clostridium perfringens	5	>10	2.5	0.5
Enterococcus faecalis	>10	>10	>10	2.5
Escherichia coli	>10	>10	>10	5
Salmonella enteritidis	>10	>10	>10	5
Staphylococcus aureus	5	>10	>10	2.5
Brachyspira hyodysenteriae	>10	>10	>10	2.5

Table 1

Treatment	# trials	Control	Aromabiotic	% positive trials	P-Value
# animals	n/a	2622	2622	n/a	n/a
ADG (g/day)	18	352a	370b	89%	< 0.0001
FCR (kg/kg)	15	1.54a	1.49b	73%	< 0.014
Mortality (%)	10	3.8a	2.2b	80%	<0.034
ROI	3,8 *				

Table 2: Meta data analysis of the average growth performances of piglets after weaning until 20-25kg. *The reduction in medication cost was not taken into account.

Free medium-chain fatty acid effects on gut health and performance in post-weaning piglets

THE importance of a healthy gut in young pigs cannot be underestimated.

The gut surface area is 200 times greater than the skin surface.

This huge surface has various difficult and contradicting functions such as absorbing nutrients as efficiently as possible while reducing the entrance of noxious substances as much as possible.

Because the gut contains more than 10 times more bacteria than the number of body cells, this is an extremely difficult task.

As such, it is not unusual that 20-35 percent of the energy and amino acid requirements of the pig go to the gut.

Considering 70 percent of the immune cells are concentrated around the gut, gut health is also essential to improve immunity of the animals.

It is widely known that the post-weaning period is one of the most stressful in a pig's life.

The environmental, nutritional, social and managerial changes occurring during the weaning period are a real challenge for piglets.

The short-term consequences of facing all these stress factors will be retarded feed intake and growth, which can lead to diarrhoea and immunity suppression.

Gut health of these piglets needs to be optimised to support them through this difficult time.

Post-weaning piglet diets are often supplemented with high amounts of organic acids.

This is essential because

the gastric acid secretion by the parietal cells is not fully developed until the age of seven to 10 weeks.

However, that is only part of the solution.

Too many organic acids can have a negative effect on feed intake.

For that reason, it is important to keep the acid binding capacity of the feed at low levels.

In this way, the limited amount of acid produced by the piglet will not be buffered by the feed, resulting in improved protein digestion.

An acidic environment alone is often not sufficient for a smooth kill-off of pathogenic bacteria entering the stomach.

An acid environment is often bacteriostatic, but not always bactericidal.

The use of free and activated medium-chain fatty acids on the other hand has been proven to increase the antibacterial effect early in the stomach.

MCFAs are saturated fatty acids consisting of aliphatic tails of total chain length of either six (caproic acid), eight (caprylic acid), 10 (capric acid) or 12 (lauric acid) carbon atoms and a polar head.

As these MCFAs have a hydrophilic-lipophilic balance that closely resembles the hydrophilic-lipophilic balance of the bacterial cell membrane, they are very efficient in destabilising this membrane.

MCFAs clearly show lower minimal inhibitory concentrations when compared to short-chain and long-chain fatty acids (Table 1).

Field trials involving 5244 piglets of different genetics have been carried out in different countries (Belgium, Spain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, England and Australia).

All trials started at day one after weaning until the piglets had an end weight of 20-25kg.

Half the piglets in the trials were given a diet containing 2kg/tonne of Aromabiotic, a specific mixture of MCFAs; the other half of the piglets can be divided into negative and positive control groups.

In trials against a negative control group, the MCFAs were just added

on top of the regular diet.

In trials against a positive control group, the MCFAs replaced antibiotics, zinc oxide, probiotics or organic acids.

The main parameters measured in the trials were average daily gain, feed conversion ratio and mortality.

The meta data analysis for ADG contains 18 trials, including nine negative and nine positive trials.

For FCR and mortality respectively, 15 (seven negative and eight positive control groups) and 10 trials (six negative and four positive control trials) were taken into account.

The meta data results are compiled in Table 2.

The control group consists of animals from both the negative and positive trials.

Overall, with MCFA, the daily gain was significantly improved from 352 to 370g/day, an increase of 5.2 percent.

Significant differences were also found for the average feed conversion ratio and mortality.

The average feed conversion ratio improved from 1.54 to 1.49kg/kg (-3.5 percent) and mortality was lowered by 1.6 percent.

With these better technical results, it was calculated that the total return on investment was 3.8.

Today's sows, piglets and fatteners possess an enormous genetic potential that cannot be kept up by standard nutrition.

On top of this, the pressure to reduce the use of antibiotics creates the need for reliable alternatives.

It is clear the broad-spectrum activity and mode of actions of MCFAs make them an ideal solution to reduce antibiotic use.

Not only can they reduce antibiotic use, they also have add-on effects when used together with antibiotics.

This provides an opportunity to reduce the duration of the antibiotic treatment and gradually reduce the antibiotic use in time.

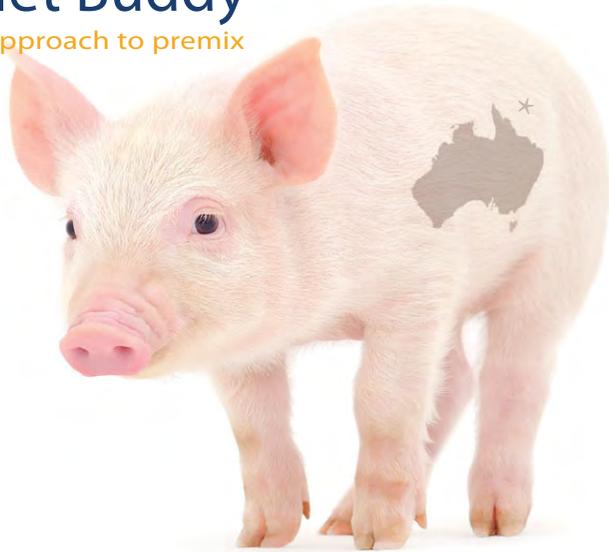
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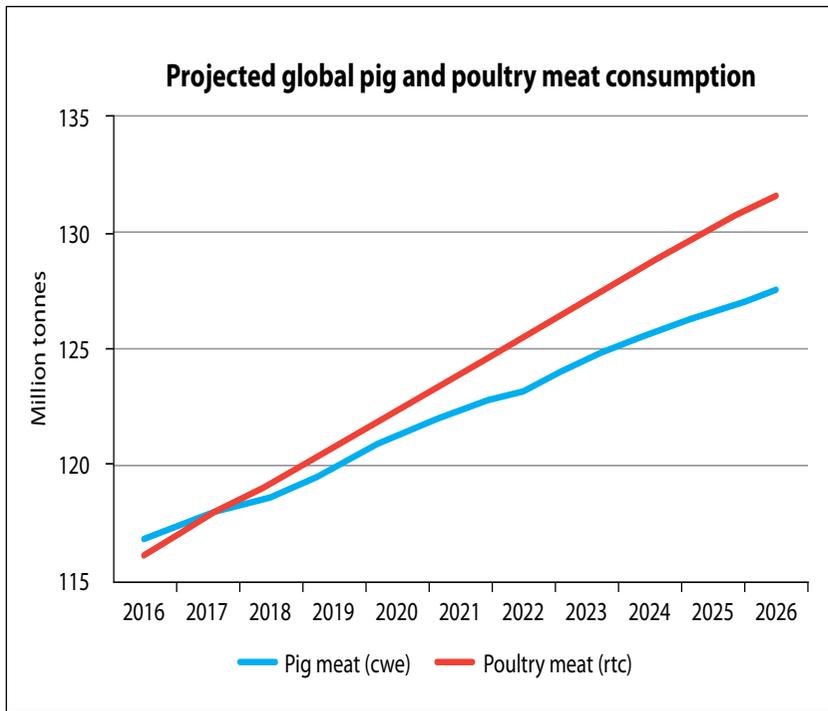
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Global pig meat production set to rise further

OVER the next decade, global pig meat production is expected to increase in line with demand, according to the latest OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook.

However, pig meat, traditionally the world's most consumed animal protein, is set to be overtaken by poultry meat, according to UK Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board analyst Bethan Wilkins.

China to drive rise in global pig meat production

Between 2016 and 2026, global pig meat production is forecast to increase by 10 percent to 127.5 million tonnes.

The main driver behind the overall rise is China, with production projected to rebound from the 2016 dip, and increase by 12 percent over the decade to 59.3 million tonnes in 2026.

On the other hand, EU production is expected to post a slight decline (-1 percent) from the 2016

level, as the domestic market saturates.

Global pig meat trade spiked in 2016, driven by strong Chinese demand as domestic production fell.

However, following the anticipated recovery in production, Chinese import demand is expected to fall back 43 percent between 2016 and 2026.

While this is expected to drive an overall decline in global pig meat exports up to 2020, volumes are anticipated to recover in the latter half of the decade.

Import demand from some developing nations, in particular Vietnam, South Korea and Mexico, is expected to drive this.

Pig meat to lose out to poultry over next decade

According to the latest outlook, pig meat consumption is set to be overtaken by poultry meat in 2017.

Furthermore, the popularity of poultry meat is expected to rise further over the next decade,

driven by its relative affordability compared to other red meats.

Global consumption of poultry meat is set to climb by 13 percent between 2016 and 2026, with per capita consumption expected to grow by 2.5 percent over the same time frame.

On the other hand, while total pig meat consumption is expected to grow 9 percent over the decade, per capita consumption is actually set to decline by 1 percent between 2016 and 2026.

Overall, the latest outlook only projects a marginal increase in pig meat prices over the next decade, but once inflation is taken into account, prices will actually record a slight decline.

However, as feed prices are forecast to remain low, the outlook for global producers remains reasonably positive.

You can find the full report, which also covers other agricultural sectors, at oecd-ilibrary.org

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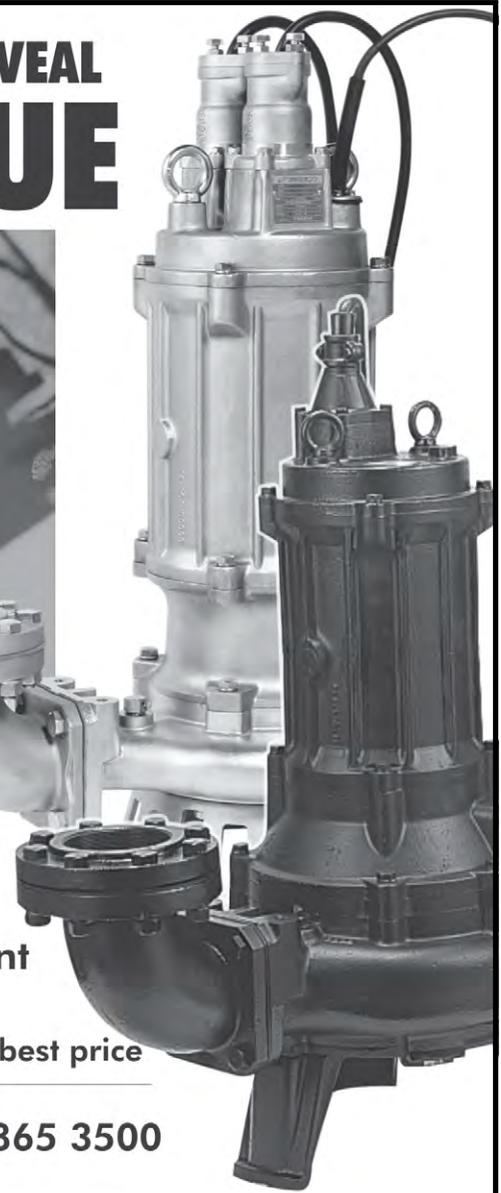
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