

# Australian



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SunPork will share its intellectual property with the sector, meaning that by adopting the proactive innovation, the Australian pork industry can lead the world in pig welfare.

# **SunPork reveals world-first** innovation for pork production

SUNPORK has unveiled an animal welfare breakthrough with the recent launch of a new patented 'maternity ring' to eliminate farrowing crates.

Australian pork producer SunPork has developed the new technology through extensive research and development over the past 10 years, with no external funding, to deliver a commercially viable solution to improve sow welfare during the period in which sows nurse their piglets, known as farrowing.

Farrowing crates have traditionally been used to reduce the inherent risk of piglet mortality during nursing and, until this breakthrough, have remained the last element of close confinement without viable alternatives in Australian commercial pork production.

The ring is a single suspended oval-shaped hoop that allows sows greater freedom of

natural nesting behaviour and socialising between sows, while limiting the potential for rolling, which can risk injuring piglets.

SunPork intends to gradually transition its entire operations to be 100 percent crate and stall-free, through the introduction of the new maternity ring, its current work to remove mating stalls and its previous removal of all gestation stalls.

SunPork is Woolworths' largest pork supplier by volume, and Woolworths' partnership on this new innovation will see the first 100 percent crate-free, cagefree and stall-free fresh pork enter Woolworths' supply chain.

Under this strategic partnership, SunPork's entire supply to Woolworths will transition to crate, cage and stall-free in the years ahead.

SunPork Group chief executive officer Dr Robert van Barneveld said, "We set the team a movement to support formidable task 10 years

ago - to find a commercially viable alternative to farrowing crates that not only eliminated the need for any confinement during farrowing and lactation, but demonstrably improved the welfare of the sow while safeguarding her piglets."

"I am so proud of what our team has achieved.

"By adopting this proactive innovation, the Australian pork industry can lead the world in pig welfare - noting this is one of very few solutions for elimination of close-confinement that benefits the sow, the piglet, the pork producer and the consumer simultaneously."

Woolworths The Group red meat business Greenstock managing director Anna Speer said, "Animal welfare is not only crucial to our business, but our customers rightly expect that the animals in our supply chain have the best possible lives we can give them, in

# Government looks to be nature positive

LAST month, the Australian Government hosted its first Global Nature Positive Summit.

The summit brought together a diverse group of leaders from government, business, academia, agriculture, environmental organisations and Indigenous communities to hear the government's goal of protecting and restoring nature.

At the heart of the discussions was the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, under which Australia, along with other signatories, has committed to protecting or restoring at least 30 percent of land and water by 2030.

This ambitious target highlights a global goal to safeguard biodiversity, with the world's economic stability deeply intertwined with the health of natural ecosystems.

With over half of the global economy directly dependent on nature, biodiversity loss poses a direct threat to economic se-



by MARGO ANDRAE CEO

curity, risking an esti-

mated \$A66.31 trillion in value. The Australian Government's strategy to meet the shared goals of the GBF is the Strategy for Nature 2024-30, which sets

gets to tackle biodiversity decline. For Australian agriculture, the stakes are high, but so are the opportunities.

ambitious national tar-

With agriculture covering about 55 percent of Australia's land use, the agriculture sector is both key player and stakeholder in government's discussions.

With primary producers' stewards of vital farming land, achieving the government's 30 percent protection goal will require careful planning, significant consultation and cooperation with agricultural communities across

the country. During the summit, the National Farmers' Federation led a session that was met with interest and demonstrated that agriculture and nature are intertwined and can convey benefits to each other.

There was a key focus provided by the NFF's Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework, which provides a mechanism to communicate Australian agricultures sustainability credentials.

For the pork industry, we are supported and underpinned by our own sustainability framework (2021-2023) and monitored

against ongoing reporting metrics.

In June 2024, Australian Pork Limited released the industry's first baseline report, which demonstrates pork's ongoing commitment to sustainability.

With pork contributing only 2 percent of Australia's total agricultural emissions, as an industry we have always steered away from greenwashing and have remained focused on profitability and productivity that underpins our sustainability goals.

Our sustainability framework focuses on pigs, people, planet and prosperity working together to ensure we remain at the forefront of innovation and that pork remains a low emission protein.

We'll need to continue to demonstrate that agriculture is already part of the solution to biodiversity challenges, driving investment while ensuring the continued productivity of our

continued P2



The summit aimed to show the government's commitment to the global framework.



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# **Pork Industry Calendar of Events**

# 2024

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

NOV 20-21 - Pig Research Summit 2024 -Copenhagen, Denmark. https://pigresearch summit.com

# 2025

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

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

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

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

MAR 25-26 - London Swine Conference https://www. London, Ontario. londonswineconference.ca/

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

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

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

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# SunPork reveals world-first innovation for pork production

rom P1 partnership with our suppliers.'

"This is an exciting industry-led advancement, which demonstrates pork producers' commitment to animal welfare, and we commend SunPork on leading this breakthrough.

"We're thrilled to see SunPork bring this innovation to market, and we'd love to see similar solutions used more broadly across the industry in future to improve the lives of all

pigs. To ensure commercial viability, key criteria for the development of the maternity ring included maintaining the current farrowing footprint, ensuring the safety of employees and achieving a transition cost equal to the replacement cost of current farrowing crates to deliver a compelling solution for all of industry.

SunPork's scientific research to demonstrate the animal welfare outcomes of the maternity ring compared to farrowing crates was published in the peerreviewed journal Frontiers in Veterinary Science in August 2024.

It identified key benefits of the maternity ring, including:

- Greater range of movement available to
- Improved physical condition of sows
- Higher lactation efficiency of sows
- Reduction in stressrelated behaviours in SOWS
- Lower conflict between piglets
- Patterns of feeding aligned more closely with weaning in the wild Improved piglet weight
- Lower use of medication for piglets
- More interaction and bonding between sow and piglets.

As a result of the science-based welfare benefits delivered by Sunpork's maternity ring, RSPCA Australia has expressed its support for the technology to replace farrowing crates.

SunPork unveiled the maternity ring and the scientific data behind it at a meeting of Australian Pork Limited delegates in mid-October.

Following its own extensive research and development, SunPork is sharing the blueprint and evidence for the maternity rings with the broader pork industry to support improved sow welfare across Australia.

Dr van Barneveld said, "People may be surprised to hear that we're sharing this design and our know-how with our peers and competitors, but we believe we have an obligation to make this pathway to close confinement-free pork available to the entire industry."

"For us, animal welfare is a collective pursuit, not a marketing tool.

"Now that we have found an alternative, the industry needs adequate

time to consider the options and if they choose to change, then adopt the new alternative."

SunPork has engaged Stockyard Industries in Queensland to manufacture and sell the maternity rings to other pork producers.

It intends to support training and development for those interested in implementing the technology, including through the University of Adelaide Roseworthy piggery, which is operated by SunPork. 🖘



Through the introduction of the new maternity ring, SunPork intends to gradually transition its entire operations to be 100 percent crate and stall-



Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek said nature-based solutions should be used to achieve both environment and climate

# Government nature positive

The summit had the opportunity to ensure enhanced collaboration between farmers, policymakers and environmental groups to address the role of farming in the protection and repair of our landscapes - work that will benefit not only the planet but the long-term resilience of agriculture

While it's early days in the development of Australia's plan, the summit aimed to show the government's commitment to the global framework.

As stewards of the land and producers of food and fibre, it's crucial we remain leaders in this space so we don't get left behind.

It's important that our industry, along with other agricultural sectors, remains in frequent discussions with the government in its vision of 'nature posi-

By working together, agriculture and conservation can create a strong future that sustains both Australian farming, nature and livelihoods of many for generations to come.

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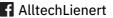
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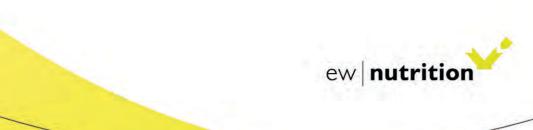
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A screenshot from hidden camera footage taken by activists at the Benalla abattoir. Photos: Farm Transparency Project

# Test case could change future of Australia's pig slaughtering practices

A TEST case claiming that pigs suffer unnecessarily could potentially reshape the livestock industry and raise pork prices in Australia.

Animal activists have taken a Victorian abattoir and the meat industry regulator to the Supreme Court of Victoria, challenging the use of "gas chambers" for stunning pigs before slaughter.

If the activists are successful, a ban on carbon dioxide gassing could set a national precedent, prompting a shift to the more expensive electrical stunning method.

The crux of the case lies in whether gassing is a legally acceptable method for stunning pigs, as there are reports of the animals showing signs of distress and pain during the process.

Animals Australia argues that the Benallabased CA Sinclair abattoir should have its license revoked for failing to minimise the pain and suffering experienced by the pigs it processes.

Currently, about 85 percent of pigs slaughtered in Australia are stunned using carbon dioxide gas in purposebuilt chambers, a practice that animal activists and RSPCA Australia have long condemned as distressing and painful.

The RSPCA explained that pigs are placed in a chamber filled with 90 percent carbon dioxide prior to slaughter, which can result in them losing consciousness only after showing signs of pain and distress – including "highpitched vocalisations."

Footage taken covertly by activists from the Farm Transparency Project at various abattoirs surfaced last year, showing pigs trapped in a metal cage known as a 'gondola' before being lowered into chambers.

The footage, which was aired on the ABC, captures the pigs thrashing around and gasping for breath.

Charles Shaw KC, representing the meat industry regulator Prime-Safe, argued in court that Animals Australia lacked the standing to challenge CA Sinclair's license, suggesting their concerns were merely emotional.

He contended that the Meat Industry Act does not mandate meat processing facilities to consider animal welfare.

"This is after all, your honour, about the killing of animals for food," he told Justice Andrew Keogh.

"It is not only not about animal welfare ... it's antithetical to animal welfare, and I don't shy away from the unpleasantness of that."

Adding that those who consume meat must accept that animals are killed for that end, and it's not a pleasant process.

After footage of a gassing operation aired on the ABC in March last year, PrimeSafe investigated CA Sinclair and another abattoir, Australian Food Group in Laverton.

While Australian Food Group closed, it avoided conviction for animal welfare breaches in the Sunshine Magistrates Court earlier this year, agreeing to pay PrimeSafe's costs of about \$30,000.

RSPCA Victoria animal welfare policy manager Mhairi Roberts said the organisation has longstanding concerns about carbon dioxide stunning, especially in gondolas designed for individual pigs as these animals are intelligent and social creatures.

She added that there needs to be research into alternatives to the gassing system that can be made commercially viable.

"We are very much advocating for both government and industry to invest in that research to find alternatives that are more humane and therefore can be made commercially viable," Ms Roberts said.

Australian Pork Limited chief executive officer Margo Andrae did not address questions about the costs of different stunning methods but insisted that carbon dioxide was the best option for animal welfare.

"We care about our pigs, and as an industry we share the community's concern for the welfare of our animals," Ms Andrae said.

"That's why we adhere to the global best practice of carbon dioxide stunning – currently the most humane and effective method of managing pig welfare during processing."

When asked about the research supporting the industry's claim that carbon dioxide stunning is best practice, a spokesperson for Ms Andrae provided a comparative literature review funded by Australian Pork Limited.

Justice Keogh has reserved his judgment on the case.

If the activists win, it could lead to significant changes in how pigs are stunned in Australia, potentially transforming practices in the livestock industry and impacting pork prices nationwide.



Pigs photographed by an investigator hidden inside the top of the chamber during a stunning operation.

# Wastewater system gets upgrade with new aerator

BEGA Cheese environmental manager for Northern Victoria Sean Trebley was given the task of upgrading the wastewater aeration system at Bega's Strathmerton plant.

#### The problem

The existing wastewater system consisted of a dissolved air floatation unit, which flowed into an aerated lagoon.

The resulting effluent was stored in two nonaerated lagoons during winter, with irrigation occurring in summer.

Aerators reduce chemical oxygen demand in wastewater as well as odours in least as efficient as surthe aerated and downstream non-aerated lagoons.

Bega had an ageing system of surface aerators in the aerated lagoon, consisting of two 22kW units and six 8kW units, but generally only one or two of these units were operated at any time.

Over several years the ageing surface aerators had progressively failed.

Repairs involved the deployment of cranes and boats to gain access - an expensive process that resulted liner.

Eventually it became uneconomical to keep repairing the aerators. The solution

Bega decided to look for a solution that was safer for operators and easier to maintain.

Mr Trebley contacted Hydro Innovations to discuss the use of the company's bankmounted Venturi aeration system.

This solution is mounted on the banks of lagoons, using a selfpriming pump to draw water from the lagoon.

The unit draws in atmospheric air using the Venturi effect, mixes it with the water being it back into the lagoon charged with dissolved 1800 or hydroinnova

Mr Trebley and his team liked the idea of bank mounting because it gave operators easy access to equipment for monitoring and repair - making it safer and more costeffective to maintain.

Bega's only concern was whether the units were as efficient as surface-mounted technologies.

Hydro Innovations was able to provide information indicating that, with the use of the right pump, oxygen transfer efficiency for Venturi aeration units can be as high or higher than 1.86kg O2/ kWh, making them at face - floating - technologies.

The aerated lagoon contained 45ML of effluent, with in-flows from 80-120ML per year.

This required a 150mm Venturi aeration unit, which was paired with a Gorman-Rupp V6A60-B selfpriming pump, giving a hydraulic efficiency of 70 percent.

## The result

Since installation, operators have observed a continued increase in the dissolved oxygen level and have seen in damage to the dam COD fall by 50 percent – even though the higher level of mixing was re-suspending settled solids, which became more bioavailable to colony-forming units.

Mr Trebley and the Bega Cheese crew are happy with the everincreasing levels of dissolved oxygen, the reduction in COD and their odour-free lagoon.

The wastewater and maintenance teams are also pleased that monitoring and maintenance can be done safely, without the use of cranes, boats or winches.

For more informapumped and discharges tion, contact Hydro Innovations on (02) 9898 tions.com.au 🖘



The lagoon two weeks after the installation of the Venturi Aerator. Ripples from the aerator that radiate to all parts of the lagoon ensure a good level of mixing.

# **AMIC CEO Patrick Hutchinson steps down**

THE Australian Meat Industry Council announced recently that its chief executive officer Patrick Hutchinson will step down from his role, effective

November 1, 2024. Since July 2017, Patrick has led AMIC through a period of significant change, playing a key role in advancing the organisation's strategic plan focused on advocacy, member support, industry growth and sustainability.

AMIC chair Tom Maguire said, "Patrick has been instrumental in developing our first ever strategic plan, then driving our strategic vision forward."

"Under his leadership, AMIC has evolved remarkably in the areas of advocacy, industry leadership, events and services, ensuring our members are equipped to face industry challenges and capitalise on new opportunities.

"On behalf of our members, Patrick's advocacy efforts have significantly lifted the profile of our industry at all levels of government," Mr Maguire said.

"His strong relationships have directly contributed to market access improvements, such as lifting export suspensions in China, and set new standards in animal welfare practices.

"He defended all our members, especially retail members, during the COVID pandemic at both a federal and state level.

"He revitalised our smallgoods membership program, culminating in strong advocacy outcomes as well as the Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards."

that Mr Adding Hutchinson's work directly contributed to AMIC's mission to increase the profitability and viability of its members, influence policy and guide the industry toward a sustainable future.

"Patrick's leadership has positioned AMIC as a robust voice both domestically and internationally," Mr Maguire

"His impact on our industry will be felt for years to come, and we are grateful for his tireless work and commitment to our industry over such a long time."

Reflecting on his time at AMIC, Mr Hutchinson said, "I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together across all sectors of the meat industry."

"Despite the many challenges we faced, we have emerged stronger and more united.

"I look forward to seeing AMIC continue its upward journey and know that the organisation is in a great position for future success."

Mr Maguire said, "As we move into a new chapter, AMIC remains committed to building on the solid foundation that Patrick has helped to establish."

'Our focus now is on finding the right leader to continue driving the organisation forward, championing the interests of all our members and steer the industry toward a profitable, sustainable future." 🥽



CEO Patrick Hutchinson will step down from his role effective November 1, 2024.



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Pigs give us so much. Surely, as ultimately they serve us so well, we should return the favour and serve pigs well while they're growing with us.



A window into a confined sow's life – artistically enriched in this case, but in reality, devoid of merit.



Not hard to spot! Happy pigs on pasture. Lives well lived should then lead to a good end of life, thus completing a positive cycle of life.

# Penning wise welfare words

WITH my long-held view and advocacy of room for improvement in how Australian pigs are 'housed' and handled, I was recently drawn to this blog headline on RSPCA's website, 'Why the confinement of pigs needs addressing urgently'.

My premise has long been those pigs, those intelligent sentient animals that give us so much while expecting so little in return, should be able to live lives free of unnecessary confinement where they are able to practice natural behav-

Such natural and vital behaviours include foraging, rooting, wallowing, nest building and socialising.

Surely it's fair and reasonable to expect pork producers and the consuming public to honour

by Brendon Cant

Cant

and respect such simple life drivers, even if that means – as it typically does – increased costs at production and the checkout.

So, let's take a peek inside at what the RSPCA 'penned' on the subject...

It's a pressing animal welfare issue in Australian farming.

Every day across Australia, more than two million young pigs are raised for meat in barren indoor farming systems, while their parents – the breeding herd – endure extended periods of extreme confinement in farrowing crates, mating stalls or boar stalls.

Pigs are social and intelligent animals with distinct personalities, they love to forage and explore and thrive in an enriched environment.

When farmed in restrictive systems, they're given little space or opportunity to perform natural behaviours that are essential to their wellbeing.

In conventional farming systems, adult female pigs (gilts and sows) used for breeding are commonly kept in groups but placed in farrowing crates (to give birth) and mating stalls (for artificial insemination), while adult male pigs (boars) may be housed permanently in individual boar stalls.

These crates and stalls severely limit the pig's ability to move freely and engage in natural behaviours.

With barely enough room to take more than one step forward or backwards and unable to turn around, housing pigs in crates or stalls deprives them of the opportunity for positive experiences, resulting in boredom, frustration, aggression and distress.

Most sows, boars and growers (pigs grown for meat) in intensive farming systems are housed indoors on concrete slatted floors, with no bedding or enrichment.

Pigs are incredibly curious and having a variety of enrichment is vital for their mental wellbeing.

When deprived of opportunities for mental stimulation and positive social interaction, they will easily become bored, frustrated and even aggressive towards other pigs.

With the widespread understanding of pigs' intelligence and emotional capacity, more must be done to improve the conditions in which pigs are farmed, and both growing pigs and breeding pigs should be given the space and opportunity to perform highly motivated natural behaviours.

While sow stalls to house pregnant sows have now largely been phased out voluntarily by the pig industry – though their use has not been completely eradicated, around 88 percent of industry is free of sow stalls – farrowing crates are still widely used.

Farrowing crates, referred to by the pig industry as a 'piglet protection pen', are metalbarred crates roughly 2m long and similar in size to a sow stall except narrower.

The farrowing crate has an area around it for piglets to move away and avoid accidentally being crushed by their mother – this is a genuine risk but one that can be mitigated without needing to confine sows.

While confined to the farrowing crate, a sow can stand up, take a step or lie down on the slatted floors, but she is unable to turn around or do little else.

It is essentially a sow stall by another name.

In a conventional farming system, a pregnant sow will be moved

into the farrowing crate roughly one week before she's due to give birth and stay there until her piglets are weaned, at about four weeks of age.

She will spend this time unable to carry out innate foraging and nesting behaviours such as nest seeking and nest building, and unable to properly interact and bond with her piglets.

Sows confined to farrowing crates risk injuries due to extended lying on hard surfaces or difficulty changing positions within the crate.

They have trouble resting properly and regulating their body temperature due to movement restriction.

The inability to carry out natural behaviours, including exploratory and maternal behaviours, leads to frustration and sows will often develop abnormal behaviours to cope, such as stereotypic sham chewing or bar biting.

Once her piglets are weaned, a sow may then be moved into a mating stall (similar to a sow stall) to be artificially inseminated and will be kept there for up to five days before being returned to a group pen or shed with other sows.

The breeding cycle of pig farming means sows will spend extended periods of their lives confined behind the bars of a farrowing crate.

Author's note - while I acknowledge that factory farming of pigs arguably manages to lower production costs, versus costs involved in more welfare-friendly systems, I would argue that with growing public awareness of some of the poor practices and unacceptable welfare outcomes generated by intensive systems, bigger numbers of consumers will inevitably draw down on more of their hard-earned dollars to make animalwelfare-positive checkout choices. In a business world

driven undeniably and understandably by supply and demand, the big factory farmers – especially those vertically integrated – will keep choosing to ignore public sentiment until it red lines on their balance sheets.



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SmartSwine 2024 conference attendees enjoying dinner at The Raft restaurant on the Swan River.

# **SmartSwine 2024 Conference**

THE SmartSwine 2024 Conference, hosted in October by Apiam Animal Health in Perth, attracted over 85 producers and industry sponsors for two days of cutting-edge discussions on technology transforming the swine industry.

This year's event focused on the latest advancements revolutionising swine veterinary care, including AI-powered disease diagnostics, workflow solutions for pig farms and a new product designed to enhance reproductive performance.

Attendees were given a first-hand look at innovations driving efficiency and productivity in pork production.

Keynote speaker Dykhuis Farms director of production Fred Kuhr shared his expertise on integrating advanced technology into largescale operations.

Apiam business manager for swine and poultry services Shaun Welsh demonstrated how PigFlow technology was being effectively implemented on Australian farms.

Producers shared their own success stories, offering valuable insights into how this technology has improved their operations.

Apiam research and development manager Dr Hugo Dunlop provided a highly anticipated update on the company's research trials, including the soon-to-be-released Japanese encephalitis vaccine.

This vaccine is expected to be available ahead of summer, helping to protect swine populations during highrisk periods.

Emerging technology also took centre stage

as Dr Mackenzie Congreve, a new addition to Apiam's veterinary team in Western Australia, introduced RealWear VR headset technology.

She explained how its easy-to-follow workflows were being used to diagnose diseases on site, streamlining processes for piggery staff.

Swine consulting veterinarian Dr Mark Eastaugh delivered a thought-provoking presentation on the cost-benefit analysis of adopting these new technologies, emphasising the potential for increased productivity and efficiency on pig farms.

Portec swine and poultry services veterinarian Dr Kim Nairn, along with Dr Jonathan Van Dissel from Apiam, highlighted the importance of upskilling young talent to address workforce shortages.

They also discussed how novel disease outbreaks are being used as opportunities for professional development.

ACE Laboratory Services provided insight into its diagnostic facilities, including their role in bringing new vaccines to market and the importance of microbiology in advancing One Health

objectives to improve swine health.

AusVet epidemiologist Ben Madin introduced the concept of compartmentalisation, explaining how it could help the pork industry maintain operations in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak.

The conference concluded with an engaging industry panel addressing the current challenges facing Australian pork producers.

Panellists discussed how the adoption of technology was crucial to overcoming the threats and obstacles the industry faces in the years ahead.

In true SmartSwine style, the event wrapped up with a lively axethrowing competition, followed by a dinner cruise on the Swan River at The Raft restaurant, where live music kept the mood festive into the night.

Apiam Animal Health extended its gratitude to gold sponsor Boehringer Ingelheim, as well as bronze sponsors Zoetis, MSD Animal Health, CCD Animal Health and AusPac for their support in making the conference a success.



The SmartSwine 2024 conference highlighted new technologies revolutionising pork production.



An engaging industry panel consisted of Dr Kate Savage from Portec, Fred Kuhr from Dykhuis Farms, Tim Kingma from KEPiggery and Gunpork Joint Venture, Monique Hill from Bailey Creek Piggeries and Bjorn Ludvigsen from BE Campbell.

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#### What is Optimate?

Optimate is a natural toxin binder made from zeolite and is used to reduce the harmful effects of mycotoxins in the feed of cattle, pigs, goats, sheep and poultry.

Mycotoxins, particularly aflatoxins, can negatively impact animal health and reduce productivity.

Optimate is registered with Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (registration number A11800) and has been scientifically reviewed to ensure its efficacy across various animal species.



CLEVER by NATURE

Optimate is BioGro certified, making it suitable for organic farming systems.

#### Benefits of Optimate Toxin binding for enhanced health

Pigs are particularly vulnerable to feed contaminants such as mycotoxins, which can cause growth reduction, digestive issues and even immunosuppres-

Optimate binds these toxins, preventing them from being absorbed into the bloodstream and reducing their harmful effects.

By neutralising aflatoxins and other contaminants, this product promotes healthier animals and improves feed safety.

One hundred percent natural and safe

Optimate is entirely natural and free from antibiotics, making it a safe choice for both young and adult pigs.

This product works as a complementary addition to a well-balanced diet and is not a re-

placement for other feed components such as energy or therapeutics. Improved feed effi-

Optimate helps animals utilise nutrients more effectively.

Healthier digestive systems lead to better growth rates, productivity and improved FCRs, which is particularly important in high-performance pig farming.

Reduced scours

The zeolite in Optimate not only assists the animal to best utilise feed and nutrients but will produce drier faeces and less scours for better bedding health and moisture control.

It also contributes to the reduction of ammonia emissions from manure, improving the overall environmental conditions for young livestock.

Suitable for organic farming

Optimate is a BioGrocertified input, making it a reliable option for

maintaining the health of livestock in systems where synthetic additives are not allowed.

Optimate will costeffectively improve your FCRs and animal weight gain through improved health, better feed utilisation and drier faeces.

The net result is that you'll bring pigs to market quicker or with better weight for less cost because your feed rate will decrease, utilisation will increase and overall animal and housing health will improve.

# How to use optimate

Include Optimate at an inclusion rate of 1-2.5 percent of the daily dry matter feed intake.

Typically, one 25kg bag of Optimate is recommended per tonne of supplementary feed.

It can be fed through various methods, including in feed troughs, in-shed feed systems or via mixer wagons.

Use alongside Zorbi-Fresh bedding additive for maximum on-farm results.

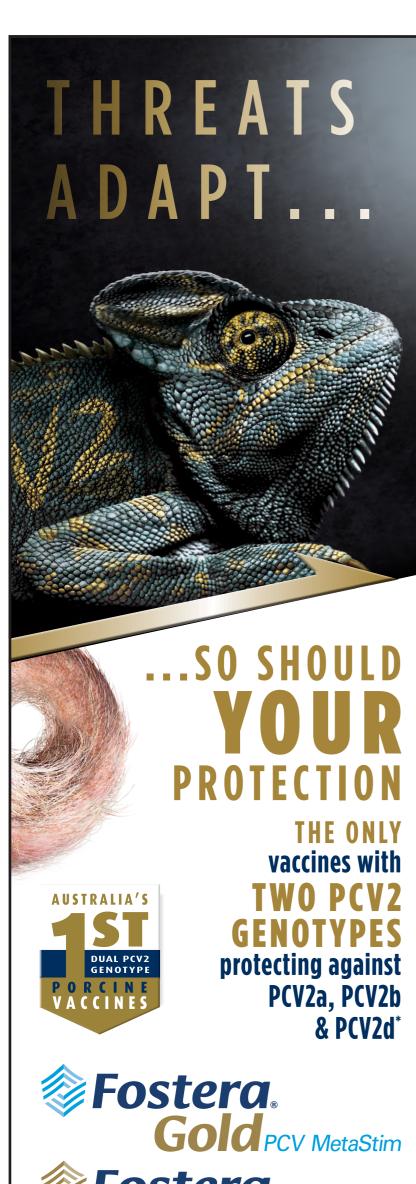
ZorbiFresh binds ammonia, dries litter and decreases shavings cost and usage.

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# Major review of industry's QA program

THE Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program certification policies require a major review to be conducted every fourth year.

This involves a review of standards, policies and documentation.

It plays an important role in ensuring the APIQ Program's overall integrity, credibility and preparedness and ensures the program continues to meet the needs of the pork supply chain.

The 2024-25 major review kicked off in July and is expected to be completed in June

The scope of the 2024-25 major review is: • Review of the 'freerange' definition and associated standards

• Review the JASANZ formula, (which applies to sites holding joint APIQ certification)

• Incorporation of the work completed in the 2023 APIQ minor review, focused on removing duplication and enhancing the clarity of the existing standards

• A review and update

of the full certification policies document

• A review of APIQ's scope (regarding standards and modules)

• Review of the APIQ fee review process and exploration of options to ensure APIQ remains affordable for producers

• An update of the compliance guide to promote consistency of audits and to enhance producer and auditor understanding of the standards, their intended outcome and how to demonstrate compliance

• A review and update of APIQ resources and templates to support the APIQ Program and its stakeholders, be that on farm, during audits and/or as part of APIQ management and APIQ panel responsibilities.

The major review aims to engage with stakeholders across the pork supply chain and invites stakeholders to provide feedback or otherwise be involved in the review process.

This includes but is not limited to pig producers, retailers, processors, veterinarians, transporters, government staff, environmental consultants and auditors.

Over the past few months, APIQ management has been reaching out to producers and stakeholders to provide feedback regarding the APIQ program.

We have released surveys that will be closing at the end of November to give the APIQ management team time to collate the feedback and start incorporating it into the standards and resources.

We will then be presenting the proposed changes to industry for feedback in face-toface workshops in February and March 2025.

Current plans are for one face-to-face workshop in each state, as well as online options to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved.

Details of these workshops will be released in the near future.

Continue to send in your feedback and, if you have not had the opportunity to respond to the surveys and you would like to, the links are:

 Survey for producers - surveymonkey.com/r/ HMWQZVD

• Survey for non-producers – surveymonkey. com/r/HMFVGF3

If you would like to provide feedback outside of or in addition to the surveys, we also invite you to contact the APIQ team at apiq@ australianpork.com.au or contact your producer relations team member. 🖘

## **Australian Pork** Limited



Scan for the survey for producers



Scan for the survey for non-producers.

# Stainless-steel 4" pump breakthrough

AUSSIE Pumps, Australia's most innovative pump manufacturer, is proud to announce the upcoming launch of its new 4" stainless-steel 316 motor pump.

Due to be released early next year, the new pump is ideal for both corrosive and abrasive wastewater applications.

In addition to being a breakthrough in terms of its resilience, longevity and price.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, "The big news is that we've been able to drop the price of these pumps, as our volumes of cast stainless-steel components from the foundry build."

These pumps are cast in Europe under an ISO 9001 quality system and that means they are certified by the factory before heading our way," Mr Hales said.

The new 4" pump is close coupled to a heavy-duty 15kW three phase IP55 rated motor.

It is capable of producing flows to 2120LPM and heads to 29m.

Its self-priming design means it can draw water with a vertical lift of 6m.

Inside, the pump features a cast 316 stainless-steel open vane impeller and large internal passages that enable compressible spherical solids up to 32mm in size to pass through the pump body.

The pump features carbon mechanical seals with nitrile rubber seals, however Viton seals are also an option for corrosive applications.

"We're seeing a renaissance in selfpriming pumps, over long-column sump pumps, as farmers realise the benefits that surface-mounted pumps bring," Mr Hales said.

Aussie Pumps has set out to replace longcolumn sump pumps submersibles with convenient selfpriming pumps.

They've been particularly successful in livestock wastewater applications.

Unlike long-column sump pumps, surfacemounted self-priming pumps can easily be checked during routine maintenance, and they are clean and simple to service.

"What we've found is that farmers like being able to service the pump without having

to pull it out of the pit," Mr Hales said.

Aussie GMP stainless-steel motor pumps are already available ex stock in the 2" and configurations, with flows to up to 1300LPM.

"These stainless-steel pumps are excellent value for money and will outlast cast iron equivalents many times over," Mr Hales said.

The company is also working on a high-head version of the 3" pump, model G3TMK-A/X powered by an 11kW motor, that will produce heads to 55m.

This is likely to be released later next year.

Further information on Aussie GMP stainless-steel pumps is available from Aussie Pumps Industrial Division, located at Norwest on 02 8865 3500, or check the website, aus siepumps.com.au 🖘



Operations manager Mal Patel checked out the 316 stainless-steel pump end that will be used on the new 4" BAXR-A/X motor pump to be launched next year.

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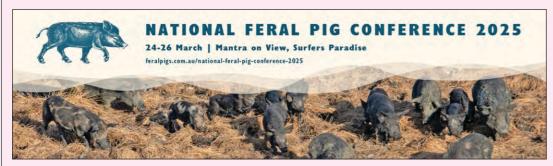
Washing routines are programmed once and can be easily modified to match the conditions. EVO Cleaner is a time, cost and water efficient choice designed for tough working environments.

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# **National Feral Pig Conference 2025**

EARLY bird registrations and abstract submissions are now open for the National Feral Pig Conference 2025, being held at the Mantra on View, Surfers Paradise, Queensland on March 24-26, 2025.

Presentations will address the conference session themes of:

- Effective regional coordination and collaboration
- Harnessing people power

Together,

mitigation, • Risk decision making and continuous improve-

• Keeping up with change

## **Presentation types** available:

- 10-minute fulllength presentations
- 5-minute speed talks Poster
- Abstract submissions are now open: • Presentation title –
- maximum 30 words • Abstract length -

maximum 400 words (no more than 1 page) Author biography - maximum 100

#### words. **Important dates for** the diary:

- Abstract submission closes November 22, 2024
- Notification authors of abstract status, December 13, 2024
- · Early bird registration, October 1 - December 20, 2024
- Regular registra-

tion, December 21, 2024 - March 7, 2025 • Late registration, from March 8, 2025.

Visit feralpigs.com. au/national-feral-pigconference-2025 or scan the QR code for more information.



# RSPCA Australia welcomes innovative maternity ring to benefit sows and piglets

Australia commends SunPork, with the recent announcement that it was moving away from the traditional farrowing crate and introducing its innovative 'maternity ring' – giving sows more freedom of move-

This Australian industry-led approach represents a big leap forward to addressing the extreme confinement of sows in farrowing crates, which are barely bigger than the sow itself and commonly used across pig breeding farms in Australia.

The maternity ring enables the sow to move around, express highly motivated nesting behaviours and interact with her piglets and other sows.

RSPCA Australia senior scientific officer farm animals Melina Tensen said the RSPCA had seen the maternity rings in practice, reviewed the available research and believed they would result in meaningful benefits for the welfare of the sow and her piglets.

"Traditional farrowing crates confine the sow from just before giving birth to when her piglets are weaned, denying her any ability to carry out innate nesting and maternal behaviours," Ms Tensen said.

"Sows confined to crates also risk injuries due to extended lying on hard surfaces and by the difficulty in changing positions within the crate.

"They have trouble resting properly and regulating their body temperature due to movement restriction.

"We commend Sun-Pork's work over many years that has now resulted in a viable alternative to the farrowing

"For pig producers, now is the time for an industry-wide transition to abandon all forms of extreme confinement of pigs - no more stalls and no more crates." 🦃



SunPork's innovation represents a big leap forward in addressing the extreme confinement of sows in farrowing crates. Photo: RSPCA Australia

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# **APL introduces general manager R&I** AUSTRALIAN Pork Limited recently welcomed Dr Rebecca Morrison as its General Manager of Research and Innovation. Rebecca brings over

25 years' experience in pig research and innovation in the Australian and US pig industries - conducting research and leading teams to deliver impactful research and new prod-

Rebecca holds technical expertise in animal welfare and behaviour, reproduction, nutrition, health, genetics, meat science and new product development.

Rebecca provides the Australian pig industry with opportunities for future enhancement in animal welfare by utilising her internationally recognised animal welfare expertise.

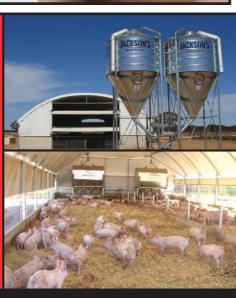
Rebecca is actively involved in the Australian pork industry and was previously an APL delegate, a member of the APL Animal Welfare Reference Group and a director of APRIL.

Rebecca is committed to ensuring sustainability and profitability of Australasian pork production and exhibits an unwavering passion for the pigs and the people that care for



Dr Rebecca Morrison, APL's General Manager Research Innovation.

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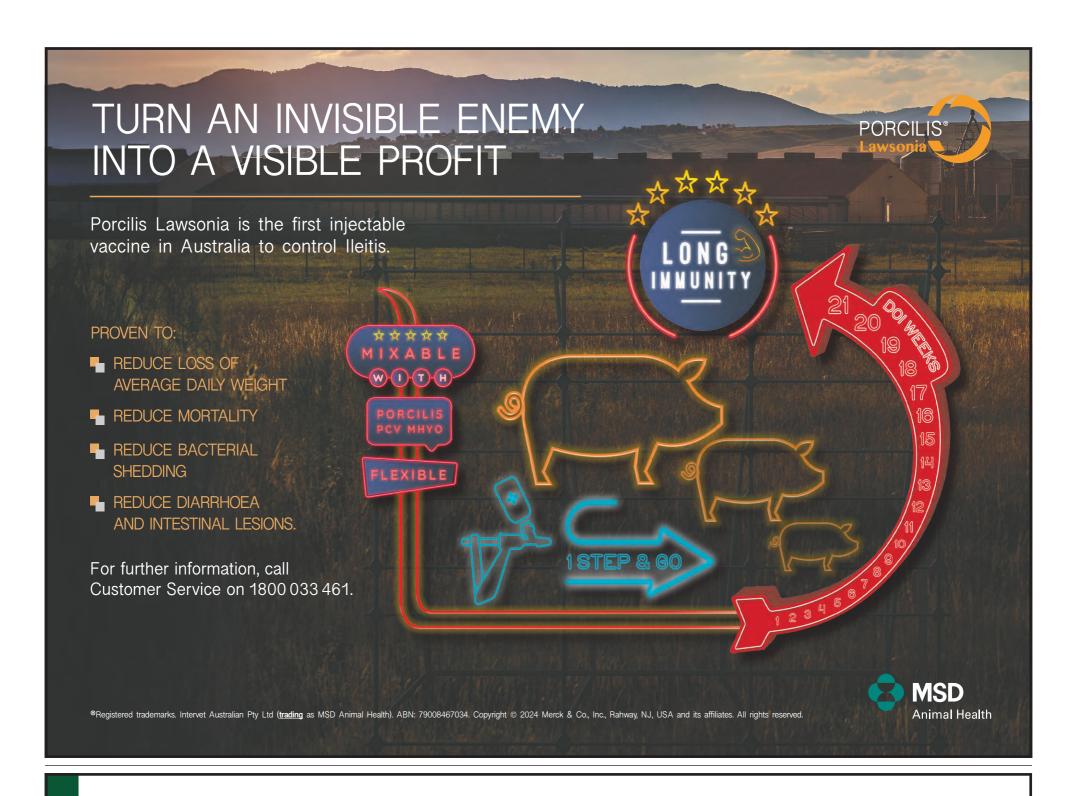


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# Coles

Coles chief executive officer Leah Weckert and Coles ambassador and Michelin-starred chef Curtis Stone.

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# **Coles makes Christmas easy and affordable**

COLES has unveiled this year's festive range, including more than 400 Own Brand products and exclusive specialty drinks that are promoted as being easy, affordable and bursting with flavour.

A recent survey of 8000 Coles' customers found of those celebrating Christmas, 23 percent are planning to cook and entertain even more at home this year compared to previous years.

Coles chief executive officer Leah Weckert said Coles was focused on delivering an easy-to-prepare and delicious festive range for every kind of occasion.

"We understand that this year has been challenging for many Aussie families and we want to make sure our festive range is not only truly delicious but also easy to prepare and affordable, so our customers can focus on what matters most — creating special moments with family and friends," Ms Weckert said.

"Our team of development chefs, producers and suppliers have worked tirelessly to bring together a range of 89 new Coles Own Brand products, sourced from our suppliers both here in Australia and globally, to add a touch of magic to Christmas ta-

bles across the country." **Food highlights** 

Coles ambassador and Michelin-starred chef Curtis Stone said this year's festive range has a delicious assortment of favourites, with options to suit every celebration.

"I've always believed the best dishes start with the finest and freshest ingredients, and this year's Coles Christmas range is no exception."

"Coles has gone to great lengths this year to take the guesswork out of the Christmas menu, to make sure everyone can plate up a delicious and affordable meal," he said.

"For my family and me, an Aussie Christmas is all about fresh prawns, succulent hams and delicious light desserts that are perfect for summer. "I personally love creating my festive menu from the abundance of fresh and in-season produce on offer, but if you need a little help, there are some great options available that don't always need my recipes."

Entertaining and canape options include Reindeer Bao Buns and Coles Finest Triple-Smoked Ham and Three Cheese Croquettes.

For mains, highlights include two new ham options... a showstopping Rib Rack Crackling Pork Roast with rich mountain ash smoke – sweet pork flavour and delicious crackling in every portion – and a single smoked ham with maple-mustard glaze and nectarine compote.

There's also the Coles Finest Free-Range

RSPCA Turkey Roast wrapped in streaky bacon with a fruity stuffing.

For a plant-based option, there's the Nature's Kitchen Vegetable Wellington filled with mushroom, water chestnut and a medley of vegetables encased in a crispy handcrafted pastry casing.

To finish, dessert highlights include the Luxury Sicilian Lemon Sponge Pudding with zesty lemon sauce, topped with a sprinkle of freezedried raspberries.

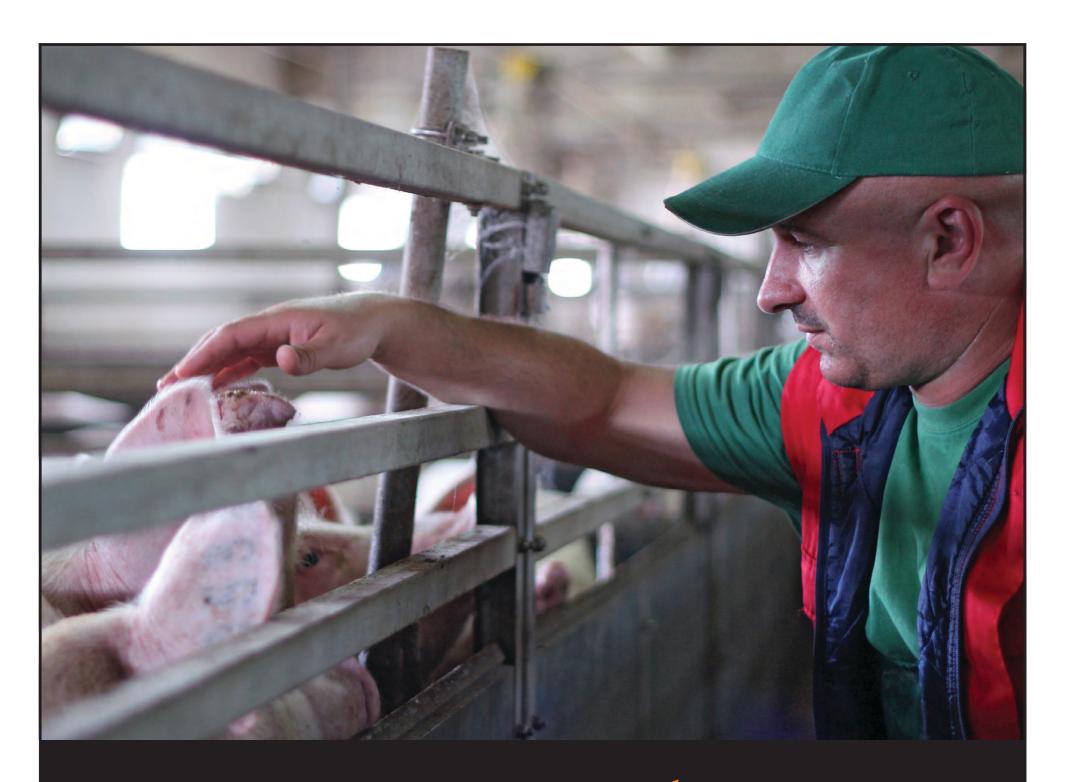
Another option is the Coles Finest Christmas Fruit Mince Pie Flavoured Milk Chocolate Block, crafted by expert Belgian chocolatiers, with flavours of candied orange and festive spices.

Retail World



Australian Pork Limited CEO Margo Andrae with Leah Weckert – celebrating the launch of Coles 2024 Christmas range, which includes two new ham ontions





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Dr Beth Cookson met with other representatives of the PHOVAPS Council.

# Support for Pacific region animal health

A MEETING of the Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services network was held in October to further support the development of regional agricultural capacity.

The meeting covered coordinating and strengthening animal health and production, biosecurity, veterinary capability and capacity, disease surveillance and preparedness, animal welfare, One Health approaches, climate resilience, and food and nutrition security in the Pacific.

It was funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and was delivered in partnership with the Pacific Community and the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Australia's chief veterinary officer Dr Beth Cookson attended the meeting with representatives from the department's Pacific Engagement Program for Animal Health.

"Animal production is central to the culture, economy and food security of Pacific nations," Dr Cookson said.

"Strengthening Pacific animal health, production and biosecurity improves food security, nutrition and livelihoods, and protects our region from animal disease threats.

"As a standing member of the PHO-VAPS Council, I am committed to growing the network's capacity and impact.

"Supporting the network will help us to strengthen our relationships across the Pacific, and to maintain Australia's reputation as a trusted partner to ensure the shared security and prosperity of our region."

The gathering in October was the second face-to-face meeting since the network was re-established in 2021.

The network is the Pacific's key decision-making structure and coordination mechanism for regional animal health, welfare, production and biosecurity matters.

It includes representation from all 22 Pacific Island countries and territories, as well as Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US and France.

# **APRIL Innovation Projects open**

THE Australasian Pork Research Institute Ltd is seeking applications for its Innovation Projects scheme, for commencement in 2025.

An independent participant-based entity, APRIL seeks to enhance the Australian pork industry by investing in research and development, education and training, and commercialisation activities focused on priorities and deliverables that ensure the sustainability of Australian pork production and to generate optimal returns for its stakeholders.

APRIL's Innovation Projects are negotiable to 12 to 18 months in duration and have a budget of approximately equal to \$75,000 (negotiable).

In this round, APRIL is willing to invest in projects that address these key priority areas for the pork industry, as identified in the 2023 Green Paper:

• Low-cost, non-straw, effluent-friendly evidence-based enrichment options for use at all phases of production to improve welfare

• Objective measures of odour and its application to both new and established piggeries

• Limiting the use of in-feed antibiotics and enhancing the effectiveness and efficacy of water medication — in accord with the Australian Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance

• Enhancing antimicrobial stewardship.

However, APRIL is willing to receive applications in any field/discipline that suitably address the criteria for Innovation Projects – refer to application form.

For assistance with the preparation of an application, refer to the 'Guidance Notes for Innovation Project Proposals', as it provides further and specific detail on project proposals under APRIL's new participant model.

For example, APRILfunded Innovation Projects may still require a cash contribution to cover project costs and facility funding, dependent on the level of participation the organisation/s has/have within APRIL's new participant model – refer to the 'Cash Contribution Calculator'.

Up to \$750,000 will be available for this round of Innovation Projects.

The Innovation Projects scheme is provided on a nationally competitive basis and available to applicants from any organisation.

Collaborative projects are strongly encouraged, though applications must identify a lead party that will administer the project.

All APRIL funding schemes are assessed, evaluated and recommended for funding by the Research and Development Advisory Committee, which has the collective expertise and experience to effectively assess applications.

If approved, research scheme funds are paid directly to the successful lead party.

Funding rules for Innovation Projects stipulate that no overhead – indirect cost recovery – can be charged.

Innovation Projects are conducted under the terms and conditions of the APRIL Research Deed, that can be viewed at apri.com.au/ research

An individual is ineligible to be considered for a new research project as project leader if, and without an approved and fully signed project variation, there are two or more consecutive quarterly project reports and/or cash expenditure reports that are overdue.

Furthermore, an individual is ineligible to be considered for a new research project as project leader if, and without an approved and fully signed project variation, a final report is more than three months overdue.

For any further information or any questions, contact executive officer Dr Charles Rikard-Bell on c.rikardbell@april. org.au or 0439 513 723.

To apply for an APRIL Innovation Project, click on the QR code below, complete the relevant proposal form and the budget and milestones template and email to Dr Charles Rikard-Bell at c.rikardbell@april. org.au by the applications close date, December 13, 2024.

It is anticipated that funding for successful projects will commence prior to July 2025, subject to APRIL Board approval.





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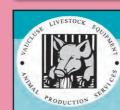




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#### **Simon Lakin**

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#### **Abbey Animal Health Pty Ltd**

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# Seaweed in weaner pig diets

THE weaning process in pig production is considered one of the most stressful events in a pig's lifetime and is characterised by intestinal and immune dysfunctions as a result of abrupt changes in their environment and feed format.

These changes can compromise the pig's feed intake, growth and health, often due to an increase in pathogenic enterotoxigenic e coli, one of the major causes of post-weaning diarrhoea in pigs.

Until recently, the widespread use of pharmacological levels of zinc oxide has been common practice, since the ban on antibiotic growth promotors in 2006, as a way of improving feed intake and growth performance of pigs immediately after weaning, as well as reducing the incidence of PWD.

However, after the ban of pharmacological zinc oxide in Europeaon Union pig diets, alternative ways to improve health and growth performance of pigs after weaning are being sought.

Seaweed blends have been an area of interest given their potential prebiotic effects.

This work compared two levels of a seaweed blend, added to a control diet and a diet with pharmacological levels of ZnO, on feed intake, growth, feed efficiency and the inflammatory response.

A total of 240 pigs were weaned in pens of five pigs per pen and

dietary treatments.

Across treatment groups, pens of pigs were balanced for the sex ratio within a pen, a pig's litter of origin and weight at weaning.

Pens of pigs were fed one of four diets across three phases: days 0-7, 7-20 and 20-42 after weaning:

- control Positive (PC) – standard diet with 3.1g/kg ZnO
- Negative control (NC) - standard diet without ZnO
- NC+5g/kg seaweed
- blend (SWB)

• NC+10g/kg SWB. Feed refusals per pen and individual pig weights were recorded on days 7, 20 and 42 to determine average daily gain, average daily feed intake and gain:feed per phase.

On day 20, six pigs

per treatment were euthanised and dissected. Peripheral plasma samples were collected for ELISA analysis of interleukin-6 (IL-6), IL-1 $\beta$  and IL-10 and the ileal mucosa was scraped for qPCR analysis of relative mRNA

quantification of IL-6,

IL-1β and tumour ne-

crosis factor-alpha. During the first seven days after weaning, PC-fed pigs tended to have higher ADG than other treatments (P<0.10) and higher G:F compared to NC (0.888 vs. 0.764, P<0.001, NC+5g/kgSWB (0.888 vs. 0.753, P=0.019) and NC+10g/

0.762, P=0.034). Between 8 and 20 days, PC-fed pigs tended to have higher allocated to one of four ADFI than the NC and

kg SWB (0.888 vs.

the NC+10g/kg SWB (P<0.10).

Average daily gain between 8 and 20 days was not different for PC and NC+5g/kg SWB pigs (0.368 and 0.308kg/day) and G:F was higher for PC compared to both NC (0.830 vs. 0.721, P=0.021) and NC+10g/ kg SWB pigs (0.830 vs. 0.702, P=0.005).

Between 21 and 42 days, there were no differences in ADG or

Gain:feed for PC (0.755) and NC+5g/kg SWB (0.768) fed pigs were not different but were lower than NC (0.804, P=0.002 and P=0.038, respectively).

There were no differences in mRNA levels of IL-6, IL-1β or TNF- $\alpha$  in the ileum.

In plasma, PC and SWB NC+5g/kg tended to have lower IL-6 concentrations compared to NC and NC+10g/kg SWB (1.7 and 1.1 vs. 4.7 and 5.0pg/ml; P<0.10).

Given the intermediate performance of pigs fed 5g/kg inclusion of SWB, it could be beneficial to investigate this inclusion level further, or lower inclusion levels, given 10g/ kg did not show any beneficial effect.

The study can be viewed in its entirety by scanning the QR code. 😘







Dr Nasim Amiralian, group leader of the Bio-Inspired Materials Group at the University of Queensland.

# **Bio-packaging from agricultural** waste to tackle plastic pollution

AMID escalating challenges on how to reduce global plastic pollution, a bio-packaging technology derived from agricultural waste is poised to revolutionise the industry by providing a sustainable, compostable and recyclable alternative to conventional plastic.

This world-leading technology has been developed at the University of Queensland by Bio-Inspired Materials Group leader Dr Nasim Amiralian and her team.

Annually, the world generates 300 million tonnes of plastic, with 85 percent of packaging stemming from fossil fuels, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable alternatives.

"We are tackling the dual crises of plastic packaging waste and agricultural food waste, collectively which amount to 1.4 billion tonnes annually," Dr Amiralian said.

"We have created materials from sugarcane trash that can replace plastic packaging and extend the shelf life of produce thanks to its antimicrobial properties.

"These packaging so-

lutions are optimised for mechanical strength, heat and moisture resistance, ensuring prolonged shelf life for packaged foods.

"Our 100 percent biobased biodegradable packaging technology represents a significant leap forward in productivity and environmental sustainability.'

Their innovative approach focuses on developing bio-packaging from agricultural waste that is both compostable and recyclable and can be used to replace conventional items such as berry punnets commonly found in supermarkets.

This technology could be the key to reducing Australia's re-ranking as the second highest generator of single-use plastic waste per capita globally.

"Key benefits of this technology include substantial reductions in waste and emissions, elimination of harmful chemicals through recyclable green solvents, enhanced biodegradability and prevention of microplastic generation," Dr Amiralian said.

"These attributes po-

sition the packaging materials as ideal solutions for both earthy and marine environments. aligning with global environmental goals."

The global fibre packaging market, expected to surpass \$537 billion by 2033, underscores the growing demand for sustainable alternatives.

This new fibre-based packaging technology not only reduces reliance on fossil fuels but also utilises agricultural waste, thereby reducing landfill and greenhouse gas emissions.

Dr Amiralian showcased her work as one of seven innovators at the recent AgriFutures Australia and growAG Catalyst Pitch event in Sydney, where she detailed this opportunity for investors passionate about sustainability, netzero and zero-waste initiatives.

"Moving forward, we're seeking support from industry partners, corporates, governments or investors to advance our technology for scaling up in standard production facilities," Dr Amiralian said.

The Catalyst Program supports women in ag-

rifood technology and innovation across Australia and New Zealand, identifying exceptional research and technology innovations ready for commercialisation and further development.

In addition to her groundbreaking work in bio-packaging, Dr Amiralian is dedicated to advancing opportunities for women and youth in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Her recent involvement in the University of Queensland's Career Progression for Women program and her role in inspiring youth through the Queensland Chief Scientist case studies highlight her commitment to gender equality and educational advancement in STEM fields.

For more information about the research or investment, scan the QR



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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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