

WAPPA Annual General Meeting 2003

Presidents Report

Firstly I must express my appreciation for the efforts of Mr Ken Boughton who for the majority of the year was the WAPPA President; I sincerely hope he is enjoying a well earned holiday in the north of the state. Ken brought with him a high degree of integrity and ingenuity to the role of president and was not afraid to raise issues to ensure they were discussed in a free and open forum – as should be noted by the number of Motions listed for decision today, many of which were inspired by Ken.

I doubt I will get any argument that 2003 has been a difficult year for all of us. Many producers began the year in an expansion phase due to the positive trading environment but were quickly faced with rising input costs and falling returns. The most significant of these costs was obviously due to the effects of the drought on feed availability and prices, however it is pleasing to see that up to this point in the season, in WA at least, that the drought is behind us and we will continue to see the relief in feed prices.

Credit must go to the processors in that, despite difficult times internationally (security threats, SARS and a rising dollar) they have managed to not only maintain export markets for WA pork but expand them. As our industry grows in WA, and with the double digit growth in slaughtering this calendar year, producers will have to get behind their processor to ensure that they continue to increase our markets to enable this growth to be sustainable.

The Strategic Planning process for WAPPA has taken a significant proportion of Executive's time during the period. You will hear more about this throughout the day from members of Executive however ultimately the plan will have its final shaping by industry stakeholders shortly.

I look forward to this years AGM as it provides the opportunity for all members to not only have their say but also to vote on a number of constitutional issues before the membership. Many of the such as taking the 'P' out of WAPPA and voting rights for General Meetings have been discussed at length during the year.

Nationally WAPPA continues to improve its relationship with APL, the Executive maintain that it is vital that both WAPPA and APL maximise the available resources to ensure that producer's issues are addressed appropriately. The structure of APL seems to have bedded down and is now truly showing the benefits of the integrated Marketing, R&D and Policy arrangement that its proponents envisaged.

Locally, now that the Agricultural Producer Commission's Pork Producers Committee (APC PPC) has settled into its role the WAPPA Executive have entered into a communication relationship with them to ensure that the APC PPC are informed as to WAPPA's activities especially where and when they may differ from those specified in our funding agreement.

WAPPA's directions and actions in the past year have focused on both the global and domestic markets for our product, acknowledging the need to meet supply chain challenges, especially in the areas where consumers are driving change through food safety, eating experience and consistency, animal welfare and price.

WAPPA has worked hard on addressing producers concerns in relation to feed grain security, right to farm, intensive industry needs such as water, environment and animal health. I take this opportunity to inform members that an issue that will affect us all in the next year will be Occupational Health and Safety, WAPPA is working with APL and Farmsafe to produce training workshops for producers and I encourage all producers to become informed as WorkSafe WA will begin inspecting piggeries sooner rather than later.

I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the value of WAPPA to its members. WAPPA's primary objective is to promote and safeguard the interests of Western Australian pork producers by such means as are permitted by WAPPA's Constitution which, it should be remembered is shaped by producers at annual meetings. A copy of our constitution is freely available at our website www.wappa.com.au.

WAPPA provides a forum for the collection and exchange of information amongst members concerning matters of mutual interest within the pork industry and to provide an information conduit for producers between governments, departments and industry stakeholders.

We represent and advance the interests of the pig industry and its members before the Governments of the State of Western Australia and the Commonwealth of Australia and their respective and relevant departments. It is unrealistic to expect governments and departments to consult with every producer on every issue so in effect WAPPA as a member organisation has the ability to speed up the wheels of bureaucracy by facilitating industry consultation.

WAPPA encourages, protects and promotes the interests of members, persons and companies who carry on the trade, business or occupation of a pork producer and make recommendations to the relevant authorities as to the future direction of the industry.

WAPPA liaises with the media and interested parties on behalf of the pork producing industry and do all possible to stabilize the pork industries so as to ensure that the members of the WAPPA are able to secure a satisfactory return on their investment.

WAPPA promotes the adoption of proven technology and production methods on pork producing properties and collects, verifies and publishes, or seeks to have published, information relating to improving pork production and quality for the benefit of its members.

And finally we co-operate with all organizations for the improvement of the standard of pork production and the marketing of pigs and pork, through initiating research, and seeking finance for research, development and promotion.

In Conclusion I believe the industry continues to require one voice, with most producers forming closer alliances with their processor, WAPPA must reflect this in the way we represent industry's needs. WA producers can't afford a fragmented industry, rather we need to continue to consolidate, take responsibility for our industry and move ahead.

That said, WAPPA is very mindful of the small producer's interests and will continue to endeavour that small producers do not become marginalised within this industry.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the WAPPA Executive for their support over the last three months and again acknowledge the efforts of Ken Boughton as president. I take this opportunity to especially thank Lea Newing for her hard work and devotion to the pork industry; I doubt I will receive any argument in saying that the pork industry is extremely grateful for Lea's efforts over the past 6 and half years.

I wish the incoming Executive all the best for the year ahead to which I have again committed to representing the needs of the pork industry.

Stuart Coole

President

19th September 2003