

MEDIA RELEASE – July 29, 2002

CALL TO ACTION FOR WA PORK PRODUCERS

WA pork producers must empower themselves if they are to sustain the growth which has seen pork exports rise by \$13 million since 1998/99 and domestic consumption grow to form a buoyant \$80 million industry.

Pork eating quality was on the agenda at the fourth general meeting of the WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA) held at Muresk Hall, Northam, on Friday July 26, where President Ken Boughton recommended producer led brands, marketing produce raised to agreed specifications, were the way forward.

“As long as we satisfy a high minimum standard, which we want to be the Australian Pork Industry Quality program, our producers have the right to produce pork for whichever market segments they prefer without being forced to pitch to exclusive niches.

“WAPPA, therefore, will not pursue a collective move towards formulated production systems, but will support producers that seek to move ahead of the pack through their own initiatives.”

Pork represents just 18 per cent of Australia's total meat consumption and inconsistent flavour has been cited as one of the major impediments to its continuing market expansion.

To overcome this reputation for variable quality, Mr Boughton said the industry needed to establish branded alliances, underpinned by high production standards so discerning customers could identify and purchase guaranteed good eating quality pork.

Besides marketing premiums, these alliances would allow participants to share infrastructure and so slash production costs such as transport.

Mr Boughton said producers needed to reflect on how an alliance would work for them before all the advantages would become clear. If there is sufficient interest, WAPPA will hold a workshop to help producers identify those advantages and understand the alliancing process.

Producers wanting the workshop to address any specific queries they have about producer alliances should contact the WAPPA office, Tel 9479 7315.

The general meeting also revisited the contentious issue of WAPPA voting rights which are currently determined on a one sow, one vote basis. Producers were asked to propose a fairer voting system for consideration as part of a voting rights review.

“WAPPA generally makes decisions by consensus without needing to vote because our members share a responsible ‘industry-first’ approach to issues, but we need a workable constitution,” Mr Boughton explained.

“Smaller producers must have their voice, but the one vote per producer system fails to recognise the contribution of our bigger members, so we hope to find the middle ground.”

The matter will be discussed further at WAPPA’s Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Esplanade, Fremantle, on September 20 and followed by the Annual Industry Dinner.

Authorised by WAPPA and issued on its behalf by Brendon Cant & Assoc., Tel 08 9385 7779
MEDIA CONTACT: Ken Boughton, Mobile 0417 985 661