

MEDIA RELEASE -- November 8, 2002

PORK INDUSTRY LEADER FEARS FOR LOCAL INDUSTRY

Despite WA's annual pork exports escalating to \$20 million, or 40 times their value of five years ago, there are fears that the local industry is beginning to stagnate.

After enjoying incredible growth, the industry seems to have been gripped by a reluctance to keep step with market growth.

According to Ken Boughton, President of the WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA), if WA does not capitalise now on its momentum, the opportunity to mark the industry as one of the world's most robust could be lost.

While WA's pork industry remains export focused, WAPPA sees the expansion of local medium sized businesses as a key to bolstering the state's production and putting profits in the hands of WA producers.

"What we need is a more aggressive local approach to expansion and growth.

"More than half of WA's 361 producers forfeit virtually any hope of gaining economies of scale by running an average of just eight sows.

"If those 190 producers stepped up production, we could tap some wonderful production opportunities," Mr Boughton said.

"Our best bet, though, is to double pork production among the 44 per cent of WA's producers who have 50 to 400 sows.

"By creating a viable and vibrant population of medium to large scale producers, we can look to fulfilling new market demands with renewed confidence."

To help identify obstacles to such expansion, WAPPA will soon survey producers.

"Once we've established what these hurdles are, we'll work for meaningful change and progressive growth among industry members," Mr Boughton concluded.

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