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WAPPA BACKS QA ALL THE WAY

With eating quality and food safety the two key drivers of pork consumption in WA, the WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA) has again reminded producers of the importance of implementing the Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance (APIQ) program.

Speaking last Friday after WAPPA's first general meeting for 2006, Cuballing producer and President, Graeme Dent, said the industry was best served by supporting best practice management in biosecurity, animal health and welfare and food safety through APIQ.

Following disquiet expressed earlier by a small producer group about the closure of the Midland saleyards and the cessation of pig auctions in WA from April 11, Mr Dent noted that despite 98 per cent of WA pigs bypassing the auction system and being sold direct from producers to processors, WAPPA remained supportive of those producers yet to adjust.

“WA processors have indicated they will consider buying suitable pigs from those producers who do not have a contract with them, provided their type and quality specifications are met.

“This is standard business practice and no different to buyers at saleyards making a decision to buy or not to buy based on what their requirements are,” he said.

Further, Mr Dent explained that environmental and animal welfare groups had made it very clear that selling live pigs at saleyards was inappropriate.

“Our industry is acutely aware that every time pigs are mixed, moved, yarded, loaded, unloaded and reloaded, they are being stressed and put at risk of bruising and physical damage, which can affect ultimate meat quality and a consumer's eating experience.

“No-one could disagree that by-passing a facility such as Midland saleyards, which also happens to be old and in disrepair, will contribute to the well-being of pigs and will benefit the industry as a whole,” Mr Dent said.

The WAPPA meeting was attended by about 30 producers and was followed by a Cost of Production seminar presented by producer and veterinarian, Dr Chris Brennan of Portec Australia.

He said producers simply had to know their cost of production.

His take-home message was that fixed costs reduce with volume increases and variable costs reduce with efficiency improvements, such as buying better, improving feed conversion and implementing better operating systems.

www.wappa.com.au

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